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A WORLD-WIDE BROADCAST

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Dear Friend:

Are babies saved if they die?

God is working out a great purpose in our lives which very few people understand.

We mortal human beings were not born with perfect characters. We came into this world with a carnal mind which from birth is enmity against God's way (Rom. 8:8).

But God is developing perfect, spiritual character in us through experience and suffering. We have all heard the expression, "Well, he certainly learned his lesson that time!" Experience is a great teacher. We can profit from our mistakes if we "learn our lesson" and quit repeating those mistakes.

But most people find it hard to apply this principle to the spiritual realm because they don't know what salvation really is. God is not trying to save everyone now. Only certain ones are being "called." And they are not usually the wise, mighty, or noble (I Cor. 1:26). But no man, either small or great, can come to Christ ". . . except the Father . . . draw him . . ." (John 6:44). The call to salvation is a gift and then we must learn that our own way is wrong, repenting of it, accepting Christ as Saviour and acquiring God's character to fit us to become sons of God -- MEMBERS of the GODHEAD -- and kings and priests under Jesus Christ in the Kingdom of God (Rev. 5:10).

Failing to understand this, some people believe that little children and babies are "saved" if they die. To justify this teaching, they refer to Matthew 18:3-6 which reads: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become AS little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself AS this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. . . ."

Notice that Jesus didn't say, "children are converted and will be greatest in the kingdom." He was speaking to His disciples, telling them to cultivate characteristics that little children ought to have. He knew that a normal, well-trained child will be humble before his parents and have implicit faith in their love, wisdom, and power to help him. Christ was simply pointing out that His followers need this quality in order to inherit God's Kingdom.

Christ repeated this same principle when He said: ". . . Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. . . ." (Mark 10:13-16). It is the mature, converted Christian who humbles himself as a little child, keeps God's commandments and acquires God's character after a lifetime of experience, who has a right to eternal life in the family of God and enters into the gates of the eternal city (Rev. 22:14).

God's great purpose is that we learn the value of His ways through experience and trial and test and even suffering. Even Christ, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. 5:8). Before giving us eternal life, with all of its powers and responsibilities, God intends that we learn obedience to His law -- the right and happy way of life.

Little children have not had the opportunity for this spiritual growth. They were born mortal and have had no eternal life in them because they did not receive the Spirit, or life, of God which imparts eternal life. "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11). Little children die without having been begotten by this Spirit, or life, of God.

We read that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). Yet, He permits many little children to die without knowing the truth. Therefore, he would have to raise them from the dead and give them their first and only opportunity to gain eternal life!

All people -- young or old -- who have died in ignorance of God's laws and ways will be given their opportunity for salvation. This is the Great White Throne Judgment described in Revelation 20:12-13.

If you do not understand this encouraging truth, then write immediately for the article "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" which fully explains the subject.

God deals fairly and equally with every person. He does not have the hurried and confusing way of "saving" people that misguided preachers have imagined. We need time to "grow in grace and knowledge." Everyone, including little children, needs character-development which comes before we inherit the precious gift of eternal life.

LETTER ANSWERING DEPARTMENT