

Exegetical Notes, Matthew 19:13-15
“Let Them Come to Me”

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Matthew 19:13-15

Verse 13

Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them.

- The phrase, “little children,” implies very young children.
- While it may seem logical that it was their mothers who brought these children to Jesus, we do not know who brought them to him.
- They were brought to Jesus that they might receive his blessing and that he might pray for them.
- The disciples rebuked those who brought the children, not the children themselves. We do not know why the disciples did this. Perhaps it was because they did not consider the children important enough to claim Jesus’ attention or, maybe they did not like the people who brought the children or were especially concerned about Jesus for some reason.

Verse 14

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

- Jesus countermanded the rebuke of the disciples and invited the children to come to him.
- The “kingdom of heaven” is the rule of God. It is not so much a place as it is an attitude. It is both a present and a future reality.
- Jesus said that the “kingdom of heaven” belongs to “such as” little children. What this suggests is that there is some quality about little children that makes the kingdom of Heaven theirs. It belongs to them, or rather, to SUCH AS little children. Scholars have speculated about this quality for generations. But the scripture does not define the

quality specifically. However, little children are so admired by Jesus that he says the kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like them.

Verse 15

When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

- Jesus took time to pray for and bless the little children who were brought to him. He broke his journey to do so and only continued on after the blessing was done.

[Point out that this is the second time Jesus has taken special attention of children. See Matthew 18:1-14.]

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