

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

July 28, 2019

“Herald of The Messiah”

8:00 ~ Service - Communion is for all Christians

9:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school

10:30 ~ Service with the King's Kid's - Communion is for all Christians

NEWS

Church Camp August 23rd to the 25th

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ www.myaletheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

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Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, secretary@myaletheia.com, kids@myaletheia.com

- 1) Who are the children calling out and who are the children refusing to play?
- 2) In what way will it be “More tolerable” for Sodom than for Capernaum?
- 3) What did Jesus mean by “Infants”?

MATTHEW 11:16-19 ~ ¹⁶NASB “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children, ¹⁷and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ ¹⁸“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ ¹⁹“The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

Jesus started talking about _____ to the Kingdom and those proclaiming it, in the last chapter. Now, He’s narrowed His focus to Himself and John - that’s our context.

Jesus clearly stated in verse 16 that He was going to make a

_____.

The tendency is to take it allegorically by _____ Jesus and John into the story.

When all the games, as indicated by the two extremes, are _____, it doesn't mean that the people don't want to play those games, it means they don't really want to play _____.

This is a reproach of their _____. An _____ that leads to fiery judgment.

The charge against John was _____. We _____ the qualities of a person we disdain, in order to caricaturize them into someone we can more easily dismiss.

Likewise, Jesus' lifestyle was intentionally and grossly _____ to make it easy to dismiss Him.

Amplifying a person's perceived _____ allows us to vilify them. Vilified enough, we succeed in dehumanizing them, and once dehumanized, the real atrocities begin.

Jesus' point was it wouldn't have mattered how John did ministry or how Jesus did ministry - the people did not want to _____.

The "Son of Man" title here, it is pointing to final _____ of those who have the "I refuse to play" attitude.

The double use of “Man” points to their _____ to reconcile Immanuel as a man.

Jesus closed with an axiom that again indicates final _____.

MATTHEW 11:20-24 ~ ²⁰NASB Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²“Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. ²³“And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴“Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”

The Judgment alluded to previously is now explicit. The “Denouncement” is a rebuke, but even more it is a _____. How did they bring judgment upon themselves? They did not _____!

The Jews had been so well prepared for the Messiah and now that He was among them, they still refused to _____.

_____ is fundamental to the process of Salvation.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

MATTHEW 11:25&26 ~ ²⁵NASB At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶"Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

This is a praise-prayer that was spoken publicly for the benefit of the people. In it Jesus is saying that _____ comes from recognizing your need. A thing that requires humility.

It requires a person to be _____ enough to cry out for help, rather than trying to do for themselves.

While wise and intelligent people are trying to figure it out and trying to devise a way to save themselves, the infant simply _____ (Matthew 18:3; 19:14, Mark 10:15, Luke 18:17).

Jesus juxtaposed God's Sovereign _____ and human _____ (Philippians 2:12). People will never be able to save themselves, forcing their way into Heaven - they more they try, the further they push God away.

Jesus was not suggesting that Christians be naïve, uneducated and dumb... (Colossians 1:28, etc.). Nor was He saying that we are we to remain infants in our thinking... (I Corinthians 14:20, Hebrews 5:13).

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 11c ~ 072819

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW

A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship



We left off last week with Jesus explaining to the crowds that John the Baptist was the one prophesied to come in advance of the Messiah to pave His way.

John's ministry was one of repentance. Those who were humble enough to acknowledge that they could not save themselves, repented and allowed John to baptize them.

Luke 7:29&30 tells us that those who were baptized were those able to accept Jesus' Words, while those who refused to be baptized were those who refused God's purpose for them by rejecting Jesus.

Say what you want about John, the fact remains, that he did pave the way for Jesus.



Matthew 11:16-19 ~ 16NASB “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children, 17and say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ 18“For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ 19““The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

This is another passage that results in a lot of bizarre interpretations. Even so, as I read the verses, they no

doubt formed an impression in your mind... that I'll bet was basically correct.

If we keep things in context and don't get distracted from the rhetorical point Jesus was making, it becomes quite straightforward.

As I said, Jesus just confirmed that John filled the most important role any human had ever been assigned. John was the final great prophet of the old order. All the prophets before him were preparing his way, so that he could prepare the way for Immanuel - God with us.

As such, John was a transitional character pointing to the new order to be established by God Himself through His Anointed One - Jesus - the Messiah - the Word, or Message, or Revelation of the Living God, made flesh.

Jesus made it abundantly clear that they were in that transitional period - "From the days of John the Baptist until now," Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence." That means that the Kingdom of Heaven was already present, otherwise, how could it suffer violence?

The Kingdom of Heaven was, at that time, presently, being established by Jesus, the One, John directed the people to, but it was being actively and violently opposed.

