

Psalms 119:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me.

Analysis

I am a stranger in the earth: hide not thy commandments from me. The psalmist confesses his pilgrim status. **Stranger** (ger, גֶּר) denotes a sojourner, alien, or temporary resident—one who doesn't belong. Abraham used this term describing himself in Canaan (Genesis 23:4), and Israel's covenant identity included remembering they were strangers in Egypt (Exodus 22:21). Peter would later remind believers, 'ye are strangers and pilgrims' (1 Peter 2:11), and Hebrews 11:13 describes the faithful as 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth.'

This alien status creates urgent need: **hide not thy commandments from me** (al-taster mimmenni mitzvotekha, אֲלֹתֵסֶת מִמְּנִי מִצְוֹתֶךָ). A stranger in foreign land desperately needs guidance—unfamiliar with local customs, vulnerable to danger, dependent on instruction. God's **commandments** (mitzvot, מִצְוֹת) provide the moral compass and divine wisdom essential for navigating this world as exiles awaiting our true home.

Historical Context

Israel's history was marked by displacement—from Abraham's migration to Egyptian slavery to Babylonian exile. The language of sojourning pervaded Jewish consciousness. Even when dwelling in the Promised Land, Israel was reminded that 'the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me' (Leviticus 25:23). This verse reflects the wisdom that earthly life is temporary pilgrimage, not permanent settlement.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. In what ways does modern culture tempt you to live as a permanent resident of earth rather than a pilgrim?
2. How does recognizing your 'stranger' status change your relationship to earthly possessions, success, and comfort?
3. What does it mean practically to ask God not to hide His commandments when Scripture is readily available?

Interlinear Text

מִנְחָתָר אֶל בָּאָרֶץ אָנֹכִי גַּר
I am a stranger H1616 in the earth H595 hide H408 H4480
H776 H5641

מִצְוֹתֶיךָ:
not thy commandments H4687

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 29:15 (Parallel theme): For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

Psalms 39:12 (Parallel theme): Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

Psalms 119:10 (Word): With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

1 Peter 2:11 (Parallel theme): Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

Luke 24:45 (Word): Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Isaiah 63:17 (Parallel theme): O LORD, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

2 Corinthians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:

Genesis 47:9 (Parallel theme): And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

Job 39:17 (Parallel theme): Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

Luke 9:45 (Parallel theme): But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.