

This morning I suggested vv2-3 comprise two parts—a command, v2—“honor your father and mother” and a promise, v3—“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth...”—in explaining the command I provided a sevenfold expression of parental honor—this evening I want to consider the promise under two heads...

- I. The Promise Explained
- II. The Promise Applied

- I. The Promise Explained

1. The apostle informs us that the fifth commandment—“is the first commandment with promise”—the promise is then stated in v3...
2. The statement—“is the first commandment with promise” has generated a measure of discuss—the problem can be stated rather simply...
3. If we were to read through the ten commandments—it would seem that there is a promise attached to the second commandment—which would make the fifth commandment the second commandment with a promise...
4. Ex.20:4-6—“you shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments...”
5. The problem is removed rather simply if we understand v6 not as a promise but as a general statement of fact...
6. Ex.20:12—“honor you father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you...”
7. This is the first commandment with a promise—that is the first [and in fact only] commandment within the Ten Commandments...
8. It seems instead of quoting from Ex.20:12 the apostle quotes from Deut.5:16 where the Ten Commandments are repeated...
9. Deut.5:16—“honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be long and that it may be well with you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you...”
10. Yet there is a very important difference—in quoting the promise Paul makes a slight change that is of extreme importance...
11. In its original context—the promise referred to the land of Canaan that would be given them in fulfillment to the promise made to Abraham...
12. To live disobedient to parents or to curse parents was punished by death under the old covenant administration...
13. Ex.21:17—“he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death...” Deut.27:16—“cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt...”
14. To fail to comply with the fifth commandment would result in death—and thus failure to live long in the Land of Canaan...
15. Yet—notice when the inspired apostle quotes it he changes it to say—“that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth...”
16. Now my question to you is this—does this promise concern length of physical life—is it true that if children obey their parents they will live to be old...
17. Or perhaps I could put it this way—is it true that children who fail to live long were disobedient to their parents...
18. For as most of you know—until a few hundred years ago—as much as half of all children died in their infancy or before the age of 10...
19. Were these children disobedient—can we simply apply this promise one for one as did the old covenant saints...

20. I suggest to you—that Paul is not primary referring to length of days at all—but to eternal life upon a resurrected and glorified earth...
21. Our Savior does the same thing in the second beatitude, Matt.5:5—“blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth...”
22. Ps.37:9-11—“for evildoers shall be cut off; but those who wait on the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace...”
23. This passage contrasts two people—the wicked has his life cut off while those who wait on the Lord live long in the land...
24. Within its historical context this has reference to a long and prosperous life in the land of Canaan—Israel’s inheritance...
25. Yet our Savior applies it to His meek people who inherit the earth—which refers to a redeemed and glorified earth...
26. Now the promise given within the Ten Commandments to children [prosperity and long life]—is also given to the nation as a whole...
27. Duet.4:40—“you shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time...”
28. Deut.5:33—“you shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess...”
29. Deut.6:17-18—“you shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which he has commanded you. And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken...”
30. The promises within these verses are primary physical—if they obeyed God they would primarily know three blessings—[a] prosperity, [b] protection, and [c] longevity...
31. Within our text the apostle carries these promises into the NC—which necessarily implies—they are primarily spiritual...
32. Notice the promise is twofold—[1] present prosperity—“that it may be well with you, and [2] eternal life—“and you may live long on the earth...”
33. Notice [1] present prosperity—“that it may be well with you...”—that it may be well with your soul—now and forevermore...
34. Within the OT this phrase—“that it may be well with you”—had reference to protection from enemies and outward blessing...
35. It here refers to soul prosperity or health—thus the promise of our text does hold-out a present prosperity and benefit...
36. Those who obey the commandments of God—experience a present and inward prosperity—a prosperity of the soul...
37. Notice [2] eternal life—“and you may live long on the earth”—what an amazing promise—those who honor their parents will live long on the earth...
38. How long is eternity—they shall live for ever on a renovated and renewed earth—they shall live forever on a new earth...
39. Prov.3:13-18—“happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom, and the man *who* gains understanding; 14 for her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold. 15 She *is* more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. 16 Length of days *is* in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. 17 Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness, and all her paths *are* peace. 18 She *is* a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy *are all* who retain her...”
40. We here have the words of Wisdom—this as we leaned this morning—refers to Christ and the substance of true and saving religion...
41. Notice there are primary two blessings, v16—“length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor...”

42. That is—present [spiritual] prosperity and eternal life—this is ultimate promise of the OT and it is the same promise of the NT...

## II. The Promise Applied

### A. The absolute importance of the fifth commandment

1. Here I refer to the unique place the fifth commandment holds within the Decalogue or Ten Commandments...
2. It is the first commandment with a promise—to be even more accurate—it is the only commandment within the Decalogue with a promise...
3. Thus I suggest the fifth commandment possess a unique importance—[1] to ourselves, and [2] to our society...
4. Notice [1] to ourselves—traditionally—we divide the commandments into two unequal sections—commands 1-4 and commands 5-6...
5. This makes sense in that Jesus Himself divides the entire OT moral law into two commandments—love God [1-4] and neighbor [5-10]...
6. But the Jews never made this division—they divided the Ten Commandments into two equal halves—commands 1-5 and 6-10...
7. In other words—they placed the fifth commandment as a part of the first table which summarized our responsibility to God...
8. Thus my point—there is a sense in which the fifth commandment bridges our responsibility to God and man...
9. Greg Goswell—“The fifth commandment helps to bind the first four and the last six commandments together. It is the commandment that is most similar to the first four, because it presents parents as authority figures, and to that extent ‘God-like’...”
10. John Eadie—“The parent stands in God’s place to his child...”—after God—parents are most important to children [cp. Lev. 19:3, 32]...
11. Notice [2] to our society—by this I mean observance of the fifth commandment is vital to any orderly society...
12. Could you image a society where the foundations of the fifth commandment begin to erode—where respect of authority begins to diminish...

