

PLAYING MAKE BELIEVE

The other day I was watching our 2-year old grandson **Playing Make Believe**. He started by wearing adult shoes and progressed to hats, necklaces, and anything else he could find.

What was he doing? He was **Playing Make Believe** of the adult world. He was being a normal child. He was acting instinctively from a child's observation of the adult world to which he was headed. He wasn't mature enough to understand how it all worked. Therefore he was **Playing Make Believe** about it.

After instructing His disciples regarding their first missionary evangelism trip, Jesus went on a private missionary evangelism trip (Matt.11:1).

Our lesson text occurred during this trip. It occurred when some of the disciples of John Baptist (JB) interrupted one of Jesus' bible studies with a question from JB – "Are you the One who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" (Matt.11:3)

After receiving Jesus' answer they left, Jesus redirected His message to JB's role in the messianic redemptive plan of God (Matt.11:7-19).

Our lesson text comes from the **Amen** (truly I say to you) **section** of this study of JB's role in the messianic redemptive plan of God: "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." (Matt.11:11)

Then Jesus interjected His typical proverbial encouragement to Positive Volition to doctrinal truth – "He who has (echo / p.a.ptc) ears to hear, let him hear (akouo / p.a.impv.3ps)." (Matt.11:15)

Jesus followed by opening our lesson text with a question – "But to what shall I compare (homoioo / f.a.ind) this (tauten) generation (ten genean)?"

Jesus answered His own question – "It is **like children** sitting in the market places, who call out to the other children. And say, we played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn." (Matt.11:16-17)

WHY? They didn't have ears to hear.

We will study four aspects of the danger of Christian's Playing Make Believe in the world without "ears to hear" doctrinal truth that could transform their lives.

(Rom.12:2) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

1. I find it interesting that the two games the children were Playing Make Believe were weddings and funerals. Jesus ask, "what shall I compare this generation?"

This generation of His day was under the fourth cycle of divine discipline (Lev.26:23-26) and headed towards the fifth (Lev.26:27-33).

I'm afraid that the generation of our day is Playing Make Believe in the same two areas as the children of our lesson: wedding and funeral.

The children were Playing Make Believe with the wedding ceremony and with the funeral ceremony while the adults were Playing Make Believe with the **marriage and life after death**.

Today 90% of Americans marry. 50% of them get divorced. 70% of those who remarry get divorced.

These facts are a reminder that while this generation has ears, they do not want to hear doctrinal truth so as to lives transformed lives for time or for eternity – “And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.” (Heb.9:27)

2. **Jesus warned His generation of Playing Make Believe with religious works as a substitute for God grace salvation.**

(Rom.3:20-24) “Because by the **works of the Law** no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.” Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being **justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption** which is in Christ Jesus.”

Religious legalism verses grace Christianity – “**Why** do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. And He answered and said to them, ‘And **why** do you yourselves transgress the commandments of God for the sake of your traditions?’ (Matt.15:2-3)

“You **hypocrites** (pretender, play acting) rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you saying, ‘this people honors Me with their **lips**, but their **heart** is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrine the precepts of men.’” (Matt.15:7-9; Isa.29:13) (Matt.23:13-35) [woe to you hypocrites] (Matt.23:36-39) [national judgment]

3. **The generation of the messianic redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ rejected it for apostate religion**

(Matt.11:18-19) “For **John** came neither eating nor drinking, and **they say**, ‘He has a demon! The **Son of Man** came eating and drinking, and **they say**, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

They tried to discredit these messianic grace redemptive ministries by character assassination of lies – “In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” (2 Cor.2:11)

Doctrinal principle: Jesus always associated Himself with those who were candidates (PV) for the Good News of the gospel (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9).

4. **Jesus introduced this new proverb in our lesson text – “Wisdom is vindicated (dikaioo / a.p.ind 3ps) [justified by her deeds] (ton ergon).” (Matt.11:19b)**

When Luke recorded this same lesson in Luke 7:31-35, this new proverb was translated differently – “Wisdom is vindicated by all her children (ton teknon).”

Luke’s version was more in line with the illustration of the children - Playing Make Believe. In Luke’s version, we are told that we could learn much from the children by the adult games they mimic.

In Matthew’s version, we are told that we could learn much from the children by how they reflected the NV conduct of the adult world – “You did **not** dance and did **not** mourn.” They wouldn’t accept JB messianic ministry or Jesus as the messianic Savior but the children did (Ears to hear!)(Matt.18:1-11; 1 Cor.1:21-24).