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A Comparative Study of the Servant Words in the New Testament

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE

SERVANT WORDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

BY
JACK ROGER REESE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SERVANT WORDS

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

An Abstract of a Thesis

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In Partial Fulfillment

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Master of Arts

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by

Jack Roger Reese

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ABSTRACT

At least twelve Greek words are used at various times
in the New Testament denoting some form or function of ser-
vice. The development of each word in its Greek and Septua-
gint backgrounds is unique; each word has a unique meaning
in the New Testament. Yet the English language cannot ade-
quately translate the full impact of these words as they
were used by the original authors. Illumination of each
term in light of its philology is necessary.

Nine of the servant words are of particular importance
because of their use in the New Testament in describing
spiritual servitude. These terms are δοῦλος, διάκονος,
παῖς, λειτουργός, λατρεία, ἱερουργέω, θεράπων, ὑπηρέτης, and
οἰκέτης along with their cognates. This thesis has attempted
to uncover through a thorough study of these words some of
the basic principles of Christian service. Because of the
prominence of two of the servant words, δοῦλος and διάκονος,
a chapter has been devoted to each, tracing the secular
Greek and Septuagint backgrounds of the terms, examining
their usage in the New Testament, and observing their devel-
opment in the writing of the Apostolic Fathers. These two

terms are then compared and contrasted. Each of the remaining words are examined in their philological development, in their New Testament contexts, and in relation to the other servant words.

The nine words considered in this thesis fall into three basic groupings. One group is defined by subjection, represented in the extreme by the δοῦλος word group. The δοῦλος is totally controlled by his master, having no voice, no will, no independent actions. In the New Testament all men are considered to be δοῦλοι in some form, either slaves to sin or slaves to Christ. Freedom for the slaves of sin is possible only through death -- Christ's death for man's sake and man's death to his own sin. Such emancipation from sin necessitates a new servitude where man's will is relinquished to the will of Christ. Ὀικέτης also is defined by subjection and generally has reference to the servant of the household. The distinction between master and slave implied in this term is less severe than that of δοῦλος. παῖς too finds its norm in subjection, but because of its connotations of "child," it often describes a relationship with a master more intimate than that of ὀικέτης or δοῦλος, thus the designation of the Messiah as παῖς Θεοῦ.

A second grouping can be made of the servant words which are defined not by their subjection but by their work

for the sake of others. The primary term in this group is
διάκονος, which has its roots in the serving at table specif-
ically and menial service generally. In the New Testament
physical and spiritual διακονία can be distinguished, both
of which are crucial for the Christian, though spiritual
διακονία, specifically the ministry of the word, is viewed
as more important. Ὑπηρέτης, θεράπων, and occasionally
λειτουργός are also defined more by their service than by
their subjection.

Three of the servant words find their New Testament
emphasis in neither subjection nor in service rendered on
behalf of others but in priestly ministration or worship.
Λειτουργία and λατρεία are both used to describe the cultic
duties of priests, the latter perhaps implying a stronger
notion of sacrifice. Λειτουργία is descriptive of man's
work on behalf of those in the world who are Christless.
Λατρεία at times refers to the worship of Christians, even
to the sacrificial giving of their lives in service to God.
Found only once in the New Testament, ἱερουργέω charac-
terizes Paul's priestly ministry in the service of the gos-
pel for the sake of the Gentiles.

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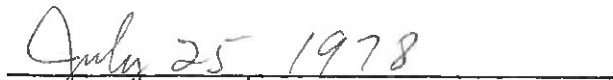Master of Arts

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Jack Roger Reese

August 1978

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Council of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

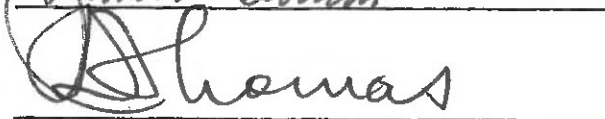MASTER OF ARTS

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CHAPTER I

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The Importance of the Study

In recent years a re-awakening has occurred in
Christian ranks concerning the function and significance of
Christian service. Religious journals are replete with
articles stressing the values, opportunities, and problems
associated with ministry. Many within the religious world
are questioning the traditional distinction between clergy
and laity. Numerous people within the church claim to be
searching for "their gifts" or "their ministries." Though
the current emphasis on Christian service is certainly
desirable, problems frequently arise because inaccurate and
mistaken meanings are assigned to the words "ministry" and
"service." Too often the quest for meaning in this context
is tainted with theological prejudice and with an unwilling-
ness to re-examine the concept of ministry in light of its
occurrence within the New Testament. Therefore, a genuinely
Biblical study of the Greek words for service is in order.
Such a study would not only aid in correcting certain false

notions, it would also aid in establishing correct ideas concerning Christian service in the New Testament and its implications in today's world.

The Statement of the Problem

At least twelve Greek words are used in the New Testament to describe some form or function of service.[1] Each word has its unique philological background; each has a particular meaning within its context. In some instances, the service is voluntary; in others, it is not. In some contexts, the New Testament authors encourage their readers to be servants; in others, service is to be avoided. Service is described as being both menial and lofty, insignificant and momentous, the cause of deep sorrow and the source of great joy. The overall task of this thesis will be to draw from this material a basic understanding of the meaning of Christian service and the fundamental principles which give the concept eternal impact.

Two words stand out in terms of usage and theological significance: δοῦλος and διάκονος and their cognates.

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[1]Three of the terms will not be considered in this thesis. Ἐργάζομαι and παρέχω only occasionally describe a relationship of service. μίσθιος and μισθωτός are rarely found in the New Testament. None of the terms shed significant light concerning spiritual servanthood or the servile relationship of man to God.

An understanding of the Christian responsibility in ministry is dependent upon an understanding of these two words individually, in contrast with each other, and in comparison to the other servant words in the New Testament.

The Occurrences of the Servant Words in the New Testament

The idea of service is represented most often in the New Testament by the terms δοῦλος and διάκονος and their cognates. The use of these two terms far outnumbers that of any other servant word found in the Scriptures. Out of the 397 times service is mentioned by the New Testament writers, δοῦλος, διάκονος, and their cognates are employed 260 times: δοῦλος 165, διάκονος 95.

Δοῦλος, most often translated "slave" or "servant" in the Revised Standard Version, is found 123 times in the New Testament: seventy-two times in the Gospels (thirty in Matthew, five in Mark, twenty-six in Luke, eleven in John), twenty-nine times in the Pauline epistles, once in James, three times in the Petrine epistles, once in Jude, and fourteen times in Revelation. The feminine form, δούλη, is used only in Luke: Luke 1:38, 48 and Acts 2:18. Δουλεία, translated either "slavery" or "bondage" in the RSV, is used four times by Paul and once by the author of Hebrews. Δουλεύω, "to serve," is used six times in the

Gospels, twice in Acts, and seventeen times by Paul. $\Delta o \upsilon \lambda \acute{o} \omega$, "to enslave," is found once in Acts, six times in the Pauline corpus, and once in II Peter. $\Delta o \upsilon \lambda \alpha \gamma \omega \gamma \acute{e} \omega$, "to subdue," is found only in I Corinthians 9:27.

$\Delta \iota \acute{\alpha} \kappa o \nu o s$ and its cognates are used more by Paul than by any other New Testament author. Usually translated "servant," "minister," or "deacon" in the RSV, $\delta \iota \acute{\alpha} \kappa o \nu o s$ is found twenty-nine times: eight times in the Gospels and twenty-one times in Paul's writings. $\Delta \iota \alpha \kappa o \nu \acute{\iota} \alpha$, "service" or "ministry," is found thirty-two times in the New Testament: once in Luke, eight times in Acts, once in Hebrews, once in Revelation, and twenty-one times in the Pauline epistles. $\Delta \iota \alpha \kappa o \nu \acute{e} \omega$, "to serve" or "to minister," is used twenty times in the Gospels, twice in Acts, once in Hebrews, three times in I Peter, and eight times by Paul.

Though the other servant words are used less often in the New Testament, their usage nevertheless is significant. $\Lambda \epsilon \iota \tau o \upsilon \rho \gamma \acute{o} s$, usually translated "minister" or "servant" with religious or ritualistic connotations, is used along with its cognates fifteen times, all by Luke, Paul, and the author of Hebrews. $\Theta \epsilon \rho \acute{\alpha} \pi \omega \nu$ is used only once in the New Testament, Hebrews 3:5, and is translated "servant." $\Theta \epsilon \rho \alpha \pi \acute{e} \upsilon \omega$, "to serve" or "to heal" is found thirty-six times in the Gospels, five times in Acts, and twice in

Revelation. Θεραπεία, "serving" or "healing," is used
twice by Luke and once in Revelation. Though the basic
meaning of παῖς is "child," sixteen of the twenty-five
times it is used in the New Testament, "servant" is implied:
eight times παῖς describes an attendant or houseservant,
eight times it describes the servant of God. Ὑπηρέτης,
translated "servant," "guard," "officer," "attendant," is
found twenty-three times, mostly in the Gospels. The verb
form, ὑπηρετέω, is used three times, only in Acts. Οἰκέτης,
translated "servant" with the connotation of household
slave, is found once each in Luke, Acts, Romans, and I Peter.
Λατρεία, translated "service," "worship," "ritual duties,"
is found once in John, twice in Romans, and twice in Hebrews.
Λατρεύω, "to serve," "to worship," is found twenty-one
times: once in Matthew, eight times in Luke/Acts, four
times in Paul, four times in Hebrews, and twice in Revela-
tion. Ἱερουργέω is found only once in the New Testament,
Romans 15:16, and is translated "minister."

The Organization and Method of Procedure

In order to determine the meaning of "servant" in
the New Testament, the following steps will be taken:

1. A word study of δοῦλος will be undertaken to
determine the early meanings and development of the word

group, its Septaugint and Jewish usage, its usage by the New Testament authors, and its usage in the early church.

2.   In addition to tracing its background, Septuagint, New Testament, and Patristic usage, διάκονος, κτλ. will be compared with δοῦλος and its cognates so that the characteristics they share and those that are unique will emerge.

3. Δοῦλος and διάκονος will then be contrasted with the other servant words used in the New Testament: παῖς, λειτουργός, λατρεία, ἱερουργέω, θεράπων, ὑπηρέτης and οἰκέτης.

4.   Finally, a summary will be given and conclusions made as to the meaning of Chrisian ministry in light of the New Testament usages of δοῦλος, διάκονος, and their near-synonyms.

The Scope and Limitations of the Study

Numerous questions and problems arise in considering the meaning of service or ministry in light of New Testament teachings. Many of the issues concerning Christian ministry will not be discussed in this paper. Since this thesis is chiefly concerned with the meaning of δοῦλος and διάκονος in the New Testament, its scope will be limited to those areas that give significance and import to the terms. This

study, for the most part, is a historical one: it is con-
cerned with the various contexts in which service was
rendered in the New Testament. The primary task is to
uncover the meaning of ministry in the minds of the early
Christians. The contemporary church's attitude toward
service should be derived from this basic understanding.

This thesis will not investigate in depth the office
of deacon. Discussion concerning the establishment, devel-
opment, qualifications, and functions of the deacon (or
deaconess) has not typically illuminated the broader ques-
tion of the meaning of service for the child of God. The
fact that the office is so designated by a word exemplifying
service, however, further indicates the importance of the
concept as it is found in the New Testament.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING OF THE ΔΟΥΛΟΣ WORD GROUP

The Greek Background of Δοῦλος

Although a wide vocabulary existed in the early Greek
writing for the concept of slave, δοῦλος was the basic word
and remained so throughout Greek history. In the Homeric
and Hesiodic literature, δμώς and δοῦλος were both used to
describe the slave, with very little distinction between
the terms.[1] Δμώς died out quickly, surviving only in Greek
poetry.[2] Δοῦλος emerged as the primary word for slave.
Though its etymology is uncertain[3] the early meaning of
δοῦλος is clear and is essential in understanding the Greek
philosophy of slavery.

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[1]M. I. Finley, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave
Labor?," Historia 8 (1959):146.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Some older lexicons offer conjectures as to the ety-
mology of δοῦλος. For example, John Pickering (A Comprehen-
sive Lexicon of the English Language [Boston: Rice & Kendall,
1855], pp. 320, 324) conjectures that δοῦλος is derived from
δόλος (deceit, fraud, treachery, cunning). R. C. Trench
(Synonyms of the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerd-
mans Publishing Co., 1948], p. 30) asserts that δέω (to tie,
to bind) is the root word. Most modern lexicographers leave
the question open. The issue is not crucial since the devel-
opment of δοῦλος can be traced to the earliest extant
writings.

The Hellenistic attitudes regarding slaves can be learned primarily through incidental remarks and through descriptions of the treatment accorded the slave. The Homeric poems and the plays of Euripides depicted clearly the servile relationship of δοῦλος to δεσπότης, as did the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides. The ancient writers described almost casually the life of the slave. Few efforts were made to justify the practice; the institution was simply taken for granted. In the late fourth century, Lysias, in a speech written for the use of a cripple appealing a decision made by the Athenian Council, argued: "I have a trade which brings me in a little, but I can barely work at it myself and I cannot afford to buy someone to replace myself in it."[4] In the pseudo-Aristotelian Oeconomica, the peripatetic author asserted the following: "Of property, the first and most indispensible kind is . . . the human chattel. Our first step therefore must be to procure good slaves."[5] Polybius in the second century B. C. spoke of "necessities," such as "cattle and slaves," the best of which came from "the countries lying round Pontus."[6] Numerous other references could be noted.

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[4]Lysias On the Refusal of a Pension to the Invalid 6.

[5]Aristotle (pseud.) Oeconomica 1.5.1.

[6]Polybius 4.38.4.

A conscious theory of slavery is not evident until the teachings of the Sophists, of whose writings only fragments exist.[7] A systematic statement of the problem and discussion of the issues did not exist until Aristotle's Politics. Whether through the polemics of Aristotle and Plato or through incidental discussions in other Greek writings, the Hellenistic philosophy of δουλεία and the meaning of the term δοῦλος can be clearly seen and constructively analyzed.

An excellent way of determining the meaning of a word is by examining that with which the term is contrasted. Identifying various antonyms of δοῦλος should be a beginning, at least, in the discovery of its meaning. Aeschylus, for example, indicated the degradation of slavery in Prometheus Bound. In the midst of great anger, Prometheus exclaims: ". . . Zeus shall learn how different it is to be a sovereign (ἄρχειν) and a slave (δουλεύειν)."[8] The δοῦλος in this passage is contrasted with one who is in authority, who has dominion over his subjects, who has access to

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[7]Robert Schlaifer, "Greek Theories of Slavery From Homer to Aristotle, Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 47 (1936):165.

[8]Aeschylus Prometheus Bound 926.

power.[9] The slave is without power and in subjection.

Similarly, Homer contrasted slave (δούλειον) with king

(βασιληϊ).[10] Implied in the term βασιλεῦς is "lord, mas-

ter, leader of the people."[11] The δοῦλοι are not the rulers

but the ruled, not the powerful but the powerless.

Sophocles, in the mid-fourth century, asserted that

a city manned by slaves is a city without men.[12] This

striking contrast between man and slave is carried a step

farther by Plato in the Gorgias. Not only are the δοῦλοι

not men, they are not even manly (ανδρεῖοι).[13] They do not

by their nature have the basic characteristics of manliness.

'Ανδρεῖους involves masculinity, virility, and courage.[14] To

the Greek mind, the slave was not worthy of manhood. The

ανήρ and the δοῦλος had little in common. Their respective

functions and purposes were not the same. Though their

relationship was not totally antagonistic, each depending

in many ways on the other, their characters by the fourth

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[9]Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English
Lexicon, revised by Henry Stuart Jones, 9th ed. (Oxford: The
Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 447.

[10]Homer Odyssey 24. 252, 253.

[11]Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, p. 309.

[12]Sophocles Oedipus at Colonus 917.

[13]Plato Gorgias 491d.

[14]Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 197.

century were viewed as so antonymous as to be almost mutu-
ally exclusive.

In the Homeric world, the total separation of ἀνήρ
and δοῦλος had not fully occurred. Some, at least, recog-
nized that a slave could possess the highest virtues,[15] but
unless he had earned the respect of men by his individual
merit, he was regarded as merely a piece of property.[16]
During the rise of the Hellenistic aristocracies, however,
an attitude of contempt for the slave gradually dominated
the popular thought.[17] In Sophocles' Ajax, for example,
Agamemnon expresses utter disdain for all slaves.[18] The
Athenian, in Plato's Laws, argues that "the soul of a slave
has no soundness in it, and that a sensible man should never
trust that class at all."[19] Isocrates recorded that the
Lacedaemonians considered the slave worse than criminals and
thieves.[20] The relationship between ἄνθρωπος and δοῦλος,

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[15]Schaifer, "Slavery From Homer to Aristotle," p. 113.

[16]Ibid. (See Homer Od.22.35-37.)

[17]Ibid.

[18]Sophocles Ajax 1228ff.

[19]Plato Laws 776e.

[20]Isocrates Panathenaicus 214.

according to Aristotle, is the same as between a man and a tool (ὄργανον), for "the slave is a living tool."[21] Therefore, a man can be a friend qua man but not a friend qua slave.[22] The Greek philosophy of slavery, then, contrasted the δοῦλος not only with kings and sovereigns but also with man himself.

Further insight into the meaning of δοῦλος can be gained by examining that with which the term is associated in the Greek literature. For example Polybius, as was mentioned above, linked the δοῦλοι with cattle.[23] Two centuries earlier, Xenophon suggested that "in dealing with slaves the training thought suitable for wild animals is also a very effective way of teaching obedience."[24] Slaves, at least to the Greek aristocrat, were chattel to be used as willed. Though not the same as wild or domestic animals, their function was virtually identical. According to Aristotle, ". . . the usefulness of a slave diverges little from that of animals; bodily service for the necessities of life is forthcoming from both, from slaves and from domestic animals

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[21]Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics 1161b.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Polybius 4.34.4.

[24]Xenophon Oeconomicus XIII.9.

alike."[25] The life of the δοῦλος in the Greek culture was in many respects the life of the animal.

The primary factor which distinguished the slave from the free man in the Greek culture was the binding of the slave's will. The mark of the δοῦλος was that he was not his own master. His will was not his own. His σῶμα and his ψυχή belonged to another. He was, in the truest sense, property. Diogenes Laertius in the third century A.D. attributed the early Stoics as saying, "Freedom is the power of independent action, whereas slavery is the privation of the same."[26] The contrast between ἐλευθερίαν and δουλεία is at the heart of the Greek view of slavery. In some ways no man in the world is free, according to Euripides, "for he is either a slave to money or to fortune . . . or people . . . or fear," each of which "prevents him from following the dictates of his heart."[27] The slave is not even allowed to utter his own thoughts but must bear "the follies of his rulers."[28] Xenophon, in exhorting his officers to submit

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[25]Aristotle Politics 1.2.13.

[26]Diogenes Laertius VII.121.

[27]Euripides Hecuba 864-867.

