

Matthew 18

ASVh with Comments

Summary. In this chapter, the Lord Jesus interacts with His disciples and one child. The events of this chapter take place in Galilee in an unknown location (not mentioned here). The main focus of the chapter is teaching about how to enter the kingdom of the heavens. There are no specific words to describe the kingdom of heaven, so the Lord Jesus teaches us in parables and comparisons to get the idea and find the way to enter the kingdom of heaven. We can summarize the parables and comparisons given in this chapter as follows. 1) Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven: this teaching is illustrated by the Lord through a comparison with a child. The Lord teaches us that we must have a humble heart like a child to enter the kingdom of heaven. 2) Temptation to sin: this teaching shows that part of entering heaven is being watchful and not sin. The Lord teaches that the world tempts us to sin, and we need to cut activities from our lives that make us sin (compared here with feet and eyes). 3) The parable of the lost sheep: through this parable, the Lord continues to teach about heaven. He tells us not to despise anybody in this world because we do not know who is or who will be a part of heaven. 4) If your brother sins against you: in this teaching, the Lord tells us never to stop forgiving our brother if he sins against us. 5) The parable of the merciful king: through this parable, the Lord teaches us that there will be a judgment day when the Lord will settle accounts with all the people of the earth. The main point of the parable is that the heart is the first place used for judgment. He teaches that forgiving is an important deed that one needs to start from the heart. The Lord has shown great mercy to humans, so we should learn to show mercy to others. It is important to remember that the only way to escape the judgment day is to believe in the Lord Jesus and follow His teachings. Faith in the Lord Jesus and His teachings is the only way to enter heaven.

18¹ In that hour came the disciples to **Jesus**, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of **the** heavens?

Comments 18:1. “In that hour ... saying.” Here, we should realize that the Lord came on earth to teach people how to come to the Father, and the Lord always traveled for this purpose. For this reason, it is believed that this event with the disciples did not happen in Capernaum (as a continuation of Chapter 17) but in a different place.

“Who then is greatest ... the heavens?” This question is commonplace among humans, as everybody wants to be important. However, it can lead to jealousy, so all believers should watch out and think hard about it.

² And **having** called to **Him** a **young** child, **He** set him in the midst of them,

³ and said, **Truly I** say to you, Except **you change**, and become as **young** children, **you will not** enter into the kingdom of **the** heavens.

Comments 18:2-3. These verses do not mean that we need to be childish; they refer to us trusting the Lord like children. Be innocent in faith and trusting in the Lord like children.

⁴ Therefore, whoever **will** humble himself as this **young** child **this** is the greatest in the kingdom of **the** heavens.

Comments 18:4. This comment refers to the world to come, when we will have the heavenly body that has been prepared for us; note that flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of the heavens. The greatest in this verse refers to those who have a chance to be face-to-face with the Father. When you are in the heavenly body, you will not only be in the presence of the throne but face-to-face with the Father, and you will receive orders straight from the Father; those are the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. In human terms, they will be called the closest servants of the Father.

⁵ And **whoever may** receive one such **young** child in **My** name **receives Me**.

Comments 18:5. “Young child” here refers to a person with a clean heart who follows and believes the teaching of the Bible as the Word of God.

“Whoever may receive ... receives Me” refers to someone who accepts the one who comes in the name of the Lord, whom the Lord sent.

⁶ But **whoever may** cause one of these little ones **who** believe in **Me** to stumble, it is **better** for him that a great millstone **may** be **hung around** his neck, and he **may** be sunk in the depth of the sea.

Comments 18:6. “Little ones” here refers to persons with clean hearts who follow and believe the teachings of the Bible as the Word of God.

“Whoever may cause one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble” refers to someone who comes and misinterprets the Bible using the name of the Lord, making these “little ones” misunderstand the Bible and creating doubt in them. Those persons have no worth in being born, as this verse says. They betray the Lord for various reasons. They misinterpret the Bible to bring glory to themselves, but the glory belongs to the Lord, not the one who uses the Word of the Lord.

⁷ Woe to the world because of **stumbling blocks!** It is necessary for the **stumbling blocks** to come, but woe to **the one by whom the stumbling block comes!**

Comments 18:7. “Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks” or “woe to the world for temptations to sin.” These temptations to sin spoken in this verse are related directly to sin against the Lord. Because of believing in themselves, humans disregard the Creator who created all things. And, because the world does not think that all things come from God, this is a sin against God. Knowledge and technology also lead to temptations to sin. Technology relates to making life easier, but humans use some technology to put themselves up. For example, people try to create rain and then put themselves at the same level as God; the smart ones lift their fists and think that they themselves are gods. Humans can play with nature, but can they create one seed without the Lord’s hand? They gather and transform seeds but forget to think about the One that created the seed. Also, they develop computers and many smart things, but they forget about the One who created all the materials used in all things. **Q:** Is the Lord against technology? **A:** No, the Lord is not against technology, even the most advanced technology, as long as technology is not used against the Lord.

