

Deuteronomy 11:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

Analysis

This verse begins the conditional clause: 'if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments.' The Hebrew shama shama (שמע שמע, doubling for emphasis) means 'hear intently, obey carefully.' Covenant blessing depends on responsive obedience. The dual commands—'love the LORD your God' and 'serve him with all your heart and with all your soul'—echo the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Love isn't mere emotion but covenantal loyalty expressed through service. The 'heart' (lev, לב) represents mind, will, and affections; 'soul' (nephesh, נפש) represents life-force or being. Total devotion is required.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern treaties typically demanded loyalty to the suzerain, but Yahweh's covenant uniquely requires love—relationship, not merely political allegiance. This personalized covenant theology distinguished Israel's religion from transactional paganism. The command combines Deuteronomy 6:5 (love God) with 10:12 (serve God), showing love and service are inseparable.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does genuine love for God manifest in obedient service?
2. What does it mean to serve God with 'all' your heart and soul, leaving no room for divided loyalty?
3. How can we cultivate deeper love for God rather than mere duty-driven obedience?

Interlinear Text

אִם יִהְיֶה הַתְּשׁוּמָה
H1961 H518 **And it shall come to pass if ye shall hearken**
H8085

וְהָיָה כִּי תִשְׁמְעוּ אֶל מִצְוֹתַי
H8085 H413 **unto my commandments**
H4687

אֲנִי יְהוָה אֲתָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לְאַהֲבָה אֶת יְהוָה
H595 **which I command** H853 **you this day** **to love** H853 **the LORD**
H6680 H3117 H157 H3068

וּלְעֲבֹד וְאֶלֱהֵיכֶם בְּכָל לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכָל
H430 **your God** **and to serve** H3605 **him with all your heart** H3824
H5647

נַפְשְׁכֶם:
and with all your soul
H5315

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 4:29 (References God): But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

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,

Deuteronomy 11:8 (Word): Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land, whither ye go to possess it;

Deuteronomy 6:17 (Word): Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

Psalms 119:4 (Parallel theme): Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently.