

Suffer the Little Children

Commentary for September 1, 2020 — ... to Come Unto Me, and Forbid Them Not

This month's article is "Human Sacrifice in Scripture." The "[September 2020 Newsletter](#)" introduces the article. Human sacrifice and ritual murder begin in Genesis, proceed through the Old and New Testaments, and end in Revelation. Only when all the biblical evidence is presented can you begin to comprehend the full horror of Israel's sin of human sacrifice — and most of the victims were children.

YHWH told Israel He would "drive out" the nations from the land God promised to Abraham (Exodus 33:2–3; Deuteronomy 7:1, 16–26, 9:4–5). God warned Israel not to do what the nations did, not to worship their gods. Children in those nations were offered and sacrificed to their gods. Israel did not listen; they did the same as the nations. Israel's sins caused YHWH to order the people themselves to drive out or kill the men, women, and children of the nations who would not leave the land God gave to them.

Child sacrifices were sins most offensive to YHWH. Israel's continual sins resulted in God's exiling them from the promised land. After 70-years of exile God allowed Israel to return to Judea. Jesus came to teach them about God the Father (Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22). He taught that all believers should be like little children in awe of God their Father.

Christ's Exalted View of Children

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus made an important statement about small children, teaching that child-like qualities are essential for a person to "**receive the kingdom of God**":

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them,

'Suffer [allow] the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God AS A LITTLE CHILD, he shall not enter therein.'

And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

• Mark 10:13–16¹

Jesus elsewhere described the attitude each believer should have after their conversion:

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you,

"Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall

¹ Matthew 19:13–15 and Luke 18:15–17 present the same information but with less detail than Mark.

receive one such little child in my name receives me."

• **Matthew 18:1-5**

Little children are humble. We as God's children are likewise to be humble toward our heavenly Father. Jesus described the severity of judgment against those who harm children:

"But whoso shall offend [cause to sin, or offend God] one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

• **Matthew 18:6**

The imagery is vivid and indicates no escape from decisive future punishment for those who cause children of God to sin. Punishment never leads a person to salvation. Punishment does, however, focus the mind and cause people to pay attention to God's teaching.

When people are resurrected to physical life in judgment before the great white throne (Revelation 20:11-13), evil people will pay attention and will learn what God and Christ have done and will do for their salvation. All sins will be forgiven eventually, even sins of human sacrifice of children, even sins causing **"little children"** to sin. Part of the redemption process will be reconciliation between perpetrators and their victims. That will be difficult for both, **"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil"** (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Note what Jesus said:

"Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."

• **Matthew 18:10-11**

Angels record and report. The apostle Paul tells us more. Angels are **"ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation"** (Hebrews 1:14). Just as God was offended when the people of Judah sacrificed sons and daughters to Moloch (as you will read in this month's article), those committing such sins will be severely punished unless they repent. God's punishment will be severe against those harming children.

Conclusion

The apostle John used the phrase **"little children"** nine times in his epistle of First John to identify his readers as believers (1 John 2:1, 12-13, 18, 28, 3:7, 18, 4:4, 5:21). Saul (later Paul) accused Stephen of blasphemy and prosecuted his religious murder by stoning. Saul persecuted God's **"little children"** and would have murdered them also. Then the risen Christ encountered Saul on the way to Damascus and he repented (Acts 9:1-18). Both Christ and Paul tell us there will be persecution, religious murder, and human sacrifice of believers in the future (Matthew 13:21, Mark 4:17, Romans 8:35). Note what Paul wrote before his death:

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

• **2 Timothy 3:12-13**

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