

## ABOUT THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE

<sup>12</sup> A second example of deep things that have been revealed to us concerns God's purpose to select 144,000 from among mankind. (Revelation 14:1, 4) We accept the teaching that all of the anointed ones living on earth at any given time constitute "the faithful and discreet slave" that Jesus said would provide timely "food" for his domestics. (Matthew 24:45) What Bible texts prove that this understanding is correct? Might Jesus have referred in a general sense to any Christian who builds up his brothers with spiritual nourishment?

<sup>13</sup> God told the nation of Israel: "You are my witnesses . . . even my servant whom I have chosen." (Isaiah 43:10) But on Nisan 11 of the year 33 C.E., Jesus told the leaders of Israel that God had rejected their nation from being His servant. He said: "The kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a *nation* producing its fruits." Jesus said to the crowds: "Look! Your house is abandoned to you." (Matthew 21:43; 23:38) As Jehovah's slave, the house of Israel was neither faithful nor discreet. (Isaiah 29:13, 14) Later that same day, when Jesus asked: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?" he was in effect asking, 'What discreet nation will replace Israel to be God's faithful slave?' The apostle Peter gave the answer when he told the congregation of anointed Christians: "*You are . . . 'a holy nation, a people for special possession.'*" (1 Peter 1:4; 2:9) That spiritual nation, "the Israel of God," became Jehovah's new slave. (Galatians 6:16) Just as all members of ancient Israel formed one "servant," so also all anointed Christians on earth at any one time form one "faithful and discreet slave." What a privilege it is for us to receive "food" through God's slave! WT 11/01/07 p. 30

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<sup>8</sup> Consider another means by which Christ leads the congregation today. Commenting on his presence and the conclusion of the system of things, Jesus said: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Matthew 24:3, 45-47.

<sup>9</sup> The "master" is Jesus Christ. The "slave" is the group of anointed Christians on earth. This slave class is entrusted with caring for Jesus' earthly interests and with providing timely spiritual food. A small group of qualified overseers from among the composite "faithful and discreet slave" form the Governing Body, serving as the representative of the slave class. They direct the worldwide Kingdom-preaching work and the supplying of spiritual nourishment at the right time. Christ thus leads the congregation by means of the spirit-anointed "faithful and discreet slave" and its Governing Body. WT 09/15/05 p. 22

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### An Individual or a Class?

<sup>4</sup> "The faithful and discreet slave" cannot be one person. Why not? Because the slave began serving spiritual food back in the first century, and according to Jesus, the slave would still be doing so when the Master arrived in 1914. That would represent some 1,900 years of faithful service for one individual. Not even Methuselah lived that long!—Genesis 5:27.

<sup>5</sup> Well, might the term "faithful and discreet slave" apply in a general sense to each individual Christian? It is true that all Christians must be faithful and discreet; however, Jesus clearly had something more in mind when he spoke of "the faithful and discreet slave." How do we know that? Because he said that the "master on arriving" would appoint the slave "over *all* his belongings." How could each individual Christian be placed over everything—over "all" of the Lord's belongings? Impossible!

<sup>6</sup> The only reasonable conclusion, then, is that Jesus was referring to a group of Christians as "the faithful and discreet slave." Can there be such a thing as a composite slave? Yes. Seven hundred years before Christ, Jehovah referred to the entire nation of Israel as "my witnesses" and "my *servant* whom I have chosen." (Isaiah 43:10) Every member of the nation of Israel from 1513 B.C.E., when the Mosaic Law was given, down to Pentecost 33 C.E. was part of this servant class. Most Israelites did not have a direct share in administering the nation's affairs or in

coordinating its spiritual feeding program. Jehovah used the kings, judges, prophets, priests, and Levites to carry out those tasks. Still, as a nation, Israel was to represent Jehovah's sovereignty and tell his praises among the nations. Each Israelite was to be a witness of Jehovah.—Deuteronomy 26:19; Isaiah 43:21; Malachi 2:7; Romans 3:1, 2.

### **A "Servant" Is Dismissed**

<sup>7</sup> Since Israel was God's "servant" centuries ago, was it also the slave that Jesus spoke about? No, for ancient Israel sadly turned out to be neither faithful nor discreet. Paul sums up the situation when he quotes Jehovah's words to the nation: "The name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people among the nations." (Romans 2:24) Indeed, Israel climaxed a long history of rebellion by rejecting Jesus, at which point Jehovah rejected them.—Matthew 21:42, 43.

<sup>8</sup> This unfaithfulness on the part of the "servant," Israel, did not mean that faithful worshipers would be forever cut off from a spiritual food supply. At Pentecost 33 C.E., 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, holy spirit was poured out upon about 120 of his disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem. At that moment, a new nation was born. Appropriately, its birth was publicized when its members boldly began telling the inhabitants of Jerusalem about "the magnificent things of God." (Acts 2:11) Thus, that new nation, a spiritual nation, became the "servant" that would declare Jehovah's glory to the nations and supply food at the proper time. (1 Peter 2:9) Fittingly, it came to be called "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16.

<sup>9</sup> Every member of "the Israel of God" is a dedicated, baptized Christian anointed with holy spirit and having a heavenly hope. Hence, the expression "faithful and discreet slave" refers to all members of that anointed spiritual nation as a group on earth at any particular time from 33 C.E. until now, just as every Israelite living at any time from 1513 B.C.E. until Pentecost 33 C.E. was part of the pre-Christian servant class. Who, though, are the "domestics," who receive spiritual nourishment from the slave? In the first century C.E., every Christian cherished the heavenly hope. Consequently, the domestics were also anointed Christians, viewed, not as a group, but as individuals. All, including those who held responsible positions in the congregation, needed spiritual food from the slave.—1 Corinthians 12:12, 19-27; Hebrews 5:11-13; 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

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### **"THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE"**

<sup>3</sup> Relief supplies are generally dispensed through an organized channel, and Jehovah has similarly made spiritual provision for his people. For example, the Israelites were "Jehovah's congregation" for some 1,500 years. Among them were those who served as God's channel to teach his Law. (1 Chronicles 28:8; 2 Chronicles 17:7-9) In the first century C.E., Jehovah brought forth the Christian organization. Congregations were formed, and they functioned under the direction of a governing body made up of apostles and older men. (Acts 15:22-31) Likewise today, Jehovah deals with his people through an organized body. How do we know this?

<sup>4</sup> Jesus said that at the time of his presence in Kingdom power, "the faithful and discreet slave" would be found providing "food at the proper time" for His followers. (Matthew 24:45-47) When Jesus was installed as heavenly King in 1914, who did this "slave" prove to be? Certainly not the clergy of Christendom. For the most part, they were feeding their flocks propaganda that backed up their own national governments in World War I. But proper and timely spiritual food was being dispensed by the group of true Christians who were anointed by God's holy spirit and were a part of what Jesus called the "little flock." (Luke 12:32) These anointed Christians preached God's Kingdom rather than man's governments. As a result, over the years millions of righteously disposed "other sheep" have joined the anointed "slave" in practicing true religion. (John 10:16) Using the 'faithful slave' and its present-day Governing Body, God directs his organized people to make spiritual food, clothing, and shelter available to all who wish to have these provisions. **Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life, Chapter 17 pp. 160, 161**