[28]Euripides The Phoenician Maidens 391-394.

to the rule of Cyrus, contrasted the free man with the
slave:

> We must distinguish ourselves from slaves in this
> way, that, whereas slaves serve their masters against
> their wills, we, if indeed we claim to be free must
> do of our own free will all that seems to be of the
> first importance.[29]

According to Plato, whatever might be enslaved, whether it
be man or city, "it least of all (does) what it really
wishes."[30] The desires and the will of the δοῦλος are
subservient to the δεσπότης. He "wholly belongs to the
master."[31] The δοῦλος cannot even contradict his master.[32]
He has no human rights. He is less than a man. No man
desired the life of the δοῦλος, for to the slave "it is
better to be dead than alive."[33] Callicles, in Plato's
Gorgias, aptly summarized the Greek attitude toward slavery:
"How can a man be happy if he is a slave to anybody at
all?"[34]

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[29]Xenophon Cyropaedia 8.1.4.

[30]Plato Republic 577d.

[31]Aristotle Politics 1.2.6.

[32]Aristotle Metaphysics 3.2.7.

[33]Plato Gorgias 483b.

[34]Plato Gorgias 491e.

The distinction between the slave and the non-slave
was not always as clear as might be imagined. The ancient
Greek society consisted of a spectrum of statuses ranging
from the δοῦλος at one end to the free citizen at the other.
In varying degrees of bondage in between were the helots,
the debt-bondsmen, the conditionally manumitted slave, and
the freedman.[35] All six categories rarely, if ever,
appeared concomitantly, nor were they equally significant
in all periods of Greek history.

For the δοῦλος, manumission was at least possible.
In fact, according to Scott Bartchy, manumission was a fre-
quent practice in both the Greek and Roman societies, so
much so that Augustus Caesar in the first century was pro-
voked to introduce laws restricting the numbers and ages of
slaves who could be lawfully manumitted.[36] Masters chose
to free their slaves for several reasons. Owners often
motivated their slaves to hard work by promising them manu-
mission after many years of service, thus increasing the
efficiency of their work.[37] Some slave-owners found it

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[35]Finley, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave
Labor?," p. 147.

[36]S. Scott Bartchy, ΜΑΛΛΟΝ ΧΡΗΣΑΙ: First-Century
Slavery and the Interpretation of I Corinthians 7:21, Dis-
sertation Series, no. 11 (Missoula, Montana: Society of
Biblical Literature, 1973), p. 88.

[37]Ibid.

difficult to provide both for their slaves and for them-
selves. Slaves were relatively expensive to own, especially
when they grew old and their output lessened. In such
situations the owners often totally freed their slaves, or
they provided a conditional manumission, or occasionally
they employed them as freedmen.[38] In some cases the owner
freed his female slave in order to marry her.[39] Some slaves
were freed according to the testament of a deceased owner
usually on the condition that they mourn publicly for a set
period of time.[40]

The methods of granting manumission varied. Often
a third party (whether individual or group) was the agent
of manumission, either by acting on behalf of the slave who
bought his own freedom, or by purchasing the slave himself
and freeing him.[41] Some slaves were manumitted through an
act of sale to a god. The slave indirectly bought his own
freedom by placing money into the temple treasury out of
which payment was made to the master. The slave legally
became the property of the god.[42] In the Delphic

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[38]Ibid., 88, 89   [39]Ibid., 90

[40]Ibid., 90, 91   [41]Ibid., 97

[42]Adolph Deissmann, Light From the Ancient East
Trans. Lionel R. M. Strachan (New York: Macmillan, 1951),
p. 322.

inscriptions recording slave manumissions,[43] four liberties
are mentioned as comprising the substance of freedom:

1) He is to be his own legal representative. He
   is his own master.

2) He is not subject to seizure of property.

3) He may do what he desires to do.

4) He may live where he desires to live.[44]

These characteristics basically distinguished the slave from
the non-slave. But freedom, to the Greek mind, was divis-
ible. A freedman might be in possession of any one, two, or
three of the elements necessary for complete freedom.[45] In
many instances, the δοῦλος became legally free but had only
partial or even no control over freedom from arrest, freedom
of action, and/or freedom of movement.[46] The Greek society
was one in which a man could be part free and part slave.
Emancipation was often incomplete.

While manumission was a frequent practice both in the
Greek and Roman societies and while slaves especially in the

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[43]recorded in volume II of Collitz-Baunack, Sammlung
der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften.

[44]W. L. Westermann, "Slavery and the Elements of
Freedom in Ancient Greece," Quarterly Bulletin of the Polish
Institute of Arts and Sciences in America (January, 1943):10.

[45]Ibid., 12.

[46]Ibid., 13.

first century generally had some expectations of manumission, the decision of manumission was entirely in the hands of the owner. Even if the slave had a ready purchaser or a large amount of money to purchase his own manumission, the prerogative belonged to the master. According to Bartchy, "this decision usually served the master's own advantage and was not based on any particular concern for the interests of the person in slavery."[47] In fact, the slave who had little interest in manumission did not have the right to refuse it.[48] Even in the question of manumission, the δοῦλος was under the total control of his owner, possessing no rights.

Jewish and Septuagint Usage
of Δοῦλος

Slavehood is a common theme in the Old Testament. The idea of slavery is broadly used to describe service of both individuals and nations. The usual Hebrew word for service, ʿebed, properly meaning "worker," occurs almost 800 times in the Old Testament.[49] In most of these

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[47]Bartchy, First-Century Slavery, p. 104.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Alan Richardson, A Theological Word Book of the Bible (New York: Macmillan, 1951), p. 223.

instances, the workers were the property of their masters, thus implying slavery. Δοῦλος, κτλ. is the word group most frequently used in the Septuagint in translating ᶜebed, crowding out the various near-synonyms.[50] A study of the institution of slavery in the Old Testament, and an examination of the δοῦλος word group in the Septuagint, should provide a background for understanding δοῦλος, κτλ. in the New Testament.

As in the classical Greek literature, the existence of a slave system is presupposed in the Old Testament. Many Old Testament characters, including Abraham, David, and Solomon, possessed slaves. Domestic slaves had few rights and were considered as property like domestic animals. Men-servants and maidservants in Genesis 24:35 are grouped with flocks and herds, silver and gold, and camels and asses. Slaves were regarded as little more than chattel. They could be bred as money[51] and, like land, they could be inherited.[52]

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[50]παῖς, properly translated "child," is used at times in the LXX for ᶜebed, especially in the Servant-poems of Isaiah.

[51]Exodus 21:21.

[52]Leviticus 25:46.

The treatment of slaves in the Hebrew culture, though
generally harsh, differed from that of the Greeks. Master
and slave were seen as possessing the same human dignity,
of being, figuratively, of the same blood. In the words of
Job:

> If I have rejected the course of my manservant or
> my maidservant when they brought a complaint against
> me, what then shall I do when God rises up? When
> he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him? Did not
> he who made me in the womb make him? And did not
> one fashion us in the womb?[53]

Sirach, several centuries later, wrote that servants should
be appointed to the kind of work that befitted them. If a
servant chose not to obey, the master was to "make his fet-
ters heavy."[54] But nothing was to be done that was "without
right."[55] "If you have a slave, treat him as yourself, and
do not be furious against your own blood."[56]

Though all slaves in Israel were generally treated
better than those of the Greeks, some distinction evidently
existed between an Israelite slave and a Gentile slave.
Poverty could reduce an Israelite into a bondage no worse

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[53]Job 31:13-15.

[54]Sirach 33:28.

[55]v. 29.

[56]v. 30.

than that of a hired servant.[57] The servile relationship

was to last no longer than six years.[58] If the year of

Jubilee came during the six year period, the Hebrew servant

regained his liberty and recovered the property he had lost

in his time of need.[59] All slaves benefitted by the Sabbath

rest[60] and partook in the Paschal celebration.[61] The fact

that some slaves chose to remain with their masters follow-

ing their six years of servitude is an indication of kind

treatment.[62] The masters did not have the right of life

over their slaves;[63] slaves were given their freedom if

abused.[64] Some gained positions of great importance in the

family[65] and could join their master's family by marriage.[66]

A slave could inherit the property of a master who had no

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[57]Leviticus 25:40.

[58]Exodus 21:2.

[59]Leviticus 25:40, 41.

[60]Exodus 20:10.

[61]Exodus 12:44.

[62]Exodus 21:5, 6 and Deuteronomy 15:17.

[63]Exodus 21:20.

[64]Exodus 21:26, 27.

[65]E.g., Abraham's servant in Genesis 24:2ff.

[66]I Chronicles 2:35.

children,[67] and could even be one of the heirs of a master who had sons.[68]

The humane treatment of Jewish slaves is an important Old Testament theme. The master is discouraged from being unjustly harsh to his servants because of the deliverance of his predecessors from the slavery of the Egyptians.[69] This national redemption from slavery, according to Hans Walter Wolff, constitutes "a solidarity" for the Hebrew master, both "with his fathers" and "with his slave."[70] That the overwhelming sentiment is in favor of the slave rather than the master is demonstrated in the regulation for runaway slaves:

> You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you; he shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place which he shall choose within one of your towns, where it pleases him best; you shall not oppress him.[71]

This law is apparently unique in the ancient orient. In other cultures, the returning of a slave to his master is

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[67]Genesis 15:2.

[68]Proverbs 17:2.

[69]Deuteronomy 15:15.

[70]Hans Walter Wolff, "Masters and Slaves," Interpretation 27 (1973):268.

[71]Deuteronomy 23:15, 16.

the primary consideration. In the words of Wolff,

> The free Israelite who is mindful of God's acts in
> the history of salvation is to be sympathetic to
> the runaway slave rather than to his master. Here
> we perceive not only a trend toward the humane
> treatment of slaves . . . but an apparently increas-
> ing tendency toward regarding the slave as the
> equal of the free man, and therefore a tendency
> which leads in the direction of the liberation of
> slaves.[72]

The kind treatment of Hebrew slaves should not be overstated,

however. Even for the Israelites, it was better to be a

free man than a slave.

The treatment of the Jews' Gentile slaves was somewhat

different than that rendered their own people. These slaves

were acquired from the surrounding nations and through pur-

chase from foreigners passing through the land.[73] The inhab-

itants of towns not belonging to Canaanites[74] became subject

to the people of Israel, falling into a sort of serfdom.[75]

This class of people was assigned to various labors and

public works. They numbered approximately 153,600 in

II Chronicles 2:17. Private slaves may also have been taken

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[72]Wolff, "Masters and Slaves," p. 209.

[73]Leviticus 25:44, 45.

[74]The Israelites were instructed to "save alive noth-
ing that breathes" in the Canaanite towns (Deut. 20:16ff).

[75]Gustav Friedrich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testa-
ment (New York: Funk & Wagnells, Publishers, 1885), p. 244.

from among these alien workers.[76] These slaves were con-
sidered to be property.[77] However, a Gentile slave, if
circumcized, obtained the right to partake of the Passover
and was distinguished from aliens and hired servants.[78]

The treatment of both Hebrew and Gentile slaves in the
Old Testament was evidently more humane (or perhaps less
inhumane) than that which existed among other nations of
antiquity. Slavery was practiced by the Jewish people but
not in the same manner as that found in other cultures. The
Essenes went so far as to abolish slavery as being unnatural
and inconsistent with the common brotherhood of mankind.[79]

In addition to describing the servile relationship of
the personal slave to his master, the $\delta o\tilde{v}\lambda os$ word group is
used in the Septuagint in defining other relationships.

1. Slavery and kings. Having the basic meaning of
dependence or servitude, the $\delta o\tilde{v}\lambda os$ word group denotes a
restriction of freedom, sometime voluntary but usually not,
and is the most frequently used linguistic form describing

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[76]Ibid.

[77]Leviticus 25:45.

[78]Exodus 12:44, 45.

[79]Oehler, Theology, p. 245.

the relationship between subject and king.[80] David is
described by others as the δοῦλος of Saul,[81] a description
he uses for himself in I Samuel 26:18. Joab becomes David's
δοῦλος.[82] Rehoboam was counselled to "speak good words
before the people and serve them" in order that the people
be servants of the king.[83]

Because of its history, Israel perhaps viewed its
kings from a different perspective than did other nations
of the ancient orient. Israel could not trace its origins
to a monarchy which was well established and highly exalted;
rather its very identity was that of a slave nation deliv-
ered from the hands of the Egyptians. The monarchichal
system in Israel developed slowly and painfully. Because
of the national recoil against the oppression of slavery,
the king was viewed as the defender of the oppressed. In
the words of the Psalmist:

> May (the king) judge thy people with righteousness,
>   and thy poor with justice!
> Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,
>   and the hills, in righteousness!

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[80]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v.
"Δοῦλος," by Karl H. Rengstorf, vol. 2, p. 266.

[81]I Samuel 19:4.

[82]II Samuel 14:19.

[83]I Kings 12:7.

> May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
>   give deliverance to the needy,
>   and crush the oppressor![84]

The king ideally was the servant of his people. This servant role is most poignantly described in the Servant Songs of Isaiah. The true ruler turns his back to the scourges[85] and bears pain and chastisement on behalf of others.[86] According to Wolff,

> This man is not merely a brother among brothers,
> like the king of Deuteronomy 17; nor does he merely
> take the side of all the oppressed like the king
> of Psalm 72; he switches roles completely. He
> takes the place of others, he bears their punish-
> ment and distress, while they are set free.[87]

This Old Testament perspective of the servant king anticipates and finds its ultimate fruition in the Messiah of the New Testament.

2. <u>National bondage</u>. When $\pi\widehat{\alpha}\varsigma$ is used for ʿebed in the Old Testament, a natural relationship is inferred, while $\delta o\widehat{v}\lambda o\varsigma$ is often used to describe bondage that is illegal or unreasonable.[88] Thus $\delta o\upsilon\lambda o\varsigma, \kappa\tau\lambda.$ is used in the

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[84]Psalm 72:2-4; see vv. 12-14.

[85]Isaiah 50:6.

[86]Isaiah 53:4, 5.

[87]Wolff, "Masters and Slaves," p. 265.

[88]Rengstorf, "$\Delta o\widehat{v}\lambda o\varsigma$," p. 266.

Septuagint in describing the servitude of one nation to another. The Israelites were the δοῦλοι of Egypt.[89] Their bondage was a burden to them[90] and was exceedingly cruel.[91] They were servants of the Mesopotamians,[92] the Moabites,[93] the Babylonians,[94] and other nations. The Philistines became the servants of Israel.[95] Δουλέια in the Old Testament was both individual and collective in nature.

3. <u>Service to a god</u>. Service in the Old Testament was not restricted to man <u>qua</u> man but was extended to the divine as well. The worshippers of a god are called his servants. Δουλεύω and προσκυνέω are often found in the same context. Ahab "served and worshipped" Baal[96] as did Ahaziah[97] and Manasseh.[98] God warned his people against serving other Gods because it would be a "snare" to them,[99] yet the Israelites often turned to the service of other gods.[100]

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[89]Exodus 6:5; 14:5, et al.

[90]Exodus 6:6.

[91]Exodus 6:9.   [92]Judges 3:8.

[93]Judges 3:14.   [94]Isaiah 14:3.

[95]I Samuel 17:9ff.   [96]I Kings 16:31.

[97]I Kings 22:53.   [98]II Kings 21:3.

[99]Exodus 23:33.   [100]Judges 10:6, et al.

That the δοῦλος word group is used in the Septuagint
to describe the worship of that which is divine is signifi-
cant. Rengstorf states, "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.[101] This service to a god or gods stands in contra-
distinction to the usage of δοῦλος , κτλ. in the Greek
world. Serving Yahweh was not only acceptable but desirable
to the Jewish mind.

Service to the one God in the Old Testament far
exceeds mere compliance to written laws. Samuel instructed
the people to "fear the Lord, serve him, hearken to his
voice . . .," and further, ". . . serve the Lord with all
your heart."[102] David instructed Solomon to serve God "with
a whole heart and a willing mind."[103] Δουλεύειν in the
Septuagint denoted service to God, not in the sense of an
isolated act of worship for which λατρεύειν and λειτουργεῖν
are most often used, but in total commitment to God.[104] The
relationship of God and his servants is most clearly seen in

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[101]Rengstorf, "Δοῦλος," p. 267.

[102]I Samuel 12:14, 20.

[103]I Chronicles 28:9.

[104]Rengstorf, "Δοῦλος," p. 267.

the Psalms. Only twice in the Psalms does δοῦλος refer to
something other than a servant of God.[105] God is the ulti-
mate object of service. He is to be served with fear.[106]
He redeems the life of his servants,[107] and blesses them.[108]
God keeps his promises to his servants.[109] He shows his
servants compassion.[110] In the Hebrew mind, to be a servant
of God is not a burden but an honor. Exemplary men of God
in the Old Testament are called δοῦλοι.[111] The prophets of
God are frequently called his δοῦλοι.[112] The nation of
Israel collectively is the δοῦλος of God.[113]

Because of its servile relationship to God, the nation
of Israel was God's agent in serving the world. Isaiah
exhorted Israel to proclaim the good news of Zion to the

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[105]Psalms 104:17 and 122:2.

[106]Psalms 2:11.

[107]Psalms 34:22.

[108]Psalms 116:7.

[109]Psalms 119:65, 76.

[110]Psalms 135:14.

[111]E.g., Abraham, Psalms 105:42; Moses, II Kings 18:12, David, Psalms 89:3.

[112]II Kings 9:7, Jeremiah 7:25, et al.

[113]Isaiah 49:3.

cities of Judah,[114] to be witnesses for God,[115] to fulfill
their responsibilities of service because God called them
to that service.[116] Israel was God's chosen agent to pro-
nounce judgment on the nations.[117] God's glory was found
through his servant Israel[118] modelled by Isaiah himself
whose cause was God's cause[119] and whose strength was God's
strength.[120] Israel's election was an election to service
both to God and to man.

Although δουλεία in relation to God was always an
admirable trait to the Hebrew, it gradually diminished in
significance in relation to one's fellowman. The δοῦλος of
man was viewed more and more disparagingly by the Israelites.
By the time of Christ, the Jew generally regarded the slave
as the lowest form of humanity, nothing more than chattel.
To note the perjorative nature of the term, δοῦλος came to
be one of the worst insults that could be hurled against
another. According to one proverb, a dog is more honorable

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[114]Isaiah 40:9.

[115]43:10, 44:8.

[116]41:9.

[117]42:1.

[118]49:3.

[119]49.4.   [120]49.5.

than a slave.[121] While the idea of δουλεία in Jewish lit-
erature does not carry the stigma most often found in the
Greek writings, it nevertheless provides a striking back-
ground from which the δοῦλος word group can be clearly
viewed in the New Testament.

The New Testament Usage of Δοῦλος

An understanding of the δοῦλος word group in the New
Testament is dependent upon an awareness of its philo-
logical background. The New Testament usage of δοῦλος, κτλ.
was influenced by the cultural, intellectual, and linguistic
structure of its time -- it cannot be separated from its
usage in Jewish and Hellenistic literature. Nevertheless,
the New Testament view of service is decisively unique.

Δουλεία in the New Testament, as in the Greek and
Hebrew writings, involves the subjugation of one will to
another. The servile relationship is sometimes to δεσπότης[122]
and more often to κύριος.[123] In relation to these terms,
δουλεία is seen as all-encompassing, totally binding, leav-
ing no place for one's own will. With few exceptions, the

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[121]From the Mekilta Exodus, the Tannaitic Midrash on
Exodus, cited by Rengstorf, "Δοῦλος," p. 271.

[122]E.g., Titus 2:9.

