

A Study of the Book of Matthew: Chapter 18 v. 1-5

- **18:1 “At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”**
 - The disciples have asked Jesus a very revealing question: **“Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”**
 - Why do you think the disciples might ask this question?
 - The very fact that they are asking the question shows that they do not yet understand that Jesus has not come to set up His kingdom on earth at this time.
 - **John 18:36**
 - Matthew skips the set-up to the question the disciples ask Jesus in this verse.
 - Mark and Luke reveal that the disciples were disputing with each other about who among them was the greatest.
 - **Mark 9:33-34**
 - **Luke 9:46**
 - Jesus' response becomes the foundation for the rest of the chapter.

- **18:2 “Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,”**
 - Jesus begins to answer their question by calling a little child to come over to Him.
 - What position did children hold during this time?
 - Jesus calls a child to Him and puts that child in the middle of the group of disciples as they are talking to illustrate a point regarding the kingdom of heaven.

- **18:3 “and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.’”**
 - **“unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”**
 - The disciples had asked Jesus a question that came from their own disputes about who among them was the greatest.

- They wanted to know who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
 - Jesus answers by telling them that they need to become like the least powerful members of society or they would not even enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - What does he mean by **“become as little children?”**
- **18:4 - “Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”**
 - What does it mean to humble oneself like a child?
 - Humble = subjecting yourself to the will of another.
 - How is this different from the disciple’s attitude?
 - **1 Peter 5:6**
 - **“greatest in the kingdom of heaven”**
 - How does one become great in God’s kingdom?
- **18:5 - “Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.”**
 - Jesus had earlier applied this to the disciples (**Mt 10:40**), but now does so with the child.
 - **Matthew 10:40-42**
 - How does this fit with **Matthew 25:35-40**?