

## Matthew Chapter 19 Continued

Verses 13-17: See the parallel accounts in (Mark 10:17-31 and Luke 18:18-30). The “little children,” for who Jesus cared so much, were evidently of sufficient age to respond to Him and He bade them “come unto me,” revealing that even a child may follow Christ.

By contrast to their simple obedience came the complex, young rich man calling Jesus “Good Master,” which the Savior challenged. Not to deny His own deity, but to impress upon this seeker the seriousness of the implication, “Are you sure you really mean that?” would be a modern paraphrase. The young man’s question “What good thing shall I do?” implies that he wanted to perform some work that might gain him “eternal life” (salvation).

The Master’s reply, “If thou wilt enter into life,” implies that the young man was still on the outside of such life. The imperative “keep the commandments (verse 17), hits his point of pride, self-righteousness. Jesus goes to great lengths now to show him that he had not kept the commandments, and therefore needs God’s grace.

**Matthew 19:13 "Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put [his] hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them."**

“Then were there brought unto him little children”: These are termed by Luke (Luke 18:15), infants, very young children. And it was on this account, probably, that the disciples rebuked the parents, thinking them too young to receive good.

Luke 18:16; and were capable of coming to him of themselves, as his words following suppose. Nor does their being brought to him, or his taking them in his arms, contradict this; since the same things are said of such as could walk of themselves (Matthew 12:22; Mark 9:36). Nor is it known whose children they were, whether their parents were believers or unbelievers, nor by whom they were brought: but the end for which they were brought is expressed.

“That he should put his hands”. It was a common custom among the Jews to lay their hands on the heads of those whom they blessed, or for whom they prayed. This seems to have been done by way of dedication or consecration to God, the person being considered as the sacred property of God ever after.

Doesn't this sound like some churches today? They say that little children are not old enough to know what they are doing, and therefore, should not be allowed to come to Jesus. These little children need the blessings of the Lord, the same as the old.

Maybe, if Jesus could touch us at a very early age, we would not make nearly as many mistakes as we do when we wait until after we have lived in the world for years before we come to Him.

**Matthew 19:14 "But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."**

“For of such”: These children were too young to have exercised personal faith (see Luke 18:15), where Luke refers to them as “babies.” Therefore, it is even more significant that Christ used them as an illustration of those who make up “the kingdom of Heaven” (18:1-4).

(Mark 10:16 also says He “blessed them.”)

God often shows a special mercy to those who because of age or mental deficiency are incapable of their faith or willful unbelief (Jonah 4:11). They are called “innocent” (in Jer. 19:4). This does not mean they are free from the inherited guilt and moral corruption of Adam’s sin, but rather that they are not culpable in the same sense as those whose sins are premeditated and deliberate.

Infant Salvation: Children who die before the age of accountability go to the presence of God and are considered safe in Jesus, rather than using the traditional word saved. This is based on the nature of God, who would not condemn anyone who lacked the ability to respond.

Based on David’s words concerning a future meeting with his dead infant (2 Sam. 12-23), most Christians are assured that children who die before the age of accountability will be in heaven. How this is accomplished is open to speculation, since the Bible does not specifically say.

The age of accountability is generally thought to be the time at which a child understands the difference between right and wrong. Sometimes God will allow tragic events like the death of a child to enter our lives, so that we can understand and appreciate His comfort and be prepared to comfort others in their time of need (2 Cor. 1:3-4).

**Matthew 19:15 "And he laid [his] hands on them, and departed thence."**

Jesus said here, that little children are usually eager to come to Him, when they are allowed by the older groups to come. Even though a child is, probably, not able to understand all the intricacies of the Scriptures, they can still receive Jesus on faith.

Except we come in the innocence of a little child by faith, you or I cannot inherit eternal life with Jesus (Matthew 18:4, Mark 10:15).

As usual, Jesus paid no attention to the complaints of the disciples. He went right ahead and blessed the children. Then Jesus departed.

**Matthew 19:16 "And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"**

“Good Master”: This is not necessarily recognition of Christ’s deity. The young man simply meant that Christ was righteous and a teacher from God who apparently had eternal life and might know how he could get it.

It is unusual for the Lord to see one person separate from others. It seemed this person was of some distinction, possibly, the rich young ruler. Some believed that some special good deed done

could insure a life in heaven with God. This young man had probably, been instructed in the Old Testament Scriptures and knew the law (Moses law).

At least he had good intentions; he wanted eternal life. He really did not recognize Jesus as God manifest in the flesh, but rather thought of Jesus as a good teacher. He surely admired Jesus and respected His abilities with God.

**Matthew 19:17 "And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."**

Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one": Jesus was not disclaiming His own deity, but rather teaching the young man that all but God are sinners. This young man's most serious spiritual defect was his reluctance to confess his own utter spiritual bankruptcy.

Jesus did not explain the commandments, so this young man already knew them. Jesus upbraided him for calling Him good. Notice, that Jesus did not say that He was not good. He just said God is the only good one.

