

Episode #8-32 Matthew 18 Part 2-The Good Shepherd

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. In Matthew 18, the disciples wanted to know which of them would be greatest in the kingdom of the heavens. The Lord showed them a little child and said they must humble themselves and become like a child if they are to even enter the kingdom! He called those who did this and believe in Him “little ones,” and warned against causing them to sin. Now, He was warning them about causes of sin and stumbling.

III. Causes of Sin and Offense. Matthew 18:6-9.

A. Verse 9. That little orb in your head will never cause you to offend! But what you see and is so attractive to you might cause you to offend. The way to avoid it is to stop looking at those things, not to remove your eye. See Matthew 5:29. “Hell fire” is “the Gehenna the (one) of fire,” meaning the fires of Gehenna. The valley of the sons of Hinnom was a very beautiful valley near Jerusalem, convenient for the idol worshippers of Jerusalem to carry out their worship. Yes, it still exists, and yes, it occasionally freezes over. Molech was served there by passing children through the fire. Josiah defiled the valley and ruined it for worship. Afterwards, being still convenient to Jerusalem, it became a garbage dump, where fires were always burning to incinerate the trash and where worms ate the refuse. Apparently very despised criminals would have their bodies cast there after their executions. The Lord uses it as a symbol for the Lord’s great disposal place of all men whom He counts as worthless and relegates to the second death.

IV. Parable of the Little Ones. Matthew 18:10-14.

A. Verse 10. Despise is *kataphroneo*, be disposed down. We would put it “look down on.” The “little ones” were the insignificant (in the eyes of the world) disciples who believed in Him. In the eyes of the world they might be nothing, but the wise should not despise any believer at that time. Apparently every disciple of Jesus Christ had at least one angel personally assigned to him! This is not “guardian angels” for children, even believing ones, but angelic ministry for even the least of Christ’s earthly disciples. The ministry of angels is usually connected to Israel. This was during the gospel period, and might have spilled over into Acts, when we see angels ministering. Yet we see no angels ministering today in the dispensation of grace. If they are doing so it is behind the scenes, but we are not sure even of that, Colossians 2:18-19. Our job is to hold fast to Christ our head. I Timothy 2:5, there is one Mediator today.

Note: Bullinger thinks this means the human messengers they send, their servants.

B. Verse 11. “Lost” is *apollumi*, that which is being destroyed or perishing. Thus one had to take the place of one who was lost. Those who refused to acknowledge that they were lost could not take part in His ministry, for He was only there for the lost! Compare this to John 9:41.

C. Verse 12. “Go to the mountains” is probably correct, in spite of modern texts that say he leaves them on the mountains, for this would be most foolish, and would doubtless result in most all of them going astray as well.

D. Verse 13. “Assuredly” is “amen I say to you,” meaning truly. The sheep that was in danger produces more rejoicing in the finding than the sheep which were not in

danger. We may not be the sheep of Israel, but we can likewise be assured of this.

God always rejoices at the saving of one who was lost. We should never imagine that we have done too much wrong for Him to want us.

V. Conclusion: Things that attract you away from God should be cut out of your life. He warned against despising any of His Own "little ones." Then, the Lord gave the parable of the lost sheep and the good shepherd who sought him out. Do we believe that God seeks us out to save us? God does not desire you or anyone to perish. Look to Christ and the free forgiveness He bought for you on the cross!