Just a Thought

When Does 40 = 1?

"And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not." (Deuteronomy 8:2, ESV)
When does forty equal one?
When forty years in the wilderness are answered by forty days in the wilderness.
Israel had been called God's son. The Lord told Pharaoh:
"Israel is my firstborn son." (Exodus 4:22, ESV)
God delivered Israel from Egypt. His people passed through the waters of the Red Sea and entered the wilderness, where they were tested for forty years.
They became hungry and complained. They doubted God's provision, tested Him, turned to idolatry, and repeatedly disobeyed the One who had redeemed them.
Forty years revealed what was in Israel's heart.
Then another Son entered the wilderness.
Immediately before Jesus went there, He passed through the waters of baptism. When He came up from the water, the Father declared:
"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17, ESV)
Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.
Israel, God's son, passed through water and entered the wilderness.
Jesus, God's Son, passed through water and entered the wilderness.
Israel remained there forty years.
Jesus remained there forty days.
One day for every year.
After fasting forty days and nights, Jesus was hungry. Satan tempted Him to turn stones into bread.
Jesus answered:
"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4, ESV)
Those words came from Deuteronomy 8—the very chapter in which Moses reminded Israel of its forty years of testing.
Jesus was standing where Israel had stood.
But He responded differently.
Israel was hungry and complained against God. Jesus was hungry and trusted His Father.
Israel tested God. Jesus answered Satan:
"You shall not put the Lord your God to the test." (Matthew 4:7, ESV)
Israel turned to idolatry. When Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world in exchange for worship, Jesus answered:
"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." (Matthew 4:10, ESV)
Every answer came from Deuteronomy.
One son failed.
The other Son succeeded.
Israel's forty years revealed disobedience. Christ's forty days revealed perfect obedience.
But Jesus did not enter the wilderness merely to show people how to resist temptation. Something greater was happening. The Son was obeying where God's people had disobeyed.
The pattern reaches even farther back.
Adam was tested in a garden where food was abundant, and he sinned. Christ was tested in a wilderness after forty days without food, and He did not.
Adam failed.
Israel failed.
And so have we.
There has never been a human life, apart from Christ, that could withstand examination and be declared perfectly obedient before God.
"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15, ESV)
Yet without sin.
Jesus entered the wilderness as the beloved Son of God. He experienced hunger. He faced temptation.
He heard the suggestions of Satan.
And He obeyed His Father perfectly.
Forty years.
Forty days.
One day for every year.
Israel came out of the wilderness with a history of failure.
Christ came out without sin.
When does forty equal one?
When the obedience of the one true Son succeeds where everyone before Him had failed.
Just a thought.

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