**Deuteronomy 11:13-17**

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*Moses continues with his exhortations. He commands Israel to love their Suzerain God and to serve Him faithfully in order that the land of Canaan may continue to receive rain from God to yield its fruits.*

Moses continued to exhort Israel to covenant loyalty and faithfulness. He clearly spelled out the conditions by which the land of Canaan might continue to yield its natural benefits. In the first part of the conditional statement, Moses said to Israel that *It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today.*

To *listen obediently* (Hebrew “shamoa’ tishme’u”, literally “if hearing, you will hear”, an intense expression that conveys diligent adherence) is to carefully obey what is said. In this case, the Israelites were to carefully obey God’s commandment that Moses pronounced to them. The commandment Moses had in mind contains two essential principles and is a summary of all the commandments: *to* *love the LORD* *your* *God and serve* *Him with all* your *heart and all* *your soul*. The first principle, to *love God* is to live in complete obedience to Him. Such a love for God is primarily an expression of obedience to His covenantal laws (6:4; 10:12; 11:1; 30:16). This love was to be the appropriate response to the LORD because He is Israel’s *God*.

The second principle required Israel to *serve* *Him* *with all* their *heart and* *with all* their *soul*. The verb *serve* refers to the act of making offerings to God as a way of paying homage to Him. The word *heart* describes the seat of feeling and of the intellect. The word “soul” refers to the invisible part of man and is the seat of desires and passions. Together, the words *heart* and *soul* emphasize complete obedience to Yahweh. The Israelites were to pay homage to God in complete submission to Him in every respect of their lives. This of course would lead to prosperous and healthy communities, since most of God’s commands involved treating others with respect and love.

In response to Israel’s faithfulness to the LORD and His covenant with them, the LORD promised to *give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil*. *He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied*. Love for God and faithful devotion to Him and His covenant bring blessings. Moses told the Israelites that God would send the *rain* from heaven to irrigate the land for the people and this would be done with no human effort, unlike in the land of Egypt.

The land of Canaan was dependent upon God for *rain* throughout the entire year. This includes the *early rain* or autumn rain (October-November), which brings the dry summer to a close and loosens the soil in preparation for planting, followed by the *late rain* or spring rain (March-April), which enables the final growth period before gathering or collecting the crops. Such rain, Moses said, would allow the Israelites to *gather in* their *grain* *and* their *new wine and* their *oil*. In addition, God would also provide grass for the animals to eat. Thus, Moses said that the Israelites would *eat* and *be satisfied*.

Nevertheless, knowing that material possessions and physical comfort could easily lead to self-congratulation and self-seeking, Moses warned Israel against turning away from their Suzerain (Ruler) Yahweh. He warned them to *Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them*. The verb *deceived* (Heb. “pātâ”) means “to allow oneself to be persuaded or to be misled.” It occurs frequently in the book of Proverbs to describe people who are simple or easily led by others ([Pr. 20:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Pr.+20.19&t=NASB95)). That is why David says that “the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple” ([Psalms 19:7b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalms+19.7b&t=NASB95)). God’s word and His commandments make people wise and firm.

The verb *serve* refers to the act of making offerings to a god as a way of paying homage to him. Then, the verb *worship* can also be translated as “to bow down,” or “to prostrate oneself.” The idea is of bowing down before a superior to show reverence to him. The Israelites were prohibited from being deceived, or from bowing down before anyone other than the Suzerain God (Yahweh). Such an act would cause Israel to *turn away* from following the true God, a violation of the very first commandment—“You shall have no other gods before Me”—binding the Suzerain God with His vassal Israel ([Exodus 20:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Exodus+20.3&t=NASB95); [Deuteronomy 5:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Deuteronomy+5.7&t=NASB95)).

Such an act of disobedience carries its own risk.

The *anger of the LORD* is His righteous judgment. When His vassals (Israel) violate the terms of His covenant, He has the absolute authority as Suzerain to do whatever He pleases. In this passage, God would express His righteous judgment when He would *shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit*. As a result, the Israelites would *perish quickly from the good land*, the land*which the LORD is giving* them. If Israel became disobedient, God reserved the right to take appropriate measures to judge sin and execute the provisions of the covenant to which Israel had agreed.

Israel had agreed to a covenant whereby they would serve God by serving one another. They swore to live in self-governance, loving their neighbor as themselves. They promised to avoid envy and seek the best for others. In this manner, they would create a society filled with mutual benefit, brimming with safety and prosperity. This would be their priestly function to other nations. God made it clear that if they did not fulfill this function, they would be disciplined appropriately.

**Biblical Text:**

**13 “It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, 14that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. 15He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. 16Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. 17Or the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the Lord is giving you.**