

Deuteronomy 13:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you;

Analysis

The investigation: 'Then shalt thou enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and, behold, if it be truth, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you.' The threefold command—'enquire' (darash, דָרַשׁ, investigate), 'make search' (chaqar, חָקַר, examine), 'ask diligently' (sha'al הִשְׁאַל, inquire carefully)—demands thorough investigation before judgment. The standards: 'truth' (emet, אֶמֶת, factual accuracy) and 'certain' (nakon, נָכוֹן, established, verified). Rumor alone doesn't justify action—facts must be established. This protects against false accusations and mob justice. Due process precedes execution, showing God values justice and truth even in addressing covenant violation. The phrase 'such abomination' reiterates apostasy's heinousness.

Historical Context

This investigative requirement appears elsewhere: 'at the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses' capital cases require (Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15). Jesus and Paul apply this to church discipline (Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19). Premature judgment without facts violates justice. Proverbs warns: 'He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him' (Proverbs 18:13). Modern cancel culture often violates this principle, condemning based on accusation without investigation. God's justice requires truth-seeking before judgment.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do we balance urgency to address sin with requirement for careful investigation of facts?
2. What does this passage teach about presumption of innocence versus immediate condemnation based on accusation?
3. How can churches implement fair investigative processes for serious accusations while protecting both accusers and accused?

Interlinear Text

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| וְדַרְשֵׁת | וְפִקְרָת | וְשָׁאַלָּת | הִיטֵּב | וְהַגְּנֵב |
| Then shalt thou enquire | and make search | and ask | diligently | H2009 |
| H1875 | H2713 | H7592 | H3190 | |
| אָמֹת | וְיָדַעַת | כִּי | הַנִּעְשָׂת | בְּהַתְּעוּבָה |
| and behold if it be truth | certain | and the thing | is wrought | abomination |
| H571 | H3559 | H1697 | H6213 | H8441 |
| | | | | H2063 |

בְּלִרְבָּבָה:
among
H7130

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 17:4 (Truth): And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:

John 7:24 (Parallel theme): Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

1 Timothy 5:19 (Parallel theme): Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.

Deuteronomy 10:18 (Parallel theme): He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.