

"Do Not"

When Jesus quoted part of the Law, it included "*do not murder.*"

(Mark 10:19) You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother.'

(Luke 18:20) You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother.'

So is it ok to murder? No, of course not, because we know what the words "*do not*" mean.

What about this verse?

(Luke 21:8) He said: "Look out that you are not misled, for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, 'I am he,' and, 'The due time is near.' **Do not go after them.**

So is it ok to "*go after them*", that is to say, believe the teachings and follow the instructions of those men?

(Matthew 24:23) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ,' or, 'There!' **do not believe it.**

(Mark 13:21) "Then, too, if anyone says to you, 'See! Here is the Christ,' or, 'See! There he is,' **do not believe it.**

(Luke 17:23) And people will say to you, 'See there!' or, 'See here!' **Do not go out or chase after them.**

Clearly it is not ok.

Why do i bring this up? Because many have ignored Jesus' command not to go after those "*false Christs and false prophets*". (see my article "Leaven")

So why do people follow those men?

(Matthew 24:23-27) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Christ,' or, 'There!' do not believe it. ²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will perform great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones. ²⁵ Look! I have forewarned you. ²⁶ Therefore, if people say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out; 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷ For just as the lightning comes out of the east and shines over to the west, so the presence of the Son of man will be.

(Mark 13:21-23) "Then, too, if anyone says to you, 'See! Here is the Christ,' or, 'See! There he is,' do not believe it. ²² For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the chosen ones. ²³ You, then, watch out. I have told you all things beforehand.

They have deceived millions into believing that they are true prophets of Christ by performing "*great signs and wonders*". And they "*come on the basis of (his) name*" too, so why wouldn't people believe them?

Are the powerful works they perform fake, or trickery?

(Matthew 7:22, 23) Many will say to me in that day: 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them: '**I never knew you!** Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'

No, Christ does not deny it. They truly do perform many powerful works in his name, but Jesus still tells them "*I never knew you.*" Why does he say "*never*" to those "*in that day*"? Because from their very beginning they were "*false Christs and false prophets.*" (Mt 24:24) Or as Luke 21:8 puts it, they falsely say '*I am he,*' and they falsely prophecy that '*the due time is near.*'

When their teachings and prophecies prove false they merely change them. And in an attempt to nullify Christ's command to not follow those who say "*I am he,*' and, '*The due time is near*", they point to scriptures such as Proverbs 4:18 claiming that the changes they make are new divine knowledge from above. And, of course, those who have been deceived believe them and continue to ignore Jesus' command because they are too prideful to admit that they have been misled. (Mt 24:5; Pr 16:18) They continue to cling to the "*great signs and wonders*" performed by the Governing Body (GB) as proof that they were not fooled, and make the excuse that the GB are imperfect, even though those men claim that their knowledge was given to them from a perfect source.

Paul also speaks about this:

(2 Thessalonians 2:3-12) Let no one lead you astray in any way, because it will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness gets revealed, the son of destruction. ⁴ He stands in opposition and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he sits down in the temple of God, publicly showing himself to be a god. ⁵ Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I used to tell you these things? ⁶ And now you know what is acting as a restraint, so that he will be revealed in his own due time. ⁷ True, the mystery of this lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who is right now acting as a restraint is out of the way. ⁸ Then, indeed, the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will do away with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the manifestation of his presence. ⁹ But the lawless one's presence is by the operation of Satan with every **powerful work** and lying signs and wonders ¹⁰ and every unrighteous deception for those who are perishing, as a retribution because they did not accept the love of the truth in order that they might be saved. ¹¹ That is why God lets a deceptive influence mislead them so that they may come to believe the lie, ¹² in order that they all may be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

Let's first consider verse 4 for a moment. Do you say that it does not apply to the GB because they do not claim to be Gods? What about John 1:18?

(John 1:18) No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is at the Father's side is the one who has explained Him.

That verse refers to our Lord as a god. (Isa 9:6) He is an angel. The archangel. (1Th 4:16; Jude 9) So an angel is a god. The GB do not claim to be angels, but they do claim that Christ arrived in 1914 and partially bestowed upon them the authority that he will give to those that will rule with him from heaven when they will be spirit creatures "*like the angels*". (Lu 20:36; 1Co 15:51, 52)

Now 2 Thessalonians 2:4 does not say that the man of lawlessness will claim to be a god, but that he exalts himself above all others and seats himself in the temple of God, and those actions portray him as a god.

The GB also claim that no others on earth are as exalted as they are. And they have also seated themselves in what they consider to be the modern day temple of God. They are 'standing in opposition' because those actions are in stark contrast to Jesus commands. (Mt 23:8, 10; 2Co 1:24; 1Ti 2:5 - see my article "leaven")

What about the powerful works in verse 9?