In pointing that out, Jesus picked up the theme that He had been talking about, which was opposition to the Message, persecution of the messengers and violence against the Kingdom. The darkness expends every effort to stop the Light and so, hates all who are agents of the Light, all who proclaim the Light.

For well over half of chapter 10, Jesus had talked about it in relation to the 12 He sent out. From verse 16 through verse 42, that's 27 verses, devoted to the fact that God, His Message and His Kingdom are resisted by the world and so, the world will try to destroy any and all who promote such things.

Jesus alluded to the fact that it had always been that way. Matthew 11:13 not only means that John was the culmination of all the prophets of old, but they likewise suffered greatly for their part in preparing for the Kingdom to come.

In verse 12, as we already saw, Jesus explicitly stated that the opposition against Him and John had been fierce.

At the point of our first set of verses today, Jesus was talking about that opposition to both He and John. That's our context.

Jesus clearly stated in verse 16 that He was going to make a comparison.

It's not real - it's a mini-parable - it's an analogy. Remember, no analogy, even one extended as a parable by Jesus Himself, is perfect in all its particulars. It can't be - it's not possible. So never press an analogy beyond where the one making the analogy intends it to go. It is unbelievable how much bad doctrine comes from taking symbolic language beyond authorial intent - please don't do that.

"This generation," primarily means the people Jesus has been dealing with - the people, mostly Jewish, of Palestine 2,000 years ago. Now, since people are people, it has at least a loose application to everyone, everywhere, throughout time.



The mini parable has children orchestrating the play of other children who themselves are uninterested even though they are given options on both ends of the spectrum.

The tendency is to take it allegorically by inserting Jesus and John into the story.

It will not work. Jesus never intended for anyone to take it allegorically to that degree. He gives us precisely what we need to know to interpret the analogy.

The people are compared not just to the children sitting and calling out, but simultaneously to the ones refusing to play as well.

The symbolic meaning is simply that the children all act like they want to play, but they really don't. No matter what game is offered, they have already decided that they are not going to play. The ones calling the game - aren't playing, their sitting. They're trying to get the other kids to amuse them by doing the activity. The other kids aren't playing.

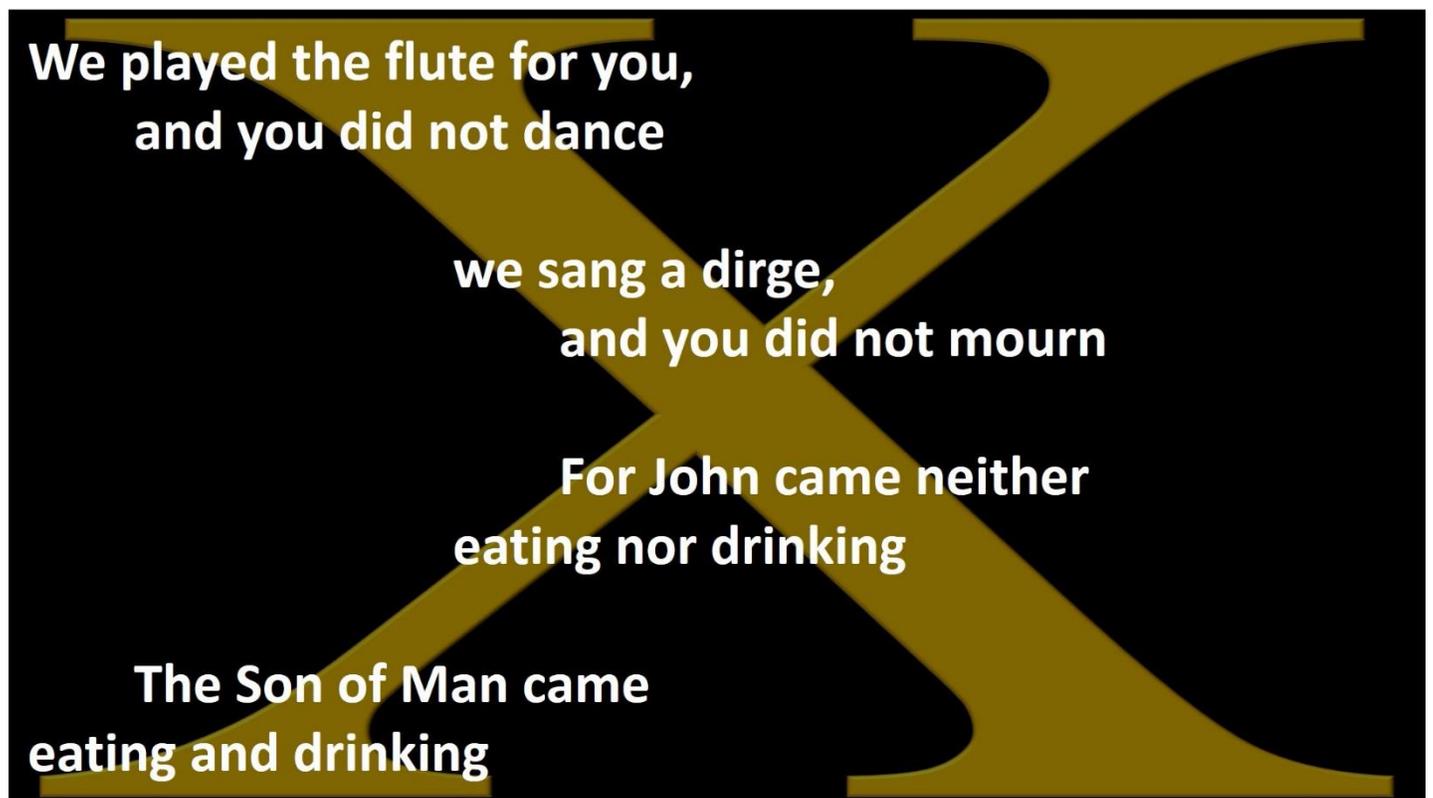
This has everything to do with an underlying attitude that the "Children" may not even be consciously aware of... When all the games, as indicated by the two extremes, are refused, it doesn't mean that they don't want to play those particular games, it means they don't really want to play at all.

