

# Acts 7:36

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

## Analysis

**He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.** Stephen recounts the Exodus as authentication of Moses' divine commission through miraculous confirmation.

The phrase brought them out emphasizes Moses' role as deliverer, yet the power came from God. The wonders and signs served as divine credentials—visible proof of God's presence and power. Reformed theology distinguishes between signs that authenticate God's messengers and the underlying spiritual reality they represent.

Three locations mark Israel's journey: Egypt (plagues and Passover), Red Sea (parting waters), and wilderness (manna, water from rock). Each miracle demonstrated God's covenant faithfulness and power to save. The forty years in wilderness becomes a test of faith—physical deliverance must lead to spiritual transformation.

Stephen's audience knew these miracles well, yet he's building toward a shocking conclusion: possessing the signs and wonders didn't prevent rebellion. External miracles don't guarantee internal transformation—a warning against presuming on covenant privileges without heart faith.

## Historical Context

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The Exodus narrative (Exodus 7-40) formed the core of Jewish identity. Every Passover celebration rehearsed these events. Stephen speaks to Jews who pride themselves on Mosaic heritage while resisting the greater Prophet Moses foretold.

The forty years becomes a significant typological period—testing and refinement. This speech occurs roughly 1,500 years after the Exodus, yet Stephen shows the pattern repeating: signs were given, yet hearts remained hard. First-century Judaism emphasized circumcision, temple, and Torah observance, often overlooking the prophetic warnings against external religion without internal transformation.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How do miracles function to authenticate God's messengers without guaranteeing faith?
2. What does the forty-year wilderness period teach about God's patience and testing of His people?
3. In what ways can we possess knowledge of God's works while resisting His authority?
4. How should Reformed Christians view signs and wonders in relation to Word-centered ministry?
5. What dangers exist in emphasizing external religious practices over heart transformation?

## Interlinear Text

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οὗτος	ἐξήγαγεν	αὐτοὺς	ποιήσας	τέρατα	καὶ
He	brought	them	after that he had shewed	wonders	and
G3778	G1806	G846	G4160	G5059	G2532
σημεῖα	ἐν	γῇ	Αἴγυπτοῦ	καὶ	ἐν
signs	in	the land	of Egypt	and	in
G4592	G1722	G1093	G125	G2532	G1722
’Ἐρυθρῷ	Θαλάσσῃ				
				the Red	sea
				G2063	G2281
καὶ	ἐν	τῇ	ἐρήμῳ	ἔτη	τεσσαράκοντα
and	in	G3588	the wilderness	years	forty
G2532	G1722		G2048	G2094	G5062

## Additional Cross-References

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**Exodus 14:21** (Parallel theme): And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

**Exodus 12:41** (References Egypt): And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

**Exodus 33:1** (References Egypt): And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:

**Exodus 16:35** (Parallel theme): And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.