

Doulos

- A. *Doulos* (δοῦλος). belongs to the *douleuo* word group rather than the *douloo* word group:
1. *Doule* (noun): "female slave"
 2. *Douleuo* (verb): "to be a slave"
 3. *Douleia* (noun): "the condition of slavery"
 4. *Sundoulos* (noun): "fellow slave"
 5. *Doulos* (adjective): "enslaved, performing the service of a slave"
 6. *Doulos* (noun): "slave"
- B. *Douloo* vs. *Douleuo*
1. The *douloo* word group refers to "enslaving" someone," or "to make another or oneself a slave."
 2. *Douleuo* refers to "carrying out the duties of a slave," or "to the relationship between a slave and his master."
 3. *Douleuo* word group refers to the *status* or the *condition* of a slave or the *attitude* of one.
- C. Classical Usage
1. The Greeks valued and prized their personal freedom and viewed slavery as a debasing condition for their personal dignity was bound up in their freedom.
 2. Rudolph Tuentje writes, "For the Attic Greek, personal freedom was his prized possession. To be independent of others and to manage his own life and to live as he chooses is of the essence of such freedom. The *doulos* belonged by nature not to himself, but to someone else" (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* volume 3, pages 392-393).
 3. In *doulos* the emphasis is on the slave's dependence on his lord.
 4. Rengstorf commenting on the classical usage of the word, writes, "The distinctive feature of the self-awareness of the Greek is the thought of freedom. The Greek finds his personal dignity in the fact that he is free. Thus his self-awareness stands out sharply from anything which stands under the concept *douleuein*. For where there is *douleuein* human autonomy is set aside and an alien will takes precedence of one's own. This does not mean that there is no place for the thought of service in the Greek world. The Greek city state depended on the service of citizens, and these gave their service after the manner of the *doulos*, who not only has no possibility of evading tasks laid upon him but who also has no right of personal choice, who must rather do what another will have done, and refrain from doing what another will not have done. In the *doulos* the free Greek world always sees its own antitype, and in *douleuein* it sees the perversion of its own nature. Hence the Greek can only reject and scorn the type of service which in inner or outer structure bears even the slightest resemblance of that of the slave" (Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* volume 2 pages 261-262).
 5. Two of the greatest representatives of Greek thought, Aristotle and Plato, used the *doulos* word group in a *derogatory* sense in keeping with its basic meaning.
 6. Aristotle in his work *Nicomachean Ethics* wrote, "the slave is a living tool and the tool a lifeless slave" (Book VIII, chapter 11, 1161b).
 7. Aristotle viewed the slave as on a par with animals.
 8. Aristotle defined the slave as a "living possession," and a "minister of action."
 9. For Aristotle, the slave was a "possession for maintaining life" (*Politics*, Book I, chapter 4, 1253b).
 10. In Greek thought, the *doulos* belonged by nature to someone else and not himself.
 11. Aristotle relates this concept of the *doulos*, he writes, "The master is only the master of the slave; he does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him. Hence we see what is the nature and office of a slave; he who is by nature not his own but another's man, is by nature a slave; and he may be said to be another's man who, being a human being, is also a possession. And a possession may be defined as an instrument of action, separable from the possessor" (*Politics* Book I, chapter 4, 1254a).
 12. The *doulos* in Greek thought had his will bound up in the will of another.
 13. There was no possibility of avoiding the tasks that were laid upon him.