This is important, because seeing it this way gives us insight into people. The Jews interacting with Jesus wanted to be seen as those eager to play, but since they didn't really want to play at all they make excuses.

Well, I would play, but I don't like to dance. I would play, but I don't like to mourn. Jesus' point was none of them would play, regardless of what game was offered.

It is a heart hardened, not so much to what is offered, but to play at all. None want to play, but they all pretend that they do.

This is a stern rebuke - it is a reproach of their attitudes - attitudes that lead to fiery judgment as we'll see shortly.



Jesus then takes that meaning and applies it literally in a chiasmic structure with the mini parable. The happy

wedding game leading into the sad funeral game, then the aesthetic John leading into the joyful Jesus.

While we know that John's ministry was noted for his aestheticism, no frills, eating locusts with wild honey, wearing camel's hair clothes and living out in the wilderness... The charge against him is exaggerated.

John did eat and he did drink. It isn't just Jesus being hyperbolic, He is intentionally exaggerating to show the way the people exaggerated.

Just like today. We note someone we dislike, or for some reason want to distance ourselves from, and we exaggerate their qualities that we disdain in order to caricaturize them into some distorted effigy we can more easily dismiss.

John's self-deprivation was overblown to give people a free conscience in disregarding his Message.

Likewise, Jesus' lifestyle was intentionally and grossly misrepresented to make it easy to dismiss Him.

The outcome of amplifying a person's perceived faults is it allows you to more easily vilify them - they are in

league with the worst of sinners - they are evil - they - they are demon possessed!

Vilified enough they are thoroughly dehumanized and once dehumanized the real atrocities begin.

Incidentally, that is where our country is going. Unchecked, our current polarization will lead to civil war, which will include horrifying war crimes, torture, rape and genocide.

The real point Jesus was making was it would have made no difference how John did ministry or how Jesus did ministry - the people, by and large, did not want to play.

