

Matthew 15:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother:
and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

Analysis

Jesus quotes the fifth commandment, 'Honour thy father and mother,' linking it to divine authority. This commandment carries both promise and threat—long life for obedience, death penalty for disobedience (Exodus 21:17). Reformed theology emphasizes the Ten Commandments' continuing moral authority. Jesus uses Scripture to expose how Pharisaic tradition violated God's law. The appeal to 'God commanded' establishes divine authority over human tradition.

Historical Context

The fifth commandment appears in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16. It was the first commandment with promise and bridged duties to God (commands 1-4) and duties to neighbor (commands 6-10). Jewish tradition highly valued parental honor, yet the Corban loophole undermined this. Jesus' citation shows His allegiance to biblical law over rabbinic tradition.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How do you honor your parents in ways that reflect God's command?
2. What modern practices might undermine the fifth commandment?
3. How does respecting parental authority relate to respecting God's authority?

Interlinear Text

ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἐνετείλατο λέγων, Τίμα τὸν πατέρα σοῦ,
G3588 For God commanded saying Honour G3588 father thy
G1063 G2316 G1781 G3004 G5091 G3962 G4675

καί, τὴν μητέρα καί, Ὁ κακολογῶν πατέρα ἢ
and G3588 mother and G3588 He that curseth father or
G2532 G3384 G2532 G2551 G3962 G2228

μητέρα θανάτῳ τελευτάτῳ
mother the death let him die
G3384 G2288 G5053

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:12 (References God): Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Exodus 21:17 (Curse): And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 20:9 (Curse): For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.

Deuteronomy 5:16 (References God): Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Proverbs 23:22 (Parallel theme): Harken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.

Matthew 19:19 (Parallel theme): Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Ephesians 6:1 (Parallel theme): Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Leviticus 19:3 (References God): Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.

Proverbs 20:20 (Curse): Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.

Romans 3:31 (References God): Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.