

# SPIRITUAL AGES

Following the logic of the Kingdom of God, we need to remember that the Holy Spirit is rescuing people from the kingdom of darkness and bringing them into the Kingdom of Light. They are called, justified and sanctified, and sealed with the seal of salvation, the Holy Spirit. Through repentance, faith in Jesus, and baptism in water and spirit, they die to their old king and are born again into the new Kingdom: they are citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom, and become pilgrims on this earth.

Nevertheless, the bible calls them “babes in the faith.” What does that mean? It carries a lot of implications, as you can see on the following bible verses:

*Mateo 18:1-14 → At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child to Him and set him in their midst, and said, Truly I say to you, unless **you are converted and become as little children**, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore **whoever shall humble himself like this little child**, this one is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven. And whoever shall receive one such little child in My name receives Me. But whoever shall offend one of these little ones who believes in Me, it would be better for him that an ass's millstone were hung around his neck, and he be sunk in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For it is necessary that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to offend, cut them off and throw them from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if your eye offends you, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire. Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in Heaven their angels always behold the face of My Father in Heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them strays, does he not leave the ninety and nine and go into the mountains and seek the straying one? And if it happens that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety and nine which did not stray. Even so **it is not the will of your Father in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish**.*

First of all, we need to look at Jesus' words. He addressed two groups of people in this teaching: the ones to be converted, and the ones supposed to look after them. I have highlighted with bold letters some important references for the new converts, and underlined the references for the caretakers.

The Lord said that sinners need to convert **and** become as little children. When one converts, needs to consciously make the choice of learning and receiving instruction. He clarifies this idea by saying they need to **humble themselves as a little child**. Later He rounds up the teaching by saying that **it is not the will of the Father that any of these little ones should perish**. But there is also another group of people in this story: the older brothers. They are called to receive these new brothers. The word used here in Greek speaks of consciously accepting something offered, and not just getting something by chance. He reinforces that if we receive them, we receive Him. Later he says that we should be very careful not to despise one of these little ones, and He compares them to weak or distracted sheep that lose the path and that the heart of the Father is to go after them when they get lost. If found, there is more joy for finding the lost one than for all the ones that are in the flock.

The letters of Paul and John expand on this idea as well:

*Hebrews 5:12-14 → For indeed because of the time, you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again what are the first principles of the oracles of God. And you have become in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone partaking of milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is an infant. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

*1 John 2:12-14 → I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are*

*strong, and the Word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

*1 Corinthians 3:1-2 → And I, brothers, could not speak to you as to spiritual ones, but as to fleshly, as to babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with solid food, for you were not yet able to bear it; nor are you able even now.*

*1 Peter 2:1-3 → Therefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envyings, and all evil speakings, desire the sincere milk of the Word, as newborn babes, so that you may grow by it; if truly you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

From these texts and many others, we can easily derive very practical conclusions:

SPIRITUAL BABIES	
SPIRITUAL DESCRIPTION	NEEDS
They have met God, and their sins have been forgiven (1 Joh 2:12-13)	They need time to grow (Heb 5:12) They need to learn the basics of the Word of God and how the gospel works (Heb 5:12-6:1, 1 Peter 2:1-3) They need to learn how to overcome their flesh, they are still battling sin (1 Cor 3:1-2) They need to learn the basics of skills (Heb 5:13; Mr 16:15-20)

SPIRITUAL YOUNGSTERS	
SPIRITUAL DESCRIPTION	NEEDS
They have overcome Satan (1 Joh 2:13-14) They are strong (1 Joh 2:14) They know and obey the Word of God (1 Joh 2:14)	They need to learn to eat solid food through practice and use (Heb 5:14) They need to deepen their relationship and understanding of God (Corinthians) They need to grow in wisdom (2 Timothy 3:10-11)

SPIRITUAL FATHERS	
SPIRITUAL DESCRIPTION	NEEDS
They understand the big picture of the Gospel; they know God more deeply (1 Joh 2:12-14) They can discern good from evil (Heb 5:14) They have skills (Heb 5:13; Mr 16:15-20)	They need to be sent (Matthew 28:18-20) They need to start their own families

To bring up a baby all the way from spiritual infancy to spiritual parenthood is what the bible calls discipleship. This newly-born citizens of the Kingdom of God need to be raised up and learn the ways of the Master within a functional loving family of brothers and sisters that care for each other.