

The Faithful and Discreet Slave

(Matthew 24:45) “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?

Here is what the July 2022 Watchtower says about that verse:

"Jesus foretold that during the time of the end, he would appoint a “faithful and discreet slave” to provide spiritual food."

It has been the long-standing teaching of the Governing Body (GB) of Jehovah's Witnesses that Christ returned invisibly in 1914 and appointed them to a position of authority over his domestics at that time. (see my article "Presence") But take a closer look at the timing in that verse and the next:

(Matthew 24:45, 46) “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so!

Do you see the flaw in the GB's teaching regarding the timing? They teach that when Christ returned in 1914 that he then appointed a “*faithful and discreet slave*” to provide spiritual food at that time.

But that is not what those verses say. Those verses say that Christ appointed his slave to feed his domestics during his absence (Mt 24:48-50), and then when he returns (“*on coming*”) he hopes to find him “*doing so*.”

Summary:

GB = Christ returned (in 1914) and appointed the slave to feed during his presence

Bible = Christ appointed the slave to feed during his absence, then Christ returns

What the GB teach makes no sense. Christ, “*on coming*”, couldn't find his slave obeying his command to feed his domestics if he hadn't already given the slave that task.

Jesus refers to the same thing in a previous illustration:

(Matthew 21:33) “Hear another illustration: There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and erected a tower; then he leased it to cultivators and traveled abroad.”

Just as the owner of the vineyard leased the vineyard to cultivators before he “*traveled abroad*”, so too Christ gave his faithful and discreet slave an assignment to fulfill when he left their company in the first century.

The same goes for the illustration about ten virgins (Mt 25:1-12; Lu 12:35-38), and the illustration about three slaves whom their master gave talents to. (Mt 25:14-27; Lu 19:12-26) Also Mark 13:34-36. All of those illustrations refer to a master who goes away, and slaves who were given duties to perform while he was away. And the assignment ends with his return. It doesn't begin with his return.

The *"faithful and discreet slave"* has been appointed since Christ's departure in the first century. You can read that appointment in the following verses:

(Matthew 28:16-20) However, the 11 disciples went to Gal'i-lee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged for them to meet. ¹⁷When they saw him, they did obeisance, but some doubted. ¹⁸Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. ¹⁹Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."

If Christ truly did return in 1914, as the GB teach, then that is when the faithful slave would have been appointed *"over all his belongings."* (Mt 24:47) That is not when he would have appointed the slave to feed his domestics as the GB teach. The slave had to be faithfully fulfilling their appointed assignment to feed his domestics at his return to gain his approval.

Yes, Luke 12:42 says: *"Who really is the faithful steward, the discreet one, whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?"*, but Jesus said that before he appointed them to do so at Matthew 28:16-20. So he was still talking about their duties to perform while he was away, as the next verse confirms:

(Luke 12:43) Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so!

Appointed Over

(Matthew 24:45) "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?"

Since the verse says that the slave was *"appointed over"* the domestics, does that mean that the *"faithful and discrete slave"* outrank the other slaves? The original Greek word (katestēsen) translated as *"appointed"* means "made, set, appointed". And the Greek word (epi) translated as *"over"* means "on, to, against, on the basis of, at".

So that verse merely means that the slave was appointed to serve them food.

Yes, verse 45 does say that the slave was *"appointed over"* the other slaves, which is what the GB glom-onto to promote their claimed position of authority, but the verse also gives the explicit boundaries of that appointment: *"to give them their food at the proper time."*

Being told to provide food for others is not being told to be their superior. On the contrary, it's a

subservient position. Jesus makes that clear in this illustration:

(Luke 17:7-10) “Which one of you who has a slave plowing or shepherding would say to him when he comes in from the field, ‘Come here at once and dine at the table’? ⁸ Rather, will he not say to him, ‘Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and serve me until I finish eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink’? ⁹ He will not feel gratitude to the slave because he did what was assigned, will he? ¹⁰ Likewise, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say: ‘We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.’”

Although those verses in Luke are speaking of a master/slave relationship, a low ranking slave would also be tasked with providing services such as cleaning, cooking, or serving food to higher ranking servants. (Ge 9:25; 24:2)

(Luke 22:27) For which one is greater, the one dining or the one serving? Is it not the one dining?

What were Christ's instructions in these verses?

(Matthew 14:16) However, Jesus said to them: “They do not have to leave; you give them something to eat.”