The next temptation to come to the whole world is greed. The greed of all things, not just the things of this world, but the greed for the unseen things as well; because the Lord calls some to do something and those persons already think about the reward they will receive, that is greed. Humans need to feel important in this world and in the world to come. The sin of greed for the things of this world is a sin against God’s work. This greed makes humans wish for things that are not made by the hand of the Lord (i.e., biological cloning, DNA engineering, stem-cell engineering, in-vitro fertilization, transgenderism, transhumanism, tattooing and body transformation, etc.) and tempts them to think that they can be equal to God. To fight against greed, be content and thankful for what you have received; be content in all things. It doesn’t matter how small we receive; just be content and thankful with a true heart. These temptations to sin spoken in this verse are related directly to sin against the Lord.

“It is necessary for the stumbling blocks to come.” It is necessary for temptations to come because of the will of the Father to save humans. Temptations will help humans turn to the Lord; when they see that they alone cannot fight temptations, they will seek help from the Lord. The purpose of temptations to come is to save the obedient ones. This way works for those who listen and obey, but the ones that do not come, the Lord works with them as well, but they choose not to come (See 1 Corinthians 10:13). Not that the latter do not feel guilty, but they choose to have fun in the world.

“But woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!” Temptation cannot come on everyone; temptation doesn’t run by its own will. For those who do not stay in the Word, temptation has power over them. But, for those covered by the blood of the Lamb, it is their own fault that temptation comes upon them; they have the Lord as their shield to protect them, but they do not rely on Him. This woe is for those covered by the blood and ignoring the Word. Many of them sin and blame the Lord for causing them to sin, but God does not cause anyone to sin (See James 1:13-18). There is no sin in God, so He cannot cause someone to sin.

⁸ And if **your hand or your foot causes you to stumble**, cut it off, and **throw it from you**, it is **better for you to enter into life crippled or lame** than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire.

Comments 18:8. This verse has been a stumbling block for many believers throughout the ages. It is important to understand that the Lord will never ask us to harm our bodies. This body, the Lord created in His image; why would the Lord ask us to destroy His creation? The nature of God is mercy; His love and mercy are beyond our understanding. The proof God has shown is in His Own Son; the Lord Jesus has proved the love of God for the whole human race. Therefore, the verse refers to some of our activities that are not needed in our lives because these activities are useless for this earth and for the earth to come. Think about your daily life, how many useless things we do. Consider these things as hands and feet, cut them off, and use your heart to pray to be able to discern them. Therefore, hands and feet refer to activities we do throughout our life on earth; we use our feet to go here and there, and we use our hands to do this and that. Pray with the heart for all daily activities, and if they are useless, cut them off.

⁹ And if **your eye causes you to stumble**, pluck it out, and **throw** it from **you**, it is **better** for **you** to enter into life **having** one eye than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.

Comments 18:9. Here, the Lord does not mean that it is better to be born blind. The eyes are not easy to control, and the eyes feed the heart. Sometimes, we see things that we should not even look at, but it happens. When you see something, that thing will feed straight into your heart, so watch what you are looking at. There are many things the Lord created; use your eyes to see the blessings of the Lord. The world uses the word entertainment. Entertaining the flesh through your eyes weakens the soul; we cannot feel our soul clearly since our attention goes to entertain the eyes and the flesh. But let's entertain our souls; the Bible should be the entertainment of all Christians. Use the Bible to entertain your eyes with the Word, and that will strengthen your soul and spirit.

¹⁰ See that **you do not despise** one of these little ones; for **I say to you**, that in **the heavens** their angels always behold the face of **My Father** who is in **the heavens**.

Comments 18:10. "These little ones." The Lord always calls us His children. When we accept the Lord in our hearts, and we baptize in water, we become children of God; we are the little ones of the Lord.

"See that you do not despise ..." This addresses everyone who reads the Bible and comes to know and accepts the Lord. We are not supposed to despise anybody in this world because we do not know who is or who will be "the little one." We have examples in the Bible where people have not been baptized in water but have accepted the Lord with a true heart; we cannot despise anybody since we do not know the hearts of people; only God knows them.

"for I say to you, ... their angels ..." This tells us that there is an angel assigned to each person that accepts in their soul God who created them because it is then that they become children of God. The angels have their duty; they serve as messengers and ministering spirits for God (See Hebrews 1:14), but the Holy Spirit, by His presence, is a witness for both the Father and the Lord Jesus. Wherever the Holy Spirit is, He is a witness to the Father and the Lord Jesus; and the Holy Spirit is everywhere at the same time.

¹¹ For the **Son of Man** came to save that which was lost.

