

The Covenantal Life
Week 9 - Family Covenant Dissolution
Deuteronomy 21:18-21

- God gives us a case law example of parents turning over their rebellious child to be executed
 - Shows how jealous God is to protect the family - where it is threatened, the law enforces harsh, just penalties
 - Family is the fundamental covenant on which society is built on, and when it falls, society will follow
 - Indicates clearly that the family covenant can be violated to a degree that the parents *specifically* can initiate capital punishment
- God also calls Israel His son (Ex. 4:22-23) - points to the covenant obligations that exist
 - God disowns His firstborn due to sin, disinheriting, turning promised blessing to curse
- What is the threshold for family covenant dissolution
 - Understanding what the covenant *is* and what it *does* helps us understand what fundamentally undermines it, is contrary to its nature
 - Deut. 21 - child is characterized by rebellion
 - Brings shame on the family name he has inherited
 - Willful, ongoing, flagrant, and extreme 5th commandment violations - disregard for the life of the parents
 - Prodigal son - Lk. 15:18 - despised his father to the point of disregarding his life
 - Mt. 18:15-20 - specifically dealing with sin among covenant members
 - Address sin personally and privately between those involved
 - Simply bringing up the sin if it does not result in repentance is not sufficient
 - Key phrase “if he listens” - reconciliation is on the shoulders of the guilty party
 - Involve covenant witnesses - overtly appeals to God’s authority over the covenant
 - Deut. 17:6-7 - God’s requirements for covenant justice stand in human covenants
 - Establishes guilt on God’s authority, makes action necessary
 - Covenant head(s) - parents are involved
 - Necessary responsibility of headship - cannot be put off
 - Head has the authority to pronounce God’s judgment in the covenant
- Not “shunning” - treating the individual in accord with reality, as outside the covenant
 - “As a Gentile” - still a neighbor, still owed love, but not intimacy
 - No obligation to provide, to pursue closeness, to treat “the same” as all the others
 - Recognizing that sin destroys relationships; but still always ready to be reconciled