



From Age to Age the Same: A Bible Study

Isaiah 46:3-4, 8-10

In ancient times, the Lord God addressed His people as children. Yet God's grace endures in every age of human history and in every age of human existence. His truth and love are as applicable and effective today as in the epic eras of the Scriptures and church history. His work of creating, labor of redeeming, and activity of calling provide as much sanctity and significance to human persons at the margins of life as in the middle. His incarnation and crucifixion, resurrection and forgiveness respect and protect human dignity undiminished from the invisible miracle of conception to the moment of natural death. Age, appearance, ability, affliction, or iniquity can neither improve any person's brokenness nor impair any person's preciousness. The Savior's presence embraces and the Father's power sustains those complicit in crimes against life, those vulnerable to them, and those advocating for better ways. Likewise, Lutherans For Life's Gospel-motivated message and ministry remain as vital and vibrant as ever.

1. What makes the people of Israel like children—even into adulthood and old age?

Isaiah 49:1 –

Isaiah 1:2 –

Isaiah 14:10 –

Isaiah 53:6a –

2. What problems does childlikeness bring? What privileges does it bring?
3. What do we and all human beings, like Israel, have in common with unborn and infirm persons?

Psalms 51:5 –

Romans 5:12 –

John 15:5b-6 –

Ephesians 4:14 –



4. How does God draw near and deal with Israel in childlikeness?

Isaiah 9:6-7 –

Isaiah 53:5-7 –

Isaiah 66:12-13 –

Isaiah 40:11 –

5. What does Jesus have in common with the people of ancient Israel (and with us)?

John 1:14 –

Hebrews 4:15 –

Hebrews 2:17-18 –

Matthew 8:17 –

6. How does God draw near and deal with us in childlikeness?

Galatians 4:4-7 –

Luke 15:22-24, 31 –

Titus 3:4-7 –

Hebrews 12:5-7 –

7. How do our differing ages, appearances, and abilities affect God's approach?

Malachi 3:6 –

Hebrews 13:8 –

Psalm 103:13-14, 17 –

Acts 2:17-18 –



8. How does childlikeness affect a person's worth?

Mark 10:15-16 –

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 –

2 Corinthians 4:7, 10 –

Galatians 3:28 –

9. In what ways does this affect how we treat each other, especially the least of these?



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From Age to Age the Same: A Bible Study/Leader's Guide

Isaiah 46:3-4, 8-10

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1. What makes the people of Israel like children—even into adulthood and old age?

Isaiah 49:1 – Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name.

Isaiah 1:2 – Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord has spoken: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me."

Isaiah 14:10 – "All of them will answer and say to you: 'You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!'"

Isaiah 53:6a – All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way.

Israel's people do not belong to themselves. They have been brought forth by the Lord. He retains responsibility for them and authority over them. Yet they remain rebellious against His commands and plans and promises for them. They behave selfishly and serve their own appetites. They must helplessly rely upon His will and His Word both for survival and for salvation, whatever their physical or intellectual abilities might be.



2. What problems does childlikeness bring? What privileges does it bring?

Childlikeness involves vulnerability. It means having to answer to somebody else and getting overwhelmed even by your own impulses. It makes you naïve but at the same time narcissistic. It excludes you from certain contexts and activities because of the mind's immaturity and the body's awkwardness. It usually entails more questions than answers. On the other hand, childlikeness comes with a delightful innocence and almost unlimited imagination. It holds a wide-open future full of options and opportunities. It has the security of operating under sheltered supervision. It offers more play than labor and more receiving than giving.

3. What do we and all human beings, like Israel, have in common with unborn and infirm persons?

Psalm 51:5 – Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Romans 5:12 – Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

John 15:5b-6 – [A]part from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

Ephesians 4:14 – [S]o that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

The genetic condition of sinfulness has left us helpless, every one, since the first moment of our conception. At every moment of our existence we stand in need of Someone Else to intervene on our behalf and save us. Our bodies and hearts have all been compromised, impaired, and corrupted to one degree or another, sometimes visibly, sometimes invisibly, but terminally in every case. Without God's compassion, presence, and power, none of us can manage so much as a blink, breath, or heartbeat. The world, the flesh, the devil, and death have their way with each of us just as much as if we were an invalid or infantile.