(Matthew 7:21-23) "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the Kingdom of the heavens, but only the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. ²² Many will say to me in that day: 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophecy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many **powerful works** in your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them: 'I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'

Those powerful works are not some sort of ungodly deeds, but are powerful works done in his name. They have the appearance of being directed and supported by Christ. (Mt 7:15) But their works are performed by men who have claimed the seat of Christ, just as the scribes and the Pharisees seated themselves in the seat of Moses. (Mt 23:2) Moses was the spokesman for God. The GB have seated themselves in Christ's seat by claiming to be God's spokesman, and therefore the God-ordained interpreters of the Law. Yes, they have sat down in the temple of God. (2Th 2:4)

(see my articles "Leaven" and "The Holy Trinity (of worship)" for more on that topic)

For many, when they are confronted with the prospect that they have been following men that they should not be following, their mind won't allow them to accept it. It is an unconscious defense mechanism called "being in denial". Their mind rejects reality to protect itself. People in denial refuse to think and talk about the problem, and their minds find ways to justify that refusal.

Here is how *Psychology Today* describes it:

Like shock, short-term denial can function as a temporary protection against the full impact of something painful or overwhelming. But ongoing denial in adulthood, a defining trait of pathological narcissism, becomes a choice to engage in distortions of reality.

Unless they are experiencing a psychotic break from reality, as can happen with schizophrenia, people with narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) know the difference between fact and fiction, truth and lies. But because their personality structure is built around inflated self-importance (designed to scaffold unstable self-esteem), they hold reality at a distance and filter information to conform to their wishes.

The narcissist's denial becomes a kind of self-deception in which accurate perception is ignored and replaced with preferred distortions. Such distortions can range from subtle misrepresentations to unrecognizable alterations of reality.

Recovery View writes this:

A more conscious form of denial is a distortion of reality in which we “rewrite” situations or behaviors that we find disturbing or don’t want to deal with. For example, the alcoholic in our life isn’t drunk again, she simply has the flu; she is overworked, overstressed, or overanxious and just trying to relax. 'What’s the big deal?' We use a sort of twisted reasoning to make someone’s behavior more palatable or manageable than it feels. We don’t want to connect the addict’s increasing unmanageability, or our own chronic anxiety, to living with substance abuse or process addictions. This kind of denial is complicated. It requires constant upkeep, because a lot of little things that relate to what we’re denying keep cropping up in front of us, and we need to keep rewriting as we go.

It takes strong character and a lot of humility to admit that you have been tricked for so long, and many people's ego will not allow it.

Identify

How can we identify such men so that we know not to follow them? That's easy. We just have to see if they match Jesus' description. And also look and see if their teachings contradict Christ's, of course. (1Th 5:21; Php 1:10; 1Joh 4:1)

In Luke Jesus gives us a two-part description:

(Luke 21:8) He said: “Look out that you are not misled, for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The due time is near.’ Do not go after them.

How can many come on the basis of his name, and yet claim to be him at the same time? Because they are not saying that they are the Son of God. They only claim to be filling the position of Christ. And what is the position of Christ? *"Mediator between God and men."* (1Ti 2:5)

And the second part of the description is that they claim that *"the due time is near."* Now Paul and Peter also mistakenly said that Armageddon was near (1Joh 2:18; 1Pe 4:7), but they did not claim to hold the position of mediator. So since this is a two-part description, both identifying marks must be present for an accurate identification.

JW leadership has been saying that the due time for Armageddon is imminent since the late 1800's. And they say "*I am he*" in that they claim that following their teachings and rules is the only way to be acceptable to God. But Jesus said:

(John 14:6) Jesus said to him: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

So the GB meet that two-part description. 1) They come on the basis of his name, saying, '*I am he.*' In other words, they come on the basis of his name while placing themselves between God and men. 2) And throughout their entire history they have said that the due time is near. Yes, they are truly "*false Christs and false prophets.*" (Mt 24:24) And what does Christ command us to do? **"Do not go after them!"**

Unfortunately, those who have been a JW for a long time, and then leave, often experience the same thing that many newly-released, long-term prisoners experience, which is called Post Incarceration Syndrome. These institutionalized personality traits are caused by living in an oppressive environment that demands passive compliance to the demands of authority figures, passive acceptance of severely restricted acts of daily living, the repression of personal lifestyle preferences, the elimination of critical thinking and individual decision making, and internalized acceptance of severe restrictions on honest self-expression, thoughts, and feelings.

Once you have freed yourself from their control, if you feel at a loss, go to the Bible without using their deceptive literature to influence you and there you will find "*the truth, and the truth will set you free.*" (Jn 8:32)

What truth? That "*there is... one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,*" (1Ti 2:5) And he is all you need. You don't need a group of men to tell you how to act and how to please Jehovah. You have the words of our mediator in the Bible for that. (2Ti 3:16, 17)

Consider Paul's account of those who followed men:

(1 Corinthians 1:10-13) Now I urge you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you should all speak in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you may be completely united in the same mind and in the same line of thought. ¹¹ For some from the house of Chlo'e have informed me regarding you, my brothers, that there are dissensions among you. ¹² What I mean is this, that each one of you says: "I belong to Paul," "But I to A-pol'los," "But I to Ce'phas," "But I to Christ." ¹³ Is the Christ divided? Paul was not executed on the stake for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Describing Christians on earth today those verses could say: I follow the Pope, but I the Archbishop, but I the GB. Yes, just as in Paul's day, Christians today choose to follow men instead of Christ, and they reap the consequences just as the Israelites did when they wanted a king to rule them. (1Sa 8:4-7, 10-18; 12:12) The Israelites "*rejected*" Jehovah as their king and chose a man instead, just as most Christians today reject Christ as their mediator and choose men instead.