Comments 18:11. This verse is believed to be part of the original manuscript written by Matthew.

¹² **What do you think?** If any man **has** a hundred sheep, and one of them **may go astray**, **will** he not leave the ninety-nine, and **having gone on** the mountains, seeks that which **has gone** astray?

Comments 18:12. This verse tells us that even if we see some true Christians tangled in bad situations that do not go against God, we need not despise them. We can define the "little ones" as those who read, believe, and follow the Word of God.

¹³ And if he **should find** it, **truly I say to you** that he **rejoices** over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

¹⁴ **Thus** it is not the will of your **Father** who is in **the heavens**, that one of these little ones should perish.

Comments 18:13-14. The "little ones" mentioned in verses 10 and 14 both come from the same fold but are not the same. In verse 10, "little ones" refers to the innocent little ones, while in verse 14, "little ones" (the lost sheep) refers to the ones that have been tricked but are still willing to follow the Lord after knowing that they have been tricked; tricked by doctrines that almost follow the Word of God, but you could find points in these doctrines that contradict the Word. They have been tricked, but they did not deny the Lord. They cannot turn back because they believe the Lord has abandoned them. The Lord never abandons His children (See Hebrews 13:5); if they turn back, they will meet the Lord in the midst of the way.

¹⁵ And if **your brother sins** against **you**, go, **reprove** him between **you** and him alone. If he **may** hear **you**, **you have gained your** brother.

Comments 18:15. This verse applies to two kinds of brothers: the true brother and the brother in name. Before you talk to your brother, make sure you bring the situation to the Lord first. The Lord will work in your heart and your brother's heart to be able to resolve the problem. Also, when you meet the brother, ask him to join hands with you in prayer. The true brother has to be treated as it is written in verses 15 to 17. For the brother in name, the action taken could end here at verse 15 because they will not listen even to God. But you still have to tell him his fault so he cannot use it against you.

Q: How do we recognize the true brother and the brother in name? **A:** We will recognize them right away. Before we talk, we should ask to come together in prayer; the Lord will speak to both hearts, and He will speak to our own heart to know if it is a true brother we are dealing with, and we will know in our hearts. When you pray

together, do not listen to the words of the other brother; you will be confused; just listen to the small little voice of the Lord speaking into your heart. Remember, the Bible tells us about the false brothers coming in sheepskin who can trick us.

¹⁶ However, if he may not hear you, take with you one or two more, that upon the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established.

¹⁷ But if he may refuse to hear them, tell it to the church. And if he may refuse to hear the church also, let him be to you as the Gentile and the tax collector.

Comments 18:16-17. In this case, do not treat this brother as an enemy, but treat him as a visitor with no hate between you; the Lord doesn't want to see hate among brothers. But never let the name of this person off the list to pray for; keep praying for this person. A true brother should listen to the church.

¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever things you may bind on earth will be bound in heaven; and whatever things you may loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

Comments 18:18. See Comments Matthew 16:19.

¹⁹ Again, truly, I say to you that if two of you may agree on the earth concerning any matter that they may ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens.

Comments 18:19. Many have used this verse in the wrong way. The verse does not refer to the things that you agree on for your benefit of luxury in this world; rather, it refers to faith and building up the faith of people around you. It refers only about faith, not luxury on this earth.

²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

Comments 18:20. The main point in this verse is “in My name.” Do not use the name of the Lord Jesus in vain; this verse only refers to building up the church of the community, not personal things.

²¹ Then Peter, having come, said to Him, Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I will forgive him? Until seven times?

²² Jesus says to him, I say not to you, Until seven times; but, until seventy times seven!

Comments 18:21-22. The real meaning of the number here is that it is beyond our count; it means that we should never stop forgiving.

²³ Because of this, the kingdom of the heavens has become like to a man, a king, who desired to settle accounts with his servants.

Comments 18:23. “Because of this, the kingdom of the heavens has become like ...” There are no specific words to describe the kingdom of the heavens. The Lord Jesus tells parables to make it easier for the listeners to understand. He presents two things to compare to each other.

Note that not everything in this parable has a symbolic meaning that can be linked with some activity during the judgment day.

Q: When will this parable be applied? **A:** This parable can be linked to the judgment day that will come upon humans; the principle presented will be applied at that time.

Q: To whom does this parable apply? **A:** The parable applies to two kinds of Christians (true Christians and Christians in name) and to the rest of the world. The Christians in name will be judged with the rest of the world on the judgment day, but the true Christians have been saved already; there will be no judgment on them at this time.

