

## CHILDREN

*“1 In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom? 2 And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,”* Matt. 18:1-4. This is the beginning of some things Jesus had to say about children.

When Jesus set in motion the law of **“human reproduction,”** he did so by causing babies to come into existence, Gen. 1:28. The first babies were known as Cain and Abel. Of all the people, on the face of the earth, not one came in some way other than being born as a baby. (I know about Melchizedek!) Even Jesus, when he came to dwell on the face of the earth, was born of a woman, Gal. 4:4. This was God’s way of “preparing a body” for Jesus’ earthly existence, Heb. 10:5. A virgin conceived and gave birth to a child – we call this *“the virgin birth of Christ,”* Matt. 1:23. Mary ask a question concerning this happening, *“34 And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?”* Lk. 1:34. A child is born: **“Immanuel,”** the text says, *“being interpreted, God with us,”* Matt. 1:23.

When the disciples became concerned about who was the greatest, Jesus used a child to show they need not to be concerned about this subject. Children are not concerned about who is the greatest – the disciples needed to learn this lesson. Ezekiel said: *“20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him,”* Ezek. 18:20. The soul that “sinneth” is the one that shall die – there is no such thing as **“inherited sin!”** Jesus uses these pure, undefiled, holy, sinless ones to teach the disciples a lesson in humility!

Our text, Matt. 18:1-11, says, *“Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* Luke expresses it this way: *“17 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.”* The people who receive the kingdom of God are those who are willing to be taught; to be led and directed, to a heavenly home, Jno. 14:1-3.

As a little child one is to be willing to receive teaching that will produce the remission of sins and instruct him to live and develop himself so he will be a fit subject for heaven. We are to be like Christ and; thus, be an example of Christ, I Cor. 11:1. The way we think and the way we live are changed so that what we were is not what we are. Someone well said: *“I used too; but no more.”* When a person seeks the Lord in a way that **he determines,** there is no change. We must completely relinquish our body and will to the service of God. Then and only then can we think of ourselves as being **servants of Christ!**

In I Pet. 2:2 we are told: *“2 as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”* The first thing a new born desires is food; so, it is with the newborn Christian – he needs the word of God - to grow spiritually.

There are two passages in the New Testament that are firm in making a distinction between those who are mature and *“babes in Christ,”* *“13 For everyone that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe,”* Heb. 5:13. Also, *“1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but unto carnal, as unto babes in in Christ,”* I Cor. 3:1. In Christ and the things of Christ we are to be mature, full grown men, and **not babes.**

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