

Matthew 18

1. Jesus cares about little ones who believe in Him Mt. 18:1-4

The “big” people are arguing over positioning and prestige. Jesus says the greatest in the kingdom of heaven are the “little” people.

The Greek words here are *paidion* and *micron*.

One use of the word *paidion* occurs in John 16:21 referring to a woman who delivers a baby. A similar use of the word occurs in Matthew 2 when the wise men visit the child, Jesus, with their gifts and then Joseph must flee with the young child to Egypt to escape Herod’s edict to kill all the boys two years old and under.

In Luke 1:59, the eight day old John, son of Zechariah, is to undergo circumcision according to Jewish tradition.

Paidion is also used in Mark 5, when Jairus begs Jesus to come and heal his seriously sick little girl. Another man comes to Jesus in Luke 4:49, seeking medical help for his son who was near death.

We can see the word *paidion* is used for a range from infants, toddlers and young children (or half-grown child – Strong’s concordance).

Then Jesus uses another word, *mikron*, interchangeably with *paidion*. What is significant is that Jesus says children can have faith in Him. Even before a child can speak, they can believe. The TLSB ftnt. for Mt. 18:3-4 highlights the humility of a child. “A child’s humility is evident especially in dependence on and trust in a superior. Greatness in the kingdom is characterized by humble trust in the Lord.”

2. Causing one of these little ones to sin is a dangerous thing. Mt. 18:6
 - a. TLSB ftnt. – Better to die by drowning than to suffer eternal punishment (cf v9) for causing a little one to sin.
 - b. Woe to those through whom temptation comes. Mt. 18:7

Temptations are bound to come... 1 John 2:16

TLSB ftnt. 7 – “The world sets up numerous stumbling blocks over which people trip and fall into sin.”

Mt. 16:23 – take offense, scandal or temptation.

Ftnt. 18:7-9

3. God loves each individual very much. Mt. 18:10-14

TLSB ftnt. 10 “guardian angels”

Ftnt. 10-14 The Good shepherd