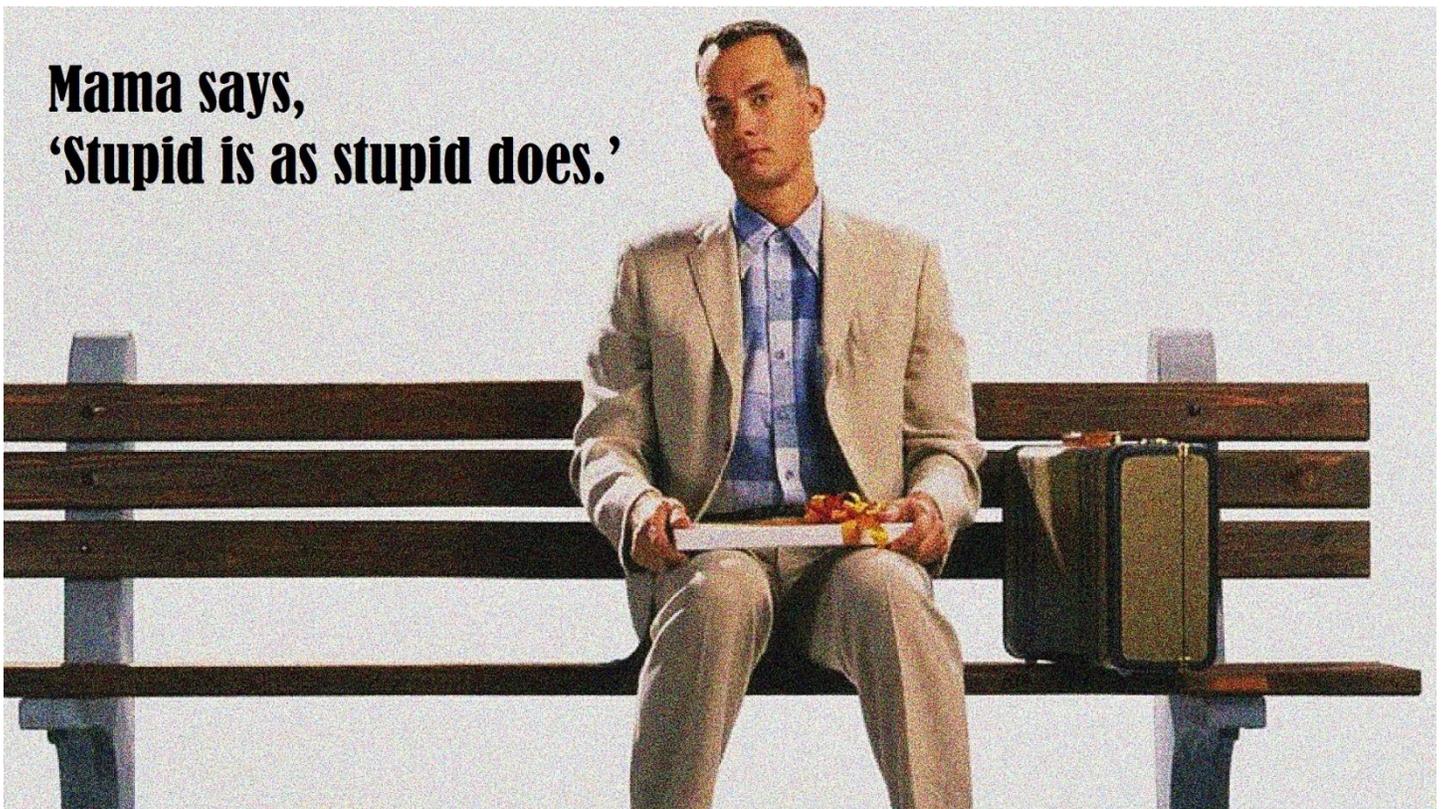


**THE FATHER HAS GIVEN JESUS THE
AUTHORITY TO JUDGE BECAUSE HE IS THE
SON OF MAN. JOHN 5:27**

It is also interesting that Jesus uses the “Son of Man” here. In this context, it is pointing to final judgment of those who have the “I refuse to play” attitude.

After the “Son of Man” title, Jesus used the word “Man” again. It is reflected in the NASB as, “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man (emphasis mine).’” The second occurrence of “Man” is completely unnecessary in Greek. It is there to emphasize that the “Anointed One of God,” Who we saw last week was God Himself - Immanuel - God with us... He came as a man, and the people could not grasp that concept. They were hung up on the fact that He was a man. 42bNET “Isn’t this

Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" (John 6:42). They couldn't accept that the Judge became just like them to prove His worthiness to Judge.



