

Days Numerically Described

by Dr. Fred Wittman

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, and fifteen days are found recorded in Scripture, but not nine, eleven, and thirteen days. The following titles of days are listed.

olígas hayméras - a few days (Heb 12:10)

οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας (ou metà pollàs. . . hayméras) - after not many days = **10 days** (Acts 1:5)

πολλὰς ἡμέρας (pollàs. . . hayméras) - many days = **20 days** {*half the amount of more days and twice the amount of not many days*} (Acts 9:43; 16:18)

hayméras pleíous - more days = **40 days** (Acts 13:31; 21:10; 25:14; 27:20 cf. Acts 1:3)

haymérai hikanáí - a considerable (adequate) number of days = **30 (?) days** (Acts 9:23,43; 18:18; 27:7)

hayméras tinás - certain (some days) = a specific, but unspecified number = 9 or 11 (Acts 9:19; 10:48; 15:36; 16:12; 24:24; 25:13)

Explanation of Numerical Days in The New Testament

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An explanation of these noted numerical days is given here.

In The New Testament the word ἡμέρας (days) are numerically described by one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, ten, twelve, fourteenth, and fifteen. But nine, eleven, thirteen, twenty, and thirty are not found in connection with the word 'days' in The New Testament and the numeral 'forty' in connection with days is only found in three Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke and that in connection with 'the temptation' of Jesus. Therefore The Holy Spirit must have used another means for specifying nine, eleven, thirteen, twenty, thirty and forty days in Acts and the remainder of The New Testament.

Not many days: Luke recorded the words of The Lord Jesus to His disciples promising baptism by The Holy Spirit "after these **not many days**" (Acts 1:5). He used the phrase οὐ μετὰ πολλὰς ταύτας ἡμέρας (ou metà pohllás hayméras). From the context we learn that the time from his ascension which occurred after His conversation with them until the baptism by The Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost (which means fifty) was ten days (fifty minus forty, v. 3). Therefore it is concluded that "**not many days**" οὐ πολλὰς ἡμέρας (ou pohllás hayméras) equals ten days. Then "**many days**" πολλὰς ἡμέρας (pohllás hayméras) would equal twenty days (Acts 16:18).

Certain number of **days:** Luke recorded that **Saúlohs** (Saul later Paul) was with the disciples in **Dahmahskóhs** for '**certain days**' after he returned from Arabia (Acts 9:19). He used the phrase τίνας ἡμέρας (tínahs hayméras). Since nine or eleven days are not mentioned in The New Testament and since it is reasonable to consider nine or eleven days in addition to 'a considerable number of days' (v. 23 see below) as likely correct, and since, because it fits the chronological sequence, it is most likely correct in other references (Acts 10:48; 15:36; 16:12; 24:24; 25:13) that Luke used the term, nine or eleven days as a very likely understanding for '**certain days**' as consistently identified in the center column references. This appears to fit the chronological dating of all the events in Acts.

Considerable number of **days:** Luke recorded that, after **Saúlohs** (Saul later Paul) returned to **Dahmahskóhs** (Damascus) from his three years of discipleship with The Lord Jesus Christ in Arabia, he confounded the Jews by substantiating that The Lord Jesus was The Christ, "then as a **considerable** number of **days**" (Acts 9:23) were being fully fulfilled, the Jews connived to kill him. He used the phrase ἡμέρας ἱκαναί (hayméras heekahnah-ée) in the nominative feminine case. This Greek word also carries the meaning of 'sufficient, adequate or enough.' He also recorded that Peter remained in **Yóppay** (Joppa) "a **considerable** number of **days**" (Acts 9:43). Since The New Testament does not

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refer specifically to ‘thirty days,’ it would seem that ‘**a considerable number of days**’ might be sufficient, enough, or adequate to indicate thirty days. A comparative study of the other references (Acts 9:43; 18:18) of this phrase indicates that it is most likely correct since it fits in with the chronological dating of all the events in Acts.

More days: Luke recorded that Paul used the phrase ‘**more days**’ to express the number of days The Risen Lord Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples before ascending (Acts 13:31). He used the phrase ἡμέρας πλείους (hayméras pleíous) in the accusative case. The adjective πλείους is a masculine and feminine accusative form of πλείων. Luke used the same phrase to record that Jesus made “appearance of Himself to them through forty days” (Acts 1:3). Therefore it is logical to conclude that the phrase ‘ἡμέρας πλείους (hayméras pleíous)’ in the accusative case or ‘**more days**’ refers to forty days when Luke used this phrase in his other writings (Acts 13:31; 21:10; 25:14). Therefore ‘**more (πλείους) days**’ is more or twice the number of ‘many days,’ which refers to twenty days.

However, Luke uses a different feminine accusative form of πλείων (pleíōn) to describe the time of struggle in the Euroclydon (Acts 27:20), which the ship endured after leaving Fair Havens in the attempt to reach a safer harbor for the winter on the Island of **Kráytay** (Crete). Since Greek is such a precise language and Luke is a precise historian, no doubt he used a different or alternative inflectional ending πλείονας (pleíōnas) in the accusative case to indicate ‘more days’ (Acts 27:20), the alternate meaning to that which he used the previous three times. In this use the number of days Luke clearly indicated was ‘fourteen’ (v. 27). Therefore, in this case ‘**more days**’ πλείονας (pleíōnas), the alternate use refers to **fourteen** days, a total of seventeen days since leaving Fair Havens (v. 19).