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By Dan Maines

## **Matthew 18**

### **Matthew 18:1-6**

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And He called a child to Himself and set him among them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you change and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. So whoever will humble himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name, receives Me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it is

better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depth of the sea."

† The disciples argued over greatness, but Jesus redefined greatness as humility.

† The child symbolized dependence and simplicity, qualities required for the kingdom.

† Causing the weak to stumble brought a warning of severe judgment, which would soon fall on Israel's corrupt leaders.

### **Matthew 18:7-9**

"Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to that person through whom the stumbling block comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away from you; it is better for you to enter life crippled or limping, than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away from you; it is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fiery hell."

† Stumbling blocks were guaranteed, but judgment was certain for those who caused them.

† The call to cut off sin showed the seriousness of covenant faithfulness.

† The fiery judgment pointed to the covenantal wrath coming upon Jerusalem.

### **Matthew 18:10-14**

"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven. What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has strayed, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go and search for the one that is straying? And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that have not gone astray. So it is not the will of your

Father who is in heaven for one of these little ones to perish."

† God values every believer, especially the weak and vulnerable.

† The shepherd parable revealed God's seeking love for His people.

† Unlike the leaders who devoured the flock, Jesus cared for every sheep.

### **Matthew 18:15-20**

"Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that on the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be confirmed. And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, he is to be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth shall have been released in heaven. Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

† Jesus gave the process for dealing with sin, rooted in Old Testament witness principles.

† Discipline was for restoration, not condemnation, but unrepentance meant separation.

† Authority to bind and release was covenantal, showing heaven's agreement with the church's faithful judgments.

### **Matthew 18:21-35**

Then Peter came up and said to Him, "Lord, how many times shall my brother sin against me, and I still forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy-seven times. For this reason the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts

with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his master commanded that he be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' And the master of that slave felt compassion, and he released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.' So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' But he was unwilling, and went and threw him in prison until he would pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved, and they came and reported to their master all that had happened. Then summoning him, his master said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' And his master, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he would repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

† Forgiveness was not limited but must mirror God's unlimited grace.

† The parable warned that those who receive mercy must show mercy.

† Israel's leaders, forgiven much, refused to forgive others, bringing wrath on themselves in AD 70.

### **How it applies to us today:**

† Matthew 18 teaches humility, forgiveness, discipline, and God's care for the weak. In the fulfilled perspective, the warnings of judgment fell on Israel's corrupt generation, but the principles remain timeless. We live in the fulfilled kingdom,

called to humble faith like children, to protect and restore the vulnerable, to forgive endlessly, and to exercise covenantal responsibility as Christ's body, knowing He is present with His people.

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

### **Source Index**

† Josephus, Antiquities 18.5.2; Wars 5.10

† Mishnah, Ketubot 4.2

† Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 49

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.13.3

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