

# No Man Can Serve Two Masters

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## Introduction

There's only one way to eternal life and it's through the only way God provided—His Son Jesus Christ. But even knowing and embracing that truth, we can still be falsely assured that we have the Son yet truly headed for destruction, “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and **broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction**, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and **narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life**, and few there be that find it” (Mat 7:14).

The popular gospel message preached today is that we have the Son if we have confessed Him as Lord and believe some facts about Him—essentially that salvation is by faith or belief in Him. But the true saving gospel is the message the Son Himself preached to the world. It matters not what millions or even billions of people say but only what one Person said. What He said is the truth and the final word. He told us what we must do to have Him and eternal life. We must listen to Him.

Now, the latter half of this writing isn't intended to give inordinate attention to the devil but is simply addressing necessary issues so that we're not ignorant of his devices. The more covertly he's allowed to operate under the radar without detection, the more successful he is. Therefore, our souls depend on discussing and recognizing his sinister activity so that we won't fall prey to him.

## The Creator preached the message of salvation

The true message of salvation is known by what the Creator preached in the beginning in a mystery, and what the Creator preached again when He came into this world and revealed the mystery. The Son of God is the Creator: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jhn 1:3); “God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (Eph 3:9); “For by him were all things created” (Col 1:16); “by whom also he made the worlds” (Heb 1:2); “for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev 4:11).

Within the creation account narrative itself, the Son of God interjected the message of salvation but kept the understanding of it hidden from us in a mystery: “according to **the revelation of the mystery [*mysterion* 3466]**, which was **kept secret since the world began**” (Rom 16:25); “But we speak the wisdom of God in a **mystery [*mysterion* 3466]**, *even the hidden wisdom*, which God ordained **before the world** unto our glory” (1Co 2:7); “And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of **the mystery [*mysterion* 3466]**, which from **the beginning of the world** hath been **hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ**” (Eph 3:9); “*Even the mystery [*mysterion* 3466]* which hath been **hid from ages** and from generations” (Col 1:26).

The Creator Himself came into this world and revealed to our understanding the message of salvation He had hid in a mystery: “Because it is given unto you **to know the mysteries [*mysterion* 3466]** of the kingdom of heaven ... **I will utter things** which have been **kept secret from the foundation of the world**” (Mat 13:11, 35); “**the preaching of Jesus Christ**, according to **the revelation of the mystery [*mysterion* 3466]**” (Rom 16:25);

“How that **by revelation he made known unto me the mystery [mysterion 3466]**; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand **my knowledge in the mystery [mysterion 3466] of Christ**)” (Eph 3:3-4); “that I may open my mouth boldly, to **make known the mystery [mysterion 3466] of the gospel**” (Eph 6:19).

## The true message of salvation preached by the Creator

In the beginning, the Son of God preached the message of salvation but hid it from our understanding in a mystery—the creation of the sun and the moon contained a figurative message, “And God made two great lights; **the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night ... And to rule over the day and over the night**, and to divide the light from the darkness” (Gen 1:16,18). The message contained in these heavenly bodies before man had even been created is that there would be two rulers over humanity and one would be greater than the other. Salvation is about which lord or master is ours.

About 4,000 years later the Son of God became a man and preached this same message of salvation—faithfulness to Him as our Lord and Ruler: “No man can serve two masters” (Mat 6:24); “Who then is a faithful and wise servant” (Mat 25:45); “Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant” (Mat 25:21); “And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luk 6:46); “If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?” (Luk 16:11); “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luk 17:10); “Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am” (Jhn 13:13).

The apostle John began his Gospel, “In the beginning was **the Word [Message]**, and **the Word [Message]** was with God, and **the Word [Message]** was God. The same was in the beginning with God. **All things were made by him**; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (Jhn 1:1-3), “**And the Word [Message] was made flesh**, and dwelt among us” (Jhn 1:14). When the Son of God became a man, He exemplified the message He preached in the beginning. His life and preaching embodied that same message to such an extent that John spoke metaphorically of Him as the Message.

Later in his Gospel, John recorded Jesus foretelling of His Advocacy for us at His Father’s right hand: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **advocate** to help you and be with you forever ... But the **Advocate, the Holy Spirit [breath]**” (Jhn 14:16, 26 NIV); “When the **Advocate** comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the **Spirit [breath] of truth**” (Jhn 15:26 NIV); “Unless I go away, the **Advocate** will not come to you” (Jhn 16:7 NIV). The message the Son of God preached in the beginning, “the greater light to rule the day” (Gen 1:16), is the same message He later preached of His Rule and Advocacy at the right hand of God.