[123]E.g., Matthew 10:24, Colossians 3:22.

gospel writers use δοῦλος to describe the relationship of the personal servant to his master. The centurion's slave, for example in Matthew 8:9 did whatever his master asked of him. The will of the master superseded the will of the servant. Such is true in most of the parables of Jesus in which servants are mentioned. The δοῦλοι in each case are subject to the authority of their masters. The masters have the right to reward them or condemn them.[124] In the Pauline epistles, the relationship of the slave owner to slave is similar. The δοῦλοι are instructed to be obedient (ὑπακού-ετε) to their earthly masters with fear and trembling (φόβου καὶ τρόβου) and with singleness of heart (ἁπλότητι τῆς καρδίας).[125] Slaves are to be submissive (ὑποτάσσεσθαι) to their masters; they are to be well-pleasing (εὐρέστους) and not contradicting, stubborn, or obstinate (ἀντιλέγοντας).[126] The relationship of slave to his master in the New Testament is parallel to that found in Jewish and Hellenistic literature.

Though the δοῦλος word group is used similarly in the Greek and Hebrew writings and in the New Testament, a new perspective and new attitudes concerning slaves and slavery

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[124]Cf. Matthew 18:23-25, Luke 19:11-27, and many others.

[125]Ephesians 6:5, cf. Colossians 3:22.

[126]Titus 2:9.

are introduced in the New Testament. The δοῦλοι are never

spoken of disparagingly by the New Testament authors.

According to Rengstorf, "The judgment on the slave (in the

New Testament) is always material, and it remains so even

when it is severe."[127] The "wicked servants" in Matt-

hew 18:32, Matthew 25:26ff, and Luke 19:22 are so called

because of their abuse of other people or material things,

not because of their position of servitude. "The δοῦλος is

never despised or rejected simply because he is a slave."[128]

This attitude toward slavery stands in contrast with the

Greek and Jewish views. Since a slave was chattel, the

Greek and Jewish master could and often did treat him in any

manner desired. Few laws restricted the actions of master

toward slave. But the law of Christ demands a new outlook

on slavery. Slaves are seen in the New Testament not as

inferior but as fully equal to their masters. Jesus nowhere

advocates an overthrow of the institution of slavery. The

New Testament, rather, introduces a new spirit of love each

man for the other.[129]

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[127]Rengstorf, "Δοῦλος," p. 271.

[128]Ibid.

[129]See Galatians 5:13.

Paul seems largely indifferent to the issue of slavery.
In the words of Scott Bartchy:

> Nowhere in Paul's writings can we find an attempt
> either to justify or to call in question the insti-
> tution of slavery as such . . . Paul apparently
> regarded slavery as a normal part of society. . .[130]

In I Corinthians 7:20, Paul encourages everyone to "remain
in the state in which he was called." However, the issue is
muddied somewhat in the next verse. The vagueness of the
Greek allows verse 21 to be translated either: "Were you a
slave when called? Never mind. But if you can gain your
freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity," or ". . . make
use of your present situation instead." Scholarly defenses
have been made of both positions.[131] Bartchy's exhaustive
analysis of this passage indicates that both views may be
overdrawn. Paul's comments concerning slavery are but a
brief interruption in his list of suggestions concerning
marriage. The broader context, however, is what Bartchy
calls Paul's "theology of calling."[132] Paul's concern is

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[130]Bartchy, First-Century Slavery, p. 174.

[131]For example, supporting "gain your freedom" are
Origen, Jerome, Luther, Calvin, Hodge, J. B. Lightfoot, J. H.
Moulton, Dodd, Moffatt, Rengstorf, Foerster, the R. S. V.,
N. E. B., T. E. V., and others. Supporting "stay in slav-
ery" are Chrysostom, the Peshitta, Theodoret, Overbeck,
Harnack, Bonhoeffer, Kümmel, Cullmann, Schnackenburg, Conzel-
mann, Bornkamm, the Jerusalem Bible and others. For a com-
plete listing see Bartchy, pp. 6, 7.

[132]Ibid., p. 127ff.

that the Christian should live according to God's calling

whether married, divorced, or single, whether slave, freed-

man, or master. His point, then, in verse 21, is neither

"take freedom" nor "stay in slavery," but "live according to

God's calling."[133] To Paul, one's status in life is rela-

tively unimportant in a world that is "passing away."[134]

Therefore "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither

slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you

are all one in Christ Jesus."[135] Paul instructs the Chris-

tian masters to treat their slaves "justly and fairly" aware

that even they have a "master in heaven."[136] The Christian

master and the Christian slave are characterized by a differ-

ent attitude than that which prevailed in the Jewish and

Hellenistic cultures.

A further indication of the break between Christianity

and its Hebrew and Greek backgrounds is the prominence of

service in the actions and teachings of Christ and the early

Christians. The Greek attitude toward service is epitomized

in Plato's Gorgias: "How can a man be happy if he is a

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[133]See Bartchy, First-Century Slave, p. 183.

[134]I Corinthians 7:31.

[135]Galatians 3:28.

[136]Colossians 4:1.

slave to anybody at all?"[137] In contrast, Jesus taught his

disciples that "whoever would be great among you must be

your servant (διάκονος) and whoever would be first among you

must be your slave (δοῦλος)."[138] Service is the basis of

all relationships for the Christian, both to God and to his

fellowman. Jesus set the example in this regard by taking

the role of δοῦλος and washing his disciples' feet.[139] For

the Greek, δουλεία is worse than death; for the Jew, it is

dishonorable; for the Christian, to be great is to be a

δοῦλος to God and man.

The importance of the word group in the New Testament

extends far beyond the perspective of slavery as a cultural

institution and even beyond the Hebrew concept of service to

God. Emerging from its philological background, δοῦλος

takes on a new and significant meaning. In the New Testa-

ment all men, in one form or another, are slaves.

The Δουλεία of Non-Believers

That men were δοῦλοι before they became believers is

a basic assumption of the New Testament. Men become slaves

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[137]Plato Gorgias 491e.

[138]Matthew 20:26, 27.

[139]John 13:1ff.

to that which they choose to obey.[140] Without exception,
Paul states, all have chosen to obey sin.[141] Those who com-
mit sin become slaves to it.[142] The slavery of man to
sin,[143] to the written code,[144] to his own appetites,[145] to
corruption,[146] to various passions and pleasures,[147] and
the inherent need for release from the corresponding bondage
are important themes in the New Testament, lying at the
heart of the gospel.

Though other terms are used in describing man's rela-
tionship to sin, the δοῦλος word group most clearly describes
the extreme nature of the bondage. As in the Greek and
Hebrew literature, δουλεία in the New Testament implies the
inability of the δοῦλος to control his own life. The life
of the slave is subject to the master. The slave of sin is,
therefore, dominated by sin. The δοῦλος τῆς ἁμαρτίας no

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[140]Romans 6:16; cf. II Peter 2:19.

[141]Romans 3:23; cf. I John 1:10.

[142]John 8:34.

[143]Romans 6:6.

[144]Romans 7:6.

[145]Romans 16:18.

[146]II Peter 2:19.

[147]Titus 3:3.

longer has the choice; he does not control sin -- sin controls him. It is sin which reigns in the mortal bodies of men, the ultimate purpose of which is to make them obey its passions.[148] The body and the spirit of the unbeliever belong to sin; they are the property of sin itself; they are under sin's dominion.

The concept of slavery to sin is specifically mentioned in only two passages: John 8:34 and Romans 6:7, 16, 17, 20.[149] In each case, man is depicted as being under sin's total control. The Johannine passage is most poignant in this regard. Following Jesus' pronouncement that truth makes men free (v. 32), the Jewish pseudo-disciples respond with obvious incredulity: "We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage (δεδουλεύκαμεν) to any one. How can you say, 'You will be made free.'"[150] Jesus' reply clarifies the nature of the bondage in which his listeners were truly enslaved: "Every one who commits sin (ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) is a slave to sin."[151] Ποιῶν, the present active

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[148]Romans 6:6.

[149]Closely related is II Peter 2:19 which describes man as a slave to corruption (φθορᾶς).

[150]v. 33.

[151]v. 34.

participle of ποιέω, indicates that the sin in this context is not a single act of sin but the continual existence of sin.[152]   Jesus is not saying that each sin represents slavery (though in a sense that is certainly true) but that the man who continues in sin is enslaved by it. He cannot break away from it by himself. In fact, he is a slave not only to sin but to his own self. Paul describes such a person in Romans 16:18 as serving his "own appetites" and in Titus 3:3 as a slave to "various passions and pleasures." According to R. V. G. Tasker:

> Whoever habitually asserts his own will, priding himself on his own independence, following his own instructions, and primarily concerned with pleasing himself -- whoever, in a word, is living a self-centered life -- is a slave. Such a person is confined within the limits of his own self-interest.[153]

Says Merrill C. Tenney: "Sin consists not of a succession of individual offenses, each of which may be pardoned separately . . . it is more like a disease.[154] As disease enslaves its victim, so sin enslaves the sinner. Jesus'

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[152]A. T. Robertson, <u>Word Pictures in the New Testament</u>, vol. 5 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1930), p. 150.

[153]R. V. G. Tasker, <u>The Gospel According to St. John</u> (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmens Publishing Co., 1960), p. 119.

[154]Merrill C. Tenney, John: <u>The Gospel of Belief</u> (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951, p. 148.

emphatic statement can hardly be overlooked: The man who is a sinner by nature a slave. Such enslavement inevitably leads to death.[155] The death resulting from slavery to sin is spiritual death, eternal death, the "eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his might."[156] The wages of sin is always death.[157] All non-believers are δοῦλοι τῆς ἁμαρτίας.

Similarly, Paul, in Romans 7, describes the relationship of man to the old law as slavery. "We are discharged from the law . . . so that we serve not under the old written code . . ."[158] The law itself was not sin,[159] but the law became a bondage to those who followed it. Though inherently holy and just and good,[160] it became an instrument of sin.[161] "Apart from the law, sin lies dead,"[162] but contrasted with the law, man's actions are inevitably

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[155]Romans 6:16.

[156]II Thessalonians 1:9.

[157]Romans 6:23.

[158]Romans 7:6.

[159]v. 7.

[160]v. 12.

[161]v. 7.

[162]v. 8.

imperfect. The written code provided opportunity for sin.[163] The law became as a heavy weight for God's people, it held them captive, it enslaved them. As with sin itself, the bondage to the old law resulted in death.[164]

In Galatians 4, Paul describes slavery to the "elemental spirits of the universe."[165] The meaning of στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου is somewhat unclear. Some ancient Christian writers interpreted the phrase as implying the Gentile worship of the heavenly bodies.[166] Some modern scholars have interpreted the elemental spirits as being the physical observance of days and seasons.[167] More than likely the description is of the elementary teaching of the religious knowledge possessed by all men, both Jew and

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[163]v. 11.

[164]vv. 9-11.

[165]Galatians 4:3.

[166]E.g. Clement of Alexandria, Exhortation to the Greeks 10, 9, 25; Augustine The City of God Against the Pagans IV, 11.

[167]E.g. W. M. Ramsay, A Historical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1899), p. 394; R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and to the Philippians (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1946), pp. 196, 197.

Gentile.[168] The phrase seems to include ritual obser-

vances,[169] but the reference is not to them exclusively.

Verses 8-9 indicate that the Gentile Christians had emerged

from a worship of idols, of "beings that by nature are no

gods," to whom they once were in bondage and whose slaves

they were in danger of becoming again. Be it Jew or Gentile,

whether the bondage be to sin, to passions and pleasures, to

selfish appetites, to corruption, to the written code, to

idols, or to the elemental spirits of the universe, the man

without Christ is by nature a slave.

Freedom for the Slaves of Sin

Several options were available in the Greek world for

the slave who desired freedom. For some, freedom came

through their purchase by an interested third party or

through their fictitious purchase by some god, an act of

emancipation from their master. For the others, only death

brought release. The New Testament imagery concerning free-

dom from sin draws upon these ideas of purchase and death.

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[168]See, for example, Ernst De Witt Burton, The Epistle to the Galatians (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1920), pp. 215, 216; J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 167; Herman N. Ridderbos, The Epistle of Paul to the Church of Galatia (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 154; and others.

[169]See Galatians 4:9.

Freedom through purchase. The Greek custom of manu-
mission required the owner to accompany his slave to the
temple where he received the purchase money from the temple
treasury, previously paid out of the savings of the slave
himself, whereupon the master granted the slave his free-
dom.[170] The slave legally became the property of the god.
In relation to the world he was a free man. In the New
Testament, Christ is seen as the one providing manumission.
The non-believer is by nature a slave, but through faith
he has become free because Christ bought him. Paul is very
specific in this regard: "You were bought with a price"
by Christ himself.[171] Christ provides emancipation for
the slaves of sin because he has purchased them. Christ
has paid for the freedom of the δοῦλος τῆς ἁμαρτίας out of
his own treasures. Jesus made the sacrifice to meet the
payment: "You were ransomed from the futile ways inher-
ited from your fathers, not with perishable things such
as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of

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[170]Adolph Deissmann, Light From the Ancient East,
Trans. Lionell R. M. Strachan (New York: Macmillan,
1951), p. 322.

[171]I Corinthians 6:20; 7:23.

Christ . . ."[172] Jesus gave his life "as a ransom for many."[173] As a result, the believer has become a freedman of the Lord (ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου)."[174]

Freedom through death. For many slaves in the Greek world, freedom through purchase was not possible. Only death could separate them from the control of their masters. Similarly, the New Testament teaches that the slave of sin becomes free from sin through dying to it: "for he who has died is freed from sin."[175] The significance of the death lies in the relationship of the sinner to the Savior. Death in this context takes meaning only as it is connected to the death of Jesus. Man cannot overcome his slavery to sin because of his own power. The believer becomes dead to sin because he has been "united with (Christ) in a death like

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[172] I Peter 1:18, 19. According to Adolph Deissmann, "when anybody heard the Greek word 'λύτρον,' 'ransom,' in the first century, it was natural for them to think of the purchase money for manumitted slaves." (Light From the Ancient East, p. 327). Bartchy rebuts Deissmann's conclusions, demonstrating that the New Testament language concerning ransom and purchase has no correlation with the language of sacral manumission (First-Century Slavery, pp. 123, 124.) Nevertheless Christ's death plays a significant role in freeing man from the bondage of sin.

[173] Matthew 20:28.

[174] I Corinthians 7:22.

[175] Romans 6:7.

his."[176] The conquering of sin in the life of the Christian

is possible because Jesus "died to sin, once for all."[177]

In Romans 6 Paul relates man's death to sin with his baptism,

for those "who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were

baptized into his death."[178] In the words of Karl Barth,

> Baptism bears witness to us of the death of Christ
> where the radical and inexorable claim of God upon
> men triumphed. He that is baptized is drawn into
> the sphere of this event. Overwhelmed and hidden
> by the claim of God, he disappears and is lost in
> this death. . . He has forfeited his identity with
> the man who sins in will and act; he is free from
> the power of sin, free also of the status of sin.
> The man over whom sin has power and dominion has
> died.[179]

Only through sharing in Christ's death can man share in his

life.[180] Paul claims that the Christian is "always carrying

in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may

also be manifested in our bodies."[181] Life and freedom can

come only to the man who is "dead to sin and alive to God

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[176]Romans 6:5.

[177]v. 10.

[178]v. 3.

[179]Karl Barth, The Epistle to the Romans, trans.
Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London" Oxford University Press, 1950),
p. 193.

[180]See Romans 6:4, 5, 8-11.

[181]II Corinthians 4:10.

in Christ Jesus."[182]   The words of Rudolph Bultmann sum-
marize the new relationship of man to God and the new free-
dom that is his:

> Faith's obedient submission to God's grace, the
> acceptance of the cross of Christ, is the surrender
> of man's old understanding of himself, in which he
> lives "unto himself," tries to achieve life by his
> own strength, and by that very fact falls victim to
> the powers of sin and death and loses himself. . .
> The new self-understanding which is bestowed with
> "faith" is that of freedom, in which the believer
> gains life and thereby his own self.[183]

Christians as Δοῦλοι

The freedom to which the Christian has been called is
not a freedom from moral standards, a "freedom as an oppor-
tunity for the flesh,"[184] nor a freedom from the law of
God.[185]   Rather it is a new servitude.   The man freed from
sin has become a δοῦλος of the "living and true God,"[186] of
"the Lord Christ,"[187] and serves "in the new life of the

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[182]Romans 6:11.

[183]Rudolph Bultmann, <u>Theology of the New Testament</u>,
vol. 1, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Chas. Scribner's
Sons, 1951), pp. 330, 331.

[184]Galatians 5:13.

[185]Romans 6:15.

[186]I Thessalonians 1:9.

[187]Colossians 3:24.

Spirit."[188] According to Bultmann,

> This freedom arises from the very fact that the
> believer, as one "ransomed," no longer "belongs
> to himself" (I Cor. 6:19). He no longer bears
> the care for himself, for his own life, but lets
> this care go, yielding himself entirely to the
> grace of God; he recognizes himself to be the
> property of God (or of the Lord) and lives for
> Him.[189]

As in its Greek and Jewish usage, $\delta o u \lambda \acute{\epsilon} \iota \alpha$ for the sake of

Christ involves total subjection, the relinquishing of one's

own will to the will of Christ. The $\delta o \hat{u} \lambda o s \; X \rho \iota \sigma \tau o \hat{u}$ is con-

trolled by Christ; he is Christ's property. Paul writes in

Romans 14:

> None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies
> to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord, and
> if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether
> we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.[190]

The paradox is striking. The man of God is at the same time

both free and enslaved. "All things are yours," Paul

asserts, "whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or

life or death or the present or the future, all are yours."[191]

But this great passage of freedom becomes also a great pas-

sage of servitude: "And you are Christ's; and Christ is

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[188]Romans 7:6.

[189]Bultmann, Theology, p. 331.

[190]vv. 7, 8.

[191]I Corinthians 3:22.

God's."[192] The same redemption that frees man from a slavery to sin binds him to the Redeemer. Rengstorf says, "When Christ undertakes the work of redemption, He makes the redeemed His own possession, giving them directions and goals by which to shape their lives."[193] Christ's will becomes the will of the Christian. There can be no escape from the carnal nature of the world, no access to the forgiveness of sins, no hope for spiritual union with the Father apart from an absolute commitment -- an unconditional, irrevocable slavery -- to God. The servant of God is dedicated to him and to no other: "No one can serve two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon."[194] Man's decision to commit himself to God can lead only to obedience. According to Paul in Romans 6, a man is a slave to the one he choses to obey: "either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness."[195] If a man choses to be free from sin, he becomes an obedient slave to righteousness,[196] a δοῦλος θεοῦ, the result of which is

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[192]v. 23.

[193]Rengstorf, "Δοῦλος," p. 275.

[194]Matthew 6:24.

[195]v. 16.

[196]v. 18.

"sanctification and its end, eternal life."[197] As a slave of sin, man keeps doing sin; as a slave to righteousness he keeps doing righteous works, liberated from sin and living "under grace."[198]

Service to God finds a natural manifestation in service to man. Paul instructs the Galatian Christians to use their freedom to be servants of one another in love.[199] Similarly, Paul describes in the first Corinthian letter his willingness to become "a slave to all."[200] This does not mean he is willing to let man enslave him with their wishes and judgments. Earlier in the letter Paul encourages the Corinthians to avoid becoming slaves of men.[201] Yet in his freedom, Paul chooses to become a $\delta o\hat{v}\lambda o s$ to all in order that the gospel might be served. The words are reminiscent of Jesus: "Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all."[202]

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[197] v. 22.

