

Deuteronomy 11:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway.

Analysis

Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God—The Hebrew *ve'ahavta* (וְאַהַבְתָּ) is a commandment, not a suggestion. Love here means covenantal loyalty and devotion, not mere emotion. Following the Shema (6:5), Moses grounds this command in the 'therefore' (לְכֵן) of the preceding chapter's rehearsal of God's mighty acts. Love for Yahweh is the proper response to His redemptive work.

Keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments—Four terms emphasize comprehensive obedience: *mishmereth* (מִשְׁמֶרֶת, 'charge/duty'), *chuqqim* (חֻקִּים, 'statutes/decrees'), *mishpatim* (מִשְׁפָּטִים, 'judgments/ordinances'), and *mitzvot* (מִצְוֹת, 'commandments'). This accumulation stresses that love expresses itself through total obedience. Biblical love is never divorced from action—true affection for God manifests in keeping His word. Jesus echoed this: 'If you love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15).

Historical Context

Moses delivered this second sermon in Moab's plains (Deuteronomy 5-26) as Israel prepared to enter Canaan. The generation that witnessed the Exodus had died; this was covenant renewal for their children (born in wilderness, now adults). The command to love God responds to chapter 10's recounting of the golden calf, the broken tablets, Moses's intercession, and God's gracious restoration. God's faithfulness despite Israel's rebellion demands wholehearted love in return.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does biblical love differ from modern emotional definitions, given that God commands it?
2. In what ways does genuine love for God necessarily produce obedience to His commands?

Interlinear Text

וְאַתָּה תֹּאמַר	אֵלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ	אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	וְשָׁמַרְתָּ	מִשְׁמֶרֶת
Therefore thou shalt love	H853	the LORD	thy God	and keep
H157		H3068	H430	H8104
וְהִלַּכְתָּ	וּמִשְׁפָּט יִי	וּמִצְוֹת יִי	כָּל	הַיָּמִים:
and his statutes	and his judgments	and his commandments	H3605	always
H2708	H4941	H4687		H3117

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 6:5 (Love): And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Deuteronomy 10:12 (Love): And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

Zechariah 3:7 (Judgment): Thus saith the LORD of hosts; If thou wilt walk in my ways, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

Leviticus 8:35 (References Lord): Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not: for so I am commanded.

Psalms 116:1 (Love): I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

Psalms 105:45 (Word): That they might observe his statutes, and keep his laws. Praise ye the LORD.

Deuteronomy 4:1 (Judgment): Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

Deuteronomy 6:1 (Judgment): Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it:

Deuteronomy 4:40 (Word): Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

Deuteronomy 4:5 (Judgment): Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.