

Deuteronomy 5:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Analysis

The covenant promise 'shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments' reveals God's gracious character. The numerical contrast is striking: judgment extends to 'third and fourth generation,' mercy to 'thousands'—divine grace vastly exceeds wrath. The phrase 'love me and keep my commandments' defines true religion as affection producing obedience, not mere external conformity. Love and obedience are inseparably linked (John 14:15). The Hebrew 'chesed' (mercy/lovingkindness/covenant faithfulness) describes God's loyal love to covenant keepers. This prefigures the New Covenant where God's law is written on hearts (Jeremiah 31:33).

Historical Context

Throughout Israel's history, God demonstrated covenant faithfulness ('chesed') to generations of believers: preserving a righteous remnant through apostasy, raising godly kings like David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, and ultimately sending the Messiah. Despite Israel's repeated covenant violations, God never abandoned His elect remnant. This mercy finds ultimate expression in Christ, through whom God extends covenant love to countless believers across all generations and nations.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the asymmetry between judgment (3-4 generations) and mercy (thousands) reveal God's essential character as gracious?
2. What does the inseparable link between loving God and keeping His commandments teach about the nature of saving faith?

Interlinear Text

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|-----------------|----------|----------------|-------------------|---------------|
| וְעַשֵּׂה | חַסְדִּי | לְאֻלָּפִים | לְאֹהֲבָיו | וּלְשֹׂמְרָיו |
| And shewing | mercy | unto thousands | of them that love | me and keep |
| H6213 | H2617 | H505 | H157 | H8104 |
| מִצְוֹתַי | | | | |
| my commandments | | | | |
| H4687 | | | | |

Additional Cross-References

Romans 8:28 (Love): And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

1 John 1:7 (Parallel theme): But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Jeremiah 32:18 (Parallel theme): Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands, and recompensest the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them: the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,

John 15:14 (Parallel theme): Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

James 1:25 (Word): But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Galatians 5:6 (Love): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Daniel 9:4 (Grace): And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

John 14:15 (Love): If ye love me, keep my commandments.

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