4. How does God draw near and deal with Israel in childlikeness?



Isaiah 9:6-7 – For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 53:5-7 – But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

Isaiah 66:12-13 – For thus says the Lord: “Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip, and bounced upon her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you; you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 40:11 – He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The Lord God Almighty handles His people with a toddler’s relentlessness but as gently as infant fingers. He delivers mercy instead of dismissing them and displays patience rather than punishment. He continually comes humbly, even incarnating Himself as a baby, though they deserve Him no-holds-barred. His single-minded fixation on cradling them drives Him to sacrifice for their forgiveness and temper His demands with delicateness. He fathers them tenderly and mothers them passionately.

5. What does Jesus have in common with the people of ancient Israel (and with us)?

John 1:14 – And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 4:15 – For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.



Hebrews 2:17-18 – Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Matthew 8:17 – This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

Jesus became not just Jewish but human, subject to getting weak and weary as much as anyone else. He faced the same anxieties, aches, and afflictions as all human beings. He felt hungry and angry and lonely. He experienced the full range of our temptations and sorrows. And from His conception as an embryo until His death in an incapable condition, He depended entirely upon the favor of the Heavenly Father.

6. How does God draw near and deal with us in childlikeness?

Galatians 4:4-7 – But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Luke 15:22-24, 31 – But the father said to his servants, “Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate ... And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

Titus 3:4-7 – But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Hebrews 12:5-7 – And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he



loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

In keeping with His incarnation among us, He does not simply unleash a succession of supernatural acts and reality-altering apocalyptic power. With the subtle touch of His Word and His Sacraments, our Lord and Savior adopts us into His household and gives us His name and inheritance so that we may reign alongside Him over His kingdom in the new creation. In the grace of creating, redeeming, and calling every human being, He receives and rejoices over each one of us from our earliest instant of existence until our entrance into eternity, not only protecting and providing for us, but also instructing and strengthening us all the way.

7. How do our differing ages, appearances, and abilities affect God’s approach?

Malachi 3:6 – For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Hebrews 13:8 – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Psalms 103:13-14, 17 – As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. ... But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children.

Acts 2:17-18 – “And in the last days it shall be,” God declares, “that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.”

They don’t. Our sanctity and significance come from what God invests in us and not from anything we assess or achieve of ourselves. He loves and values us as much in the depth of our deprivation and need as He does at the height of our productivity. Even our flaws and failures, our sin and death, cannot undermine His devotion to us. He bends heaven and arranges earth to serve our survival and salvation, no matter where we’ve come from or what we’ve done. So He desperately desires to rescue from guilt and regret those who have permitted, promoted, or participated in



violence against life, like assisted suicide, embryo destruction, or abortion. Jesus died and rose to forgive all these sins and more and to bring good from our lives.

8. How does childlikeness affect a person's worth?

Mark 10:15-16 – “Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 – But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

2 Corinthians 4:7, 10 – But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us...always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.

Galatians 3:28 – There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

If anything, we are even more dear to God at the edges of life and ability than at our best moments. He proclaims that infants and persons with impairments are of particular importance and presents them as emblematic of us all. He makes His power perfect in human weakness. The more our pride decreases, the more His might increases in us. He would have everyone recognize how much we must rely on Him for survival and salvation.

9. In what ways does this affect how we treat each other, especially the least of these?

We treasure and protect every human being as precious to God and privilege to us. We speak truth and show love both to and for the ones vulnerable to violence against life or victims of it, including those who themselves make the decisions. Whether by conversation or by servanthood, in relationships, congregations, and communities both personal and public, we declare and demonstrate the Gospel message with courage and compassion to change hearts and save lives.



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