

Text -

Matthew 18:23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

Romans 14:7-12 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Introduction: To give account is to render stewardship and report back to a superior or appointing fellow. The import is to receive commendation or condemnation based on how one has managed resources kept in trust with him or her. We are each and severally managing the life, time, talent, wealth, knowledge, etc that God has placed in us on earth. The aim of this lesson is to show that little children (infants, toddlers, and pre-teens) are innocent before God, safe and saved whereas youths and everyone else are accountable. Subsequently, it is only young men/women and adults that are subject to the gospel call. That is why there is no infant baptism in the NT. By age of accountability, we mean there is a period of maturity in a one's life from which he or she may be fully held accountable for his or her actions.

In secular world this varies with countries; it used to be 21 but has been lowered in many places to 18 (especially for males). That is taken to be the voting age and that at which an offender may be tried by regular court. Anything lower is considered as being a Minor to be dealt with on Juvenile basis. In many countries, certain privileges are allowed those from 16 years (such as permission to drive or engage in sexual intimacy). In the most permissive places and religions such as where child marriage exists, even the girls must have passed puberty indicating such would have probably been in their early teens.

Accountability –This is to give details with aim to explain or justify decisions and actions taken. It is meant to expose lapses or mistakes and show that reasonable effort was made to the best of one's ability to mitigate such. For one to be held accountable such must be old and rational enough to know good from evil, discerning to know what is sin (a transgression of law). Thus babies and imbeciles can not fall into this category. The fact children do not know sin while young adults are accountable is evident in many passages:

Ecclesiastes 7:29 Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions

Ezekiel 28:12,15 Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty... Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.

Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:13-14 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. Matthew 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

1 Kings 3:7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

Isaiah 7:14-16 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Exodus 30:11-15 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) an half shekel shall be the offering of the LORD. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the LORD. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your souls.

Exodus 38:26 A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men.

Numbers 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

Numbers 14:26-31 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.

Numbers 32:10-13 And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD. And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

It is for this reason that parents and guardians must train children in the way of the Lord:

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 2:7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

1 Thessalonians 2:11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children,

1 Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

1 Timothy 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

1 Timothy 5:14 I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Hebrews 12:7-10 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Conclusion: The child from David's initial adultery with Bathsheba died and David spoke concerning its innocence and the fact that he would go meet the dead child later, he repented of his sin. Joseph and Daniel are good examples of young people who lived a god-fearing life. Paul and Timothy started out as disciples as a young man and youth respectively (Acts 7:58, 16:1, 1 Timothy 4:12). Young people everywhere are encouraged to turn to Christ.

Ecclesiastes 11:9-10 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

Luke 12:47-48 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.