

Matthew 18:1-14 **Greatness - like humble little Children in Kingdom of Heaven - Offenses must come - Severity of Hell - Lost Sheep - Save the Lost**

Question of Greatness in Kingdom of Heaven

¹ At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Humble little child is Example

² Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, ³ and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

Warnings against causing little ones to sin

⁶ "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Offenses must come

⁷ Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

Severity of Judgment in Hell Fire

⁸ If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

The Lost are the reason Jesus came

¹⁰ "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. ¹¹ For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

Illustration of the Lost Sheep

¹² What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? ¹³ And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

God does not desire the loss of one

¹⁴ Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

When they came into the house in Capernaum

✠ Jesus asked what they had been disputing on the road. [Mark 9:33]

✧ They kept silent, because on the road they had disputed over who would be greatest. [Mark 9:34]

Who is greatest in Kingdom of Heaven? [Matthew 18:1, Mark 9:33-35, Luke 9:46-48, 22:24-26]

- ✚ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. [Mark 9:35]
- ✚ Greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven is not something to seek or strive for.
 - ✧ Greatness is doing and teaching obedience to sayings of Jesus. [Matthew 5:19]
 - ✧ Greatness is a reward for humble service. [Matthew 18:1-14, 20:25-28, 23:11, Mark 9:33-35, 10:42-45, Luke 9:46-48, 22:24-26]
 - ✧ Greatness is not an exalted position of honor, but the love God holds for a humble and contrite heart of servitude. [Psalm 34:18, 51:17, 57:15, Isaiah 66:1-2]
 - ✧ For he who is least among you all will be great." [Luke 9:48]

Humble little child is Example

- ✚ Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, held him in His arms, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become **as little children**, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever **humbles himself as this little child** is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me." [Matthew 18:2-4]
- ✚ Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." [Mark 9:37, Luke 9:48]
 - ✧ The phrase "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven," might cause one to conjure up all sorts of ideas of childish behavior that might be imagined as required to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - ✧ However Jesus clarified the statement with the following line, "Therefore **whoever humbles himself as this little child** is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - ✧ Now we see that the message has an entirely different meaning.
 - ✧ It is not childishness that is important, but meek humbleness that is required.
 - ✧ God will not allow arrogant pride to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - ✧ One does not enter the Kingdom of Heaven by way of some great personal accomplishments or dazzling piety.
 - ✧ One enters the Kingdom of Heaven based only on what God has done, so all glory goes to the Father through Jesus Christ the Savior of the world.
 - ✧ God has a way to remove all pride before entry into the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - ✧ At the Judgment Seat of Christ, All we have done will be revealed, both the good and the bad. [Matthew 10:26, Mark 4:22, Luke 12:2, Romans 2:1-16, 1 Corinthians 4:5, Hebrews 4:12-13]
 - ✧ We will each be judged openly according to what we have done. [Matthew 16:27]
 - ✧ When our lives have been exposed openly for all to see, Pride will be gone, and we will with humble gratitude find ourselves in the Kingdom of Heaven only by the Grace and mercy of God through Christ Jesus. [Acts 15:11, Ephesians 2:4-8]

Warnings against causing little ones to sin

- ✚ God's love for believing little ones, is expressed in the warning against anyone who might "cause one of these **little ones who believe in Me** to sin."
 - ✧ It would be better to be drowned in the sea with a mill stone hung around your neck than to face the punishment for having caused a little believer to sin.

Offenses must come

- ✚ Woe to the world because of offenses! For **offenses must come**, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! [Matthew 18:7, Mark 9:42, Luke 17:1, Acts 14:22]
 - ✧ God wants each of his people to be tested to prove the validity of their faith. [James 1:12, 1 Peter 1:5-7]
 - ✧ God allowed Satan to enter the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were innocent, to call them to a choice to obey God or to be lured into disobedience. [Genesis 3:1-7]

- ✧ For the same purpose, God must allow Satan to be released at the end of the Kingdom of Heaven thousand year reign of Christ. [Revelation 20:1-3]
- ✧ Satan's job is to call those who have been born and raised in the perfect environment of the Kingdom of Heaven, to a choice. That choice is to continue to follow God or to rebel against His rule and His laws that have been held honorable for the entire time.
- ✧ We find that Satan will be as effective at the end of the thousand year reign of Christ as he was in the Garden of Eden. [Revelation 20:7-9]
- ✠ But woe to that man by whom the offense comes! [Matthew 18:7, Luke 17:1]
- ✧ It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. [Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42, Luke 17:2]
- ✧ Those who cause others to sin will be cast into the Lake of Fire with Satan.
- ✧ Satan will then be cast into the Lake of Fire where the beast and the false prophet still are, after being thrown in a thousand years earlier. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever. [Revelation 20:10]

Severity of Judgment in Hell Fire [Matthew 18:8-9]

- ✠ Hell is so terrible, it would be better to be maimed physically in any form if it would help you avoid being cast into Hell.
- ✧ To avoid Hell would be worth losing a hand, a foot, an eye or any other part of the body.
- ✧ Hell is Everlasting Fire that can not be quenched, and the person can not die, a place of everlasting torment. [Matthew 5:29-30, 18:8-9, Mark 9:42-48, Luke 16:19-31, Revelation 20:10]

The Lost are the reason Jesus came

- ✠ "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. [Matthew 18:10-11]
- ✧ The Saints of God, no matter how small, have witnesses in Heaven before the throne of the Father in Heaven. God is witness to all that happens in the life of the least of His believers.
- ✧ Judgment is inline for anyone who despises one of them.
- ✧ The very purpose of Jesus coming to earth as a man was to save the lost. [Matthew 10:6, 15:24, 18:11, Luke 19:10]

Illustration of the Lost Sheep

- ✠ The greatest Joy in Heaven is for the sinner who comes to repentance and is saved. [Matthew 18:12-13, Luke 15:1-7, 8-10]
- ✧ Repentance as evidence of faith is the greatest need for a person to be saved. [Matthew 3:2, 8, 4:17, 9:13, 11:20-24, 12:41, 13:15, Mark 1:4, 14-15, 2:17, 4:12, 6:12, Luke 1:16-17, 3:3, 8, 5:32, 10:13-16, 11:32, 13:3-5, 15:7, 10, 24:46-47, John 12:40, Acts 2:37-38, 3:19, 26, 5:31, 8:22, 11:18, 21, 13:24, 14:15, 17:30, 20:20-21, 26:20, 28:27, Romans 2:4, 2 Corinthians 7:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 2 Timothy 2:25-26, James 5:19-20, 2 Peter 3:9, Revelation 2:5, 16, 3:3, 19]
- ✧ This is evident in the call to repentance in most portions of Scripture. [Jeremiah 18:8, 23:22, 25:4, 26:3, 35:15, 36:3, 7, Ezekiel 13:22, 18:20-32, 33:9-19, Daniel 12:3, Jonah 3:8-10]
- ✧ Repent! Remains the call for people throughout the Great Tribulation, where it is stressed that God is looking for Repentance. [Revelation 9:20-21, 16:8-9, 10-11]

God does not desire the loss of one

- ✠ Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish. [Matthew 18:14, 2 Peter 3:9, John 3:14-16, Ezekiel 18:32]