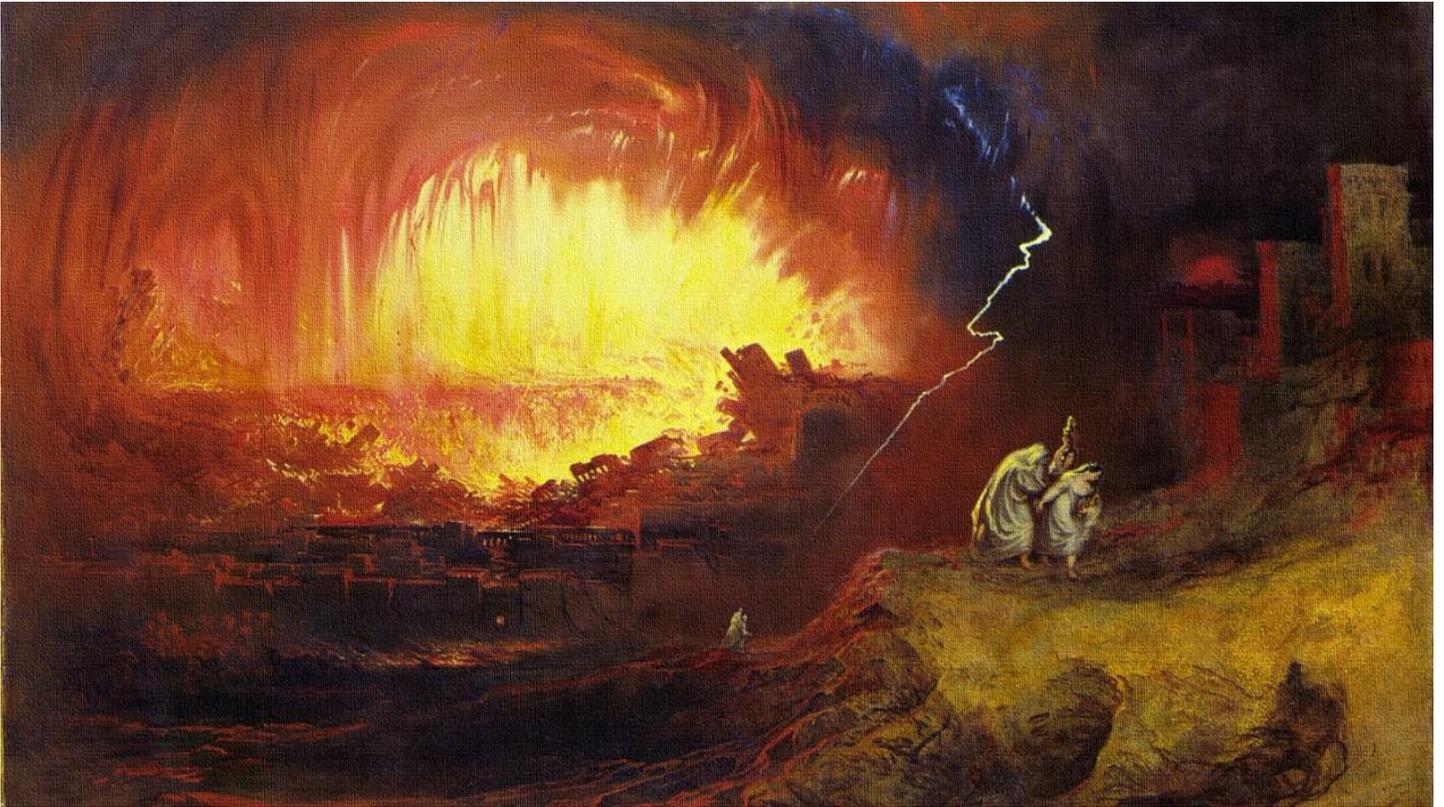
Jesus closed with an axiom. Because Jesus can be thought of as Wisdom itself, it is common to see that here, but in this spot, wisdom is the Truth of God in general, which included John's testimony.

This axiomatic saying again points us to the outcome for such people as described in these verses... Judgment Day will vindicate all who stood on the side

of Truth. All who accept John for who he was and accept Jesus for Who He is.

“The proof of the pudding is in the eating.” That’s an incredibly important concept in Christianity that we will see developed going forward. People don’t become Christians by intellectual agreement - it is always about eating the pudding - about playing the game - it’s about a leap of faith of active participation.

That’s the theme we’ve seen over this whole chapter. Will you play, regardless of the game, or will you refuse to play, regardless of the game? That’s the question.



Matthew 11:20-24 ~ 20NASB Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 21“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22“Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23“And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. 24“Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more

tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.”

As I said, there are consequences to the choice. The Judgment alluded to previously is now made explicit.

Again, your first impression upon hearing these verses read is probably on target. Let’s quickly clarify a few things...

The denouncement of cities is a Biblical way of talking about the majority of people inhabiting those cities - it does not mean the city itself per se or the entire population per se. In addition, the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum are representative of the whole of Israel, whereas the towns of Tyre, Sidon and Sodom are representative of the worst of the ungodly world system.

The “Denouncement” is a rebuke, a reproach, a reviling reprimand, but even more it is a cursing. Jesus cursed those people with the judgment that they brought upon themselves. And how did they bring this cursed judgment upon themselves? They did not repent!

They experienced Jesus the Manifested Word of the Living God among them teaching and ministering and performing miraculous signs and they still refused to play - they still refused to repent!

As such the concept is an easy one to grasp. The basic gist is that the world at large, the Gentile unbelievers at least had an excuse for their unrepentance; Israel, the chosen Children of God, did not.

The Jews had the prophets of old preparing them, they had the Holy Scriptures to guide them, they had John, the final prophet in the spirit of Elijah, pointing the way, and now they had Jesus Himself, the promised Messiah and they still refused to repent.



Repentance is fundamental to the process of Salvation. Because we have the complete Gospel, we can simply and correctly say that “Confessing Jesus,” is all that is required for eternal Salvation.