### B. The relationship between a command and a promise

1. We mustn’t overlook the fact that the apostle showed no reluctance in encouraging obedience to a command with a promise...
2. Thus we are confronted with the great truth—promise of blessing is not opposed to command—we are commanded to obey with the incentive of promise...
3. Let me put it this way—our eternal reward—is set before us—as an incentive or motivation for obedience to God’s commandments...
4. There are those who have a problem with such thinking—they think it’s improper to obey the commandments based upon reward...
5. They say it is improper to motivate us to obedience with a promise—if we do this we will return receive that...
6. And let me simply say at the outset—that sometimes this is wrong—for a parent to bribe a child to obedience with a gift...
7. But surely this can not always be wrong—for the simple reason—our text expressly motivates us to obedience with a promise...
8. Children are exhorted to honor their father and mother—“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth...”
9. In other words—children are encouraged to obey the commandment precisely because of the promise—or the promise in an incentive for the commandment...

10. Why are we to obey God—is it wrong to obey Him in light of the promise—it is wrong to obey in order to receive a reward...
11. Well let me simply say—it would be our obligation to obey God regardless if He gave a promise or reward...
12. He is worthy of our obedience regardless if He promised anything or not—we are obligated to obey regardless if He promised anything or not...
13. Yet—the Scriptures are not apposed to encourage obedience to the commandments with a promise of reward...
14. Eph.6:5-8—“slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasures, but as salves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free...”
15. Notice [a] what they are to do, v7—they are to obey masters—“as to the Lord, and not to men”—that is—with the recognition that in obeying masters they are obeying God...
16. Slaves are to obey their masters—“as to the Lord”—that is—you are to render your obedience as a sacrifice to God...
17. Notice [b] why they are to do it, v8—“knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave of free...”
18. Slaves you are to obey your masters with your whole heart—you are to obey him regardless of his moral conduct...
19. Why—v8—“knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord”—if not now—then when He returns...
20. Col.3:23-24—“and whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ...”
21. This passage is very helpful in several ways—[a] it teaches that working for a reward is not wrong, and [b] it describes this reward as our inheritance...
22. This is obviously thinking back to the OT inheritance of the land—it here refers to the inheritance of the new earth...
23. Thus it is not only right to be motivated by promise—the more it excites us—the more it honors and pleases God...
24. What is the ultimate substance of our inheritance—an eternity upon a sinless earth with our beloved Savior...
25. Thus in the truest sense—God Himself is the promise—He is our reward—and the more we anticipate our reward the more it honors Him...
26. Let me illustrate—think of a father who tells his children—hurry up and clean your rooms, living room, and basement...
27. For when you are finished you are going to spend the all day with me at the park—is it wrong for the children to work hard knowing they will spend the entire day with their father...
28. In fact—the more they love their father the more they will be motivated by the promise—and the more diligent in cleaning the house...
29. Let me ask you—does this honor or dishonor the father—doesn’t it warm his heart that his children want to spend the day with him...
30. Oh my friends—let us get this point very clear in our minds—to be motivated by promise is not wrong—it simply depends on the promise...
31. Gen.15:1—“do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward...”—while Abram was promised long live in the land—ultimately God Himself was his reward...

### C. The relationship between the old and new covenants

1. The quotation of the fifth commandment and slight alterations—teaches us two important truths concerning the relationship of the old and new covenants...
2. But before I examine these—I don’t want to take for granted that all of us understand what is meant by old and new covenants...

3. Simply put—the old covenant was made with the nation of Israel—it includes the historical covenants made with Abraham, Moses, and David...
4. The new covenant is made with God's spiritual Israel—or the true seed of Abraham—and replaces the old covenant...
5. Notice [1] they share the same moral law—by this I refer to the Ten Commandments—which serves as the backbone to both covenants...
6. This is to say—the same Ten Commandments that were written on stone in the OC are written upon the heart in the NC...
7. Jer.31:33—“but this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people...”
8. Notice [2] they relate as type and reality—simply put—the old covenant has physical promises and the new covenant spiritual promises...
9. Everything the old covenant had—the new covenant has a spiritual counterpart—did the OC have a temple, priesthood, sacrifices, enemies, and land...
10. So too—the new covenant has a spiritual temple, priesthood, sacrifices, enemies, and land—in every way the NC is superior than the OC...
11. Heb.8:6—“He [Christ] is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises [spiritual and eternal promises]...”
12. Eph.1:11—“in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will...”
13. Eph.2:19-22—“now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit...”
14. Eph.6:2-3—“honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth...”
15. Eph.6:10—“for we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places...”