

Deuteronomy 19:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, beside these three:

Analysis

If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them פִּתְשָׁמֵר אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה (ki tishmor et-kol-hamitzvah hazot la'asotah)—shamar (keep) means guard, observe carefully. La'asot (to do) emphasizes active obedience, not mere intellectual assent.

To love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways reveals the heart of covenant obedience. It's not bare law-keeping but loving relationship issuing in consistent lifestyle. Ahavah (love) is covenant loyalty, choosing devotion, wholehearted commitment. **Then shalt thou add three cities more for thee**—expanding from six to nine cities of refuge would accompany territorial expansion. More land means more people, requiring more accessible justice and mercy. This provision was never implemented because Israel never fully obeyed. It stands as testimony to blessing forfeited through disobedience, yet also to God's gracious planning for obedience He desired but knew would not come.

Historical Context

The three additional cities were never established because Israel never fully possessed the expanded territory on a permanent basis. Even during Solomon's greatest extent, there's no record of implementing the nine-city refuge system.

This unfulfilled conditional promise parallels other Deuteronomic blessings conditioned on obedience that Israel never fully realized. The prophets later reinterpret land promises eschatologically, pointing to the new heavens and new earth where God's people will inherit forever.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does true obedience to God flow from love for Him rather than mere duty or fear?
2. What blessings might we forfeit when we fail to wholeheartedly obey and love God?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תִּשְׁמַר	אֶת	כָּל	הַמְצָאִת	הַזֶּה	אַתָּה
H3588	If thou shalt keep	H853	H3605	all these commandments	H2063	
	H8104			H4687		
אַתָּה	לֹא תְּאַהַב	הַמִּזְמָרָת	אֲנָכִּי	אֲשֶׁר	לְעֹשָׂת	הַזֶּה
	to love	them which I command	ever	to do	not	thee
	H157	H3117	H853	H6213	H834	H595
הַזֶּה	יְהִי	בְּדִבְרָכֶיךָ	אֶלָּךְ	בְּכָתָת	אֶלָּךְ	יְהִי
the LORD	thy God	H1980	H1870	H3605	ever	then shalt thou add
H3068	H430			H3117		H3254
לְבָנָךְ	עַד	בְּשַׁלְשָׁלָת	עַל	עַרְבָּיִם		וְיִסְפְּתָת
H0	H5750	more for thee beside these three	H7969	H5892		
				H5921		
בְּשַׁלְשָׁלָת	הַאֲלֹהִים					
more for thee beside these three	H428					
H7969						

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 12:32 (Parallel theme): What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.