

The Mindset of a Slave

Paul, James, Peter, and Jude all identified themselves as *doulos*, “a servant” or “a slave” of Jesus Christ: “Paul, a servant [*doulos* 1401] of Jesus Christ” (Rom 1:1); “James, a servant [*doulos* 1401] of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 1:1); “Simon Peter, a servant [*doulos* 1401] and an apostle of Jesus Christ” (2Pe 1:1); “Jude, the servant [*doulos* 1401] of Jesus Christ” (Jde 1:1).

Hidden by figurative language within the creation narrative is the true gospel message—that there would be two divisions of people called either “Day” or “Night,” “And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (Gen 1:5). And there would be two lords ruling over one or the other, “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**” (Gen 1:16,18). The Lord Jesus Christ at God’s right hand is the Greater Light—greater than all: “Sit thou **at my right hand**, until I make **thine enemies thy footstool**” (Psa 110:1); “**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” (Eph 1:20-21); “**on the right hand of God**; angels and authorities and powers **being made subject unto him**” (1Pe 3:22).

There are only two alternatives—anyone not being ruled by the Greater Light, is being ruled by the lesser light. John said, “**greater is he that is in you**, than he that is **in the world**” (1Jo 4:4). Either the Greater Light is in us, or the lesser light is. It’s a sobering and humbling truth that if Christ isn’t in us, the devil is.

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants [*doulos* 1401] ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom 6:16). Notice, Paul didn’t say we’re slaves of whom we confess to obey but of whom we actually obey. And the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, “And why **call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not** the things which I say?” (Luk 6:46). If we’re not obeying Him as Lord, then calling Him Lord is vain. Salvation isn’t about being a believer but an obeyer. The gospel message from the beginning is that Christ would “rule the day ... rule over the day.” Therefore, to be “Day” and not “Night,” Christ must rule over us by obeying everything He commanded.

Paul said, “**Let this mind be in you**, which was also in **Christ Jesus**: Who, being in the **form [*morphē* 3444] of God**, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the **form [*morphē* 3444] of a servant [*doulos* 1401]**, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phl 2:5-7). Christ was in the *morphē* of God but took upon the *morphē* of a *doulos* or a slave. He went from His position with God, “**In the beginning** was the Word, and the Word was **with God**, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning **with God**” (Jhn 1:1-2), to the position of a slave, obeying everything His Father commanded. And that’s the mindset we must have to be saved. Whatever position we might have occupied as free, we must take the lowly position of a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we truly have the mindset of a slave, it won’t bother us when we get treated like one! Getting rattled by how we’re treated indicates we don’t have the mindset of a slave. As slaves, others are free to treat us how they want but we’re slaves to treating them how we would want to be treated, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Mat 7:12), “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise” (Luk 6:31). That might sound unfair but it’s simply a matter of perspective. What’s unfair is the fleeting and temporary satisfaction others receive now, compared with the far surpassing and eternal reward we’ll receive later. The mindset of a slave is to take no thought of any reward now, but patiently wait for it in due season.

The gospel Jesus Christ preached is that slaves get their “meat” in due season—they work now and get rewarded later, “Who then is a **faithful and wise servant [*doulos* 1401]**, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them **meat in due season?**” (Mat 24:45). And that slaves don’t seek to profit themselves, but obey out of duty to their lord, “We are **unprofitable servants [*doulos* 1401]**: we have done that which was **our duty to do**” (Luk 17:10). This is the mindset of a slave.

The gospel message from the beginning is that we must become slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the gospel the Lord Himself preached, “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that **loseth his life for my sake** shall find it” (Mat 10:39). “Well done, *thou* good and **faithful servant** ... *Thou* wicked and **slothful servant**” (Mat 25:21,26). Others are free to live their lives. But we must be slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved—have the same mind He had, the mindset of a slave.