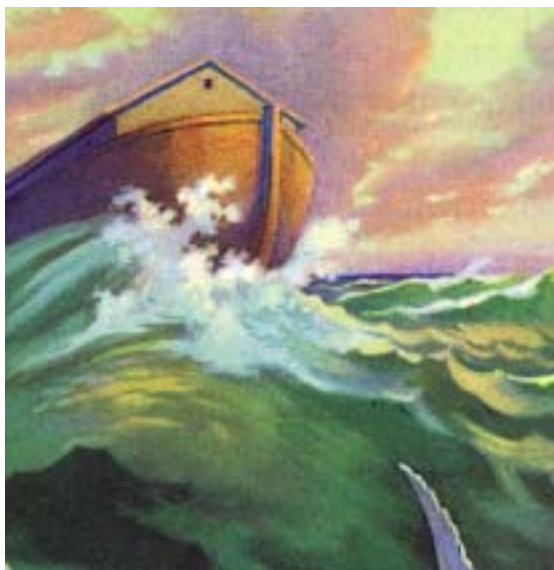




Why all the Forty's?

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In the Coptic Orthodox Church, there are many significant traditions and ancient holy teachings, which have a great importance. The number “**forty**” goes under this classification in the church. We obviously see this number a lot during many events in the church, including the Great Fast. There comes a point where one might ask himself, “Why **Forty**?” **Forty** is an extremely important number not only in our Coptic Church, but also in the Holy Bible. Some examples of where the number **forty** can be found in the Holy Bible include...



Noah and the Ark

- ◆ God flooded the land during the time of Noah for **forty** days and **forty** nights (Genesis 7:4, 7:12, 7:17, 8:6)
- ◆ The Israelites wandered in the desert for **forty** years (Exodus 16:35, 32:13, Deuteronomy 2:7, 29:5, Joshua 5:6, Amos 2:10, Acts 7:42, Acts 13: 21)
- ◆ Moses fasted and prayed on the mountain for **forty** days and nights when he received the Ten Commandments from God (Exodus 24:18, Deuteronomy 9:9, 9:11, 9:18, 9:25)
- ◆ When the Israelites did evil in the sight of the Lord, He sent them into the hands of the Philistines for **forty** years (Numbers 14:34)

- ◆ King David reigned for **forty** years (2 Samuel 5:4, 1 Kings 2:11)
- ◆ The period Solomon ruled over Jerusalem was **forty** years (1 Kings 11:42, 2 Chronicles 9:30)
- ◆ God told Jonah to tell the Nineveh that in **forty** days the city would be overthrown (Jonah 3:4)
- ◆ The Lord Jesus Christ fasted and prayed in the desert for **forty** days and nights (Matthew 4:2, Mark 1:3, Luke 4:2)

...And there are many more examples

As you can see, the number **forty** is very significant in the major events in Biblical History as well as our Church's history. Although the number **forty** is used as a punishment in some instances, it is also used to reveal glory. We should take this into consideration when we begin to complain about fasting or doing certain things for the church. So many martyrs and church leaders have fasted for at least **40** days, including our Lord Jesus Christ, who was perfect in every way imaginable. Next time you hear the number “**forty**” in the Divine Liturgy or the next time we have a Great Fast, remember that this is not just a random number that is insignificant; this great number has immense symbolism and true meaning in Christianity.