

Parable—Entry into the Kingdom

Want to go to heaven? I'm sure everyone reading this does... We have already seen in previous parables that the place is large enough for everyone and that the price of entry has been pre-paid. We try to express in human terms this eternal blissful state of existence but in reality, a bible verse states---However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived"---the things God has prepared for those who love him---(1 Cor 2.9). But, how do we get there and how do we know that we are going?

The bible records, especially in the New Testament, several nuggets of instruction about entrance into the kingdom and about being saved from the grip of death and gain eternal life. One very simple nugget is a simple parable taught by Jesus to the world in Matt 18.2 when he says: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." I see a big difference here in the phrase "like little children" and the word "childish", don't you? "Childish" has to do with selfishness, disobedience, fear, jealousy, tantrums, hate, cheating, stealing and all the other childish things we were usually punished for by our parents or other authority. "Child-like behavior" on the other hand takes us to faith, belief, trust, hope, joy, excitement, obedience, forgiveness, sacrifice, love, humility and many other beautiful traits of character that pleased our parents or other authority.

The Apostle, "born out of season", writes to the church in Corinth at 1 Cor 13.11 about childish behavior: "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me." Oh, the beauty of life's transition thru Christ our Lord: bearing the fruit of the vine (John 15.5); bearing our own cross daily (Luk 9.23); bearing the load of another (Gal 6.2). Mature, responsible, obedient and hard-working citizens now exist in God's kingdom so that entrance is guaranteed for eternity! In doing so we become "like little children"—born sons of the Living God! (1John 3) Sj-2/15