That’s because “Confessing Jesus” means to be one with Him mind, body and soul. It is to live externally what is true internally and that is a path 180 degrees from the non-Christian path.

There are only two paths and they run in opposite directions. Every non-Christian is on the path leading away from God and so they must by logical necessity

change direction as a Saved person going the other way on the path leading to God.

Repentance is an integral part of what it means to “Confess Jesus” and be saved. For the most part, the people around Jesus, refused to take that first step.

Refusing to repent is like refusing to say you’re sorry - it is always born out of human pride. I didn’t do anything wrong. If I did do something wrong, it wasn’t my fault. If it was my fault, it wasn’t as bad as what others do. I don’t need to repent, because I don’t need to change. I don’t need to say I’m sorry, because I don’t need to be forgiven. And the reason for all of that is, I’m basically a good person.

Thinking that you are basically good is human pride. It is never true. Oh, a person may be good relative to another person - generally not, but maybe.

Big deal! Being good relative to another person is like one mosquito being good relative to another mosquito - you’re still going to smash them both.

No one is even remotely good when compared to a perfectly good God - that’s the standard!

Salvation requires accepting the Savior's activity, which requires recognizing a need for Him to Save you... You fall off Dragon's Tail in Glacier. You luckily end up on a narrow ledge surrounded by cliffs in all directions. You have a couple of broken bones and you're bleeding. The Alert helicopter shows up and lowers a rescue-dude with a basket down to you. You're embarrassed that you need help - that's pride. So, you say, if you get out of my way, I can climb out of here on my own. That's stupid pride and will result in your death.

Instead, you put yourself in the rescue crew's hands and allow them to save you how they think best, because you know you can't climb out of there. You know you need the salvation they offer.

That's repentance - it is a humble acknowledgement that you've gotten yourself in a bad place and you need saving.

The Jews knew better than any other people on the planet that they needed Salvation - they forgot that Salvation comes on the Savior's terms, not on the recipient's terms.

Instead of humble repentance and humble acceptance of the Salvation provided, they were “Looking God’s gift horse in the mouth.”

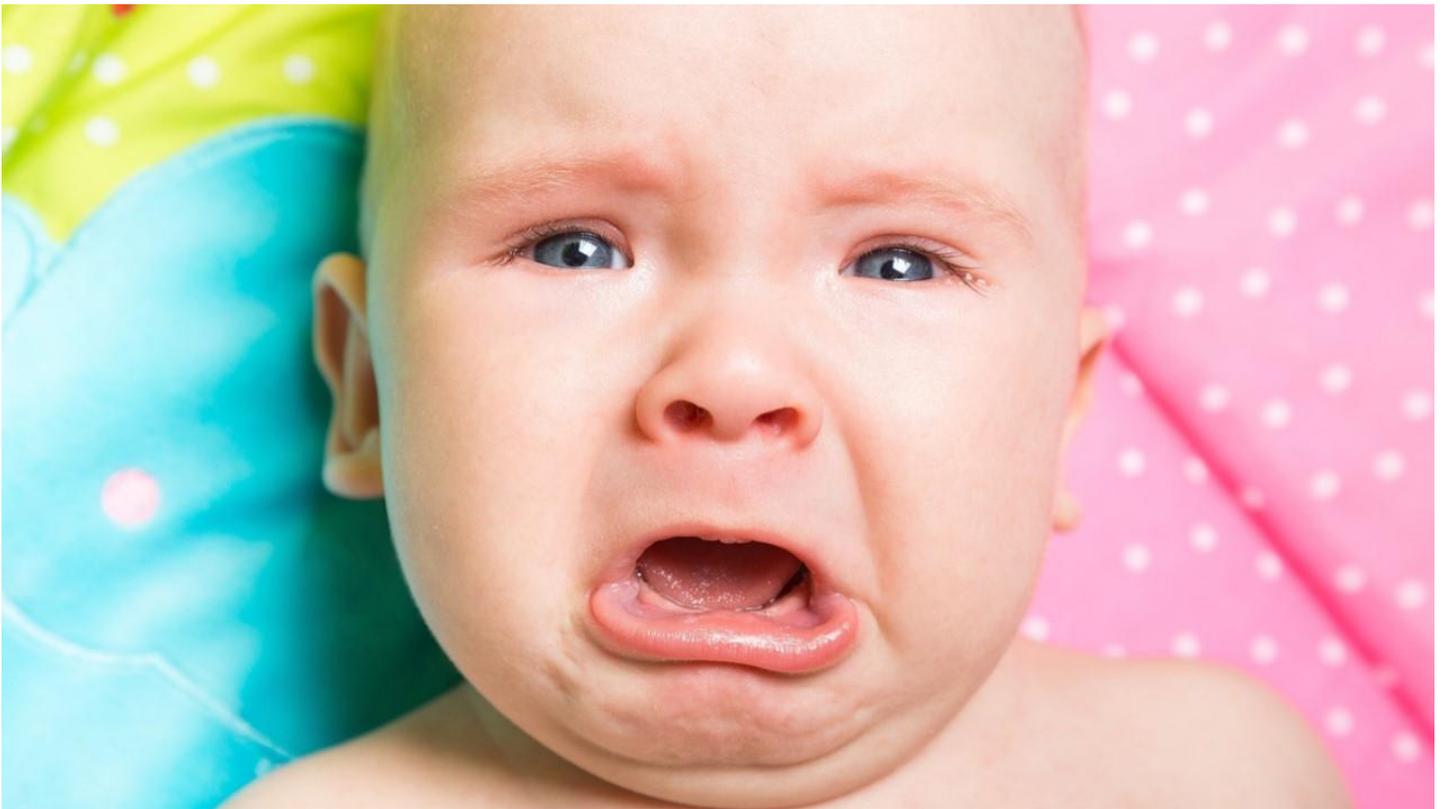
It would result in the most severe judgement. Tyre, Sidon and Sodom were condemned by God and rightly so, but it will be an even more certain, deserved and justified condemnation for those who have had an even better opportunity.