[198] v. 15.

[199] Galatians 5:13.

[200] I Corinthians 9:19; cf. Mark 10:44.

[201] I Corinthians 7:23.

[202] Mark 10:44.

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As opposed to the suppression that results from slavery to sin, slavery to Christ results in sonship. Christians receive a new status in relationship to God. Jesus contrasts the old slavery -- the δουλεία τῆς ἁμαρτίας -- to the life of sonship in John 8:35: "The slave does not continue in the house forever; the son continues forever." The son is a permanent member of the house; he has certain rights that cannot be denied him. The slave is a part of the household according to the master's pleasure, he has no inherent rights in the οἰκία. The distinction between δοῦλος and υἱός is made even more clear in Galatians 4. Paul contrasts life as δοῦλοι to the elemental spirits[203] with life as δοῦλα Θεοῦ, for God sent his Son "to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (υἱοθεσία) . . . So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir."[204] "fellow heirs with Christ," Paul adds in Romans 8:17. In receiving υἱοθεσία, man does not become independent, he does not become free from God as he has become free from the world, but he has chosen to be dependent upon the Father, establishing in

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[203]v. 2.

[204]vv. 4, 5, 7.

reality an umbilical relationship with him. Not only has the follower of Christ received liberty from the bondage of sin, he has attained the security and even the inheritance that only the Father can give.

Though the idea of slavery in the New Testament is an important theme, its impact should be considered only when compared with the great commandment of love. According to B. F. Westcott: "The relationship of the believer to Christ, out of which springs his relation to his fellow believer, is essentially one not of service but of love.[205] Jesus called his disciples to be more than unwitting instruments, blindly entering into the purposes of their master. "No longer do I call you servants," Jesus tells his apostles, "for the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends. . ."[206] Jesus had revealed to his intimate friends all that the Father had made known to Him. He had shared with them his goals, his dreams, his power, his suffering, his very life. The disciples' acceptance of that friendship did not terminate their commitment to him as δοῦλοι, for Jesus told them in the preceding verse, "You are

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[205]B. F. Westcott, Gospel According to St. John, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), p. 205.

[206]John 15:15.

my friends if you do what I command you."[207] Nevertheless,
the man who finds freedom from sin discovers not only a
paradoxical slavehood to the one who has liberated him along
with the blessings of sonship that accompany the liberation,
but he attains friendship with the Liberator himself.

The Usage of Δοῦλος in the Apostolic Fathers

In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, those early
Christian leaders who were close to apostolic influence and
whose writing styles are similar to those of the New Testa-
ment authors, the δοῦλος word group is used with relative
infrequency. No systematic explanation is made as to the
meaning of slavery, be it slavery to earthly masters, to sin,
or to God. The early Christian literature sheds little
light on the meaning of service for the child of God.

Δοῦλος in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers is
primarily used to describe the relationship of the personal
slave to his master. Both slaves and masters are evidently
present in the same church in the early post-apostolic per-
iod presenting numerous problems.[208] Yet, the idea of

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[207]John 15:14.

[208]Robet M. Grant, The Apostolic Fathers, A New Trans-
lation and Commentary, vol. 4 (Camden, N. J.: Thomas Nelson
& Sons, 1966), p. 132.

emancipation for the δοῦλος seems far from the minds of the early Christians. Building on New Testament themes concerning the relationship between slave and master, the Apostolic Fathers encourage masters to treat their slaves kindly, giving their allegiance first to the Lord. The author of The Epistle of Barnabas, in addressing Christian masters, advises,

> Thou shalt not command in bitterness thy slave or handmaid who hope on the same God, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both; for he came not to call men with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit prepared.[209]

In a discussion of the duties of bishops, Ignatius writes to Polycarp,

> Do not be haughty toward slaves, either men or women; yet do not let them be puffed up, but let them rather endure slavery to the glory of God, that they may obtain a better freedom from God.[210]

No suggestion of manumission is made in the early writings. Slaves are not to rebel against their masters. Instead, they are to obey them as if they were obeying God. Such is the exhortation of the Didache to slaves: "You who are slaves be subject to your master, as to God's representative,

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[209]Epistle of Barnabas 19:7.

[210]Ignatius to Polycarp 4:3.

in reverence and fear."[211] The emphasis in the early days
of the church is not in the freeing of slaves but in all men
serving the Lord, slave and master, bond and free. No men-
tion is made of emancipation by the church until the Apos-
tolic Constitutions written in the late fourth century.[212]

The δοῦλος word group is used in the early church not
only to describe the servitude of the personal slave to his
master, but it also describes the imprisonment of many early
Christians for the sake of Christ. Clement of Rome notes
the voluntary bondage of some Christians for the purpose of
releasing others:

> We know that many among ourselves have given them-
> selves to bondage that they might ransom others.
> Many have delivered themselves to slavery, and
> provided food for others with the price they
> received for themselves.[213]

Ignatius speaks to the Roman church of his servile relation-
ship to the state: "I do not order you as did Peter and
Paul; they were Apostles, I am a convict; they were free, I
am even until now a slave."[214] But even in his physical

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[211]Didache 4:11.

[212]Apostle Constitutions 4:9:2, cited by Grant,
The Apostolic Fathers, p. 133.

[213]I Clement 55:2.

[214]Ignatius to the Romans 4:3.

bondage, Ignatius expresses hope in his spiritual freedom in Christ: "But if I suffer I shall be Jesus Christ's freedman, and in him I shall rise free. Now I am learning in my bonds to give up all desires."[215] The physical bondage of the Christians involve a complete servitude, the will of the δοῦλος being totally subjugated to that of the oppressor.

The word group is used in describing not only the slavery of one man to another, but also the bondage to the Father and the Son. The author of II Clement proclaims that the man who is righteous is the man who serves God: "Let us serve God with a pure heart, and we shall be righteous, but if we do not serve him, because we do not believe the promise of God, we shall be miserable."[216] In the eighth parable of the Shepherd of Hermas, a similar message is presented:

> He gave repentance to those . . . whose heart he saw would be pure, and would serve him with all their heart. But in whom he saw guile and wickedness, that they would repent with hypocrisy, to them he gave no repentance lest they should again defile his name.[217]

The servant of God, according to Hermas, must refrain from:

> adultery and fornication, from the lawlessness of drunkenness from evil luxury, from much eating,

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[215]Ibid.

[216]II Clement 11:1.

[217]The Shepherd of Hermas, Similitudes 8:6:2.

and extravagance of wealth, and boastfulness and
haughtiness and pride, and from lying and evil
speaking and hypocrisy, malice and all blasphemy
(for) he who does not refrain from these cannot
live to God.[218]

On the other hand, God's servant must:

serve the power of things which are good, faith,
fear of God, love and harmony, words of righteous-
ness, truth, patience; that these there is nothing
better in the life of man.[219]

According to Hermas, only the servant of God can have his

prayers answered:

How then can (the one who serves not the Lord) pray
for anything from the Lord and receive it . . . ?
They who serve him, they shall receive their requests.
But they who do not serve the Lord, they shall
receive nothing.[220]

The intense loyalty of the early Christians to Christ and

their ensuing servitude to him is reflected in the words of

Polycarp when pressed to revile Christ:

For eighty and six years have I been his servant,
and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme
my King who saved me?[221]

In the early church the man who loved God was the man who

served him at any cost.

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[218]Ibid., Mandates 8:3, 4.

[219]Ibid., 8:9.

[220]Ibid., Similitudes 4:4.

[221]Martyrdom of Polycarp 9:3.

CHAPTER III

THE MEANING OF THE ΔIΑΚΟΝΟΣ WORD GROUP

The Greek Background of Διάκονος

Διάκονος was used much less frequently in the clasical Greek literature than δοῦλος, yet its meaning and significance are no less clear. Though its etymology is uncertain,[1] its usage provides an adequate background for understanding the term in the New Testament. Generally the Greek writers applied διακονία to menial service, the serving of physical needs, and specifically the waiting at table.

In the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides, the personal servants of a king were called διάκονοι. According to Herodotus, at the death of a Scythian king, fifty διάκονοι (translated "squires" or "lacqueys") were strangled and

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[1]According to some ancient writers, διάκονος was a derivative of διά and κόνις, "one who runs through dust." But R. C. Trench Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953) and Hermann Cremer Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1895), claim the antepenultima in διάκονος forbids it. Both suggest διάκω or διήκω, "to hasten," as the root. Most modern lexicographers leave the question open.

buried with him.[2] Thucydides wrote that the honor of
Pausanias was "no better than that which the common run of
his servants (διακόνων) received -- to be put to death."[3]
Usually, however, other words were used to describe such a
servant.[4]

Διακονία in the Greek literature was usually used to
describe service of relatively little importance. Plato,
for example, characterized the foolish philosopher as one
who could not handle even the "menial services" such as
"how to pack his bedding," and how "to put the proper sweet-
ening into a sauce."[5] Socrates, in Plato's Gorgias, argued
that the labors of a "tradesman or a merchant or a manufac-
turer," such as "a baker or cook or weaver or shoemaker or
tanner," minister (θεραπεύω) to the body. In so doing
they are "slavish (δουλοπρεπεῖς) and menial (διακονικὰς)
and illiberal (ἀνελευθέρους)."[6] Such διακονία, though
necessary, was viewed as less than noble. The Greek
denigrated such menial service.

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[2]Herodotus 4.71, 72.

[3]Thucydides, Book I 133.

[4]E.g. δοῦλος, οἰκέτης.

[5]Plato Theaetetus 175e.

[6]Plato Gorgias 517e, 518a.

Implied in the term διακονία was the caring for the needs and desires of another. Herodotus wrote of a man who befriended Etearchus and who took an oath "that he would do him whatever service he desired."[7] Plato used the term to describe the serving of a man's want but labelled such service "flatterer's work."[8] The work of certain men to coordinate the meeting of buyers and sellers at a market place was termed διακονία. This ignoble task was performed by those who were "weakest in body . . . and useless for any other task."[9] Service for the sake of others was generally undesirable in the Greek world.

Waiting at table seems to have been an important form of διακονία in the Greek literature. Sophocles' character Philoctetes, in describing to Neoptolemus his efforts to stay alive after being shipwrecked on an island, related how his bow "was servant" to his belly.[10] Euripides' Odysseus, while watching the Cyclops eat the flesh of his friends, "went up close and waited on (διακονεῖσθαι) the Cyclops."[11]

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[7] Herodotus 4.154.

[8] Plato Gorgias 521a, b.

[9] Plato Republic 371c.

[10] Sophocles Philoctetes 286, 387.

[11] Euripides Cyclops 405.

Aristophanes in The Archanians pictured the διάκονος as "a perfect cook."[12]   In the first century B.C., Diodorus Sicilus described service at meals as διακονία. Serving others at table came to be the overriding meaning of the term. The most basic διακονία was the serving of food. All other forms of διακονία have their roots in the supplying of the physical needs of a man who is hungry.

Though διακονία, as δουλεία, was generally avoided by the Greeks, διακονία was of worth and significance when rendered to the state. In the Gorgias, Socrates agrees with Callicles that the Greek leaders of old were admirable "at least as servants of the state (διακόνους εἶναι πόλεως)," and were "able to procure for the city the things she desired."[13] The διακονία to the state was rendered for the sake of the state and as such became a noble action. Therefore, one who performed an act of service to the state was to do it "without gifts."[14] Payment for such service was considered inappropriate. The Greek statesman, according to Hermann Beyer, ruled as servant of the state "not for the sake of ruling nor for the sake of his own desires, but for

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[12]1015.

[13]Plato Gorgias 517b.

[14]Plato Laws 955c.

the sake of the service laid upon him," the main task of
which was "the education of good citizens."[15] But διακονία
even to the state did not require the emptying of a man's
ego for the sake of others, nor did it lead to true sacri-
fice."[16]

Several early inscriptions indicate that the word group
at times described a specialized office within certain com-
munities. According to Moulton and Milligan:

> There is now abundant evidence that the way had
> been prepared for the Christian usage of this
> word by its technical application to the holders
> of various offices.[17]

In an inscription dated approximately 100 B.C., dedicators
of a statue to Hermes are described, among other things, as
διάκονοι.[18] Religious connotations of διακονία can be found
in the same source where διάκονοι are included in a list of
temple officials.[19] Similarly, the Corpus Inscriptionum
Graecarum describes a "college" of διάκονοι presided over by

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[15]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v.
"Διακονία" by Hermann W. Beyer, vol. 2, p. 82.

[16]Ibid.

[17]James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary
of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other
Non-Literary Sources (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publish-
ing Co., 1949), p. 149.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

a priest in the service of Serapis, Isis, and other Egyptian mystery cults.[20] The New Testament notion of a specialized office of διάκονος, then, is not an altogether radical departure from the philological background of the word group.

In terms of the inherent worth of the service, διακονία varied little from δουλεία in the minds of the Greeks. Though neither servant word reflected virtuous activity, and though the servant of one man could be called both δοῦλος and διάκονος, the two terms are not synonymous. A διάκονος was not necessarily a δοῦλος. A free man could and often did perform διακονία for the sake of others. Διακονία in the Greek world was often voluntary.

The Jewish Background of Διάκονος

The διάκονος word group is used infrequently in the Jewish literature. Διακονέω is not found in the Septuagint; διάκονος and διακονία are used rarely. Philo and Josephus provide some insight into the meaning of the word group in the Jewish world during the first century A. D.

In the Septuagint, διάκονος and διακονία are used to translate the Hebrew words naʿar (usually translated "lad,"

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[20]Ibid.

"youth") and shārath ("minister," "personal attendant").[21] Shārath is most often translated λειτουργείν in the Septuagint, often implying a priestly ministry.[22] Διάκονος is used for both Hebrew words in Esther in describing the servant of the king.[23] In Proverbs 10:4 the following reference is made concerning the διάκονος: "A son who is instructed shall be wise, and shall use the fool for a servant." In I Maccabees 10:58 the basic meaning of διακονία, to wait at table, is used in the account of Antiochus' sending Jonathan "golden vessels to be served in." In IV Maccabees 9:17 the administrators of torture are called διάκονοι.

Philo uses the διάκονος word group only in the general sense of serving or waiting upon. He describes, for example, the attendants (διακόνους) at a banquet taking their stand "with everything in order ready for their ministry (ὑπηρεσίαν)."[24]

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[21]Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint (Graz-Austria: Akademische Druck-U. Verlaganstalt, 1954), p. 303.

[22]James Hastings, ed. "Minister," Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 3 (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1898), p. 376.

[23]Esther 1:10; 2:2; 6:1, 2, 5.

[24]Philo The Contemplative Life 75. Cf. Ibid., 70.

Josephus uses the word group in several senses.

(1) The specific sense of waiting at table is referred to
in the Antiquities XI, 163: "Someone . . . hastened to per-
form the service of bringing the king his drink." (2) The
service of a lacquey is described as διακονία.[25] (3) Nehe-
miah is said to have served King Xerxes by being his messen-
ger.[26] (4) The service of a woman in intercourse is
described as διακονία.[27] (5) Διακονία is used to suggest the
obedience of one will to another: "Elijah knew that it was
not of his own will but in obedience to the king's command"
that he served.[28] Service to God is called διακονία by
Josephus. In describing the preparation of the temple for
worship in the days of Solomon, Josephus mentions "all the
vessels for the service of the sacrifices to God which were
carried into the temple."[29] David is said to have arranged
"that one family should minister to God each week from
Sabbath to Sabbath."[30]

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[25]Josephus Antiquities 19, 129.

[26]Ibid., 11, 166.

[27]Ibid., 8, 74.

[28]Ibid., 9, 25.

[29]Ibid., 8, 101. Cf. 10, 72.

[30]Ibid., 7, 366.

In general, the Jewish literature uses the διάκονος word group in the same sense as the Greeks. As with δουλεία, διακονία does not seem to carry the same stigma to the Jews as it did with the Greeks, yet in contrast to the Hebrew notion of service, the teaching of Jesus concerning διακονία is striking.

The New Testament Usage of Διάκονος

Contrasted with Greek and Jewish Usage

In the Greek literature the διάκονος word group described an undesirable relationship between a servant and the one served. Whether the ministry was performed by a δοῦλος to his δεσπότης or rendered voluntarily for the sake of another, διακονία in the Greek world was generally avoided. In Jewish literature the word group was rarely used, being replaced in the Septuagint by other servant words. To the Jewish mind διακονία was not an integral part of man's relationship with man or God. In the New Testament the word group stands in sharp contradistinction from its usage in the Greek and Jewish writings. Διακονία becomes the fulcrum upon which rests the Christian's relationship with God and his fellowman.

Διακονία was despised by the Greeks because of its menial nature. The noble man was one who did not have to serve anyone. Service was not so despicable to the Jew, but in the Septuagint, ministry for the sake of others was most often translated λειτουργία (usually implying a priestly ministry) not διακονία. But in the New Testament, service rendered for the advantage of the one served is called διακονία According to D. S. Margoliouth:

> The New Testament ministry is not one of the priest as distinct from the people: the exclusive class becomes a universal priesthood. Λειτουργεῖν and its correlates occur only about fifteen times in all, and not in any single case can they be made to apply to a literal priestly function on the part of the Christian ministry. . . The fact seems clear that the New Testament writers prefer διακονεῖν because it connotes two things: the first, which λειτουργεῖν also connotes, ministration Godward in the service of others; the second, which λειτουργεῖν does not connote, lowliness in that ministration.[31]

That the New Testament ascribes the word διακονία to the notion of serving is significant. The menial service in Greek and Jewish literature -- the lowly, humble service of the διάκονος -- becomes the dynamic of the Christian existence modeled by Christ himself.

The ancient Greeks and the Jews in Jesus' day would have had no difficulty in answering the question posed in

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[31]D. S. Margoliouth, "Minister, Ministry," <u>Dictionary of the Bible</u>, ed. James Hastings (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1898), p. 377.

Luke 22, "Which is the greater, one who sits at table or one who serves?"[32] Throughout history, the man who was great was so judged because of the service rendered to him. The greater the man, the more he was served. But Jesus attributes greatness to the one serving: "Whoever would be great among you must be your διάκονος."[33] The menial service of the Greeks and the unimportant service of the Jews has become the key to greatness for the Christian. In the words of Hermann Beyer:

> (Jesus) purifies the concept of service from the distortions which it suffered in Judaism. Jesus' attitude to service is completely new as compared with the Greek understanding. The decisive point is that He sees in it the thing which makes a man his disciple.[34]

While in societies of men possession of power determines greatness, in the kingdom of God greatness is reserved for those who spend their time in serving others.

In the New Testament the essential nature of Διακονία is derived directly from the work and person of Jesus. According to Paul, Christ became a servant (διάκονον) to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness . . ."[35] Jesus

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[32] v. 27.

[33] Matthew 20:26.

[34] Beyer, "Διακονία," p. 84.

[35] Romans 15:8.

speaks of his own work as διακονεῖν: "The Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."[36] That Jesus describes his personal sacrifice for the sake of others as διακονία is significant. His ministry to the world included not only his years of teaching but specifically his redemptive death for the sake of the world. To expect his disciples to be servants is not unreasonable, for the greatest servant is the Master himself. Through his life and his death, Jesus transcends the Greek and Hebrew notions of διακονία, becoming himself the source and pattern of service.

