

(Matt. 19:13) – *“THEN WERE THERE BROUGHT UNTO HIM LITTLE CHILDREN.”* We learn from Luke 18:15-16 that there were infants among these children. The parents desired that the Lord *“PUT HIS HANDS ON THEM, AND PRAY.”* We are not told exactly what the parents had in mind or even if they were true believers in Christ as Lord and Savior. It could be that the children were sick, and the parents desired the Lord to heal them. Also, the laying on of hands was a ceremonial act indicating a conveyance of blessings (Gen. 48:14). Whatever the case, it is absurd to assume that these infants were saved and that the Lord was sprinkling them in some sort of “infant baptism.” That would contradict the whole of Scripture that tells us how salvation is by God’s grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ alone, and baptism is by immersion in water for believers to confess their union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. *“AND THE DISCIPLES REBUKED THEM”* – When the disciples rebuked the parents for bringing their children, the Lord was displeased and rebuked them.

(Matt. 19:14-15) – He said, *“SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN, AND FORBID THEM NOT, TO COME UNTO ME: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.”* These children were typical of sinners saved by God’s grace. Just as small children have no ability to save, protect, or provide for themselves, so we, as sinful and depraved people, have no ability to save, protect, or provide for ourselves in spiritual and eternal matters. Our salvation is totally by the free, sovereign, and invincible grace of God and based upon the merits of Christ’s obedience unto death as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer (cf. Matt. 18:1-6). *“AND HE LAID HIS HANDS ON THEM, AND DEPARTED THENCE”* – Unless the Lord lays His hands on us in spiritual power, we will not enter into the kingdom (John 3:3-7).

(Matt. 19:16) – A man came to the Savior to ask a question. Luke tells us that the man was a “ruler.” Mark tells us that he came “running” and he “kneeled” before Jesus indicating zeal and great respect (Mark 10:17). *“GOOD MASTER”* means “good teacher,” but not as God manifest in the flesh. *“WHAT GOOD THING SHALL I DO, THAT I MAY HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?”* His question revealed that, like all of us by nature, he was concerned about eternal life, but he thought that he could earn it by his good works. He had a zeal of God, and going about to establish his own righteousness, he had not (and would not) submit himself to the righteousness of God (Rom. 10:1-3). He did not realize that eternal life cannot be earned by our works. It is a gift from God in Christ (Rom. 4:5; 6:23; John 6:67-68; 10:27-28; 17:2).

(Matt. 19:17) – *“WHY CALLEST THOU ME GOOD?”* – Only God is good. The law taught that all people are sinners in whom there is no goodness (Rom. 3:10-12). So, Christ said,

“Why do you call me good if you do not believe that I am God, *‘THERE IS NONE GOOD BUT ONE, THAT IS, GOD.’*” The Savior then continued to answer the man according to the law – “*BUT IF THOU WILT ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.*” Christ was in no way saying that this man could be saved by works of the law, but he was showing that if anyone could be saved by works, that person would have to keep the law perfectly without any sin whatsoever (Rom. 2:1-27; Gal. 3:10). The least sin renders salvation impossible for any who seek salvation by their works. Salvation is not by deeds of the law (Rom. 3:20) but by God’s grace in righteousness that Christ alone worked out by His obedience unto death for His people (Rom. 3:21-27; 4:1-8; 10:4; Eph. 2:8-10). In sovereign grace, God chose a people unto salvation (Rom. 11:5), justified and redeemed them from the curse of the law by the substitutionary death of Christ (Gal. 3:13), and regenerates them by the power of His Spirit through the instrument of the Gospel (Eph. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:23-25).

(Matt. 19:18-20) – When the man asked “*WHICH*” of the commandments, Christ quoted the second table of the law summing up our duty to love our neighbors as we love ourselves (Lev. 19:18). The reason for this is that it is easy for people to claim to love God Whom they have not seen but not so to claim love for brethren whom we must see and live with daily (1 John 4:20). The young man replied, “*ALL THESE THINGS HAVE I KEPT FROM MY YOUTH UP: WHAT LACK I YET?*” This revealed his misunderstanding of the law as he had been taught wrongly that he could keep the letter of the law (cf. Paul in Php. 3:4-6). He was not lacking in human morality, nor religious zeal, sincerity, and duty. He was lacking in the perfection of righteousness that can only be found in Christ and His righteousness imputed and received by God-given faith in Christ. This is the plight of all people by nature, and it cannot be remedied by our efforts to keep the law. It can only be remedied by looking to and resting in Christ for all righteousness and eternal life.

(Matt. 19:21) – The young man boasted that he loved his neighbor as himself. Therefore, Christ put him to a test – “*IF THOU WILT BE PERFECT, GO AND SELL THAT THOU HAST, AND GIVE TO THE POOR, AND THOU SHALT HAVE TREASURE IN HEAVEN; AND COME AND FOLLOW ME.*” Christ was not telling him that he could be saved by his works, but that he lacked faith in Christ Who is the only way of salvation for sinners. The man’s lack of faith in Christ proved that he had no righteousness before God, and that the righteousness he claimed was not good enough. Christ’s statement here was to show the man that the law requires a perfect righteousness which no sinner can attain by his attempts to keep the law (cf. Matt. 5:20). The law was given to show those to whom it was given their sinfulness and the impossibility of salvation by their works. It requires a perfect love that would give up all for the benefit of our neighbors, even our worst enemies. So, the bottom line is that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes” (Rom. 10:4).