Verses 18-22: This list of commands in verse 18 centers on outward duties, rather than inward nature, which was the young man's real problem. He protests that he had kept these outward demands. His luxurious wealth and self-righteousness had blinded him to his real weakness.

To expose this, Jesus orders, "go and sell" all your possessions "and give to the poor ... and come ... follow me (verse 21). This he would not do and went away "sorrowful."

Jesus thus shows him that he had not kept the commandments at all. He loved himself more than he loved his neighbor ("the poor"), and he loved his possessions more than he loved God ("Me"). This passage teaches the seriousness of true discipleship, but it in no way teaches the average man that he must sell his possessions in order to be a Christian.

Verses 18-19: These are 5 of the 6 commandments that make up the second table of the Ten Commandments, all dealing with human relationships (Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20). Christ omitted the tenth commandment, which deals with covetousness and added (Lev. 19:18); the summation of the second half of the Decalogue (Rom. 13:1-10).

**Matthew 19:18-20 "He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness," "Honor thy father and [thy] mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"**

"Have I kept": The self-righteous young man would not admit to his own sin.

Jesus was aware that this young man was familiar with the Jewish law. This young man had attempted to do what was right. He still had no peace within. Doing works does not bring peace. A personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to find peace and happiness.

This young man was earnest in asking, if there was one other thing that he could do that would insure him a life in heaven?

**Matthew 19:21 "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me."**

“Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor”: Again Jesus was not setting forth the terms for salvation, but rather exposing the young man’s true heart. His refusal to obey here revealed two things.

1. He was not blameless as far as the law was concerned, because he was guilty of loving himself and his possessions more than his neighbors (verse 19).
2. He lacked true faith, which involves a willingness to surrender all at Christ’s bidding (16:24). Jesus was not teaching salvation by philanthropy; but He was demanding that this young man give Him first place.

The young man failed the test (verse 22).

“Come and follow me”: This was the answer to the young man’s question (in verse 16). It was a call to faith. It is likely that the young man never even heard or contemplated it though, because his own love of his possessions was such a stumbling block that he had already rejected Jesus’ claim to lordship over his life. Thus, he walked away in unbelief.

Really, being perfect does not get us to heaven. Having a pure heart and believing in Jesus and His resurrection from the dead, gets us to heaven. We do know that our treasures should not be stacked up here on the earth, but should be stored away in heaven.

God really does not require a person to give up every cent he owns in this world to follow Him, unless it is so important to him that he would choose the wealth over God; if it came to a decision. Whatever we have, that is more important to us than God, is what we are required to give.

God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3).

**Matthew 19:22 "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."**

Here is where the decision is made for eternity with God in heaven, or an eternity in hell. The Bible says that it is difficult for a rich person to be saved. The reason is that many of them have made a god out of their wealth.

God, as I said before, will not allow us to have anything that is more important to us than He is. How sad! This young man went away not only from Jesus' presence, but away from God for all of eternity. He chose great wealth on this earth in place of heaven for all of eternity.

Sometimes, it is just our pride, or our families, or homes, or our recreation. Whatever it is, we must choose to serve God or our pet loves. We cannot serve both.

Verses 23-26: The further comment "that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven" shocked the disciples; "Who then can be saved?" (verse 25). Who accepted the common notion of the day that the rich were blessed of God and therefore certainly saved.

To correct that misunderstanding, Jesus explained the human difficulty for the rich to be converted. Hardly (Greek *duskolos*), implies with extreme difficulty, though not hopeless. The illustration of a "camel" going through the "eye of a needle" has been interpreted as a camel-hair rope going through a needle; or an actual camel squeezing through a small gate.

"The Eye of a Needle," next to the main gate at Jerusalem; or the absolute impossibility of a literal camel actually going through a tiny needle's' eye. This last usage is most likely.

**Matthew 19:23 "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."**

"Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven": Either into the Gospel dispensation, and receive the truths, and submit to the ordinances of it, or into the kingdom of glory hereafter.

Not that there have been, are, and will be, some that are rich that are called by grace, brought into a Gospel church state, and are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Though these are but comparatively few.

Nor is it riches themselves that make the entrance so difficult, and clog the way, either into grace or glory, but putting trust and confidence in them. That Christ explained of such, that "trust in riches"; and which rich men in common are very apt to do, as this young man did.

**Matthew 19:24 "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."**

"Camel ... eye of a needle": I.e., it is impossible. Jesus was underscoring the impossibility of anyone's being saved by merit. Since wealth was deemed proof of God's approval, and those who had it could give more alms, it was commonly thought that rich people were the most likely candidates for heaven. Jesus destroyed that notion, and along with it, the notion that anyone can merit enough divine favor to gain entrance into heaven.

Jesus explained to His disciples that a rich man has a much harder decision to make to follow Him. All of them were familiar with the "eye of the needle" entrance in that part of the world. The opening was very low and the camel had to kneel down and go through it on his knees.

