

Luke 18:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

Analysis

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them—parents brought brephe (βρέφη), 'babies' or 'infants,' to Jesus hina autōn haptētai (ἴνα αὐτῶν ἅπτηται) —'that he might touch them' for blessing. The disciples epetimōn autois (ἐπετίμων αὐτοῖς) —'rebuked them,' thinking infants unworthy of the Master's time.

This follows immediately after the Pharisee and tax collector parable. The disciples still think in terms of merit—who deserves Jesus's attention? Infants have zero religious credentials, no works to present, nothing but need. Yet Jesus welcomes them, illustrating that entrance to God's kingdom requires childlike dependence, not adult achievement. The disciples' rebuke reveals they haven't grasped Jesus's teaching about humility and grace.

Historical Context

First-century Jewish culture valued children but didn't grant them religious status until maturity. Children couldn't fulfill Torah commandments, participate in synagogue readings, or count toward a prayer minyan (quorum). Rabbis taught adults, not infants. Parents sought rabbinical blessings on children (like Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, Genesis 48), but the disciples thought Jesus too important to 'waste time' on those without religious standing. Jesus's response revolutionizes the kingdom's entrance requirements.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What does the disciples' rebuke reveal about their misunderstanding of kingdom entrance requirements?
2. How do infants illustrate the kind of humble dependence required to receive God's kingdom?
3. In what ways might you be acting like the disciples, thinking some people unworthy of Jesus's attention?

Interlinear Text

Προσέφερον δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ βρέφη ἵνα αὐτοῖς
they brought And them also G3588 infants that them
G4374 G1161 G846 G2532 G1025 G2443 G846

ἄπτηται· οἶδόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ ἐπετίμησαν
he would touch saw And G3588 when his disciples it they rebuked
G680 G1492 G1161 G3101 G2008

αὐτοῖς
them
G846

Additional Cross-References

1 Samuel 1:24 (Parallel theme): And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.