The Meaning of Διάκονος in the New Testament

In the New Testament διάκονος and its cognates mean a variety of things in their different contexts. In the narrow sense διακονεῖν has reference to waiting at table or attending generally to someone's physical needs. This physical service correlates with the usage of the term in Greek and Jewish literature. Διακονεῖν is also used with theological significance in a variety of ways. The spiritual διακονία discussed in the New Testament contributes to the uniqueness of Christ's message and to the impact of the early Christians' ministries on their world.

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[36]Matthew 20:28.

Distinguishing between types of διακονία is difficult. Such differentiations are often impossible or arbitrary at best because of the universality or even ambiguity of the service. Physical service, for example, often has spiritual manifestations. Nevertheless, the New Testament writers frequently contrast physical and spiritual service.[37] According to T. M. Lindsay,

> This distinction between two different kinds of ministry which appears at the very beginning is seen to exist all through the apostolic church and beyond it into the sub-apostolic church.[38]

Therefore, for the sake of clarity and organization, New Testament διακονία will be discussed on two levels: physical and spiritual διακονία.

Physical Διακονία

Service at table. Διακονία is often used in the New Testament with the fundamental meaning of serving food and drink. In John 2, for example, the διάκονοι at the wedding party are assistants to the host of the feast (ἀρχιτρίκλινος) and appear to be voluntary or at least hired servants whose responsibility is to wait on the guests. That they are not

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[37]E.g. Luke 10:38-42, Acts 6:1-6.

[38]T. M. Lindsay, "Ministry," The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, vol. 3, ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1947), p. 2057.

δοῦλοι seems evident in that Mary encourages them to "do whatever (Jesus) tells you,"[39] implying they could exercise their judgment and choose not to obey him. To these servants Jesus first reveals his miraculous power by turning water into wine.[40] In John 12:2 Martha provides διακονία to Jesus by serving him dinner while Mary anoints his feet with perfume.

In many instances Jesus uses the status and function of διάκονοι to teach his listeners spiritual lessons. His parable in Luke 12 is insightful because of the reversal in roles, the master serving the διάκονοι at table:

> Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes (home from a wedding banquet); truly, I say to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them.[41]

The διάκονοι are blessed not so much for what they have done but for what their lord has done for them. He allows them to take the role of masters, prepares a great feast, assumes the role of servant, and ministers to them. Thus will Christ minister to the ones who are watching and waiting when he returns.

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[39]v. 5.

[40]vv. 7-11.

[41]v. 37.

The parable in Luke 17 has a different impact. The function of the δοῦλος is seen as providing διακονία for the master. Jesus speaks to his disciples:

> Will any one of you, who has a servant (δοῦλον) plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and gird yourself and serve me (διακόνει μοι), till I eat and drink; and afterward you shall eat and drink'? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants (δοῦλω); we have only done what was our duty.[42]

Service at table is only to be expected from the δοῦλος even after a day of plowing and shepherding. The master in this case does not have an obligation to express thanks. Likewise, for the child of God, performing all that is commanded is only to be expected; "we have only done what was our duty." Salvation comes not from works of διακονία but from the grace of God.

The διακονία mentioned in Acts 6 stems from the idea of serving food but seems to extend beyond in the concern for physical needs. With the disciples increasing in number in Jerusalem, the widows of the Greek-speaking Jews had been neglected in the daily distribution.[43] This διακονία

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[42]vv. 7-10.

[43]v. 1.

evidently involved the giving of alms to be used for meals and physical necessities.[44]   Because the Twelve needed to be able to devote themselves to prayer and τη διακονία του λόγου, they appointed seven men with the purpose of waiting on tables (διακονεῖν τραπέζας).[45]   Though less important than the ministry of the word, even the menial service of providing food had a significant purpose in the early church.

The general serving of physical needs. The word group describes much more than the serving of food and drink but acquires, in some contexts, the broader meaning of general physical service. Following his forty day fast in the desert and his ordeal with Satan, Jesus is ministered to by the angels.[46] In Luke 8 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others" ministered to Jesus and the Twelve, providing for them "out of their means."[47] The implication of sacrifice in service is not an uncommon theme in the New Testament. Such is suggested in Jesus' exhortation in Matthew 25 to

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[44]Joachim Jeremias, Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969), p. 131; cf. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, The Beginnings of Christianity, Part I, vol. 4 (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1933), p. 64.

[45]v. 2.

[46]Matthew 4:11, Mark 1:13.

[47]v. 3; cf. Matthew 27:55, Mark 15:41.

provide for those in need. By feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming strangers into their homes, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the outcasts in prison, the righteous have unknowingly rendered διακονία to Jesus himself.[48] By contrast there are those who will not be welcomed into the kingdom of God, those who shut their eyes to human misery, poverty, and need. By his nature the righteous man is one who gives of himself for the sake of others by caring for the physical needs of those around him.

On numerous occasions, collections were made in the early churches to provide relief for poverty stricken Christians. This administration of physical help is termed διακονία in the New Testament. Barnabas and Paul were commissioned to collect money from Christians in Antioch to help minister to Christians in Judea.[49] That "mission" (διακονίαν) was accomplished.[50] Paul spoke on several occasions of a special contribution for the Jerusalem Christians. He wrote to the church at Rome of his pending journey to

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[48]vv. 35-44.

[49]Acts. 11:29.

[50]Acts 12:25.

Jerusalem to provide aid (διακονῶν) to the poor Christians there.[51] The benefits of this great ministry were more than that of physical relief for the recipients of the gift, "for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but overflows in many thanksgivings to God."[52] The response to the needs of others results in God being glorified through the obedience of the διάκονοι and by their generosity.[53] The Hebrews author, in this regard, reminds his readers that God will not overlook their work "in serving (διακονήσαντες) the saints . . ."[54] Such service not only benefits those in need but it invokes God's blessings on the server.

Spiritual Διακονία

Though the serving of physical needs is an important aspect of Christian διακονία, the New Testament indicates that spiritual διακονία, specifically the ministry of the word, is the primary Christian service. Jesus rebukes Martha for being more concerned with physical διακονία than she should

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[51]Romans 15:25, 26, 31.

[52]II Corinthians 9:12.

[53]v. 13.

[54]6:10

be.[55] The "greater portion" was chosen by Mary "who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching."[56] The apostles in Acts 6 appointed special διάκονοι to care for the neglected widows because preaching the word of God was more important than serving tables.[57] Acts of physical service do not decrease in this light -- their necessity is emphasized on numerous occasions in the New Testament. Nevertheless, the importance of physical διακονία shrinks in comparison to the necessity of serving the world by preaching the word.

Service rendered to God. That certain individuals in the New Testament are called διάκονοι θεοῦ is a significant break from the Greek and Jewish background of the word group. The child of God is not only the δοῦλος of God -- bound to him totally, lost in his will -- he is also the διάκονος of God -- ministering to his needs, providing service for his sake and to his glory. Timothy is called God's διάκονος in I Thessalonians 3:2, his service being rooted "in the gospel of Christ." In II Corinthians 6, Paul defends his earthly ministry: no obstacles are put in anyone's way, no fault

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[55]Luke 10:40, 41.

[56]vv. 39, 41.

[57]v. 2.

can be found in his διακονία,[58] "but as θεοῦ διάκονοι we commend ourselves in every way."[59] As a servant of God, Paul faced "afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger,"[60] but was sustained "by purity, knowledge, forebearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine, love, truthful speech, and the power of God."[61]

Governing authorities are called servants of God in Romans 13:4. This service is tied to verses 1 and 2 where the authority is said to be from God, instituted and appointed by God. Within the sphere of government, the ruler is God's minister for good, but also possessing the right to execute God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

Ultimately, all Christians are διάκονοι θεοῦ. All service is rendered to God and for his glory. The contribution for the Jerusalem Christians is said to have glorified God.[62] I Peter 4 states that if a man is blessed with gifts he is to use those gifts to the fullest, including the gift

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[58]v. 3.

[59]v. 4.

[60]vv. 4, 5.

[61]vv. 6, 7.

[62]II Corinthians 9:13.

of service for which God supplies the strength, "in order
that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus
Christ."[63]   Man does not receive glory for his service, nor
is it for man to seek glory, but each man's ministry is for
the glory of God, in his service, for his sake.

Service rendered to Christ.   Several men are called
διάκονοι Χριστοῦ in the New Testament: Paul (II Cor. 11:23),
Timothy (I Tim. 4:6), Epaphras (Col. 1:7).   Service to Christ
in each case is founded upon service to others.   Paul boasts
of his risking his life for the sake of teaching; Timothy
is exhorted to provide certain practical teachings to his
fellow-Christians; Epaphras taught the Colossians about the
grace of God.   For the Christian, service to Christ stems
from the words of Jesus himself: "Whoever serves me must
follow me, and where I am, my servant also will be.   My
father will honor the one who serves me."[64]   The mark of ser-
vice to Christ is discipleship.   Serving Christ necessitates
hating self: "He who loves his life shall lose it, and he
who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal
life."[65]   As with the δοῦλος Χριστοῦ, the διάκονος Χριστοῦ

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[63]v. 11.

[64]John 12:26.

[65]v. 25.

dies to himself, denies himself, despises his own life for the sake of following his Lord. The διακονεῖν in this context, however, expands upon the relationship of δουλεία to Christ, for the service is voluntary. It is the conscious humbling of one's self in relation to the Master. The servant must follow his Lord. He is to go where his Lord leads. Διακονία requires suffering, sacrificing, losing one's life for the Master's sake. True Christian service can be achieved in no other way. But any man who serves Christ will be honored by the Father. As the prerequisite for discipleship is service, the end result is greatness in the kingdom of God.

Ministry of the word. From the very first days of the church, Christians have been ministering to the world through the gospel of Christ. The New Testament urges a διακονία that is beyond that implied from its philological background. The διακονία of the word is an essential part of Christian service, even more important than the serving of bodily needs. The Twelve in Acts 6 had a responsibility to distribute the Bread of Life more than that of serving tables.[66] The gospel proclaimed by the apostles gave "insight into the mystery of Christ" which was made known

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[66]vv. 2, 4.

to them by the Spirit.[67] "Of this gospel," Paul claims, "I have been made a minister."[68] His ministry involved preaching to the Gentiles specifically and to "all men" generally.[69] In I Thessalonians 3:2, Paul calls Timothy "God's servant in the gospel of Christ"[70] whose ministry for the Thessalonians included establishing their faith. Because they "spoke of the grace that was to come to you" Peter calls the prophets διάκονα: ". . . they were not serving themselves but you . . ."[71] Their message was delivered through the preaching of the gospel.[72]

In every passage referring to the ministry of the gospel, the broader context includes the idea of suffering. In Ephesians 3 Paul exhorts his readers not to be discouraged

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[67]Ephesians 3:4, 5.

[68]Ephesians 3:7, cf. Col. 1:23.

[69]3:8, 9.

[70]"διάκονον τοῦ θεοῦ" is a variant reading supported by ℵ, A, P, Ψ, 81, vg., syr^h, and others. "συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, preferred in the Nestle text, is supported by B. D*, 33, it^d,86*, and others, and is, according to Metzger, "the reading that best accounts for the others" (Bruce Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament London: United Bible Societies, 1971, p. 631). Whether a διάκονος (servant) of God or a συνεργὸν (fellow-worker) with God, Timothy had given special spiritual aid to the Thessalonian Christians.

[71]I Peter 1:12.

[72]Ibid.

in his ministry because of his sufferings, for his sufferings "are your glory."[73] In the parallel passage in Colossians 1, Paul says he rejoices in his sufferings as God's minister of the gospel.[74] One of the purposes of Timothy's ministry to the Thessalonians was to encourage them in spite of the sufferings of Paul's missionary team.[75] According to Paul, "We told you beforehand that we were to suffer affliction."[76] In I Peter 1, the message of the prophets included "the sufferings of Jesus and the subsequent glory."[77] Additionally, his readers were urged to rejoice in spite of the various trials they were to suffer because these trials tested the genuineness of their faith and redounded "to praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."[78] Even in Acts 6, Stephen, who was first appointed as a διάκονος of tables, publicly proclaimed the word of God[79]

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[73]v. 13.

[74]vv. 23-25.

[75]I Thessalonians 3:2, 3.

[76]v. 4.

[77]v. 11.

[78]vv. 6, 7.

[79]Acts 6:8 - 7:53.

and was ultimately stoned to death.[80]   In each instance,
those involved in the διακονία τοῦ λογοῦ took to heart Jesus'
exhortation to hate his own life.[81]   The man who serves the
world with the gospel must be willing to follow Jesus[82] whose
own walk led him into inevitable suffering.

The ministry of the new covenant (II Corinthians 3:3-9).
One of the most significant passages in all the New Testa-
ment concerning διακονία is found in II Corinthians 3 where
the word group is used six times in seven verses. Paul's
claim in verse 6 is the key to understanding the meaning and
significance of διακονία in this context: God "has enabled
us to be ministers of a new covenant (διακόνους καινῆς δια-
θήκης)."

In II Corinthians 3:3, Paul asserts that his readers
"are a letter from Christ delivered (διακονηθεῖσα) by us."
This verb is used elsewhere by Paul only in describing the
collection of money[83] but is used here in a broader sense.
The message of Christ has been served, supplied, ministered

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[80]7:58-60.

[81]John 12:25.

[82]v. 26.

[83]Romans 15:25; II Corinthians 8:19, 20.

by Paul to them, written "not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts."[84] Paul seems to be defending his own ministry. A need evidently existed for a "letter of recommendation," not to be written but displayed by the lives of the Corinthian Christians themselves.[85] Paul's opponents made similar claims to be διάκονοι.[86] While Paul's ministry relied upon the message of Christ, his opponents, who claimed the same, were actually "false apostles, deceitful workmen."[87] That Paul distinguishes the writing on tablets of stone from that of human hearts suggests the pseudo-apostles may have been misusing the old law. Such a theme is carried out in the subsequent verses. Paul is contrasting the διακονία of the law with his own διακονία of the gospel of Christ.

In verse 6 Paul explicitly states that his is a ministry of the new covenant in direct contrast with that of the written code. By its nature the written code, the old law, brought with it slavery (δουλεία)[88] and even death.[89]

84v. 3.

85v. 2.

86See II Corinthians 11:23.

87II Corinthians 11:13.

88Romans 7:6.   89Romans 7:9-11.

Because God has made him "sufficient,"[90] Paul is "qualified"
to be a servant, a deliverer of the new covenant of God which
brings life through the power of the Spirit.[91] The written
code and the Spirit are in opposition[92] because the Spirit
gives life which the law was unable to do. Paul is contrast-
ing his διακονία of life with that of his opponents which is
the διακονία of death. Such it is called in verse 7: δια-
κονία τοῦ θανάτου. This "dispensation of death," originally
ministered by Moses through the written code, was not in and
of itself evil. In fact, the law was "holy and just and
good."[93] It came with great splendor, so much that the
Israelites could not look at Moses' face.[94] But the splendor
of Moses' ministry cannot compare with the Spirit's ministry
(διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος)[95] mediated through Christ.[96] The
ministry of Moses was a "dispensation of condemnation
(διακονία τῆς κατακρίσεως)" blinding the eyes of the Israelites

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[90]v. 5.

[91]v. 6.

[92]Cf. Romans 7:6.

[93]Romans 7:11.

[94]v. 7.

[95]v. 8.

[96]Hebrews 8:6.

whose hearts were hardened.[97]   But Paul's ministry of the
new covenant was a "dispensation of righteousness ($\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\delta\nu\iota\alpha$
$\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\sigma\sigma\nu\eta s$)"[98] far exceeding the splendor of Moses' min-
istry:

> . . . What once had splendor has come to have no
> splendor at all, because of the splendor that
> surpasses it. For if what faded away came with
> splendor, what is permanent must have much more
> splendor.[99]

Paul does not minimize the worth of Moses' ministry, for the
less it is, the less would be the ministry of the Spirit in
comparison. But in spite of the great magnitude of Moses'
$\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\sigma\nu\iota\alpha$, it was nothing when compared to the glory of God's
new covenant ushered in by his Son[100] and sealed with his
Spirit.[101]

The ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18-21).
Paul's $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\sigma\nu\iota\alpha$ to the world is not only a ministry of the
new covenant but is a ministry of reconciliation. In II Cor-
inthians 5:18 Paul claims that God through Christ "reconciled
us to himself and gave us the $\delta\iota\alpha\kappa\sigma\nu\iota\alpha\nu$ $\tau\hat{\eta}s$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\hat{\eta}s$." In

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[97]vv. 9, 14.

[98]v. 9.

[99]vv. 10, 11.

[100]Romans 5:22.

[101]Ephesians 1:13.

classical Greek καταλλαγή meant an exchange, often of money.[102] Plato spoke of an exchange of one fear or pleasure for another.[103] The term came to describe a change from enmity to friendship.[104] Καταλλαγή in the New Testament generally describes the restoration of God's favor to man, who had been separated from God because of sin and who is reunited with God because of Christ's expiatory death. Though man has existed in a rebellious state against God, God's wrath will not be incurred against the one who has faith in him.[105] Therefore, anyone who is "in Christ" is a "new creation,"[106] he has been brought into a right relationship with God; God does not count his trespass against him.[107] Christ's greatest διακονία to the world is the exchanging of the enmity between man and God for friendship. Christ has become the instrument of reconciliation. Because of the action of Jesus on the cross, Christ bears the sin

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[102]Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 762; cf Aristotle Oeconomica 2.4, 3.

[103]Plato Phaedo 69a.

[104]Liddell and Scott, Ibid., cf. Aristotle Oec. 2.16,2.

[105]Romans 4:5-8.

[106]II Corinthians 5:17.

[107]v. 19.

for men by enduring the penalty for sin -- being made "to be

sin . . . so that we might become the righteousness of

God."[108] As Christ is the agent of the reconciliation, Paul

is the minister -- the proclaimer -- of the reconciliation.

Though the third person plural in verse 18 implies Paul and

his fellow-workers, the inference is much broader. All who

themselves have been reconciled by God through Christ have

become ministers of the reconciliation. In the words of

Philip Hughes,

> It is because the way of reconciliation now stands
> wide open that the ministry of reconciliation has
> been committed by God to His servants. There is
> no service to mankind more crucial and urgent than
> the exercise of this ministry.[109]

Because of the nature of the reconciliation and because of

the urgency of the ministry, "we are ambassadors ($\pi\rho\epsilon\sigma\beta\epsilon\upsilon o\mu\epsilon\nu$)

for Christ, God making his appeal through us."[110] The

$\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa o\nu o\iota\ \tau\hat{\eta}s\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\hat{\eta}s$ are spokesmen for God himself who

proclaim his message: "Be reconciled to God."[111] Christ's

$\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}\kappa o\nu o\iota$, seeing men in their sinful state, proclaim what

God has already done for them through Christ, speaking with

108v. 21.

109Philip Hughes, The Second Epistle to the Corin-
thians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962),
p. 206.

110v. 20.   111v. 20.

the authority of God himself. This function is essential to the concept of διακονία in the New Testament and stands at the heart of the ministry of the gospel of Christ.