14. The essence of freedom for the Greeks was to manage one's own life and to live as he chooses without interference from others.
 15. The thought of being a slave was totally repulsive to the Greeks and was viewed with total contempt.
 16. The Greeks rejected and scorned the type of service that the slave rendered.
 17. The slaves subordination and dependence on his or her master was viewed as a totally debasing and contemptible condition.
 18. The *douloi* were a despised class of individuals.
 19. The only positive association of *doulos* which Plato relates was to be a *doulos* to the laws of society which was the mark of the ideal citizen (Plato *Leges* 3.689c, 700a; cited by Rengstorf, Kittel, 2:261ff.)
 20. The Greek found his true worth only in being conscious of himself and the free development of his potential.
 21. Although the Greeks viewed slavery in this light, the slave was allowed to take part in the mystery religions in Greece.
 22. They were allowed to take part in domestic worship and were not always treated harshly but were often treated humanely.
 23. The *doulos* word group is never employed by the Greeks in terms of man's relationship as a slave to God.
 24. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf of Tübingen University in Kittel's, writes, "Within the Greek concept of God there is in fact no place for this word group as an expression of religious relationship and service" (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Volume 2, pg. 264).
 25. Only the LXX and NT employed the *doulos* word group for man's relationship as a *slave to God*.
- D. LXX Usage
1. The LXX employs the *doulos* word group to translate the Hebrew words *`avadh* (עֲבַד), "to serve, to work," and *`evedh* (עֶבֶד), "slave, servant."
 2. Rengstorf commenting on the *doulos* word group in the LXX usage, writes, "When we turn to the Greek Bible, and investigate its use of the word group, we are struck at once by the degree to which it has crowded out the various synonyms (*diakoneo*, *hupereteo*, etc.). Whenever there is a reference to service, it is usually expressed by a word from this word group. The group is thus freed from the restriction to the service of slaves which marks its use in non-biblical Greek. The reason for this is that it is almost always used for the root *avadh* (עֲבַד) and its denominatives" (*Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* volume 2 page 265).
 3. *The Complete Biblical Library* provides the following excellent comment on the LXX usage of *doulos*, states, "The idea of slavery in Israel was far removed from the Greek notion. First, people could become slaves as a result of choice. Second, in contrast to the Hellenistic idea, slaves served only for 6 years (Ex. 21:2), and the Old Testament also provided for the protection of slaves from mistreatment (Ex. 21:14, 26-27). Third, a religious relationship was regularly conveyed by servanthood. David referred to himself as God's slave (1 Sam. 23:10-11 [LXX 1 Kings 23:10-11]; Psalm 89:50 [88:50]), but he also considered himself Saul's servant (1 Sam. 19:4 [LXX 1 Kings 19:4]) and Jonathan's servant (1 Sam. 20:7-8 [LXX 1 Kings 20:7-8]). Here one can observe the sharp contrast with the Hellenistic mind-set which would have despised such a relationship. God referred to David as His slave (2 Sam. 3:18 [LXX 2 Kings 13:8]; Psa. 89:3, 20 [LXX 88:3, 20]) who would effect His salvation. God's people are His chosen servants (Psalms 105:6 [LXX 104:6]; 134:1 [133:1]; Isaiah 49:3; cf. 2 Kings 10:21-23 [LXX 4 Kings 10:21, 23]), especially the prophets (2 Kings 17:23 [LXX 4 Kings 17:23]; Amos 3:7; Zechariah 1:6). The slave of God, therefore, carries out the will and purpose of God. The slave also depends upon his Lord to provide protection and sustenance. One can see the appropriateness of such a metaphor as a description of God's people. The Psalmist considered himself the slave of God who had been free by God (Psalm 116:16 [LXX 115:16]; cf. Psalms 34:22 [LXX 33:22]; 102:28 [101:28]; 144:10 [143:10]; Isaiah 48:20; 2 Maccabees 7:33; 8:29). Service to God is not, however, expressed in single acts; rather, the servant continually does the bidding of his Lord. The most unique role of the word slave is

its function as an image of the Messiah. This is developed in the closing chapters of Isaiah where the term *ʿevedh* occurs 20 times in the singular (chapters 39-53, Kaiser, ‘*ʿevedh*,’ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, pp. 639f.; note, *doulos* occurs only six times here in the Septuagint). This is vital for understanding Jesus’ mission as God’s Servant (Mark 10:43ff.; Philippians 2:7)” (*The Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary*, Delta-Epsilon 1132-2175).