Because of His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, He is now “the greater light,” our Ruler or Advocate at the right hand of God in heaven: “Sit thou at my right hand” (Psa 110:1); “he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God” (Mar 16:19); “being by the right hand of God exalted” (Act 2:33); “who is even at the right hand of God” (Rom 8:34); “set *him* at his own right hand” (Eph 1:20); “Christ sitteth on the right hand of God” (Col 3:1); “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb 1:3); “who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Heb 8:1); “sat down on the right hand of God” (Heb 10:12); “is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12:2); “is on the right hand of God” (1Pe 3:22); “am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev 3:21); “the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev 22:3).

## The message of salvation has been detoured

The entire issue of salvation preached by the Son of God since the beginning is which lord, master, or ruler we're serving. And since "No man can serve two masters" (Mat 6:24), if we're not serving the Lord Jesus Christ, then we're serving the devil and his cohorts. But to impede people from being ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore maintain his rule over them, the devil diverts the message preached to anything else. As long as people aren't hearing the message of faithful service to the Lord Jesus Christ as Advocate at God's right hand, they're not being ruled by "the greater light" but by "the lesser light."

The Protestant Reformation about 500 years ago was supposedly an enlightenment that the statement "the just shall live by his **faith [emuna 530]**" (Hab 2:4), "the just shall live by **faith [pistis 4102]**" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38), is to simply believe and only believe. But the Hebrew *emuna* and Greek *pistis* translated as "faith" means "faithfulness" which agrees with what was preached in the beginning—faithfulness and loyalty to the "the greater light." The Reformation wasn't a return to the message from the beginning but the beginning of a new message! It transferred the message preached to an entirely different context—from "faithful service to the Lord" to "faith or belief in the Lord."

Within the context of faithful service to the Lord, water baptism is the point of change in lord, master, or ruler over our lives. We repent of our sinful past and commit ourselves to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—to serve and obey Him faithfully to death. God breathes His breath into our hearts and His Son becomes our Lord and Advocate at His right hand. We live daily obeying Him, submitting to Him, and agreeing with Him. And when we die in faithfulness to Him, we're assured of being raised to eternal life at His return.

On the other hand, in the context of faith or belief in the Lord, an altar-call or sinner's prayer is the point of "salvation." We repent of our sins and make a confession of faith or belief in Jesus Christ. At that moment we're born again as new creatures with eternal life inside—our spirit person changes from spiritual death to spiritual life. We're saved right now and assured of going to heaven after we die.

Christians today call themselves "believers" but the apostles and early Christians called themselves servants: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ" (Rom 1:1); "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ" (Col 4:12); "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ" (Phl 1:1); "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (Tit 1:1); "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Jas 1:1); "Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ" (2Pe 1:1); "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ" (Jde 1:1).

Christianity has become a "Jesus" religion. By quoting Paul's statement out of context, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom 10:9), salvation has become simply confessing Him as Lord and believing facts about Him.

However, Jesus said that we must serve Him as Lord and do what He said: "No man can serve two masters" (Mat 6:24); "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them ... And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not" (Mat 7:24,26); "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luk 6:46). And Paul agreed, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves **servants to obey**, his servants ye are **to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto

righteousness?” (Rom 6:16). We’re not servants of whom we confess as Lord but of whom we obey as Lord! Therefore, what he said later, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus” (Rom 10:9), wasn’t merely a confession but a commitment.

Although it’s good and necessary that we’re taught to believe the facts of Jesus Christ’s divinity and humanity, virgin birth, life and ministry, miracles, death, burial, and resurrection, hardly anything is being taught about His position and function today at the right hand of God. This isn’t by mistake but by design. Principalities and powers—the devil and his minions—don’t want the message preached about Christ’s position at the right hand of God with all power and authority over them: “Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him at his own right hand* in the heavenly *places*, **Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion**, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph 1:20-21); “*And having spoiled principalities and powers*, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it ... If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where **Christ sitteth on the right hand of God**” (Col 2:15,3:1); “Who is gone into heaven, and is **on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him**” (1Pe 3:22).

## We wrestle not against flesh and blood

Paul revealed that flesh and blood isn’t what we’re ultimately struggling against, “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against **the wiles [methodeia 3180] of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against **the rulers of the darkness** of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.” (Eph 6:11-12). The “rulers of the darkness” are “the lesser light to rule the night” (Gen 1:16) preached in the beginning. Paul had used the same Greek word *methodeia* earlier when speaking about the deceptions of men, “That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, **by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait [methodeia 3180] to deceive**” (Eph 4:14). The devil rules over flesh and blood people and uses them as instruments to spread his wiles and deceptions.

The devil not only wants us to believe there is no God but also that there is no devil! He’s not trying to make himself known but exactly the opposite. His strategy is for us to forget all about him, live as though he doesn’t exist, and assume people just act from their own initiative. He gets us fighting with each other rather than against him.