Διακονία as God's Gift

The New Testament speaks of a Christian's ministry as being empowered by God who bestows various gifts to the church. Whatever the capacity for ministry, whatever the mode of service, the strength for that service is God-supplied. Paul was made "a minister according to the gift of God's grace" which was given him "by the working of his power."[112] In Acts 21:19 Luke describes Paul as recognizing that the ministry he serves is not his own but God's, for he "related to them one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry." The Christian can claim no power of his own but recognizes that all "sufficiency is from God."[113] According to I Peter 4:11, whoever renders service should give it "as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies." All ministries are given by God and are used for his glory.

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[112]Ephesians 3:7.

[113]II Corinthians 3:5.

Just as the New Testament attributes the work of ministry as coming from God, so it is also attributed to Jesus Christ. Paul describes his ministry as more valuable than his own life, having received his ministry "from the Lord Jesus."[114] Paul and Apollos are servants through whom the Corinthians believed "as the Lord assigned to each."[115] Though their services were different (Paul planted, Apollos watered), each of their ministries was from the Lord. In Colossians 4:17 Paul asks Archippus to "fulfill the ministry which (he has) received in the Lord." Paul thanks Christ for appointing him to the service he was engaged in.[116] Christian service is not from human origin but is divine in nature.

Varieties of Διακονία

Διακονία applies to all service rendered on behalf of the church and describes the very character and activity of Christians in their concern for others. Ultimately, the whole church is involved in διακονία, each Christian having responsibility for ministry. As the body of Christ consists

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[114]Acts 20:24.

[115]I Corinthians 3:5.

[116]I Timothy 1:12.

of individual members with varying functions.[117] God pro-
vides gifts (χαρίσματα) that "differ according to the grace
given to us."[118] Seven distinct gifts are mentioned in
Romans 12. In I Corinthians 12:8-10, as in verses 28, and
29, nine are listed. In Ephesians 4:11, four are suggested.
The plurality of gifts corresponds with the plurality of
needs. The gifts of διακονία become so closely associated
with the διάκονος that the minister himself is called a gift
of God:

> And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some
> prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,
> for the equipment of the saints, for the work of min-
> istry, for building up the body of Christ.[119]

Whether each of the three phrases in verse 12 are coordinate
or whether the last two are subordinate to the first is
debatable.[120] In either case one of the purposes of God's
gifts to the Christian is that he may be fitted for the
"work of ministry," a ministry which is inherently tied to
the equipping of the saints and the building up of Christ's

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[117]Romans 12:4, I Corinthians 12:14ff.

[118]Romans 12:6.

[119]Ephesians 4:11-12.

[120]The second two phrases begin with εἰς while the
first begins with πρὸς .

body. That every Christian has a work of ministry is implied

in verses 7, 8, and 11:

> But grace was given to each of us according to the
> measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said,
> "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,
> and he gave gifts to men."

Individuals have different gifts "according to the grace

given to us,"[121] gifts with a wide variety of functions.[122]

But whatever gift a Christian may have, he is to use it to

the fullest.[123] Through the utilization of these different

gifts, the source is the same for each of them:

> Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit;
> and there are varieties of service but the same Lord;
> and there are varieties of working, but it is the
> same Lord who inspires them all in every one.[124]

The multiplicity of ministries is an essential characteristic

of Christ's church.

The Office of Deacon

The διάκονος word group in the New Testament is most

often used in a non-technical sense. It is applied to all

sorts of person with all types of service, general as well

as specific. On occasion, however, the context demands a

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[121]Romans 12:6.

[122]Romans 12:4, 5.

[123]Romans 12:6.

[124]I Corinthians 12:4-6.

technical rendering of the term -- the specialized ministry
of the deacon. New Testament data concerning the office of
deacon is slim. Only two passages clearly use the technical
sense of the word: I Timothy 3:8, 12 and Philippians 1:1.
The former passage enumerates various qualifications of the
office-holder; the latter reference is incorporated in Paul's
greeting to the church in Philippi. In both places deacons
are mentioned immediately after bishops. In fact, the quali-
fications of the two offices as described in I Timothy 3 are
similar. Some have suggested that the official διάκονοι in
the early church were literally assistants to the ἐπίσκοπος,
though in no way is the deacon's role seen as exclusively
that of the bishops' servants. Their ministry was for the
congregation as well.[125] In neither passage are the specific
functions of a deacon mentioned. Some have given the tech-
nical sense of the word group to its usage in other New Testa-
ment passages. Phoebe, a διάκονος of the church at Cen-
chreae[126] may or may not have been a church official. Archip-
pus in Colossians 4:7 was possibly a deacon. Much discussed

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[125]See C. F. D. Moule, "Deacons in the New Testament,"
Theology 58 (November, 1955):405-407; and Beyer, "Διάκονία,"
pp. 91, 92.

[126]Romans 16:1.

is the διακονία of the Seven in Acts 6 which may have been

the prototype of the eventual church office, though certainly

no special office is explicitly mentioned.

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The Usage of Διάκονος in the Apostolic Fathers

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The most frequent usage of the διάκονος word group in

the post-apostolic literature has reference to the work or

office of deacon. The Didache mentions a two-fold breakdown

of church leadership -- ἐπισκόπους and διακόνους -- and

lists some of their mutual characteristics:

> Appoint therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons
> worthy of the Lord, meek men, and not lovers of
> money, and truthful and approved, for they also
> minister to you the ministry of the prophets and
> teachers.[127]

Later writings describe three levels of leadership -- bishop,

presbyters, and deacons.[128] The qualifications of deacons

mentioned by Polycarp to the Philippians parallel Paul's in

I Timothy 3:

> Likewise must the deacons be blameless before his
> righteousness, as the servants of God and Christ
> and not of man, not slanderers, not doubletongued,
> not lovers of money, temperate in all things,

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[127]Didache 15:4; cf. I Clement 42:5.

[128]Cf. Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans 8:1, to the Magnesians 6:1, to Polycarp 6:1.

compassionate, careful, walking according to the truth of the Lord, who was the "servant of all."[129]

Most other references to διακονία in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers involve the giving of money or physical service to the poor or needy. The rich man who provides for the poor "without hesitating" is said to have "fulfilled his ministry rightly."[130] All the δοῦλοι of God are encouraged to "look after widows and orphans" by providing for them out of one's wealth, establishments, fields, and houses, "that you should fulfil these ministries" for Christ's sake.[131] The ministration of bishops "for the common good" is called διακονία.[132] Bishops are encouraged to minister to the destitute and widows and receive "the servants (δοῦλοι) of God into their houses gladly and without hypocrisy."[133]

Eventually a strong connection developed between διακονία and λειτουργία, so that διακονία often described acts of Christian worship and λειτουργία acts of physical

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[129]Polycarp to the Philippians 5:2.

[130]Shepherd of Hermas, Similitudes 2:7.

[131]Shepherd of Hermas, Similitudes 1:8, 9.

[132]Ignatius to the Philadelphians 1:1.

[133]Shepherd of Hermas, Similitudes 9:12:2.

service.[134] Such a blending of the two concepts is an indication of the ultimate separation between the usage of the διάκονος word group in ancient Greek and in the Christian literature. While in the classical Greek, διακονία was almost totally separated from worship of the gods, in Christian literature it is inherently connected with worship. The writings of the early Christians gave the concept of service significant spiritual meaning.

Δουλεία and Διακονία Contrasted

Δουλεία and διακονία at first glance appear to be synonyms. Both describe service rendered to another. Both are frequently translated "servant" in English versions of the New Testament. Yet their differences, though subtle, are significant. An examination of those differences should result in a more complete understanding of each word in its New Testament setting and should help answer the broader question of the meaning of service for the Christian.

The primary difference between δοῦλος and διάκονος is the nature of subjection in regard to each term. The

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[134]G. W. H. Lampe, "Διακονία in the Early Church," Service in Christ: Essays Presented to Karl Barth on his 80th Birthday, James I. McCord and T. H. C. Parker (eds.) (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), p. 49.

subjection of the δοῦλος is total. He has no will of his own;
his will has been enveloped by the will of another. He is
literally in bondage to his κύριος or his δεσπότης. His
obedience is complete. The focus of διακονία, on the other
hand, is not subjection but service rendered for the sake of
another. While the δοῦλος is defined by his subjection, the
διάκονος is defined by his work. The δοῦλος can provide
διακονία,[135] but the διάκονος is not necessarily a δοῦλος.
In fact, in classical Greek διακονία often described the
service of a free man given voluntarily. The δοῦλος is
always subject to a master. Whether the διάκονος is in sub-
jection is not crucial to the meaning of the term. A person
is considered a διάκονος because of the nature of his work.
Implied in the term διακονία is menial labor, waiting at
table, general physical service, and more broadly any service
rendered for the advantage of another. To say, however, that
διακονία describes a servant's relation to his work and not
his relation to a person is to misunderstand the nature of
διακονία. R. C. Trench has done a disservice in this regard.
According to Trench:

> The difference between διάκονος on one side, and
> δοῦλος and θεράπων on the other, is this -- that

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[135]E.g. Demosthenes 19:69.

διάκονος represents the servant in his activity for the work . . . not in his relation, either servile, as that of the δοῦλος, or more voluntary, as in the case of θεράπων, to a person.[136]

This statement, often quoted by subsequent lexicographers, has become the standard for distinguishing between the terms. Yet concerning διακονία, F. J. A. Hort writes,

> It is a strange mistake of Archbishop Trench's (his article on this word and its synonyms being indeed altogether less careful than usual) to say that διάκονος does not represent the servant in his relation to a person.[137]

The fact is that διάκονος often describes service in relation to a person in addition to its relation to a task. In Luke 12:37 Jesus says, "(the master) will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them."[138] According to Matthew 20:28, ". . . the Son of man came not to be served but to serve." Crucial to the meaning and purpose of Christ's διακονία is that mankind is the object of his ministry. Reciprocally, one of the great privileges of being a Christian is being a διάκονος of God[139] and of Christ.[140]

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[136]R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 32.

[137]F. J. A. Hort, The Christian Ecclesia (London: Macmillan & Co., 1897), p. 203. Parentheses his.

[138]Emphasis mine.

[139]I Thess. 3:2; II Cor. 6:4; John 12:26.

[140]II Cor. 11:23; I Tim. 4:6; Col. 1:7.

However, it is not man's subjection which makes him God's
διάκονος but rather the nature of his service.

Jesus' pronouncement in Mark 10:43[141] not only indicates the distinctiveness of διάκονος and δοῦλος, but it also denotes their complementary nature:

> . . . but whoever would be great among you must be your servant (διάκονος), and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all (πάντων δοῦλος).

The child of God is both διάκονος and δοῦλος. His greatness is derived from his willing service rendered for the sake of others, service that is often menial and undesirable, the service of meals, the ministry of physical needs, the spiritual διακονία presented to the world through the agency of Christ's gospel. It is a noble service yet humble by its very essence, a selfless service yet one inevitably leading to greatness. But he who would be first in the kingdom must also lose his own will; he must become the "slave of all." Discipleship is inherently characterized by slavery -- slavery to the living God, slavery to the Lord Christ, slavery in the Spirit, slavery to all. The Christian is not only a servant in terms of his work but also in terms of his relationship to his Master. He is both δοῦλος and διάκονος because Christ, the model servant, is living within him.

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[141]Cf. Matthew 20:26.

CHAPTER IV

RELATED SERVANT WORDS IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT

Though δοῦλος and διάκονος are the prominent servant
words in the New Testament, several others are used with
considerable theological significance. These terms are near-
synonyms; they are not identical. Each has its unique
philological background and meaning within each context.
Together they constitute a substantial body of material,
shedding light on the forms and functions of Christian ser-
vice. An examination of these terms, in contrast to the two
primary servant words, should provide a deeper understanding
of the Biblical meaning of service. The words to be con-
sidered are: παῖς, λειτουργός, λατρεία, ἱερουργέω, θεράπων,
ὑπηρέτης , and οἰκέτης and their cognates. An examination
of the background and meaning of these terms will be fol-
lowed by a comparative analysis of the terms with δοῦλος and
διάκονος.

<u>παῖς</u>.

Fundamental to the meaning of παῖς is the notion of
subordination, most often in the form of a child in relation

to a parent or an adult. In terms of descent, πᾶις means a
son or daughter. This usage is found often in the Greek
literature. In the <u>Iliad</u>, Agapenor is said to be the son
(πᾶις) of Ancaeus.[1] Plato refers to "our children (παίδων)
of both sexes."[2] In the <u>Nemean Odes</u>, Pindar discusses
παίδων δε παῖδες: "the children's children."[3] Numerous other
examples could be cited. In the Septuagint πᾶις can occa-
sionally be found with the meaning of physical descendant.
In Proberbs 4:1, for example, children are instructed to
hear the instructions of a father.[4] Only in John 4:51 is
πᾶις used in the New Testament clearly with the meaning of
son. Jesus tells the official that "his son (πᾶις) was liv-
ing." πᾶις in this passage is parallel to ὑιός, which is
used in the earlier verses to refer to the same boy.

In terms of age, πᾶις means a boy or girl. Homer uses
the term in this sense on numerous occasions.[5] According to
Pindar, various trials make a man preeminent, "whether as
a boy among boys (παισὶ νέοισι πᾶις) or a man among men."[6]

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[1] Homer <u>Iliad</u> 2, 609.

[2] <u>Laws</u> 788a.

[3] 7.100.

[4] cf. 20:7.

[5] e.g. <u>Odysseus</u> 4, 665: <u>Iliad</u> 2, 289.   [6] 3.72.

In the <u>Protagoras</u>, Plato notes that the Spartan can often make "his interlocutor seem like a helpless child (παῖδες)."[7] παῖς in the Septuagint is used infrequently in this sense. The servants in Genesis 26:34 had been feeders of cattle "from our youth (παιδός) even to this time." In Deuteronomy 22:13ff, proof of the virginity of a girl (παιδός) is to be supplied by her father. In the New Testament παῖς is only occasionally used with the meaning of a child. In Matthew 2 Joseph is told to take the child (παιδίον) Jesus to Egypt because Herod was to have all the male children (παῖδες) put to death.[8] In Luke 2:43 "the boy Jesus (Ἰησοῦς ὁ παῖς)" is said to have remained in Jerusalem as his parents were returning to Galilee. The scribes and Pharisees are described in Matthew 21:15 as "indignant" as they witnessed "the children (παῖδας) crying out in the temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.'" In Acts 20:12, Eutychus is referred to as a young man -- a "lad (παῖδα)."

Though the term παῖς is often used to describe a child in terms of age and descent, it can equally have reference to a servant. The usage of παῖς in this sense is not at all uncommon in the Greek and Jewish writings. In secular Greek the household servant who answers his master's door is often

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[7]342e.   [8]vv. 13, 16.

referred to as παῖς.[9] In Plato's <u>Charmides</u> Critias' personal
attendant was called παῖ.[10] Παῖς, meaning servant or
attendant, is frequently used in the Septuagint. In fact,
of the 807 times the Hebrew servant word ʿ<u>ebed</u> is found in
Jewish Scriptures, it is translated παῖς and its cognates
340 times in the Septuagint, more than any other servant
word including δοῦλος. Pharoah's servants, for example, are
called παίδων in Genesis 41:37. Saul's servants in I Samuel
16 are called παῖδες in verse 15 and δοῦλοι in verse 16.[11]
The king's servants in Daniel 2:7 are called παισίν. Arta-
xerxes' servants are referred to as παίδων in I Esdras 5:33,
35. In I Maccabees 1:6, 8, the servants of Alexander are
considered to be παῖδας. In the New Testament, the use of
παῖς to refer to a man's servant is infrequent. In Matt-
hew 14:2, Herod's servants are called παισίν. The centurion's
slave in Luke 7 is referred to as both δοῦλος and παῖς.[12]
The menservants and maidservants of Luke 12:45 are described
as παῖδας and παιδίσκας. The father's servants in the story
of the prodigal son are called παίδων.[13]

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[9]E.g. Aeschylus <u>The Libation-Bearers</u> 653, Aristophanes
<u>The Acharnians</u> 395, <u>The Clouds</u> 132.

[10]155a.   [11]Cf. I Samuel 18:22, 23, 26.

[12]vv. 3, 7.   [13]Luke 15:26.

The term $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s$ reaches its greatest theological significance in describing man's relationship to God. David refers to himself as $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$[14] and encourages the $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}\delta\epsilon s \ \kappa\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}o\upsilon$ to praise the name of the Lord.[15] David is called $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$ in the New Testament in Luke 1:69 and Acts 4:25. Isaiah refers to the nation of Israel collectively as $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$,[16] as does Luke in the Magnificat.[17] Jesus is called $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$ in Matthew 12:18, Acts 3:13, 26 and 4:27, 30. The problem related to these Old and New Testament passages centers around whether the $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$ should be translated "child of God" or "servant of God." In most instances the context gives a clear indication, though occasionally a passage is debatable. With few exceptions[18] $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$ seems to refer to God's servant rather than child. The $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$ passages of Isaiah 41-53 have been much discussed in this

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[14]Psalms 68:17, cf. 17:1, 35:1.

[15]Psalms 112:1.

[16]41:8, 42:1, 44:1, 2, 21.

[17]Luke 1:54.

[18]Notably, Jewish literature from the inter-testamental period (e.g. Book of Wisdom 2:13, II Maccabees 7:34) and the developing Patristic tradition of $\pi\alpha\hat{\iota}s \ \theta\epsilon o\hat{\upsilon}$ as child of God (e.g. Martyrdom of Polycarp 14:1, Irenaeus 3.12.5, 6.) See L. L. Carpenter, Christian Application of the Doctrine of the Servant (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1929), pp. 140ff.

light. Two distinct traditions of interpretation developed concerning these passages by the time of Christ. In Hellenistic Judaism the παῖς θεοῦ of Isaiah 41-53 is thought to have reference to the people of Israel and was construed as "child of God."[19] According to Palestinian Judaism, however, nine of the παῖς θεοῦ passages in Isaiah 41-53 refer to the people of Israel;[20] two of the passages have reference to Isaiah himself;[21] Messianic interpretation was assigned to Isaiah 42:1ff, 43:10, 49:1f, 6f, and 52:13ff with the connotation of servant.[22] With the exception of Isaiah 43:10, the New Testament also mentions these as Messianic. By the time of the New Testament writings, the designation of the Messiah as παῖς θεοῦ -- servant of God -- seems firmly established.

That τὸν παῖδα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν in Acts 3:13[23] refers to Jesus as servant rather than child is little debated. Both David and Jesus are called παῖς θεοῦ in Acts 4:23, 27, and

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[19]Theological Dictionary of the Bible, s. v. "παῖς θεοῦ," by Joachim Jeremias, vol. 5, pp. 648, 685.

[20]41:8, 9; 42:19 (twice); 44:1, 2, 21 (twice); 45:4; 48:20; 49:3. See Jeremias, "παῖς θεοῦ," p. 684.

[21]49:5, 50:10. See Jeremias, "παῖς θεοῦ," p. 686.

[22]Jeremias, "παῖς θεοῦ," p. 699.

[23]cf. Acts 3:26; 4:27, 30.

