

Sermon on the Mount—The Two Masters**Matthew 6:19—34**

The key idea in this section of Scripture is to do those things that will have eternal benefits instead of temporal. There are earthly and heavenly treasures, the choice between light and dark, God and mammon. These principles have application to all generations regardless of what dispensation they are a part of. We in the Church, the Body of Christ are to serve only one Master and everything we do should have eternity in view. However, this passage in Matthew has only one interpretation and that pertains to getting the Little Flock, the remnant Jewish believers, through the Tribulation and into the Kingdom.

Treasure in heaven (verses 19—21)

The contrast is between faith in material goods and faith in Jesus Christ their Messiah. Jesus had promised to take care of the Little Flock but they had to put their complete trust in Him. They could not put some trust in Christ and some trust in their riches because the Tribulation is in view. Anyone who was able to buy and sell in the Tribulation will have taken the mark of the beast. The only way for a rich man to stay rich in the Tribulation will be to forsake Christ and cling to his riches. Unfortunately, this act will condemn him to hell because his trust was not in Christ. You can see why Jesus made this contrast and why having riches in the Tribulation meant eternal damnation.

An example of a man who chose riches over Christ is found in Matthew 19:21. This man came to Jesus to find out if he was lacking in obeying any part of the Law. As far as he knew he was following the Law. Jesus told him to sell all he had and give to the poor and then he would have treasure in heaven. This treasure in heaven is the Kingdom and therefore selling all he had is how he gains eternal life. When viewed from the Tribulation this makes perfect sense. If we try to spiritualize this for today and apply it to the church then it doesn't make sense because selling our possessions certainly doesn't save us but for those in the Tribulation selling all and trusting Christ completely will mean eternal life (Luke 18:18—30). This points out how individual Israelites need to not only have faith but to prove their faith by works. We never need to add works to our faith to receive eternal life.

James adds to this idea of a rich man in the Tribulation not able to enter into the Kingdom. Their treasure is corrupt and shall be their condemnation. They have become rich by cheating their fellow Israelites. James, through the Holy Spirit, tells this remnant to be patient for the coming of the Lord and not to hold a grudge against a brother because doing so may lead them to condemnation (Matthew 6:14—15).

James 5:1—9 ¹Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. ²Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. ³Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. ⁴Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. ⁵Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. ⁶Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you. ⁷Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. ⁸Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. ⁹Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

Light and Dark (verses 22—23)

This is a word picture that illustrates the idea that a man can't be two things at once. In this case the eye is focused on only one thing either truth and light or lies and darkness. Those who are part of the Little Flock are of the light. Everyone else is of darkness. (See also James 1:8 and 4:8 about being double minded.)

1 John 1:5—10 ⁵This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ⁷But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the

blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. ⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Serving Two Masters (verse 24)

The two masters are identified as God and wealth. This obviously continues the thought that a rich man will not be able to enter the Millennial Kingdom. A rich man who worships his money will need to worship the Beast and take the mark. A person who does this will not be able to serve God. On the other hand a person following the Messiah is not going to be rich during the Tribulation. In other words a person will have to choose to follow after God or wealth. Today, those who are in the Church, the Body of Christ, certainly can be rich and saved. This is not true during the Tribulation.

James 4 gives some specific instructions for those going through the Tribulation and gives us some insight as to what they will be going through. God will be supplying them with what they need but they will want more even murdering to obtain things they lust for. The reference to adulterers in James 4:4 relates to Israel. Ezekiel 16:15—43 explicitly charges Israel with adultery with other gods and spells out her condemnation for doing so. Instead of separating themselves from all the other nations they embraced their heathen practices and worshipped all kinds of idols.

James 4:1—4 ¹From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? ²Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. ³Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. ⁴Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Revelation 13:16—17 ¹⁶And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: ¹⁷And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

God Will Supply (Verses 25—33)

This whole paragraph is God's reassurance to the Little Flock that He WILL take care of them even when everything around them is hopeless. Just as He protected, feed and clothed Israel through the wilderness (Deuteronomy 29:5) He will do the same for the Little Flock through the Tribulation. This all compliments what James says about planning in chapter 4:13—15.

God's promise to them is that He would feed and clothe them and give them shelter. When they put their trust in God there will be no reason for them to worry about tomorrow because He promises that He will supply what they need. This is specific to the Tribulation for God says that others do need to work to supply themselves with what is needed. Paul is very specific that we absolutely need to think and plan about tomorrow and if we don't then we are worse than an unbeliever. This contradiction can be explained with an understanding that God deals with different groups of people in different ways at different times.

2 Thessalonians 3:10—12 ¹⁰For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. ¹¹For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. ¹²Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

Proverbs 6:6—11 ⁶Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: ⁷Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, ⁸Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. ⁹How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? ¹⁰Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: ¹¹So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Even though we are to work for our supply we need to realize that it is God who really gives us what we need. Thanking God for our food before each meal is a recognition that even though I might have worked hard so I could buy the food it was God who gave me the ability to work so I could buy the food. This is brought out in Philippians 4:6, 19.

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