Matthew 11:25&26 ~ 25NASBA
At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent

and have revealed them to infants. 26“Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight.

This is a praise-prayer that was spoken publicly for the benefit of the people. In it He points out precisely what I've alluded to today. Repentance is the result of recognizing the need you're in, which requires a humble and honest assessment.



It requires a person to be infantile enough to cry out for help, rather than trying to do for themselves. A hungry infant doesn't walk to the kitchen and begin preparing a meal. They rely, 100%, on the help of another... And they are zero % embarrassed about it!

A person must put away all their human resources, talents, abilities, their wisdom, education and intelligence, and instead humbly cry out to the only one who can possibly save them.

I'm at the end of my proverbial rope Lord, and I completely fall on Your Gracious Mercy - please save me. It is an end of self-sufficiency.

Such a person is not going to quibble about the method or means of the salvation provided - they are just going to eagerly and gratefully accept it... That's the point!

While wise and intelligent people are trying to figure it out and trying to devise a way to save themselves or at least contribute to their salvation the infant simply accepts.

That's what it is here, and that's what Jesus meant when He said, 17NASB "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all" (Matthew 18:3; 19:14, Mark 10:15, Luke 18:17).



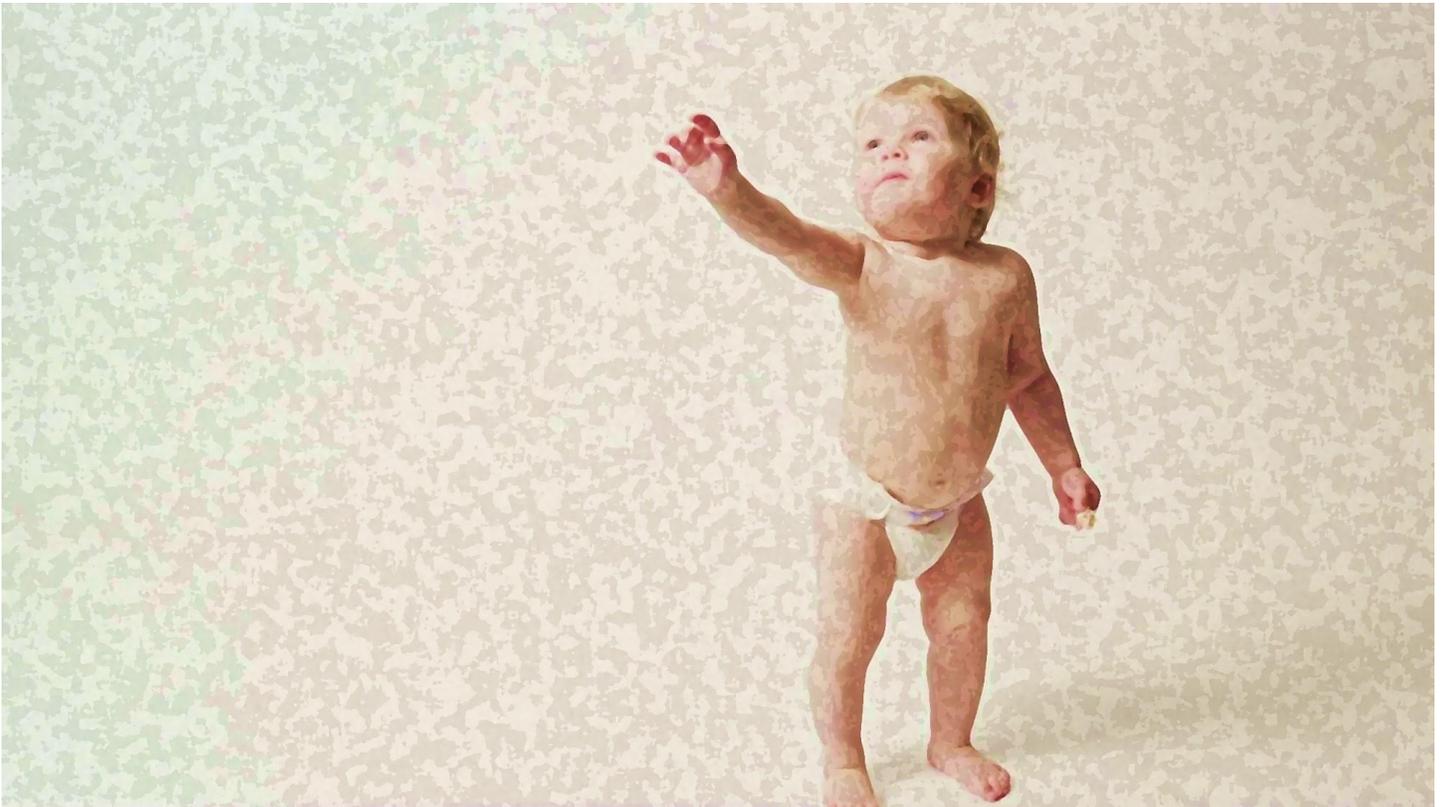
Are you good enough? Is your halo shiny enough and your wings big enough, to get into heaven?