David is undoubtedly to be viewed as God's servant here.[24]
Moreover, παῖς θεοῦ had become a well-known designation of
those who serve God faithfully.[25] Moses, Jacob, Abraham,
David, the three in the fiery furnace, and others had been
called παῖς θεοῦ in Jewish literature. However, because
παῖς θεοῦ had come to be regarded as a common formula
referring to noteworthy historical Hebrew figures, the ser-
vant of God passages in Acts 3 and 4 do not necessarily echo
the Messianic predictions of Isaiah 41-53. Certainly the
statement that God "glorified his servant Jesus" (Acts 3:13)
is reminiscent of Isaiah 42:13, but whether Luke or Peter
(whose sermon Luke is quoting) had that in mind is unclear.
Nevertheless, that Jesus is to be viewed as God's servant is
plainly indicated.

Considering its abundant usage in the classical Greek
and in the Septuagint, παῖς is used with surprising infre-
quency in the New Testament. The word is not found in any
of the epistles. The Christian is nowhere encouraged to be
παῖς either to God or to man. When it is used, whether
implying child or servant, the παῖς always finds himself in

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[24]See Jeremias, "παῖς θεοῦ," p. 704.

[25]F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, The Begin-
nings of Christianity, Part I: The Acts of the Apostles,
Volume I: Prolegomena I (London: Macmillan & Co., Limited,
1920), p. 391.

a subordinate even subservient role. In general, the παῖς

of secular Greek and the Septuagint is replaced with δοῦλος

and υἱός in the New Testament.

Λειτουργός, Λειτουργία, Λειτουργέω.

The usage of the λειτουργός word group in the Septua-

gint and the New Testament is very different from that found

in secular Greek. While λειτουργός, κτλ. in the Biblical

literature is used almost uniformly in a cultic or priestly

sense, the word group in the ancient Greek generally refers

to secular service. Its etymology gives some indication of

its meaning. From λήϊτος, concerning a nation or a people

(related to λαός), and ἔργον, work, λειτουργός implies one

who renders service for the sake of a people.[26]

In the Hellenistic literature, λειτουργία most often

refers to special services rendered to the state by a group

of citizens whose income was above a fixed level. The ser-

vice could be rendered voluntarily[27] or else was demanded

by law, usually on a rotation basis.[28] Such service included

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[26]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v.
"Λειτουργός, κτλ.," by Hermann Strathmann, vol. 4, p. 216,
and Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testa-
ment Greek (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895),
pp. 761, 762.

[27]Strathmann, "Λειτουργός," p. 216.

[28]Antiphon 138.26

the giving of work or money to the phyla (subdivisions or districts within the Ionic and Doric communities),[29] payment of certain military taxes, and special services performed by wealthy emigrants.[30] In a broader sense the word group came to describe all kinds of services rendered to a government or a community. Eventually, the word group extended to any type of service rendered for the sake of another. Aristotle, for example, uses this general sense in calling those who render λειτουργία to an individual "δοῦλοι" while calling those who render it to the community "artisans and hired laborers."[31] A woman could perform λειτουργία to the state "in the matter of producing children."[32] The λειτουργός word group is occasionally used in describing sacerdotal ministration, but these references are uncommon in the secular Greek. Diodorus Sicilus refers to the λειτουργία of the Egyptian priesthood.[33] Several second and first century B. C. inscriptions and papyri include

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[29]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "φυλή," by Christian Maurer, vol. 9, p. 245.

[30]For further discussion, see Strathmann, Ibid.

[31]Politics 1278 a, 12-14.

[32]Ibid. 1335b, 28, 29.

[33]1.21.

references to the λειτουργία of men to various gods, usually
including monetary offerings and certain cultic actions.[34]

The cultic sense of the λειτουργός word group was
adopted by the Septuagint translators in denoting the ser-
vices of the Levites and priests especially in the tabernacle
and temple, In general, the word group is used in the
Septuagint for the Hebrew shērēth, but only when the refer-
ence is cultic.[35] The Levites, for example, are said to
have entered the tabernacle "to minister in their service
(λειτουργεῖν τὴν λειτουργίαν)."[36] Even the priestly service
performed for pagan gods is described as λειτουργία.[37]

The disparity of meaning implied in the usage of
λειτουργός, κτλ. in the secular Greek and in the Septuagint
is puzzling. In classical Greek the word group primarily is
used for service rendered to the state; any cultic reference
is rare. In the Septuagint the word group describes with few

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[34]For further details, see James H. Moulton and George
Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated
from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (Grand Rapids:
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), p. 373.

[35]When not describing the functions of a priest,
shērēth is variously translated λατρεύειν (e.g. Ezra 20:32),
δουλεύειν (e.g. Isaiah 56:6), διακονία (e.g. Esther 1:10),
and θεραπεία (e.g. Exodus 33:11).

[36]Numbers 8:22; cf. 16:9, 18:21, 23.

[37]II Chronicles 15:16.

exceptions cultic service. Though no answers are certain,
the usage of the word group to describe the ministry of
priests seems appropriate. The priests in the Old Testament
offered service to God and in so doing provided service for
the people of God. The nation of Israel was ultimately
served by the λειτουργία of the priests. But the λειτουργία
of the Septuagint was not a ministry of the state but of the
temple, of God himself. According to Strathmann:

> The LXX translators obviously felt a need to try to
> fix a regular and exclusive term for priestly min-
> istry, and thereby to show that the cultic relation
> to God is something special as compared with all the
> other relations of service in which men might stand.[38]

The Septuagint usage of λειτουργός , κτλ. provides a distinc-
tive background from which the New Testament perspective of
the word group emerges.

The use of the λειτουργός word group in the New Testa-
ment correlates at times with the general popular usage of
the ancient Greeks, and more frequently with the cultic
usage of the Septuagint. Paul's description of earthly rul-
ers as λειτουργοί in Romans 13:6 is an example of the general
usage of the term. The earthly authorities are "ministers
of God" not in the sense that they provide a priestly

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[38]Strathmann, "Λειτουργός," p. 221.

function for the people[39] but in the sense that any public
servant provides services for the citizens. The λειτουργόι
of verse 6 are earlier called διάκονοι (verse 4) where the
benefit received from the service of rulers is mentioned.
The reference in Romans 13 is not too different than two
verses in Hebrews 1 which describe angels as λειτουργόι.
In verse 7 they are called God's servants; in verse 14 they
are described as "ministering spirits (λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα)
sent forth to serve (διακονία)." In neither passage is a
cultic ministry implied. Rather the angels act as agents of
God in dispensing his will and therefore provide service to
God's children. The object of the λειτουργία in Romans 15:27
and II Corinthians 9:12 is the collection of money for the
Jerusalem Christians. Several interpretations of the word
in these contexts are made. Some opt for a λειτουργία simi-
lar to that of the special service supplied by the wealthy
Christians for the public welfare of the church in Jerusa-
lem.[40] Others see the λειτουργία in terms of a priestly

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[39]As advocated by John Murray, The Epistle to the
Romans, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing
Co., pp. 145, 5.

[40]See C. K. Barrett, A Commentary on the Second Epistle
to the Corinthians (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 240.

ministry based on the Septuagint usage of the term. According to this view, the ministry takes the form of an act of divine service of a high order.[41] In all likelihood, neither interpretation is wholly correct, but rather a general service for the sake of Christians in need is implied.[42] The clearest example of a non-cultic usage of the λειτουργός word group is found in Philippians 2:25, 30. Epaphroditus is said to have ministered to Paul (presumably in the payment of gifts) and has risked his life in so doing. Even though the gift as mentioned in 4:18 is described in cultic language ("a fragrant offering, a sarifice acceptable and pleasing to God"), Epaphroditus' ministry was simply a service rendered to one in need. Only in the sense that it aided Paul in his spiritual activities can the λειτουργία be called "sacred."[43]

In many passages the λειτουργός word group is used to describe a sacred or priestly ministry. The reference in

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[41]See Philip Hughes, Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), p. 337, and John Murray, Romans, vol. 2, p. 219.

[42]As noted in chapter 3, pp. 60 and 61 above, διακονία is also used to describe the contribution to the church in Jerusalem.

[43]See Jac. J. Muller, The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 100, 101, and J. B. Lightfoot, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), pp. 123-125.

Luke 1:23 to Zechariah's ministry in the temple is parallel
to the usage of the word group in the Old Testament. Other
passages apply Old Testament connotations to New Testament
principles. Paul, for example, describes himself in
Romans 15:16 as a λειτουργὸν Χριστοῦ to the Gentiles "in the
priestly service (ἱερουργοῦντα) of the gospel of God"
Though some[44] deny a cultic interpretation here,[45] most
scholars agree as to the priestly implications of λειτουργός
in this passage. Paul figuratively has taken on the role of
priest, serving the gospel by leading the Gentiles to God.
The Gentiles are Paul's holy offering sanctified by the Holy
Spirit. In Philippians 2:17 Paul again speaks of a priestly
λειτουργία: ". . . I am being poured out like a drink offer-
ing on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith."[46]
The sacrifice in this context is the faith of the Philip-
pians[47] who are exercising their ministry of service to God

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[44]E.g. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. P
Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg
Press, 1945), p. 879.

[45]insisting on general service based on the apparent
necessity to use ἱερουργέω to define the ministry.

[46]New International Version.

[47]See Ralph P. Martin, The Epistle of Paul to the
Philippians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,
1959), p. 120.

even through their visible offering of gifts to Paul[48] and their sharing in Paul's suffering. Paul's own life-blood, which he suspects will be shed for the sake of Christ, becomes the accompanying libation through which he renders his priestly function.

In no New Testament book does the $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{o}s$ word group appear more frequently than Hebrews, a fact not surprising in light of the obvious familiarity of the Hebrews author with the Old Testament cultic vocabulary. In comparing the priestly ministry of Jesus, a claim the author takes pains to authenticate, with the cultic functions of the Old Testament priests, the $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{o}s$ word group takes on great significance. The issue is met directly in the eighth chapter. In the chapters preceding, Christ has been shown to have the true qualifications of priesthood based on the order of Melchizedek, a priesthood superior even to the Levitical priests.[49] In chapter 8 Christ's ministry is said to be superior because he ministers from a superior place and because the new covenant is superior to the old. In verse 2 Christ is depicted as a $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{o}s$ "in the sanctuary and the true tent." His service is performed from the heavenly realm,

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[48]Philippians 4:18.

[49]e.g. 2:17, 3:1; 4:14-16; 5:1-10; 6:19, 20; 7:1-28.

in the tabernacle made not by man but by God. As "every high

priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices," Christ

as high priest offered his life for the sake of those he

serves. This sacrifice[50] is not to be construed as continu-

ing --[51] Jesus' death was once for all. His continuing

λειτουργία is one of intercession, the offering of prayers

to God on behalf of God's children.[52] Additionally, his

λειτουργία is "much more excellent than the old" because he

mediates from the perspective of the new covenant (verse 6),

a mediation resulting in "the promised eternal inheritance"

for "those who are called."[53] The new covenant became effec-

tive through the offering of Christ's blood[54] as "even the

first covenant was not ratified without blood."[55] Moses,

for example, sprinkled with blood all the vessels used in

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[50]see 7:27, 9:14.

[51]The aorist προσενέγκη prevents this interpretation.
See B. F. Westcott, The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Mac-
millan and Co., Limited, reprinted 1920), p. 217.

[52]See Westcott, Ibid., Thomas Hewitt, The Epistle to
the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,
1966), p. 131, and Neil Lightfoot, Jesus Christ Today: A
Commentary on the Book of Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Baker Book
House, 1976), p. 155.

[53]9:15.

[54]9:16, 17

[55]v. 18.

worship ($\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\iota\alpha s$).[56] The purification of vessels of wor-
ship by blood is far surpassed by the offering of Christ's
life for the sins of men. According to Hebrews 10:10, "we
have been sanctified through the offering of the body of
Jesus Christ once for all." While the $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\iota\alpha$ of the
Levitical priests was a daily service involving repeated sac-
rifices "which can never take away sins."[57] Unquestionably,
the $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma os$ word group finds its greatest theological sig-
nificance in terms of the ministry of Christ.

The $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\iota\alpha$ of Acts 13:2 connotes a slightly differ-
ent meaning than that of the word group as found in other
passages. The context is the gathering of prophets and
teachers in Antioch who engage in worship ($\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma\iota\alpha$) and
prayer.[59] The usage of the word group to describe the wor-
ship of Christians bears some importance as to its developing
meaning. According to Hermann Strathmann, "(This verse) is

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[56] v. 21.

[57] v. 11.

[58] v. 12.

[59] According to Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, A
Translator's Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles (London:
United Bible Societies, 1972), p. 244, $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau o\upsilon\rho\gamma o\upsilon\nu\tau\omega\nu$ should
be translated "were serving" in the general sense if the
reference is to the five men named (Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius,
Manaen, and Saul.) If the reference is to the larger gather-
ing, "were worshiping" is the proper rendering.

the first to attest a transfer of the important OT cultic
term to the purely spiritual Christian service of God, even
though the reference be only to a small prayer fellowship of
leading men."[60] This designation of worship as λειτουργία is
evidently borrowed in some instances by the Patristic writ-
ers[61] who also reflect the Greek and Septuagint usages.
Eventually, however, the church transferred the Old Testament
concept of the priest to the Christian clergy.[62]

Λατρεία, Λατρεύω.

The λατρεία word group is derived etymologically from
λάτρον (to pay or hire), λάτρος (a hired servant). Thus the
original meaning of λατρεύειν is to serve someone for pay, a
sense of the term found rarely in Greek literature.[63] More
commonly the word describes a general service, often with no
explicit reference as to whether the work is compulsory or
voluntary. Λατρεία describes variously physical labor,[64]

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[60]Strathmann, "Λειτουργός," pp. 226, 227.

[61]e.g. Didache 15:1.

[62]Strathmann, "Λειτουργός," pp. 228, 229.

[63]See Solon 13.48.

[64]Sophocles Trachiniae 830.

business transactions,[65] obeisance,[66] slavery,[67] and in some cases service to the gods.[68] The term is applied in a number of ways to a number of tasks or relationships. No technical usage developed in the Greek writings.

The Septuagint translators eliminate all meanings of the word group other than that of service rendered to deity. Usually used for the Hebrew ʿābhadh, λατρεύω describes service of a religious nature, while δουλεύω is used when ʿābhadh implies a service rendered to humans.[69] Λατρεία is used in a general religious sense numerous times in the Septuagint. The Hebrews are encouraged to serve God "in the mountains"[70] and "in the wilderness."[71] They are forbidden to serve other gods.[72] The children of Isarel are exhorted to serve the Lord in righteousness and justice.[73] But λατρεία and λατρεύω

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[65]Plutarch 2.107c.

[66]Xenophon Ages 7,2.

[67]Xenophon Cyropaedia 3. 1, 36.

[68]Plato Apologia 23a, Phaedra 244e; Euripides Ion 152.

[69]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, s.v. "Λατρεία, λατρεύω," by Hermann Strathmann, vol. 4, p. 60.

[70]Exodus 3:12.

[71]Exodus 7:16.

[72]Deuteronomy 5:9.

[73]Joshua 24:14; cf. vv. 15-24.

in the Septuagint imply more than just a general religious
service, taking on a specific cultic connotation, not of a
priestly ministry, but of sacrificial cultic worship.
According to Cremer, the difference between $\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\upsilon\omega$ and
$\pi\rho o\sigma\kappa\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ is that "$\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\upsilon\omega$ denotes adoration manifest in act
by service, by sacrifice, but $\pi\rho o\sigma\kappa\upsilon\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ adoration in word and
gesture, prayer and confession."[74] In Exodus 4-10, the sac-
rificial nature of $\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\upsilon\omega$ is indicated through God's
repeated instruction to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and say to
him, "These things saith the Lord God of the Hebrews; send
my people away that they may serve me."[75] In explaining to
Pharoah the type of worship necessary, Moses says, "Thou
shalt give to us whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices which
we will sacrifice to the Lord our God and our cattle shall
go with us . . . for of them we will take to serve ($\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$)
the Lord our God."[76] Worship of Yahweh God is called $\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\iota\alpha$
in the Septuagint[77] as is the worship of other gods. Though
$\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\epsilon}\iota\alpha$ in the Septuagint has its outward manifestations in
sacrificial cultic worship, the inward dedication and

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[74]Herman Cremer, <u>Biblico-Theological Lexicon</u>, p. 756.

[75]Exodus 9:1; cf. 4:23; 7:26; 8:1; 9:13; 10:3, 7, 8.

[76]Exodus 10:25, 26.

[77]e.g. Exodus 23:25, Deut. 28:47, II Sam. 15:8.

commitment to the one God is not lost in the term. The type

of service demanded by God is stated in Deuteronomy 10:12:

> And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require
> of thee but to fear the Lord thy God, and to walk
> in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve
> (λατρεύειν) the Lord thy God with all thy heart,
> and with all thy soul.

The man who loves God serves and worships him with his whole

being.

In the New Testament no trace of the classical Greek

background can be found in the λατρεία and λατρεύω passages.

As in the Septuagint, all references are to spiritual ser-

vice. The uses of λατρεία and λατρεύω in the New Testament

fall into three basic categories: (1) general spiritual

service offered to God; (2) specific activities of worship

to God; and (3) sacrificial cultic service. Perhaps typical

of the general sense of the term is in II Timothy 1:3 where

Paul states, ". . . I serve (God) with a clear conscience."

Such purity of motive is also mentioned in Acts 24:14-16 in

the context of Paul's defense of "the Way." The life of the

Christian, he says, is rooted "in the law (and) written in

the prophets" (verse 14) pointing toward an ultimate resur-

rection (verse 15). Therfore, "I always take pains to have

a clear conscience before God before men" (verse 16).[78]

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[78]See also Acts 27:23.

From that clear conscience, then, Paul boldly proclaims to Felix, "I worship (λατρεύω) the God of our fathers." Similarly, a general service or worship is the idea of the term in Hebrews 12:28 where acceptable worship to God is to be accompanied by reverence and awe. Such service is connected to a sense of gratitude to God for offering "a kingdom that cannot be shaken." Λατρεία is the natural response of the Christian to God's glorious works.[79] Paul's λατρεία in Romans 1:9 specifically describes his mission activity: ". . . I serve (God) with my spirit in the gospel of his Son . . ." The service rendered to his hearers through Paul's preaching is a λατρεία rendered even to God.

In several New Testament passages the connotation of λατρεία, λατρεύω is that of a specific activity of worship rendered to God. For example, the λατρεία mentioned by Jesus while being tempted in the desert correlates with Satan's use of προσκυνέω. Satan's enticement to worship him is met with Jesus' emphatic reply: "You shall worship (προσκυνήσεις) the Lord your God and him only shall you serve (λατρεύσεις)."[80] Both terms seem to imply adoration and service, with the former connoting perhaps a greater

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[79]Cf. Luke 1:74, Hebrews 9:14.

[80]Matthew 4:10, Luke 4:18.

reverence and the latter greater sacrifice.[81] The prophet-
ess Anna is said to have rendered λατρεία to God, worshiping
with fasting and prayer.[82] The λατρεία of Acts 26:7 seems to
refer specifically to prayer offered "earnestly . . . night
and day." Not only does the context indicate that the mode
of λατρεία in this passage is prayer, but such is implied by
the absence of a recipient.[83]

Λατρεία and λατρεύω are occasionally used in a cultic
sense, describing both general cultic worship and priestly
ministry. Thus the Septuagint distinction between λατρεία and
λειτουργία is lost. The sacrificial worship of the children
of Israel is referred to by Stephen in Acts 7:7," . . . and
they shall come out and worship me in this place." In the
same sense, λατρεύω describes man's worship of heathen gods.[84]
Several passages in Hebrews imply a sacrificial priestly
ministry. Priests, for example, are said to "serve a copy
and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary"[85] and serve the tent

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[81]J. Reiling and J. L. Swellengrebel, A Translator's
Handbook on the Gospel of Luke (London: United Bible Socie-
ties, 1971), p. 192.