4. The usage of the *doulos* word group is expanded in the LXX where it is used to describe the relation of God and man.
5. It was also used to describe the relationship between the subject and his king.
6. *Doulos* was also used of men who served *Jehovah* such as David and Moses.
7. Therefore, it was no longer a derogatory term as in classical Greek, but now became a title of honor in the LXX.
8. He who called himself a *doulos* acknowledges that another has power over him.
9. Although the concept of the *doulos* still retained the element of unconditional subjection to another, it yet lost its negative character.
10. *Doulos* now became a title of honor as a result of God’s election of Israel.
11. From its connection with *ʿavadh*, *doulos* in the LXX is used for a slave and his status and situation.
12. The *doulos* word group in the LXX is used to denote a relation of dependence or service which may be forced, or sometimes voluntary, yet its use is still restrictive.
13. The historical development of the *doulos* word group reaches its peak when it comes to describe the relationship of dependence and service in which man stands to God.
14. The Greeks never employed the word group in this manner and avoided it.
15. Man is exalted by *servicing God* in the LXX.
16. The worth of the *doulos* is determined by his knowledge of his *kurios*, “Lord,” and so was based upon his relation to God.
17. The meaning of *doulos* had now become elevated through its usage in the LXX.
18. The classical Greek writers used the *doulos* word group primarily in a negative light, whereas, the LXX elevates its usage to a higher level and meaning.
19. The Bible does not condemn slavery, but in fact condones it (Lev. 25:44).
20. Slavery was commonly practiced in the nation of Israel.
21. The nation of Israel was commanded by the Lord God to make slaves of those whom they conquered in battle.
22. Under Israelite law, the length and type of service depended upon nationality, the form of servitude, and gender.
23. For instance, Israelites who became slaves to resolve a problem with debt, were to be treated as “hired workers” under the Mosaic Law and not as slaves from pagan nations.
24. There were 5 ways in which one could become a slave:
 - a. Those who sold themselves into slavery because of debt.
 - b. Those who were prisoners of war.
 - c. Those who were born into slavery (Gen. 17:23; Lev. 22:11)
 - d. Those who were sold into slavery, i.e., Joseph (Gen. 37:28, 36)
 - e. Those who were caught committing the crime of breaking and entering (Ex. 22:2-3)
25. The Rights of Slaves in Israel:
 - a. To redeem themselves and work for their freedom
 - b. To good and fair treatment (Lev. 25:43)
 - c. To justice (Ex. 21:20; Job 31:13)
 - d. To marry and have children (Ex. 21:5)
 - e. To choose to remain a permanent slave after being set free (Ex. 21:5; Deut. 15:16)
 - f. To own property and have money (Lev. 25:29)
 - g. To promotion (Gen. 15:2)
 - h. To worship God without interference from Master (Ex. 12:44; Deut. 12:12)
26. Hebrew slaves had more rights:
 - a. They could be held for only 6 years (Ex. 21:2; Deut. 15:12)

- b. When freed, the master had to provide animals, grain and wine (Deut. 15:13).
 - c. They could not be returned to foreign owners if they ran away (Deut. 23:15)
27. Slave owners had the right:
- a. To hold slaves as possessions (Lev. 25:45)
 - b. To leave slaves to his inheritance (Lev. 25:46)
 - c. To hold as property the wife and children of all slaves who were unmarried at the time they became a slave (Ex. 21:4)
 - d. To capture runaways (1 Kings 2:39-41)
 - e. To free slaves on the Sabbatical Year or Jubilee
 - f. To circumcise slaves as commanded by the Lord (Gen. 17:12-13, 23, 27)
 - g. To sell, trade, or give away slaves (Gen. 29:24)
 - h. To punish or disciplines slaves, but not to kill (Ex. 21:20)
 - i. To marry a slave or give them in marriage (1 Chron. 2:35)
 - j. To marry a daughter to a slave (1 Chron. 2:34)
 - k. To make slaves those who are caught for breaking and entering (Ex. 22:2-3)
 - l. To make slaves of those individuals caught stealing (Gen. 44:8-33)
 - m. To demand military service of his slaves (Gen. 14:14-24)
28. Manumission of slaves in Israel:
- a. Slaves in Israel could be manumitted in several different ways.
 - b. Manumission is the "act or process of releasing someone from slavery."
29. Slaves could be manumitted by:
- a. Redemption
 - b. Elapse of time (6 years)
 - c. The Year of Jubilee
 - d. Physical disability (Ex. 21:26-27)
 - e. Purchasing one's freedom through the accumulation of personal assets (Lev. 25:49)
30. Rengstorf provides the following 4 points on the usage of the *doulos* word group in the LXX, he states "1. From the connexion with *vedh* it may be seen that in the LXX and Greek Judaism generally the word is used for a slave and his status and situation. It is used quite definitely and emphatically in this way, as shown by its specific use in cases where serving as a slave is not felt to be normal. 2. Since the word group is used to denote a relation of dependence or service which may be forced, or sometimes voluntary, but which is always felt to be restrictive, it is the usual linguistic form for the relation of the subject to the king in the despotic monarchies of the ancient Orient. 3. This ceremonial usage of the group is of epoch-making importance because it provides the assumptions on which the words can be adopted into the language of worship. The climax of the historical development is reached when the group comes to describe the relationship of dependence and service in which man stands to God. This also brings us to the point where the Jewish and oriental usage enters into the sharpest possible antithesis to that of the Greek and Hellenistic world. 4. The attitude of divine service expressed in the term is shared by the Jewish world with other Semitic peoples and tribes and also with the Egyptians. In every case the conception of God bears the stamp of unconditional majesty and absolute superiority to man. This may be seen from the names of the Semitic deities (Baal, Adon, Adonai/*kurios* etc.), which all represent the deity as Lord" (Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* volume 2, pages 266-269).
- E. NT Usage
- 1. *Doulos* and its cognates appear very frequently in the Pauline writings in comparison to the rest of the NT.
 - 2. Out of the 124 instances fo *doulos*, 30 are in Paul, 30 in Matthew and 26 in Luke.
 - 3. The *doulos* in the NT is never spoken of in a negative or derogatory fashion as in classical Greek of the Hellenistic world.
 - 4. The *doulos* in the NT is never despised nor rejected simply because he or she is a slave.
 - 5. The apostles never condemned slavery and neither did our Lord.

