

HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS

Does God have a special plan for his household in the time before Jesus's return? Does he have a plan for those of us he has set in charge of that household? He certainly does. In chapter two we looked at the illustration of the head of the house and the thief. We saw that the head of the house were Christian leaders. We also learned that if they were watchful they could protect their house (churches) from Satan, who is the thief. Immediately after this illustration, Jesus tells us what makes a faithful leader of his house.

Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. (Matthew 24:45–47 NASB)

This somewhat obscure passage is found in the parable of the faithful and evil slaves. The passage is obscure because the Church hasn't known what to make of it. What the Church has missed is that in verse 45, Jesus is asking us a riddle! He asks, "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave?" A few verses earlier in the Olivet Discourse, Jesus had referred to Noah and compared his return to this Old Testament character. In Luke 17 when speaking to the Pharisees, Jesus compared his return to Lot. Could Jesus be referring to another Old Testament figure here? Here are the clues Jesus gives us:

- The faithful head of his household is a slave;
- He is put in charge of his household by his master;
- He provides food for his household at the appointed time.

Have you guessed the answer yet? It's Joseph! Jesus is telling us to act like Joseph at the appointed time! Let's see how Joseph is the perfect answer to Jesus's riddle:

- His brothers sold Joseph into slavery;
- Potiphar, his master, made him the head of his household and put him in charge of all of his possessions;
- Joseph provided food for both his Jewish brothers and the Egyptians during the seven-year famine.

You may be asking, *How is it possible no one has seen this verse as a riddle before?* The answer is obvious. As we discussed in chapter two, God has sovereignly chosen this time to reveal new revelations to us. It most likely is time for us to take the next step. The follow-up question then is: *How does Jesus want me to be like Joseph?* Let's first look at the reward Jesus promises to those who accomplish his will:

Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. (Matthew 24:46–47 NASB)

Those of us who act like Joseph will be put in charge of all of Jesus's possessions upon his return! When Jesus sits on his glorious throne, those who understand and live out this command will be the leaders of his kingdom. If we are going to accomplish this task, we need to understand who God's household is and what kind of food Jesus is talking about.

We have learned that God's people are Gentiles and Jews. The faithful slave will care for both. Food has a dual meaning here, I believe. Certainly it refers to God's Word. "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" (Matthew 4:4 NASB). But I believe Matthew 24:45 also refers to physical bread.

In chapter six, we learned that Jesus foretold there will be famines during the beginning of the birth pangs period. We also saw that once the mark of the Beast is established, no one will be able to buy or sell without it. During that time the Church will face a famine more severe than any