

Hebrews 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

Analysis

Israel tested God 'and saw my works forty years' - unbelief persisted despite constant evidence of God's power and provision. The Greek 'dokimazō' (tested) implies challenging God to prove Himself. This demonstrates the irrationality of unbelief - even abundant evidence doesn't compel faith apart from God's grace. Reformed epistemology recognizes that the problem is not lack of evidence but the noetic effects of sin.

Historical Context

The forty years refers to Israel's wilderness wandering after refusing to enter Canaan (Numbers 14). Despite daily manna, water from rocks, and God's presence in the cloud, the generation that left Egypt died in unbelief.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. Why doesn't evidence alone produce faith?
2. What 'works' of God have you witnessed that should strengthen your faith?

Interlinear Text

οὐ ἐπείρασαν με, οἱ πατέρες ὑμῶν ἐδοκιμασάν με,
When tempted me G3588 fathers your proved me
G3757 G3985 G3165 G3962 G5216 G1381 G3165

καὶ εἶδον τὰ ἔργα μου τεσσαράκοντα ἔτη·
and saw works my forty years
G2532 G1492 G3588 G2041 G3450 G5062 G2094

Additional Cross-References

Acts 7:36 (Parallel theme): 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.

Exodus 19:4 (Parallel theme): Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Deuteronomy 4:9 (Parallel theme): Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

Deuteronomy 4:3 (Parallel theme): Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.