

Deuteronomy 28:58

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, **THE LORD THY GOD;**

Analysis

If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book—the phrase *šāmar la’āsōt* (שָׁמַר לְעָשֹׂת, 'observe to do') requires not just hearing but doing. **That thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD**—Hebrew *haššēm hannikbād wəhannōrā’ hazzeh* (הָשֵׁם הַנִּכְבָּד וְהַנּוֹרָא הַזֶּה) uses 'THE NAME' (the Tetragrammaton YHWH) in all capitals, emphasizing God's covenant name.

This verse is the theological hinge: the curses result not from arbitrary divine cruelty but from refusing to fear God's 'glorious and fearful name.' The juxtaposition of *nikbād* (glorious) and *nōrā’* (fearful/awesome) captures the paradox of God's character—He is both attractive and terrifying, loving and holy. The phrase 'written in this book' refers to Deuteronomy itself, making obedience concrete and measurable.

Historical Context

This verse was read publicly during covenant renewal ceremonies (Deuteronomy 31:11, Nehemiah 8). By the first century, Jews avoided pronouncing the divine name (YHWH) out of reverence, saying 'Adonai' instead. Jesus's use of 'I AM' (John 8:58) deliberately invoked this 'glorious and fearful name,' claiming divine identity.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does the fear of the Lord relate to obedience to His law?
2. What does it mean that God's name is both 'glorious' and 'fearful'?
3. In what ways does Christ embody the fullness of God's 'glorious and fearful name' (Philippians 2:9-11)?

Interlinear Text

דְּבָרִי אָם לֹא תִשְׁמֶר תְּשַׁמֵּר וְתִּעְשֶׂה אֶת כָּל־דְּבָרֵי
H518 H3808 If thou wilt not observe H8104 to do H853 H3605 all the words H1697

אֶת וְפִרְאָא בְּזַה בְּזַה יְמִינְךָ יְמִינְךָ פְּרִים בְּזַה בְּזַה וְתִּפְרֹעַ הַ
of this law H2063 that are written H3789 in this book H5612 H2088 and fearful H853 H3372

אֱלֹהִים יְהִי הָאָת בְּזַה וְפִרְאָא בְּנִכְבָּד הַשְׁמָה
name this glorious and fearful H2088 H853 THE LORD H3068 THY GOD H430

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 42:8 (Glory): I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.