

Who's Your Master?

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In his song entitled "Gotta Serve Somebody", Bob Dylan sang: "... *yes indeed you're gonna have to serve somebody; well it may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you're gonna have to serve somebody.*"

(quoted from the CBS record
"Slow Train Coming" by Bob Dylan)

This may seem like a very simple idea, but it has historical support that has been lost, ignored, or completely misunderstood. As a result, mankind does not realize the extent to which it has been deceived into serving the devil (Rev. 12:9). Due to this deception, there is much confusion about serious questions such as "why were we born?", "why do we have to die?", "what happens after death?", "does God exist?", "if He does, why is there so much suffering on this earth?" etc. These, and many other important questions, cannot be answered correctly due to a "spiritual slavery" that came into effect millennia ago. Similar to physical slavery, "spiritual slavery" deprives individuals of basic rights. In the case of spiritual slavery, the right to know the truth about "why were we born?", "why do we have to die?", etc., is obscured.

Unlike physical slavery, which often involves entrapment that is not associated with a choice made by an individual, spiritual slavery involves making choices that lead to a form of imprisonment which prevents an individual from seeing or hearing the correct answer to the questions mentioned previously. So, "how did we get into this situation?" and "how do we get out of this spiritual imprisonment?"

In order to answer these questions, we need to review specific choices made by our forefathers and the effect these have had ever since. In the

beginning of man's history, two choices were available. Choice #1 involved believing that the word of God is accurate, reliable, and to be trusted beyond any doubt, even if there appeared to be other alternatives. Choice #2 involved relying on one's ability to make the right decision without considering how God's word should be applied in any given situation. In essence, ignoring God's word because it cannot be "trusted". This choice was encouraged by a spirit-being who previously based his decisions on the word of God, but at some point rejected it. This spirit-being is referred to as "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17). By choosing #2, our forefathers forfeited the relationship they once had with the word of God, who is represented symbolically as "the tree of life" (Gen. 2:9). "The word of God" and "the Lord God" are often synonymous and used to describe a spirit-being who was created and taught by Almighty God. Eventually, this same spirit-being was given authority to create everything according to the will of Almighty God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with (toward) God, and the Word was (a) God. ²He was in the beginning with God (Almighty). ³All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made. ⁴In him was life (hence: tree of life), and the life was the light of men (Jn. 1:1-4; cf. Col. 1:16-17; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

It is important to note that the word "God" in the Hebrew language is plural (*elohim*), and can refer to any number of spirit-beings. Jesus Christ even pointed out that human beings are considered "gods" because of their future potential following repentance of sin (Jn. 10:34).


It should be apparent that "the tree of life", "the word of God", and "the Lord God" are terms that can be used to describe the spirit-being that later

became known as Jesus Christ. This explains many of the things that Christ said during his ministry on earth.

I (Christ) have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He (Almighty God) who sent me is true; and **I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him** (Jn. 8:26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Then Jesus said to them, "when you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but **as my Father taught me, I speak these things** (Jn. 8:28; emphasis added).

I speak what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have seen with your father (the devil; cf. Jn. 8:44) (Jn. 8:38; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).



ALWAYS LEARNING AND NEVER
ABLE TO COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE
OF THE TRUTH.
II Timothy 3:7

.... Therefore whatever I speak, **just as the Father has told me, so I speak** (Jn. 12:50b; emphasis added).

.... The words that I speak to you **I do not speak on my own authority**; but the Father who dwells in me does the works (Jn. 14:10b; emphasis added).

Therefore, the Word of God spoke according to what he had heard, and learned, from his heavenly Father. The Word of God also became flesh and died in order to provide everlasting life for every repentant sinner. This is the main reason he is also described as "the tree of life".

Jesus said to her, "**I am** the resurrection and **the life** (everlasting). He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live (Jn. 11:25; cf. 14:6; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back now to our forefathers. When they rejected the Word of God, they rejected Almighty God.

Jesus answered them and said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His (Almighty God's) who sent me (Jn. 7:16; cf. Jn. 5:19-30; Ed. note in parenthesis).

By not trusting Almighty God's word, our forefathers became slaves to sin. Sin is defined as the transgression of God's law (1Jn. 3:4).

Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin (which leads) to death, or of obedience to righteousness (Rom. 6:16; cf. Ps. 119:172; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Therefore, anyone who persists in living contrary to God's word cannot come to a correct understanding of life's perplexing questions because the answers are only available from God, and God will not offer assistance to those who have rejected Him.

Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2Tim. 3:7).

Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (Isa. 59:2).

To recap so far, our forefathers had two choices and if they made the wrong decision it would end up negatively affecting them. Not only would it negatively affect them, it would also create problems for future generations because

they would not have access to the only source of correct answers for life's perplexing questions. This lack of access is described using symbolic language in the following section of scripture, and it was the consequence for breaking God's command in Genesis 2:17.

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of **Us** (note: **plural**, denoting more than one spirit-being involved with creating; cf. Gen. 1:26), to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take again of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" – ²³therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24; Ed. note in parenthesis, emphasis added).



BUT BECAUSE I (CHRIST) TELL THE TRUTH, YOU DO NOT BELIEVE ME.

John 8:45; Ed. note in parenthesis.

Although our forefathers had access to the tree of life, this access was denied after they rejected God's word and placed their belief in the value system of a liar.

