

Psalms 119:167

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

Analysis

My soul hath kept thy testimonies (שָׁמְרָה נַפְשִׁי עֲדוֹתֶיךָ, shamrah nafshi edotekha) —Shamar ('keep, guard, observe, preserve') with nefesh ('soul, life, self') as subject. The inner person guards edot (testimonies, covenant witnesses). The intensity? **And I love them exceedingly** (וְאֶהְבֶּםָּךְ, va'ohavem me'od). Me'od means 'very, exceedingly, greatly'—the same word in the Shema: 'love the LORD thy God with all...thy might [me'od]' (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Jesus fulfills this perfectly, keeping the Father's testimonies with total soul-commitment and loving them me'od—with all His being unto death (Philippians 2:8).

Historical Context

The Shin (ש) section concludes with this affirmation of whole-souled Torah love. The nefesh (soul/self) as guardian of edot (testimonies) reverses the common pattern of external law-keeping. True obedience flows from internal transformation—the new covenant promise of Ezekiel 36:26-27.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean practically for your soul (nefesh) to 'keep' God's testimonies rather than just your outward behavior?
2. How does 'exceedingly' (me'od) loving God's Word connect to the Shema's command to love God with all your me'od (might)?
3. How did Jesus demonstrate whole-souled keeping of and love for the Father's testimonies throughout His earthly ministry?

Interlinear Text

הָשָׁמַרְתִּי	נַפְשִׁי	עֵדוּתְךָ יְיָ	וְאֶהְבֶּךָ	מְאֹד:
hath kept	My soul	thy testimonies	and I love	them exceedingly
H8104	H5315	H5713	H157	H3966

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 10:16 (Parallel theme): This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Psalms 40:8 (Parallel theme): I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

Romans 7:22 (Parallel theme): For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Psalms 119:97 (Love): O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.

Psalms 119:111 (Parallel theme): Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

Psalms 119:159 (Love): Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.