Now those who are new to the Bible need "*milk, not solid food.*" (1Co 3:2) They are the lambs and little sheep that Jesus spoke of. (Jn 21:15-17) But you have become spiritually mature and no longer need someone to lead you by the hand in your worship of Jehovah. (He 5:14-6:1)

Although the GB disagree with that, Christ holds a different view:

(Matthew 20:25-28) But Jesus called them to him and said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. ²⁶ ***This must not be the way among you;*** but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. ²⁸ Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many."

That scripture goes both ways. Those taking the lead (by setting a good example - 1Pe 5:3) are commanded not to attempt to exercise authority over others. That also means that you should not allow men to exercise authority over you in your relationship to Jehovah. (1Ti 2:5) (For a detailed explanation of what Mt 20:25-28 truly means, as opposed to what the GB says it means, see my article "The Governing Body".)

There is only one person who should be between Jehovah and ourselves.

(1 Timothy 2:5) For there is... one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

The GB, and by extension the local elders in each congregation, have put themselves "*between God and men.*" They tell us that we must follow their directions if we are to please God. They tell us that disobeying them is disobeying Jehovah.

They appoint men to positions of authority and claim that it was the holy spirit who appointed those men. [w20 p.21 par. 5] (See my article "Appointed by holy spirit")

They point to examples of the apostles directing the Christians in the first century and claim the same status for themselves. But those apostles had direct communication with the holy spirit while the GB do not. [w16.01 p. 23 par. 6] And the Christians of the day did not have the Greek Scriptures completely written and assembled for them to be able to follow Christ's words directly, so they *had* to rely on those men.

The GB ignore Jesus' own words in John:

(John 14:6) Jesus said to him: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Instead they spread lies to place themselves between God and men:

"We also need to trust in the only channel that Jehovah is using today." [w20.7 p. 24]

"Some may feel that they can interpret the Bible on their own. However, Jesus has appointed the 'faithful slave' to be the only channel for dispensing spiritual food." [w16.11 p. 16]

"Just as anointed Christians do, alert members of the great crowd are sticking close to God's appointed channel for dispensing spiritual food." [w12 9/15 p. 26]

"Theocratic appointments come from Jehovah through his Son and God's visible earthly channel, "the faithful and discreet slave" and its Governing Body." [w01 1/15 p. 16]

Yes, they have truly '*misled many*'. (Mt 24:5)

What about their other teachings? Are they in-line with scriptural doctrine? If you read the articles in my Ramblings folder you will find topic after topic where the teachings of the GB are in direct conflict with the Bible. <http://da.getmyip.com/PDF/Ramblings>

Meeting Together

Consider also this scripture:

(Hebrews 10:24, 25) And let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works, ²⁵ not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.

What do those verses say is the point of meeting together? That's right, to incite to love and fine works, and to encourage one another. (Ro 1:12; 1Th 5:11) Not to be directed by a group of men who tell you how to worship. Although new ones need to be taught the good news (Jn 21:15-17), it is not the job of those taking the lead to be directing mature Christians. (Mt 20:25, 26)

Unfortunately meeting together under the control of the GB is, as Paul puts it: "*not for the better, but for the worse that you meet together.*" (1Co 11:17)

If meeting together is "*for the worse*" then it is not recommended. But that does not mean that we give up associating and meeting together with our brothers and sisters "*to incite to love and fine works.*" (He 10:24) We can invite them to our homes, or meet in the park. They didn't have telephones or email back when the Bible was written. If getting together in person isn't possible, then we can use those options to build one another up. (Ro 14:19)

No doubt you are familiar with the direction regarding conduct as laid out in the Bible. You know what you should not do.

(1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, men who submit to homosexual acts, men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners will not inherit God's Kingdom.

(Acts 15:28, 29) For the holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you except these necessary things: ²⁹ to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"

And you know how Jehovah and His Son require you to act. (Mt 25:34-40)

(Galatians 5:22, 23) The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.

Wait on Jehovah

Do you say that they are just imperfect men and that we should wait on Jehovah to take care of it? If you were an alcoholic and your doctor said that your liver was failing because you drink too much, would Jehovah take care of it? No, because His word says not to be a drunkard. He already "took care of it" by giving you instructions. But you ignored His instructions.

It is the same with following imperfect men. Jehovah already took care of it by providing instructions in the Bible through His Son not to be followers of men. If you ignore His instructions, you will reap what you sow.

(Galatians 6:7) Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap;

(Matthew 15:14) Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

Conclusion

When you obey men your obedience is to them. If we are being obedient to men, then our obedience is misplaced. We should be obedient to God and Christ, not to men. (Ac 5:29)

(Luke 21:8) He said: "Look out that you are not misled, for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, 'I am he,' and, 'The due time is near.' **Do not go after them.**

So will you obey Christ's command when he says: "*Do not go after them*"?

What do *you* think?

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