(Mark 6:37) He replied to them: “You give them something to eat.” At this they said to him: “Should we go off and buy 200 de-nar'i-i worth of bread and give it to the people to eat?”

(Luke 9:13) But he said to them: “You give them something to eat.” They said: “We have nothing more than five loaves and two fish, unless perhaps we ourselves go and buy food for all these people.”

Christ told them to give the crowds food. But note that they did **not** produce food for the crowds.

(Matthew 14:19) And he instructed the crowds to recline on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said a blessing, and after breaking the loaves, he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

(Mark 8:6) And he instructed the crowd to recline on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and began giving them to his disciples to serve, and they served them to the crowd.

(Luke 9:16) Taking now the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed them. Then he broke them up and began giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

The disciples fed the crowds the food that Christ provided. They did not create the food themselves or alter it in any way. (Mr 8:17-21; 2Co 9:10)

(Matthew 14:20) So they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the leftover fragments, 12 baskets full.

(Mark 6:42) So they all ate and were satisfied,

(Luke 9:17) So they all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the leftovers, 12 baskets of fragments.

Who were those in the crowd? They were not seasoned and mature Christians. They were new followers that were probably hearing the good news for the first time. And what were these new ones satisfied to eat? Bread and fish, the most basic of food staples at the time. Not extravagant or rich foods. (Mt 13:10-17)

The appointment to feed other slaves is an appointment to a very low position among his master's slaves since feeding others is serving them, just as a slave who bathes other slaves would be of the lowest rank. Jesus made that clear when he washed the feet of the apostles and told them *"I set the pattern for you"*. (Jn 13:12-16; Mt 3:11; Jn 1:27) It is similar to the hierarchy in a company today. The CEO is on top. Beneath him are the supervisors. Beneath them are the staff. And then you have those who clean the bathrooms. Those last ones are who Jesus was emulating when he washed their feet. So the *"faithful and discrete slave"* is to be the lowest of servants to the other slaves, not governors over them.

No, the *"faithful and discrete slave"* was not given any authority over other slaves. Yet the GB dare to claim the position of governors, in opposition to Christ's commands. (see my article "The Governing Body")

(Matthew 24:45b) to give them their food at the proper time

The GB claim that *"the proper time"* means that they are to give certain food at one time and other food at another time, such as early in the last days and later in the last days. But is that accurate?

We don't need to use human reasoning to figure out what *"the proper time"* is. Jesus himself defined for us what he meant by *"the proper time"* when he told Peter three times (Mt 18:16) to feed the new ones, that is to say, the *"lambs"* and *"little sheep"*. (Jn 21:15-17) Yes, *"the proper time"* to feed someone is when they are too young to feed themselves. (see my article "Feed My Lambs")

Although the GB single-out Matthew 24:45 and claim that it stands on its own, it is actually one of four illustrations directed at the *"slaves"* of the master. (see my article "Know One Thing")

Who is the *"the faithful and discreet slave"* today? Matthew 24:27 tells us:

(Matthew 24:47) Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.

Jesus identifies *"the faithful and discreet slave"* as the one whom he will appoint *"over all his*

belongings." (see my article "Anointed")

What belongings does Jesus have? Jesus tells us:

(Matthew 28:18) Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.

How does he appoint the slave over those belongings?

(Revelation 20:4) And I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed for the witness they gave about Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had not worshipped the wild beast or its image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for 1,000 years.

So *"the faithful and discreet slave"* in Jesus' illustration represents those that will rule over his belongings with him for the 1,000 years.

How many will rule with him? Revelation 7:4 tells us that it will be 144,000.

So the *"faithful and discreet slave"* includes the entire 144,000, ***not*** just a few men in New York who have unscripturally claimed the position of governors. (see my articles "Do Not" and "Leaven")

Yet again the GB use false teachings to promote their misappropriated position of authority. Just as a wicked slave in the first century would beat his fellow slaves into submission (Mt 24:49), the GB, in their counterfeit station as governors, insist that the others chosen to rule with Christ must be submissive to them.

[w20.01 p. 31] Not all who have the hope of living in heaven are part of "the faithful and discreet slave."

Those *"chosen ones"* (Mt 24:31) *"who survive to the presence of the Lord"* (1Th 4:15) and are found to be *"faithful and discreet"* are rewarded. But if any of them have started to beat their fellow slaves (Mt 24:49), they will be thrown outside with the *"hypocrites"* where they will weep and gnash their teeth. (Mt 24:51) (see my article "Know One Thing")

What do *you* think?

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