

Deuteronomy 13:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Analysis

The command after false signs: 'Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.' Despite impressive signs, if the prophet teaches apostasy ('let us go after other gods,' v.2), reject him. The theological explanation: God permits this to test (nasah, נִסָּה, prove/try) His people. The test measures love—do you follow God because of truth or merely because of miracles? Authentic love for God maintains loyalty despite spectacular counterfeits. This elevates covenant relationship above supernatural experience. God tests to reveal what's in hearts.

Historical Context

This principle applied to Jesus's generation—He performed miracles validating His claims, yet many rejected Him because they loved darkness rather than light (John 3:19). Conversely, some 'believed' superficially because of signs but lacked true faith (John 2:23-25). The standard remained: does teaching conform to Scripture? Bereans were commended for testing Paul's teaching against Scripture (Acts 17:11) despite his apostolic authority and miracles. Truth trumps experience; Scripture judges claims.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this passage challenge experience-centered Christianity that prioritizes feelings and phenomena over doctrine?
2. What does it mean to love God 'with all your heart and soul' rather than merely being impressed by His power?
3. How can we cultivate discernment that tests teachings against Scripture regardless of accompanying signs?

Interlinear Text

ל א H3808	תִּשְׁמַע H8085	אֶל H413	דְּבָרַי H1697	הַנָּבִיא H5030	הָהוּא H1931
	Thou shalt not hearken		unto the words	of that prophet	
ו א H176	אֶל H413	חֹלֵם H2492	הַחֲלֹמִים H2472	הָהוּא H1931	מִנִּסָּה H3588
	or that dreamer	of dreams		proveth	for the LORD
					H5254
					H3068
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ H430	אֶתְּךָ H853	לֵדַע H3045	הִישָׁכֶם H3426	אֶתְּ אֲהַבִּים H157
	your God		you to know	whether ye	love
					H853
					for the LORD
					H3068
	אֱלֹהֶיךָ H430	בְּכָל H3605	לִבְבְּךָ H3824	וּבְכָל H3605	נַפְשְׁכֶם H5315
	your God	with all your heart		and with all your soul	

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 8:2 (Word): And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

1 Corinthians 11:19 (Parallel theme): For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

Psalms 66:10 (References God): For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

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.

Isaiah 8:20 (Word): To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 (References God): And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: