

John 7:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For neither did his brethren believe in him.

Analysis

For neither did his brethren believe in him. This stark parenthetical statement explains the preceding verses' flawed advice. 'Neither...believe' (oude...episteuon) uses imperfect tense indicating continuous unbelief during Jesus's ministry. John directly states what readers might suspect: the brothers' counsel came from unbelief, not insight. They viewed Jesus through natural eyes, not spiritual understanding. Despite growing up with Him, witnessing His sinless life, perhaps hearing about His miracles, they remained unconvinced. This proves that evidence alone doesn't produce faith—regeneration by the Spirit is required (1 Corinthians 2:14). The brothers' later conversion (Acts 1:14, 1 Corinthians 15:7) testifies to resurrection's power and grace's triumph. Reformed theology sees here the doctrine of effectual calling—God must open blind eyes or none believe, regardless of proximity to truth.

Historical Context

Mark 3:21 records Jesus's family thinking Him 'beside himself' (insane), attempting to restrain His ministry. Growing up in Nazareth, His brothers saw Him as merely Mary's son, a carpenter (Mark 6:3). Familiarity bred contempt or at least incomprehension. First-century Jewish culture emphasized family honor; Jesus's controversial ministry likely embarrassed His brothers. Their post-resurrection conversion is historically significant—James became Jerusalem's leader, mentioned by Josephus and Paul (Galatians 1:19), and tradition records his martyrdom in 62 CE. Jude authored an epistle. Their transformation from skeptical brothers to church leaders powerfully validates resurrection reality. Critics cannot easily

dismiss Christianity when founded by people who initially doubted but were convinced by overwhelming evidence.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does the brothers' unbelief despite proximity to Jesus teach about human spiritual blindness?
2. How does their later conversion demonstrate grace's power and resurrection's reality?
3. Why doesn't evidence alone produce faith without Spirit-given illumination?

Interlinear Text

οὐδὲ	γὰρ	οἱ	ἀδελφοὶ	αὐτόν	ἐπίστευον	εἰς	αὐτόν
neither	For	G3588	brethren	him	believe	in	him
G3761	G1063		G80	G846	G4100	G1519	G846

Additional Cross-References

Mark 3:21 (Parallel theme): And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.