Jesus said to them (Jewish religious leaders), "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceeded forth (was created by) and came from God (Almighty); nor have I come of myself, but He sent me. ⁴³Why do you not understand my speech? **Because you are not able to listen to my word** (cf. Jn. 12:37-40). ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and the desires (value system) of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of

it." (Jn. 8:42-44; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Jesus Christ, as Almighty God's representative, has always spoken the truth (Heb. 13:8), while Satan stands for the exact opposite (Mt. 16:23; Mk. 8:33). Therefore, unless an individual is obeying every word of God, they will never come to a correct understanding of life's perplexing questions (Mt. 4:4).

But because I (Christ) tell the truth, you do not believe me (Jn. 8:45; Ed. note in parenthesis).

He who is of God (Almighty) hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God (Jn. 8:47; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Part of obeying God includes repentance of sins, and living a new life in accordance with every word of God (Rom. 6:4-7; Mt. 4:4). Until this occurs, every person is a slave to their master, Satan, whether they are cognizant of his influence in their lives or not.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself (give up previously held values), and take up his cross (Gr. *stauros* – upright stake), and (then) follow me (Mt. 16:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Taking up one's "stauros" includes the willingness to suffer, if necessary, in order to obey one's master. In the case of a Christian, it might involve being humiliated by those who follow Satan's values.

And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake (Ps. 119:172), you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled (Isa. 8:12)." ¹⁵But sanctify (set apart) Christ as Lord (your master) in your hearts, and always be ready to

give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil (1Pet. 3:13-17; cf. Php. 1:29; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ pointed out that anyone who is a slave of Satan, and his values, is incapable of ever knowing the truth of God.

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you (Jn. 15:15).



**THEREFORE, IF THE SON MAKES YOU
FREE, YOU SHALL BE FREE IN DEED.**

John 8:36

Having only two masters is not unique to the New Testament. The prophet Elijah warned the nation of Israel that they had to “get off the fence” and decide which “master” they were going to follow.

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal (pagan god, and part of Satan’s false system of worship), then follow him.” But the people answered him not a word (1Kgs. 18:21; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Society today is worse off than ancient Israel because they do not realize they have chosen Satan as their master. Even the majority of Christianity believes it is no longer necessary to obey God’s law and commandments.

Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (Jn. 8:34).

Again, it is due to Christ’s shed blood that sinners can be freed from the slavery of sin, which deprives those who are held by it to understand the answers to life’s perplexing questions.

Therefore, if the Son makes you free, you shall be free in deed (Jn. 8:36).

You were bought at a price (Christ’s death on our behalf); (therefore) do not become slaves of men (don’t follow man’s values, which are influenced by Satan) (1Cor. 7:23; cf. 2Cor. 4:4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The alternative of being freed from sin is everlasting death. By comparison then, obedience to God’s law and commandments is a much better choice.

Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden (with the consequences of sin), and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart (not a hard taskmaster like Satan; cf. Isa. 14:16-17), and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Mt. 11:28-30; cf. Ps. 55:22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because mankind has not experienced living in a world that follows the law and commandments of God, they cannot imagine living any differently than they do right now. However, when serious problems arise and there are no apparent answers, they might pause and consider whether there is something wrong with the way mankind lives. Sadly, these momentary reflections don’t usually last long because we try to put them out of our minds, and move on with life. An anonymous scholar once mused about

this and stated the following: "Please do not adjust your mind, there's a fault with reality (as we know it)."

In truth, "reality" is spiritual and not physical, and because our number one enemy is an unseen spirit-being, we are not aware of his influence or the fact that he has everyone "doing his bidding". This is "all the more true" in the materialistic culture of our modern Western world.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness** (symbol of deception) of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places (Eph. 6:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

If Jesus Christ did not intervene to protect his obedient servants, Satan would have total domination of this planet as well as everyone in the spirit realm.

And I also say to you that you are Peter (Gr. *petros*, a small stone), and on this rock (referring to Christ himself) I will build my church, and the gates of Hades (death; the grave) shall not prevail against it (Mt. 16: 18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And, as the inhabitants of this present evil age (Gal. 1:4) continue to break God's law and commandments, it will become increasingly difficult to speak out against "the god of this world", Satan (2Cor. 4:4). This condition will eventually lead to various forms of chaos.

They (the ministers of Satan; cf. 2Cor. 11:13-15) will put you out of synagogues (places for public declarations); yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service (because people are completely deceived

regarding what is good and evil; cf. Isa. 5:20) (Jn. 16:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²²And unless those days were shortened (due to Christ's intervention), no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened (Mt. 24:21-22; Ed. note in parenthesis).

And, when people begin to wake up and realize the serious consequences of the choice they made to follow the wrong "master", it will be too late,

"Behold, the days are coming", says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. ¹²They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but shall not find it" (Amos 8:11-12).

At this point in time, the situation will not improve until Christ returns to establish his Father's kingdom on earth. Christ's first action will be to remove the influence of the "master" who has deceived this world.

Then I (John) saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished... (Rev. 20:1-3a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Once this is completed, the truthful master who has been ignored for thousands of years will begin to re-educate everyone who survives the

events associated with Satan's downfall. The central feature of this education process will be teaching the law and commandments of God to everyone who is still alive at that time.

The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. ³Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; he will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For **out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.** ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isa. 2:1-4; emphasis added).

In conclusion, if you are in doubt regarding which master you are serving, you need to examine your attitude toward God's law and commandments. If they are a burden, you have Satan as your master and will not participate in the first resurrection from the dead (1Jn. 5:2-3; Rev. 20:6). Conversely, if you delight in keeping God's law and commandments, you have Jesus Christ as your master and will fully participate in the first resurrection from the dead (Ps. 119:97-104).

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