

Deuteronomy 4:32

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it?

Analysis

For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth...

Moses shifts from warning to wonder, challenging Israel to investigate all human history (lemin hayom asher bara Elohim adam al ha'arets, 'since the day God created man on the earth') and search the entire earth (ulmiketseh hashamayim ve'ad ketseh hashamayim, 'from one end of heaven to the other'). The scope is comprehensive: all time, all space. Has anything comparable to Israel's experience ever occurred?

The rhetorical question hanihyah kadavar hagadol hazeh (הֲנִיְהָיָה כְּדָבָר הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה, 'has there been any such great thing?') invites empirical investigation. Moses appeals not to blind faith but to historical evidence. Israel's experience is falsifiable—if another nation can demonstrate comparable divine encounter, Israel's uniqueness collapses. But no such evidence exists.

This argument from uniqueness anticipates the apologetic strategy of the prophets and apostles: biblical faith invites scrutiny because it rests on public, verifiable events, not private mystical experiences. Christianity makes the same claim about

the resurrection—'ask, investigate, verify' (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). The God of Israel acts in history, leaving evidence that withstands examination.

Historical Context

Moses appeals to Israel's unique historical experience of divine revelation. Since creation, no other nation had experienced direct theophany as Israel did at Horeb/Sinai. This appeal to unprecedented historical evidence was meant to strengthen their faith and commitment as they prepared to face the religious pluralism of Canaan.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does biblical faith's appeal to historical evidence differ from religions based on private mystical experience or philosophical speculation?
2. What unique evidences of God's work in history strengthen your confidence in the Christian faith?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	שָׁאַל	נָא	הַיּוֹם	רִאשׁוֹן יָמַי	אֲשֶׁר	הָנִהְיָ הָ	לִפְנֵי יְיָ
H3588	For ask H7592	H4994	now of the days H3117	that are past H7223	H834	which were H1961	before H6440
לְמַן	הַיּוֹם	אֲשֶׁר	בָּרַךְ אֱלֹהֵי יָמַי	אָדָם	עַל		
H4480	now of the days H3117	H834	created H1254	that God H430	man H120	H5921	
הָאָרֶץ	קִצְּהָ	הַשָּׁמַיִם	יַעַד				
upon the earth H776	and ask from the one side H7097	of heaven H8064	H5704				
קִצְּהָ	הַשָּׁמַיִם	הָנִהְיָ הָ	כִּדְבָר				
and ask from the one side H7097	of heaven H8064	which were H1961	thing H1697				
	הַגָּדוֹל					הֲיֵה הָ	אִלּוּ
	unto the other whether there hath been any such thing as this great H1419					H2088	H176
הֲנִשְׁמָע	כְּמֹהוּ:						
is or hath been heard H8085	H3644						

Additional Cross-References

Job 8:8 (Parallel theme): For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

Psalms 44:1 (References God): We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

Matthew 24:31 (Parallel theme): And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Deuteronomy 32:7 (Parallel theme): Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

Genesis 1:27 (Creation): So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Joel 1:2 (Parallel theme): Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land. Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?

From KJV Study • kjevstudy.org