

Exodus 4:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

Analysis

And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign (וְהָיָה אִם-לֹא יִאֱמִינוּ לָךְ וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ לְקוֹל הָאֵת הָרִאשׁוֹן וְהָאֱמִינוּ לְקוֹל הָאֵת הָאַחֲרֹן)—God's patient provision: **if they will not believe... the first sign... the latter sign**. God knows human weakness and provides multiple confirmations. **Voice of the sign** (קוֹל הָאֵת, qol ha'ot)—signs "speak," testifying to God's power. The progression from rod-to-serpent (power over forces of evil) to leprosy-healing (power over sin/disease) moves from external authority to personal transformation. God's patience with skepticism shows His understanding of human frailty—He provides sufficient evidence for faith.

Historical Context

Israel's 400 years of bondage likely witnessed failed liberation attempts and false messiahs, creating understandable skepticism. God's provision of multiple signs shows wisdom—He doesn't expect blind faith but provides reasonable evidence. The graduated signs (if the first doesn't convince, try the second) demonstrate God's patient accommodation to human weakness.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does God's provision of multiple signs encourage you that He understands and accommodates honest doubt?
2. What 'signs' has God given you progressively to build faith when initial doubts remained?

Interlinear Text

וְהָיָה
H1961 אִם
H518 לֹא
H3808

וְהָאֵם יֵנוּ
H539
And it shall come to pass if they will not believe

וְלֹא
H0 יֵנוּ
H3808

וְשָׁמַע וְ
H8085
thee neither hearken לְקוֹל
H6963
the voice הָאֵת
H226
sign וּ
H7223
of the first

וְהָאֵם יֵנוּ
H539
And it shall come to pass if they will not believe לְקוֹל
H6963
the voice הָאֵת
H226
sign הָאֲחֵרָה:
H314
of the latter

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 28:10 (Parallel theme): For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Deuteronomy 32:39 (Parallel theme): See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