No one can think their way into Heaven - it isn't an equation to be solved, or a puzzle to be worked, or a complex set of tasks to be completed.

Christianity isn't a means to an end and Heaven isn't a destination to reach - everything in the Bible screams relationship.

People fear that, but it is vital to comprehend that Christianity is a relationship with the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit... The Kingdom of Heaven isn't a place, it's a connection.

No one can be in a relationship without being in a relationship. This relationship is one of Father - child. You can't be in that relationship if your pride won't let you be a child!



An infant in this case, represents people so unashamedly and unabashedly humble they don't even make a pretense of trying to do for themselves, they cry out for help. An infant in this case, represents people so humble they are unaffected by propriety, protocol and etiquette to the point that they simply reach out and touch the face of God.

Jesus isn't saying you need to be stupid; He's saying you need to be humble. More on that later, but while we're here we need to recognize how unbelievably comfortable Jesus was in juxtaposing God's Sovereign Will and human responsibility.

Most Christians are uncomfortable with both and to one degree or another they try to force it to be one or the other. Where we have a problem - God doesn't. Philippians 2:12, 12ESV "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." That's 100% human responsibility to act - to obey - to do with real consequences. It is immediately followed by verse 13, 13ESV "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." That is 100% God's Sovereign Will.

It is pleasing in the Father's sight in the sense that that is how God orchestrated things. People will never be able to save themselves, forcing their way into Heaven - they more they try, the further they push God away.

Only by trusting in Him and His Salvation can one be His child.



I said we'd be back, so please, understand that this has nothing to do with wisdom, education and intelligence as such - it is about the attitude of self-sufficiency that often comes with it.

Jesus is certainly is not suggesting that Christians be naïve, uneducated and dumb... That is counter to many other Bible passages (Colossians 1:28, etc.). Nor was He saying that we are we to remain infants in our thinking, which again, is contradictory to other Scripture (I Corinthians 14:20, Hebrews 5:13).

There are Christians, who because of this passage and others, disdain education or learning too much. They think it hinders the flow of the Holy Spirit if you know too much or plan things out. That thinking is unbiblical nonsense, but they don't know that, because they never learned any better.

The point Jesus is making is that we can never allow our human resources, talents and abilities, our wisdom, education and intelligence, to puff us up, make us arrogant, cause us to feel like we've achieved something - especially when it comes to our own salvation, even in part.



Never rely on yourself - rely solely on God. No matter how mature you become, and you should become mature, always trust Him like a small child.

So, devote yourself to learning, but even more to love (I Corinthians 8:1). Godly love - Agapê - is always humble and it is always grateful.

I am completely unaware of a Bible character who was both humble and grateful who went wrong. I have never met a Christian who remained humble and grateful who has fallen away from the Faith.

My very best advice is to make sure that every day you are humble and grateful. That attitude is an integral feature of Godly love that is manifested in the person filled with the Holy Spirit.