Q: What are the things about the kingdom of the heavens that we must learn from this parable? **A:** The parable teaches us three important things. First, it tells us that all things cannot happen unless the Lord of heaven, the Father, agrees; it is upon the Father's decision to make things happen. Second, the Lord wants to see from us true humbleness and us begging for mercy from our hearts to offer us forgiveness. And third, the principle of mercy shown in this parable will be applied on the judgment day. Here, we need to note that when the Bible talks about the judgment day, it refers to an angel's day length of time, not a human's day length of time of twenty-four hours.

²⁴ Then he, having begun to settle, one was brought to him, a debtor of ten thousand talents.

Comments 18:24. This verse has a deeper meaning than what it appears. To owe that much to the Lord of heaven, the Father, the person must have lived the life unlawfully to God, and with a hardened heart, this servant ignored the voice of the Lord in his heart. The amount owed to the Lord increases when you ignore the voice of the Lord;

this is called ignorance and rebellion towards God; with their mouth, they speak blasphemy, and with a disrespectful heart, they bring sorrow to their soul.

²⁵ But he, **having nothing** to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and **the wife**, and **the children**, and all **as many as** he had, and payment to be made.

Comments 18:25. This verse shows the consequences of the servant's actions, the suffering of watching, and the pain he feels because all his deeds have brought suffering to his whole family. When the judgment day comes, his eyes will see the suffering of his family because of the way of life he lived and led his family. He led his whole family to live the same way as he did, and all will be punished in the same way. We need to note that the Lord does not judge the children for the sins of the parents unless they follow the same sinful life (See Ezekiel 18:20).

²⁶ The servant, therefore, **having fallen down**, **fell on his knee to him**, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay **to you all**.

²⁷ **Now** the lord of that servant, **having been** moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

Comments 18:26-27. The servant did not ask for forgiveness, but he recognized the lord's authority and begged for patience. He also promised to "repay all." By this, the servant admitted his own faults and willingly accepted the punishment, asking only for patience. The lord forgave him the debt, but the consequences of his actions would still follow.

²⁸ **However**, that servant, **having gone** out, found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred **denarii**, and **having seized him**, **he choked him**, saying, Pay what **you owe**.

²⁹ So, his fellow servant, **having fallen down**, **begged** him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay **you**.

³⁰ **But he was not willing; rather having gone**, **he threw him into prison**, **until** he should pay that which was **owing**.

Comments 18:28-30. These verses show clearly how we humans are towards each other. The servant received forgiveness from his lord but did not show others the same forgiveness he received. We are the same way; we come asking for mercy and forgiveness from the Lord, but we do not do it to others.

³¹ **Therefore**, his fellow servants, **having seen the things that were done**, they were exceedingly **grieved**, and **having come**, **told to their lord all that had taken place**.

³² Then **having called to him**, his lord **says to him**, **You evil servant**, I forgave **you all** that debt, because **you begged me**;

³³ **did it not behoove you to have also shown** mercy on **your fellow servant**, as I **also** had mercy on **you**?

Comments 18:31-33. When the Lord has shown mercy to you, because the Lord has great mercy to all humans, you should learn as well to show mercy to others.

³⁴ And **having been angry**, his lord delivered him to the **jailers until** he should pay all that was **owing**.

³⁵ **Thus also My Heavenly Father will do to you**, if **you do not forgive each** his brother from your hearts.

Comments 18:34-35. These verses refer to the judgment day. We will always want to know what is counted for to be judged and not judged on the judgment day. Take notice that the Lord will always point to the heart and not the mind; the heart is the first place to be used for judgment. We may not say what the heart thinks, and we believe that we are not guilty, but for the Lord, the heart's thoughts are louder than the mind's thoughts. He can hear the thoughts of the heart. For us to be safe, it is essential only to believe in the Lord Jesus, and this will lead us to the right place; those who believe in the Lord Jesus and follow the Lord's teaching will have a place of waiting for the judgment day. True believers in the Lord Jesus will pass through their own judgment as well, but not at the same time as the rest.

"... each his brother." The Lord Jesus addresses this parable to the disciples, but the principle of this parable applies to all people. We are all children of God and created in His image. Some believe, and some do not believe in the God of the Bible, but to each one, the Lord gives in their hearts the knowledge of God, the Creator of all things, and all will be judged for that knowledge of God in them (See Romans 1).

Life and Faith Applications. 1) Be aware of the teachings the Lord gives in this chapter. 2) Do not sin or promote sinful activities that can cause others to stumble. We should not even mention what others do in darkness (See Ephesians 5:11-12) so we do not cause others to judge because only God can judge. Rather, when you expose the deeds of darkness, bring the Bible forward, open the passage, read from it to the people, and make sure not to criticize from your point of view as you are not the judge. 3) If you are offended by your brother, tell him his faults, for living in peace among brothers is important. 4) Watch about comparing yourself with others and trying to be the greatest; jealousy can creep into your heart. 5) Pray always and watch your heart; the Lord can hear the thoughts of the heart, and the heart is the first place to be used for judgment.