

Two Powers to live or die by



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In the beginning God created all things and laid down the basis for life to be lived on earth as recorded in the first book of the Bible. (Gen 1-2) Later, through Moses, God gave us further helpful instructions in the Ten Commandments so we could understand that He alone is to be in control of all things, and that we should obey Him with all our heart soul and mind.

Exodus 20:1-17

God gave the Ten Commands to set out the limit of human behaviour, when we fail to comply the commands condemn us, for we are without excuse; for even the creation itself declares the glory of God.

Rom 1:18-23

These commands were summarised in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

“And you shall love the LORD your God with all thine heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.”

Deut 6:5

“You shall not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.”

Lev 19:18

This Divine rule to follow is restated in the New Testament in Matthew's gospel.

'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments depends the whole Law and the Prophets."

Matt 22:37-40

But man did not fulfil this command, and did not submit God's control in his life. Even in the very beginning, while Adam and Eve lived in the presence of God, they took it upon themselves to do what they wanted in disobedience to God. Eve listened to Satan, and Adam listened to Eve, both failed to follow God's instructions for life in the presence of God, so both of them died

spiritually to that eternal life of bliss and happiness God made available because they took life into their own hands. Gen 3

After Adam and Eve rebelled against God and compromised His truth, the way was open for Satan to take dominion over the earth.

2 Cor 4:4 1 John 5:19

Taking the power of their life away from God through disobedience became the disastrous way of mankind under Satan's leading. By following our fleshly passions, which the devil incites; we went from the frying pan of disobedience to enter the prospect of fire in hell. Soon after Adam and Eve rebelled against God's dominion, murder became a part of the creation. One of their sons killed his brother.

Cain killed his brother Able out of jealousy. (Gen 4) And this pattern of evil continued amongst the people God had made to live with Him. Behind all motives to murder is the desire to be centre of our world, to have

control over others. Instead of God being the centre of life as we obey His commands and do His will, we place ourselves at the centre of life and insist on having our way. Instead of leaving God in control of all things, we take God's place; we insist on being in control, and as a result, pain and suffering comes to the entire world. We follow the god of this world.

There are two forces at work in the world

In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, Jesus gives us a vision of the spiritual forces behind the scenes in our lives that we cannot see with natural eyes.

The book of Revelation reveals that from a human perspective we may think all things we do are up to us, but from a higher perspective, there is only God and His great enemy, Satan, the devil, who has power in our lives when we follow his deception. *'In whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light*

of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.' 2 Cor 4:4

When we seek to obey God we trust Him and allow Him to control all we do in order to please Him. When we disobey God, we think we please ourselves, but we have only given in to the leading of the devil's great deception, and we rebel against God and compromise His truth. When we align ourselves with Satan we take him in preference to God. 2 Tim 2:26

However, the book of Revelation tells us that God is always in control. (Rev 1:17-18) He has limited Satan's power (Rev 20:1-2) so that Satan cannot prevent God's word from going out into the world, but Satan can still deceive the minds of those who will not obey God. Nevertheless, by resisting the devils temptation, the faithful will prove the value of their faith and strengthening the hearts of others who remain faithful to God.

At worst, our choice to follow temptation and compromise our faith will send us to hell with

Satan; at best our disobedience assists the Devil in gathering his harvest of souls to join him in the fiery pit.

God will help us overcome Satan

God tells us in the book of Ephesians about this spiritual war we all are taking part in. *'For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.'*

Eph 6:12

However which way this battle may go, the responsibility for what we do is ours. We choose who we obey, God, or His enemy. The choice is ours. *'Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.'*

James 4:7-8

We are either instruments of God who is light, or we live as instruments of the evil one who is darkness. If we want to live in peace we must obey God; but if we allow ourselves to

be deceived and compromise God's truth, His judgement is upon us, and Satan causes more harm as he rages in the world.

In the battle for souls, God already has the victory in Jesus Christ by His death and resurrection. This means God is the judge; He has all authority and has already condemned Satan. If we follow Satan's deception, we will be condemned. God gives Christians the power and ability to walk with Him. *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."* Ezek 36:27

Satan's control has many faces

The devils opposition to God's rule comes to us with many faces; domestic, political and religious. The consequence of taking going with the world isn't always murder, but it always causes suffering, not only to us but also other people.

The battle is for our minds. The controlling mindset can often be seen when we are

demanding, intolerant, we won't listen, we lack introspection, we are unyielding, and we are hardly ever remorseful. We don't even see we have been disobedient to God. But any one of these attitudes is enough to indicate we want to control others and we have taken God's place.

Taking control makes us god in His place

When we don't accept God's control we take His place. With self in control we commit idolatry; we set ourselves up as idols in our own mind. If God is not in control we won't agree with God's standards so we set up our own. But our apparent control isn't ours, we are deceived; the one we obey determines our eternal destiny.

God's Fatherly heart loves us according to His nature; our control is based on self interest, which makes loving others outdated. Maintaining our controlling mindset is stressful business which hurts us and others.

Self rule comes from the foolishness of men

In our world today we witness people making decisions that go against their God given life, because they seek personal control and not the truth about life. People, who lack faith and reverence for God, resort to self determination at the devils request. And since man naturally has limited knowledge and understanding, his choices will often be inadequate.

'Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you thinks that he is wise in this age, he must become foolish, so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is the one who catches the wise in their craftiness"; and again, "The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are useless."

1 Cor 3:18-20

'This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.'