Jesus was saying, a rich man has to humble himself, and get down on his knees to worship God to receive heaven. Rich people sometimes think too highly of themselves and are not humble enough to kneel to God. Poor people have already been humbled by their position in the community.

**Matthew 19:25 "When his disciples heard [it], they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?"**

“Who then can be saved”: This was the right question to ask, it showed that they got Jesus’ message. Salvation is possible only through divine grace (verse 26).

**Matthew 19:26 "But Jesus beheld [them], and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."**

In the Old Testament, men of great wealth like Abraham, David, and Solomon were the beloved of God. Wealth usually indicated that you were in tune with God. Wealth was a blessing from God.

Now, this teaching was going against all these teachings of the Old Testament. He also kept the Law of Moses. They could not understand why this young man could, possibly, not be saved. Then Jesus told them that all things are possible with God. Even this wealthy young man could be saved, but he just had to put God ahead of everything else, including his wealth.

Verses 27-30: “In the regeneration” (Greek paliggenesia), refers to the renewed world of the future, the kingdom of righteousness yet to come. While the term is used for individual rebirth (in Titus 3:5), here it looks to the future millennial kingdom where the apostles will judge “Israel” (literally). Forsaking earthly benefits will bring a “hundredfold” blessing and “everlasting life.”

**Matthew 19:27 "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"**

“We have forsaken all and followed thee”: Peter points out that they had already done what Christ demanded of the rich your ruler (verse 21). They had embarked on the life of faith with Christ. Note that Jesus did not rebuke Peter for his expectation of reward (Rev. 22:12).

Peter, as all the other disciples, had given up everything of this world to follow Jesus. They gave up jobs, families, homes, and all worldly possessions.

**Matthew 19:28 "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."**

“Regeneration”: Here the term does not carry its normal theological meaning of personal regeneration (Titus 3:5). Instead, Jesus was speaking of “the period of restoration of all things about which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time” (Acts 3:21).

This is a reference to the earthly kingdom described (in Rev. 20:1-15), when believers will sit with Christ on His throne (Rev. 3:21).

Here was the promise that the disciple’s rewards were not for the here and now. They were for the time when Jesus shall reign and sit on His throne. They will rule with Him. They will rule over physical Israel (the descendants of Abraham in the flesh).

**Matthew 19:29 "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."**

"And everyone that hath forsaken houses": Not only the disciples of Christ then, but any other believer in him, whether at that time, or in any age, that should be called to quit their habitations, or leave their dearest relations, friends, and substance.

“For my name's sake”: Or as in Luke, "for the kingdom of God's sake"; that is, for the sake of the Gospel, and a profession of it. Not that believing in Christ, and professing his name, do necessarily require a parting with all worldly substance, and natural relations, but when these things stand in competition with Christ.

He is to be loved and preferred before them; and believers are always to be ready to part with their worldly possessions for his sake, when persecution arises, because of the word. All these things are to be relinquished, rather than Christ, and his Gospel; and such who shall be enabled, through divine grace, to do so.

"Shall receive a hundred fold": Mark adds, "now in this time"; and Luke likewise, "in this present time", in this world. Which may be understood either in spiritual things, the love of God, the presence of Christ, the comforts of the Holy Ghost, the communion of saints, and the joys and pleasures felt in the enjoyment of these things. Being an hundred times more and better to them, than all they have left or lost for Christ's sake.

"And shall inherit everlasting life": The other evangelists add, "in the world to come", which is infinitely best of all. For this is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens, when all other inheritances are corruptible, defiled, fading and perishing.

**Matthew 19:30 "But many [that are] first shall be last; and the last [shall be] first."**

“First ... last ... first”: This statement means that everyone ends up the same, a truth that is explained by the parable that follows.

Those who have not sacrificed to the level of the twelve disciples, will also be rewarded in heaven, for they have given up personal things in this life for Jesus' sake.

### **Matthew Chapter 19 Continued Questions**

1. What two reasons were the little children brought to Jesus?
2. How did the attitude of the disciples and the attitude of many church people today coincide about children?
3. If we are touched by Jesus at an early age, how might it help us?
4. What did Jesus tell the disciples about the children?
5. What did the young rich man call Jesus?
6. What did he ask Jesus?
7. Who did he think Jesus was?
8. How did Jesus reprimand him?
9. What did Jesus tell him to do?
10. Why did the young man still want an answer after admitting he had kept the law from his youth?
11. What did Jesus tell him to do to be perfect?
12. Why was the young man sad on hearing this?
13. What are we required to give up to be saved?
14. Why does the Bible say it is difficult for a rich man to be saved?
15. What example of an animal did Jesus give to demonstrate how hard it was for the rich to be saved?
16. What must the animal do to go through?
17. What does that demonstrate with people?
18. Why were the disciples amazed at this?



19. Name three Old Testament people who were beloved of God?
20. What did Peter ask Jesus?
21. What promise did Jesus make the disciples?
22. What two things does Jesus promise believers who give up earthly things for Him?
23. Why does He say the first may be last, and the last first?