He uses people, including ministers of churches, as his instruments, “And no marvel; for **Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light**. Therefore *it is* no great thing if **his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness**; whose end shall be according to their works.” (2Co 11:14-15). We’re quite naïve if we think this isn’t even *more* of a problem today than it was in the churches established and overseen by the apostle Paul himself. If wolves ravished the church in Ephesus as soon as he left, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Act 20:29), then they’re certainly wreaking more havoc almost 2,000 years later.

The devil understands salvation better than we do. He knows that as long as he’s ruling over us, then we’re on our way to destruction, “*broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction*” (Mat 7:13). And he knows very well what to have his ministers teach in churches to keep people under his rule yet think they’re on their way to eternal life, “*narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life*” (Mat 7:14).

Protestant Trinitarian pastors are quite confident and relaxed that they're doing a good job. But the "job" they're doing depends on who they're working for. Of course if they're working for God, then their flocks are headed to eternal life. But if they're working for the devil, then their flocks are bound for destruction so long as they keep them following their teaching. And since they're teaching that God is a Trinity of Persons, Jesus is God Himself, man is an immortal spirit living in a body, and salvation is by believing, then it's obvious who they must be working for. These highly intelligent men are embracing and advancing false views of the most important subjects. How can every one of them be wrong about what's most crucial? Jesus Christ didn't teach these things and if they won't submit to what He taught, what other conclusion can be drawn about them?

One of the most accurate indicators of which "way" we're heading—destruction or eternal life—is how we're treated by the devil's ministers. Since the devil knows who is under his rule and who isn't, his ministers conduct themselves differently toward both groups. Those under his rule are treated well in church to keep them going the wrong way, all the while assuming they're heading the right way. On the other hand, since those under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ are seen as a threat, they're dealt with in various ways including shunning, discouraging, intimidating, mocking, belittling, reprimanding, and employing an array of setups and stumbling blocks intended to make them fall or at least slow them down.

The devil's ministers plot and scheme various traps for the godly to be entangled and snared thereby: "And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him" (1Sa 23:9); "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth" (Psa 37:12); "They also that seek after my life lay snares *for me*" (Psa 38:12); "They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul" (Psa 56:6); "The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me" (Psa 140:5); "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah" (Jer 18:18); "All my familiars watched for my halting, *saying*, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him" (Jer 20:10); "Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom" (Dan 6:4); "Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk ... But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?" (Mat 22:15,18); "And they send unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words ... But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me?" (Mar 12:13,15); "Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him" (Luk 11:54); "And they watched *him*, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words ... But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?" (Luk 20:20,23); "But their laying await was known of Saul" (Act 9:24); "*in* perils among false brethren" (2Co 11:26); "by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph 4:14); "false brethren unawares brought in" (Gal 2:4); "For there are certain men crept in unawares" (Jde 1:4).

They set up stumbling blocks and snares to cause the servants of the Lord Jesus Christ to fall into sin and fall away. And if they can't get them out of the way entirely, they'll at least work at slowing them down from effectively doing God's work. They have an arsenal of tactics intended to distract them, discourage them, and discredit them.

However, the souls of those in church that simply flow with the system and don't rock the boat are obviously in danger since they're treated well by comparison. They're recognized, encouraged, honored, esteemed, and placed in prominent positions. Sadly, it's ominous evidence of the way they're headed. As long as the devil's system is flowing smoothly, his ministers are confident of the end result.

## Conclusion

Our salvation isn't just about faith or belief. It's ultimately a spiritual battle that requires depending on God's strength to overcome the evil spirits bent on destroying us. Jesus Himself exhorted all seven churches in the book of Revelation, "To him that overcometh," "He that overcometh," "Him that overcometh" (Rev 2:7,11,17,26, 3:5,12,21). It's about staying faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ through the deceptions, temptations, and oppositions that come against us. It's about being ruled by Him and not by "the god of this world" (2Co 4:4).

The devil doesn't want us to know these things. He wants us thinking that salvation is simply by believing some facts are true. But the main logical conclusion of a salvation that's by "faith alone" is that ultimately we're secure no matter what we do or don't do—the very opposite of what Jesus taught, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and **doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock ... And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand" (Mat 7:24,26).

The devil doesn't want us to know the depths of his involvement in our lives. He wants us thinking that we just make wrong choices and mistakes, and that we're the victims of circumstance. He wants us thinking that the beliefs and teaching of his ministers is the fruit of their intelligence and academic achievement when it's mainly out of their loyalty to him. After all, how can they be ministers of God while disagreeing with the teaching of the Son of God? If shown the truth that Jesus Christ taught, the fear of the Lord should compel them to change what they're teaching. Otherwise, what other conclusion can be drawn?

As long as the devil keeps us from serving the Lord Jesus Christ, he keeps us serving him. This is what the message of "faith alone" is intended to do. It's meant to detour us from the message preached from the beginning—faithful service to the Lord Jesus Christ seated at the right hand of God. The true message that leads to eternal life is what was preached in the beginning by the Son of God and what He preached again when He came into this world.