John 3:19

God gives insight so we know what we do

God does not leave us without guidance as to how we take control out of His hands to do as we wish. There are many references in the Bible that reveal when we are living in rebellion. *"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."* 1Cor 6:9-11

In the letter to the Galatians, Paul goes further and lists even more acts of the sinful nature. *"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,*

envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Gal 5:19-21

The flesh Paul refers to is a life lived outside of God's will, a life deceived by the devil to demand independence. This is a life that will not bow down to God as the sovereign ruler of all things. These attitudes and behaviours displayed in Paul's writing are normal for those who don't know God, but for those who claim their salvation in Jesus Christ, they are to be vigorously put aside.

Unfortunately, much of what passes for acceptable behaviour by many who call themselves Christian is condemned by God, since it always takes power from Him and places it into their own hands, with the result that Satan rages through their self will.

There are many times when we are impatient or angry over insignificant things, and brush it

off as unimportant, when in fact it is the heart of deceitful pride. The issue is, if we are Christians we will obey God and reflect the life of Christ who now lives in us, by the power of His indwelling Spirit.

If we are Christians our faith will be tested

'Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.'

James 1:2-4

We are not to react to those who would take advantage of us. *"I say to you, do not resist an evil person."* (Matt 5:39) We are to seek first the kingdom of God.

Matt 6:33

A religious life can lead to spiritual death

A religious life which does not submit in absolute obedience to Christ by taking up our cross will not save us from damnation.

Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

Matt 7:21-23

Not Loving the Lord means not obeying His commands. *'We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.'*

1 John 2:3-6

Not Loving the Lord means loving the world. *'Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the*

Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.'

1 John 2:15-17

Leaving God in control means we love one another. *'Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.'*

1 John 3:7-12

Our choice is as simple as light or darkness

In the teaching of Jesus we see a sharp contrast between darkness and light; between the ways of men and the will of God; between tombstone religion and a passionate spirituality in love with God.

Often, this teaching is not seen as being particularly absolute for our lives today because we have a tendency to minimise the gravity of missing the mark. After all, we are covered by grace, so we argue that inconsistent living is only part of our humanity.

However, God has told us that we have everything pertaining to life and godliness. He has given us His Spirit so that we can walk as Jesus walked. He has reborn us in the image of His Son. And we are reminded that we need to live up to the glory of God in Christ.

Now in Revelation comes the clarification of the message of the Lamb. There are two

powers at work in the world which go unseen except by faith.

God is working to bring all things to an end in Christ Jesus. The devil is doing his utmost to cause as much damage as he possibly can, even though he will lose in the end.

The souls of men and women are being used by Satan as pawns in a desperate attempt to get back at the Lamb.

In this battle, we are either supporting the Lord, or we are giving sustenance and support to the enemy. If we are not gathering with the great Shepherd, we scatter. If we are not making a stand to witness to Christ, we have compromised His truth. Nothing that happens in our lives is free from this spiritual warfare we are involved in, nothing.

When we take the path of least resistance, because of fear or sinful desires we abdicate our responsibility to keep looking to God for all we need and the way we must behave.

The devil denies that we are in a spiritual war. The devil offers us the easy way. So even in our Christian service, he promotes the easy way of not taking up our cross. And instead of imitating Christ, we have the easier message of the world, that all are welcomed in the church, because our God is a God of love who accepts all who will come, no stipulations required. There is no need to suffer with Christ.

However nothing we do or say is without having some effect in this battle for our lives. So we must be on guard against false teachers who causes deception, and we must guard against taking the easy comfortable way of the world. The book of Revelation clearly shows us that we are in a battle which is going on between two spiritual powers, God and Satan.

We must stand guard and take up our arms, for the last days are here, and the end is near, the Lord is coming, be ready!

God gives teachers to help us keep Him in control

God never intended we make our own way as disciples, or decide for ourselves what is needed to live in His presence. God provided for our understanding so we are not ignorant.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Matt 28:19-20

'And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers.'

Eph 4:11

'We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.'

Col 1:28

Those who will not listen to the teachers God provides are rebellious. Because of this, they cannot really claim to be disciples who follow Jesus because they won't listen to those He provides, they want to determine what they will believe. A favourite response of the unteachable is "that's only your opinion."

'And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house. But you shall speak My words to them whether they listen or not, for they are rebellious.'

Ezek 2:6-7

God is Sovereign, He is always in control

As much as Satan rages in the world and tries to use us, God is still in control. If we trust Him and obey Him will make us complete in Christ. *'And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according*

to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.' Rom 8:28-29

'For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.' Col 1:16-17

"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! he trusts in You." Isa 26:3

To be under God's control means we take up our cross

If God is going to be in control, as He must be if we are going to have any peace, we must deny our self and take up our cross and follow Christ's example. If we don't die to self rule, we will want the control only God should have.

'And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." Luke 9:23 -24

Jesus calls on us to reject the demands of our individual personal preferences and worldly aspirations, to seek His way, His dominion. Instead of our desire to be in control, we need to follow Him and take up our sacrificial cross daily to follow the Lamb of God who is the judge of all. Rev 1:18

Jesus says saving our life in the world of personal aspirations will mean losing the eternal life He gives to those who obey Him. Therefore, losing this earthly life for His sake will result in life in His kingdom. Our Cross of obedience is our key to Heaven.

Who's in control of our life?

The kingdom of God is God's rule over all things; this means He is also the Judge over

all. He will judge everyone according to what we have done concerning His revealed will for mankind.

God calls on us to resist the devil and the temptation to compromise His truth in our daily lives, by trusting in Him and therefore obeying His word. If we are faithful we will overcome the world by the power of His Spirit. If we overcome in the face of strong opposition He will reward us.

"Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

Rev 2:10

God is coming to judge the disobedient. *'For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who refuse to obey the gospel of God?'*

1 Pet 4:17

Living Water Resources



Come to the river

'For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who refuse to obey the gospel of God?' 1 Pet 4:17

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