6. The NT does not teach the abolishment of it.
7. The Word of God never commands slaves to seek their freedom or leave their masters or rebel against them.
8. Many slaves and their masters belonged to the same local assembly in the early church.
9. This obviously could produce problems in the local assembly.
10. The doctrine of the apostles does not deal with this problem by telling masters to release their slaves, nor does it teach slaves to leave their masters.
11. Each group, slaves and masters are given specific commands in order to deal with their relationship to each other in the natural realm.
12. Slaves are commanded to be constantly obedient to their masters as unto the Lord (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22).
13. Masters are commanded to deal fairly with their slaves as unto the Lord (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1).
14. Slaves who had the opportunity to gain their freedom by legal means were not condemned for doing so, but were encouraged (1 Cor. 7:21).
15. Being a slave in the natural realm was not a hindrance to serving God since He has given each Church Age believer in Christ *spiritual freedom*.
16. NT doctrine is quite clear that all men and women are slaves to something or someone.
17. Apart from the literal usages of the *doulos* word group and their parabolic usages, there are 2 categories of slavery in the NT which deal with the spiritual realm.
18. One is positive and one is negative.
19. The Scriptures teach that you are either a slave to the *Protocol Plan of God* which is a born-again believer living in the new nature by utilizing the operational type spiritual life for the Church Age with its 2 power options, 3 spiritual skills, 4 spiritual mechanics, or you are a slave to the cosmic system of Satan as an believer or unbeliever living in the old sin nature or Adamic nature functioning in life according to the 3 arrogance skills.
20. The NT clearly teaches that the whole human race is enslaved to sin.
21. Everyone who commits sin is the *slave to sin nature* and resides in the *slave market of sin* (John 8:34).
22. We *cannot* live in the Father's household forever if we are slaves to sin (John 8:35).
23. Only the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of God can set us free from our slavery to sin (John 8:36).
24. *Spiritual* living through the utilization of the 3 spiritual skills produces slavery in the following categories:
 - a. *Slave to God* (Acts 16:17; 20:19; Titus 1:1; James 1:1; 1 Pet. 2:16; Rev. 7:3; 15:3)
 - b. *Slave to Christ* (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 7:22; Gal. 1:10; Eph. 6:6; Phil. 1:1; Col. 3:24; 4:12; 2 Tim. 2:24; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1:1)
 - c. *Slave to the Royal Family of God* (2 Cor. 4:5; Gal. 5:13).
25. *Cosmic* living through the utilization of the 3 arrogance skills produces slavery in the following categories:
 - a. *Slave of Men* (1 Cor. 7:23)
 - b. *Slave to Sin Nature* (John 8:34; Rom. 6:17, 19, 20, 21; 2 Pet. 2:19)
 - c. *Slave to Fear* (Rom. 8:15; Heb. 2:15)
 - d. *Slave to Legalism* (Gal. 4:8-9; 5:1)
 - fe *Slave to Money* (Matt. 6:24)