

Deuteronomy 18:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

Analysis

Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God—The Hebrew tamim (perfect) means whole, complete, blameless, or having integrity—not sinless perfection but wholehearted devotion without divided loyalties. This is covenant faithfulness language: complete allegiance to YHWH alone, rejecting the syncretistic compromise of mixing His worship with occult practices. The preposition im (with) indicates relational intimacy, not mere external conformity.

This verse encapsulates the contrast between Israel's calling and Canaan's corruption. Where the nations consulted omens and spirits (v. 14), Israel must walk in undivided trust in God's revealed will through His prophets (vv. 15-19). Jesus echoes this principle in Matthew 5:48: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'—wholehearted love for God and neighbor, unmixed devotion to the kingdom. Paul applies it in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, calling believers to separation from idolatry.

Historical Context

This command was given as Israel stood on the threshold of Canaan, where Canaanite religion permeated every aspect of culture—agriculture, warfare, sexuality, and governance. The temptation to hedge bets by consulting both YHWH and Canaanite deities would be overwhelming. Archaeology reveals household idols, divination tools, and fertility cult objects throughout ancient Israel, confirming that many Israelites failed this test of wholehearted devotion. The prophets repeatedly condemned this covenant infidelity as spiritual adultery.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. In what areas of life are you tempted toward divided loyalty—trusting God verbally while functionally relying on worldly wisdom or practices?
2. How does wholehearted devotion to God require rejecting not only blatant idolatry but also subtle syncretism with cultural values?

Interlinear Text

תָּמָּ יִם	תְּהִי ה	עַם	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
Thou shalt be perfect	H1961	H5973	with the LORD	thy God
H8549			H3068	H430

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:48 (Parallel theme): Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Genesis 17:1 (References God): And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

Genesis 6:9 (References God): These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

Psalms 37:37 (Parallel theme): Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Job 1:8 (References God): And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

Job 1:1 (References God): There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

Philippians 3:12 (Parallel theme): Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.