

## Standing on the Promises

*A Series on The Biblical Principles of Childrearing*

### #2- Covenantal Continuity

February 15, 1998

#### Review & New

##### I - Context of childrearing - family - father is responsible head

- Normal pattern for transfer of faith to subsequent generations - family locus of cultural experience and family worldview is biblical.

##### II- Foundational Assumptions

- Bible is sufficient - (Deut 6:4-9, Eph 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Discipline is no substitute for regeneration. The object is the salvation of our children.
- Godly child-rearing is covenantal. Children of believers have great covenantal privileges (1 Cor. 7:13-15). Children of unbelievers are unclean. Covenantal privilege is a ground for confidence.

##### III-The Promises of God to Parents

- Not really an broad survey of many different promises concerning our children but a survey of the ubiquitous recurring theme throughout all of scripture of God's normative pattern of passing the faith of the parents on to subsequent generations. It is the core promise upon which all others stand.
- Representative text - Psalm 103:13-18

##### IV Covenant continuity

If we view the Old Testament as a monolithic record of how God used to deal with his former people and the New Testament as a somewhat disjunctive account of how God deals with His new people, you are going to think differently about the implications of the revealed character of God in the Old Testament as New Testament saints.

- Why do we have difficulty? Partly because we read our New Testament including the book of Hebrews; Hebrews 8:7-13 - Express teaching that we had an old covenant that was faulty, obsolete and vanishing.

What's wrong with our logic? We are universalizing a distinct teaching about a particular covenant to everything we encounter in pages 1 through 1500 in my Bible. Need to remember the very pervasive context of the Book of Hebrews and the very specific context of the instruction on the obsolescence of the covenant spoken of. Specifically and unambiguously applies to the Levitical priesthood established by Mosaic covenant and the types and shadows pointing toward the coming of a savior. (Hebrews 9:1-15 )

##### We are Israel and Judah.

We are not some new and different people unspoken of in the OT. If not, we better look elsewhere (outside the new covenant) because 8:8 says new will be with the house of Judah and Israel. As partakers of the blessings of the new covenant, we are partakers as the historic people of an unchanging God.

##### Continuity of various covenants seen in variety of ways in NT

- Perhaps most clearly in Ephesians 2:11-13 Covenants (plural) and made part of commonwealth of Israel. Because of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are Israelites.

2 Cor 1:20 - All of the promise of God are in Christ yes and amen. Not just a matter of personal blessing. It is to the glory of God to fulfill his promises.

##### But God's people are one people from eternity past to eternity future.

Romans 11:24 - Olive tree.

##### Continuity of OT Law Testifies to Continuity of administrations

Another perspective - how do the apostles apply the laws given to Old Testament Jews in the New Testament? Cor 9:9-10 - Muzzling an ox. God concerned about the ox? No! Written for our sakes.

##### Old Testament Promises Fulfilled in the New Testament Church

Eph 6:1-3 -More NT application of OT law.

##### So What Does All This Have To Do With Our Children?

- 1st - Once we see the reality of covenantal continuity between the new and the old, we can begin to think differently about our children and the process of raising them to love our lord because the principle of generational transfer of parental faithfulness is a ubiquitous presence throughout Old Testament covenantal theology.
- We can begin to make sense of straightforward (yet somehow heretofore obtuse) New Testament teaching on the subject of Covenantal blessing of children.
- 1 Cor 7:14 - children of believers are holy.
- Acts 2:36-39 - Promise is to you and to your children.
- Acts 3:25 - And in your seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
- Acts 16:14-15 - Normal mode of evangelical conversion is household to household. Phillipian Jailer also. Not and oblique oddity.

##### V- Nature, Covenant Nurture, and Grace

Clear up potential for confusion. Nature, covenant, grace. How do they work together.

Children are by nature objects of wrath (Romans 5:12). So we discipline them to restrain sin and to lead them into grace.

By nature, our children are indistinguishable from other children, by covenant their is a vast divide. 1 Cor 7: 14 teaches that children of believers are covenantally privileged. They are holy, set apart unto God. Rejoice and parent in the faith that it is so.

Children are still like every other elect saint of God, saved by grace through faith. It is still God that gets all the glory and only God who can do the work to our hearts.

#### Objection - children saved by the parent's works?

We are all saved by grace through faith. Faith not the ground of our salvation, but rather the instrument. Otherwise we could boast in our faith. Aged Protestant distinction. No problem seeing this in the salvation of adult saints; (Romans 10:13 How will they hear if there is no preacher?....) Just because a preacher is necessary doesn't make the preaching a work upon which the salvation of sinners is procured. The preaching is God's chosen instrument.

#### **Duties of Parents Before God**

*Psalm 103:17-18 Three main elements of parental duty; keeping covenant, remembering his commandments, doing them.*

- First duty - to believe the promises of God. Remember - failure to believe is a sin. (John 3:18)
- Personal obedience - Col 3:21 - Children should see your obedience to your heavenly father in every realm of your life.
- Intercession for your children - Job prayed for his children as their representative.
- Instruction in God's standards - Deut 6:4-9. Greatest commandment given in the context of a passage on raising children. We are to teach our children diligently the law of God.

#### **Specific Commands Regarding Parenting.**

Illustration - If we desire a garden full of weeds - do nothing. Likewise, if we want a home full of grief. But God clearly instructs parents in how to avoid this. Guess what? It requires hard work and sacrifice!

- Prov 29:17 - Correct your son - delight to your soul. Must think long term. Not restful early on.
- Prov 13:24 - Spare rod = hatred. Prompt discipline = love.

Emotional love can be objective hatred. Objective hatred will turn to emotional hatred.

- Prov 19:18 - While their is still hope. Do it now. Do not set your heart on their destruction. We get this backwards. Let it slide when they are young.
- Prov 22:15 - Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. Rod of discipline drives it far from him.

Note both "bound up" and "far from him". Both are true. First is an indication of the magnitude of the task. Second of the fruit of it.

- Prov 22:6 - Train up a child in the way...