[82]Luke 2:37; cf. Revelation 7:15, 22:3.

[83]Strathmann, "Λατρεία," p. 63.

[84]Acts 7:42, Romans 1:25.

[85]8:5.

from an altar.[86] These passages undoubtedly refer to a Levitical ministry, certainly not the ministry of the Jewish people in general. Similarly, the worship ($\lambda\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha s$) mentioned in Hebrews 9:1 is conducted by the $\acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\epsilon\hat{\iota}s$ who are said to perform their "ritual duties."[87] The ministry in each of these cases is a sacrificial ministry made on behalf of the children of God,[88] much along the lines of $\lambda\epsilon\iota\tau\upsilon\upsilon\rho\gamma\acute{\iota}\alpha$.

$\Lambda\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is used with a unique linkage to sacrificial service in Romans 12:1. Rather than the slaying of animals for the sake of the recipient of worship, sacrifice in this passage refers to the surrender of the Christian's own life for the sake of God. The child of God is exhorted to present his body "as a living sacrifice ($\theta\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu\ \zeta\hat{\omega}\sigma\alpha\nu$), holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship ($\lambda\upsilon\gamma\iota\kappa\dot{\eta}\nu\ \lambda\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\nu$)." $\Lambda\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ in this passage does not lose the connotation of the cultus, but rather sheds light on the type of worship that is acceptable to God. True worship extends beyond outward ritual. $\Lambda\alpha\tau\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ to God is not an external form but an internal response to the mercies of God. Such service demands the renunciation of man's will; it demands

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[86]Hebrews 13:10.

[87]v. 6; cf. 9:9, 10:2.

[88]8:3; 9:7, 9; 10:1; 13:11.

the offering not of animals but of self for God's sake. In
contrast to the priestly ministry that developed among the
Jews, cultic service that is acceptable to God finds its norm
in λογικήν -- that which is rational, reasonable, spiritual.
Rational worship in this context is not opposed to emotional
worship, but to an automatic or mechanical service.[89] There-
fore, the outward activity results from an inward commitment.
The λογικήν λατρείαν of the Christian results in the reshaping
of inner lives as well as the distinctiveness of outward
behavior. In many respects the λατρεία word group reaches
its climax of development in this passage.

Ἱερουργέω.

Ἱερουργέω is a relatively late Greek word derived from
ἱερός and ἐργός. Used rarely in the Greek literature, the
term describes a priestly ministry or a service accompanied
by sacrifice. In Plutarch, for example, ἱερουργεῖν depicts
the "performing of sacred functions"[90] and the celebration of
"certain sacred rites."[91] In the only Septuagint reference,
a variant reading in IV Maccabees 7:8 (ἱερουργοῦντας being

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[89]See Murray, Romans, vol. 2, p. 112.

[90]Numa 14:1.

[91]Alexander 31:4.

substituted for δημιουργοῦντας) describes a priestly ministry in relation to the Law "at the risk of (the priests') own blood." Josephus and Philo generally used the term with the meaning of sacrifice. In the Jewish War, Josephus describes worshipers who are killed while offering sacrifices (ἱερουργούντων).[92] Philo, in Noah's Work as a Planter, suggests that "there is not a single bad man who really performs a sacrificial act (ἱερουργεῖ)."[93] The noun form ἱερουργία is found in Plato describing marriage-sacrifice.[94] According to Moulton and Milligan, isolated papyri and inscriptions indicate that ἱερουργέω by the time of the New Testament refers in the wider sense to "a sacred function" and normally "should receive the full force of 'sacrifice.'"[95]

In the New Testament ἱερουργέω is found only in Romans 15:16, connected in that passage to Paul's λειτουργία. Paul claims that grace had been given to him by God "to be a minister (λειτουργὸν) of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service (ἱερουργοῦντα) of the Gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by

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[92]5, 14. cf. 5, 16; Antiquities 7, 333.

[93]164. Cf. On the Cherubim 96, On the Migration of Abraham 98.

[94]Laws 775a.

[95]Moulton and Milligan, Vocabulary, p. 301.

the Holy Spirit." Paul's ministry functions as a type of priestly offering for the sake of the Gentiles. Implied, though not explicitly stated, is the sacrificial ministry typical of the usage of the term in contemporary Greek literature. Paul's priestly function evidently involves sacrificing and mediating for the sake of the recipients of the service.[96] In Philippians 2:17, for example, Paul couches in priestly terms a discussion of his inevitable martyrdom.[97] His priestly service to the Gentiles manifests itself in the preaching of the gospel, an act not characteristic of Levitical cultic practices. As a result of his preaching, the Gentiles themselves are presented to God as an acceptable offering, purified and made holy through the work of the Holy Spirit.

θεράπων, θεραπεία, θεραπεύω

Like many of the other servant words, the θεράπων word group has both general and specialized meanings in the secular Greek. Often the term is virtually synonymous with διάκονος, ὑπηρέτης, and οἰκέτης. Homer uses θεραπεία to

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[96] See H. C. G. Moule, <u>The Epistle to the Romans</u> (London: Pickering & Inglis, Ltd., n.d.), pp. 410, 411.

[97] See pages 94 and 95 above.

refer to the service of a squire to his master.[98] It vari-
ously describes the service rendered to one's parents,[99]
reverence for men's graves,[100] the service of a charioteer,[101]
and of minstrels and poets.[102] $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha$ often means service
done to gain a favor,[103] thus flattery,[104] and even the
indulging of one's love of pleasure.[105] In Plato's Euthyphro
not only is $\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\epsilon\iota\nu$ mentioned in relation to the handling
of horses, hunting dogs, and oxen, but it describes "atten-
tion to the gods."[106] Using the word group in the sense of
divine service is not unusual in secular Greek. "If you want
the favor of the gods," says Xenophon, "you must worship the
gods ($\theta\epsilon\rho\alpha\pi\epsilon\acute{\upsilon}\tau\epsilon o\nu$ $\tau o\grave{\upsilon}s$ $\theta\epsilon o\grave{\upsilon}s$)."[107] Lysias uses the term in

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[98]Odysseus 13.265, cf. 16, 253.

[99]Euripides Ion 183, Plato Republic 467a.

[100]Plato Republic 469a.

[101]Homer Iliad 5.580.

[102]Hesiod Theogony 100.

[103]Thucydides 3.11.

[104]Thucydides 1.9, 3.12.

[105]Xenophon Cyropaedia 3.1, 18.

[106]13a-e.

[107]Memorabilia 2.1, 28; cf. Euripides Ion 111, Plato,
Republic 469b.

almost a cultic sense referring to "those deities whom we worship (θεραπεύοντες) and to whom with our devotions and purifications we sacrifice and pray."[108] Numerous cultic usages of the word group can be found in the inscriptions and papyri.[109]

Θεραπεία not only is used of general service but takes on the specialized sense of healing, care for the sick, medical treatment. Thucydides speaks of physicians who were unable to "cope with (θεραπεύοντες)" the plague[110] which often resulted in the death of a victim "in spite of careful nursing (θεραπευόμενα)."[111] According to Plato's Protagoras, a good doctor results from thorough study of "the cure (θεραπείας) of the ailing."[112] Likewise Aristotle states, "the physician who is to heal (θεραπεύσοντα) the eye or the other parts of the body must know their anatomy."[113] The θεραπεία in classical Greek at times has reference to the healing of the soul as well as the body.[114]

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[108]Against Andocides 51.

[109]Moulton and Milligan, Vocabulary, pp. 288, 289.

[110]2.47.

[111]2.51.   [112]345a.

[113]Nicomachean Ethics 1.13.7.

[114]Plato Gorgias 513d.

The $\theta \epsilon \rho \acute{\alpha} \pi \omega \nu$ word group in the Septuagint reflects
many of the same meanings found in secular Greek. Typically,
$\theta \epsilon \rho \alpha \pi \epsilon \acute{\iota} \alpha$ is used to describe general service rendered to man
or God. Pharaoh's servants, for example, are called $\theta \epsilon \rho \alpha -$
$\pi \acute{o} \nu \tau \omega \nu$ in Exodus 9:8.[115] The same word is used in Genesis
50:17 to designate "the servants of God."[116] The later
Jewish literature tends to use the word group in the sense
of healing. The reference is most often to physical heal-
ing[117] but the cure often stems from divine hands. In Wis-
dom 16:12, the restoring of physical health comes from
"neither herb nor mollifying plaister" but from "thy word,
O Lord, which healeth all things." In Philo, the word group
often designates spiritual healing, the healing of the
soul.[118]

With but few exceptions[119] $\theta \epsilon \rho \acute{\alpha} \pi \omega \nu$, $\theta \epsilon \rho \alpha \pi \epsilon \acute{\iota} \alpha$, and
$\theta \epsilon \rho \alpha \pi \epsilon \acute{\upsilon} \omega$ are used in the sense of healing in the New Testa-
ment. Jesus' power to heal is intimately connected with the

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[115]Cf. Job 3:19, Proverbs 18:14.

[116]Cf. Exodus 4:10, I Chronicles 16:40, Job 1:8.

[117]E.g. Tobit 12:3.

[118]E.g. Allegorical Interpretations 3.118, On the
Special Law Books 2, 239.

[119]Luke 12:42 where Jesus calls household servants
$\theta \epsilon \rho \alpha \pi \epsilon \acute{\iota} \alpha s$, and Acts 17:25 and Hebrews 3:5 discussed below.

preaching concerning the kingdom[120] and is an intricate part
of his earthly ministry. The δύναμις utilized by Jesus is
shared with his disciples who in Luke 10:9 are encouraged
"to heal the sick . . . and say to them, 'The kingdom of God
has come near you.'" The power of healing in the New Testa-
ment manifests itself in two forms: the curing of illnesses
and infirmities[121] and the exorcism of unclean spirits.[122]
In all these Jesus and his followers exercise the power of
God over darkness and over Satan. Jesus brings not only sal-
vation to his disciples as their Savior but also indicates
his power and compassion as the Great Physician.

Two New Testament passages are of particular interest
because they stray from the usual meaning of the terms. In
Acts 17:24, 25, Paul says to the Athenians, ". . . (God) does
not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served (θεραπεύ-
εται) by human hands . . ." The θεραπεία in this context
takes on almost a cultic meaning -- ritual acts performed to
an idol and worship offered to it. On one level Paul seems
to be saying that temple activities and idol worship are
futile because God cannot be capsulized into a physical

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[120]Matthew 4:23, 9:35.

[121]E.g. Mark 1:41, 5:23, Luke 14:4, Acts 3:7.

[122]E.g. Matthew 8:16, Luke 14:4, Acts 8:7.

creation. But more than that, Paul's argument seems to rest on the teachings of the Greek philosophers: "What advantage do (the gods) derive from what they get from us?"[123] and further, "the deity, if he be really such, has no wants."[124] In other words, God needs nothing from men. He is not dependent upon man's worship and service for his existence. Rather than man supplying the needs of the gods, the one God is the supplier of man's needs. "He himself gives to all men life and breath and everything."[125]

The noun θεράπων is found only once in the New Testament where Moses is described in Hebrew 3:5 as a servant in God's household. Ordinarily, δοῦλος would be expected as in Revelation 15:3 where Moses is called δοῦλον τοῦ Θεοῦ, but evidently a more intimate relationship is suggested in this passage. According to Westcott, "θεράπων suggests a personal service freely rendered."[126] Moses is honored much as the οἰκέτης of God's heavenly home,[127] occupying both "position

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[123]Plato Euthyphro 15a.

[124]Euripides Heracles 1345.

[125]v. 25.

[126]B. F. Westcott, Hebrews, p. 78.

[127]cf. Deuteronomy 24:5.

and a role of subservience, appropriate for Moses."[128] But

while Moses is faithful in God's house as a servant, Christ

is faithful over God's house as a son.[129] Where Moses'

honor as Θεράπων is great, Christ's honor as υἱός is even

greater.

Ὑπηρέτης, Ὑπηρετέω.

Ὑπηρέτης is generally assumed to be derived from

ἐρέτης (rower), thus "under-rower" or perhaps more accur-

ately, "a member of an organized team of oarsmen."[130] The

term quickly came to apply not just to the rower who takes

instruction from his superior, but to virtually anyone in a

position of subordination. Ὑπηρέτης is first found in

Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound in which Hermes is characterized

as Θεῶν ὑπηρέτης -- messenger of the gods.[131] The notion

of rendering ὑπηρεσία to the gods, or serving others for a

divine purpose, is not unusual in the secular Greek.

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[128]Neil Lightfoot, Jesus Christ Today, p. 88.

[129]v. 6.

[130]For a discussion of the linguistic problem, see
L. J. D. Richardson, "ΥΠΗΡΕΤΗΣ," Classical Quarterly 37
(1943): 55-61.

[131]954.

Sophocles speaks of serving "the divine power."[132] According to Plato, Socrates considered his philosophical exhortations divinely conceived, for "the god commands me to do this, and I believe that no greater good ever came to pass in the city than my service (ὑπηρεσίαν) to the god."[133] The word group also has reference to general service rendered to another. The type and object of service are dependent upon the various contexts in which the terms are found. The herald who proclaims messages of tragedy is called ὑπηρέτης by Euripides.[134] Xenophon similarly uses the term of an orderly who attends a commander in war.[135] The Athenian stranger in Plato's Laws speaks of paying back the debts one owes his parents for raising him, "so that he ought to give them service (ὑπηρεσίαν) to the utmost of his power."[136] Doctors' assistants are called ὑπηρέται but are so entrusted with medical responsibility that they are often called doctors as well.[137] Plato speaks of men who gain "a victorious

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[132]Electra 1306.

[133]Apology 30a.   [134]Hector 503.

[135]Cyropaedia 2.4,4 and 6.8,13. See Thycydides 3.17 and Plato Republic 467a.

[136]717c; cf. Plato Republic 467a.

[137]Plato Laws 720a; cf. 961e.

reputation" by serving their native laws.[138] The various
agents who carry out the law of a nation are called ὑπη-
ρέται.[139] Aristotle insists that the primary function of
δοῦλοι is bodily service (σωματικὰς ὑπηρεσίας)[140] and sees
the necessity for δοῦλοι to be able to serve (ὑπηρετεῖν) in
the menial tasks (διακονικὰς πράξεις) of the house.[141]

In general, the ὑπηρέτης word group in secular Greek
has reference to one who willingly accepts his role of sub-
ordination to another. According to Karl Rengstorf, "the
reference is always to service of any kind which in structure
and in goal is controlled by the will of him to whom it is
rendered."[142] But the ὑπηρέτης often has responsibility and
authority and is usually paid for his work.[143] Ὑπηρεσία
is service performed by a free man who has the option to
discontinue his service if desired.

The ὑπηρέτης word group is found rarely in the Septua-
gint and has little bearing on its usage in the New Testament.

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[138]Laws 729d.   [139]Laws 873b, 914a, 956e.

[140]Politics 1.5,3.

[141]Politics 3.2,8.

[142]Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, by
Karl Rengstorf, "Ὑπηρέτης," vol. 8, p. 532.

[143]Ibid.

In Job 1:3, ὑπηρεσία designates Job's "household," presumably meaning house-servants. General service performed for a man is suggested in Isaiah 32:5 and for a king in Proverbs 14:35. The word group is found several times in the Wisdom of Solomon, referring to the work of a carpenter (13:11, 12), of a potter (15:7), the serving of a man's appetite (16:21), service and obedience to God (16:24, 25), and serving the commandments (19:6). According to Rengstorf, "the idea of both voluntary and honorable service is bound up with this word in the OT."[144]

Ὑπηρέτης, κτλ. are rarely used in the New Testament. The verb form ὑπηρετέω is found only three times while ὑπηρεσία does not occur at all. Primarily ὑπηρέτης refers to a guard, officer, or attendant who has been assigned certain responsibilities. Thus the assistant to the president of the synagogue who receives the scroll from Jesus is called ὑπηρέτη.[145] The guards who arrest Jesus are described as ὑπηρέται,[146] as are the guards who witness Peter's denial.[147] The use of ὑπηρέτης in these passages is similar to the

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[144]Ibid., p. 535.

[145]Luke 4:20.

[146]John 18:3, 12, 18, 22; cf. John 7:32.

[147]Matthew 26:58, Mark 14:54.

general usage of the term in secular Greek. Some of the
ὑπηρέτης/ὑπηρετέω passages are somewhat more difficult to
interpret. Gaining an insight into these passages should
illuminate the broader notion of service in the New Testament.

In his prologue Luke refers to certain "ministers of
the word (ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου)" who delivered to
Luke accounts of Jesus' life.[148] The phrase is original to
Luke, found nowhere else in the New Testament. Presumably
the ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου are also the eyewitnesses
(αὐτόπται) mentioned in the same verse who felt compelled to
share the gospel with others.[149] Why Luke chooses this
expression rather than the more common διάκονοι τοῦ λόγου
is not clear. Perhaps the ὑπηρέται are to be seen not only
as servants of the word but of the person of Christ -- the
incarnate Word.[150] Such would correspond with other Lukan
passages in which preaching Jesus and preaching the gospel

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[148]Luke 1:2.

[149]Lenski, among others, sees no compelling evidence
to assume that the ministers were necessarily eyewitnesses.
See R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel
(Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1951), p. 30.

[150]See Leon Morris, The Gospel According to St. Luke
(Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974),
pp. 65, 66.

are linked.[151] The term may be used to emphasize the sub-
ordinate relationship of the ministers to the message and
to the Messenger himself. According to Rengstorf, the
expression finds meaning in that it "establishes continuity
between the preaching of Jesus and the history of Jesus. . .
The choice of ὑπηρέτης makes good sense in this connection
since the word emphasizes the fact that the ἀυτόπται were
not propagandists for their own views of what happened with
Jesus but had unreservedly put their persons and work in the
service of Jesus' cause."[152] The term is used similarly in
Acts 26:16 where Paul relates to Agrippa how Jesus had
appeared to him in a vision saying, ". . . I have appeared
to you . . . to appoint you to serve and bear witness
(προχειρίσασθαι σε ὑπηρέτην καὶ μάρτυρα) to the things in
which you have seen in me."

In John 18:36, Jesus makes it clear to Pilate that if
his "kingdom were of this world, (his) servants (ὑπηρέται)
would fight. . ." The central question is whether Jesus is
referring to his closest disciples as ὑπηρέται who would
fight if his kingdom were earthly or whether Jesus, if his
kingdom were of this world, would have ὑπηρέται who would

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[151]Acts 8:4, 9:20.

[152]Rengstorf, "ὑπηρέτης," p. 543.

fight for his cause. That Jesus would refer to his disciples as ὑπηρέται is not beyond possibility. According to Westcott, Jesus' reference is to "the Jewish conceptions of a kingdom and to the Jewish officers, corresponding in this context with the royal dignity Christ assumes."[153] Furthermore, disciples of Christ are called ὑπηρέται in at least one other New Testament passage -- I Corinthians 4:1. On the other hand, in no other gospel account does Jesus call his disciples ὑπηρέται nor is there any indication even his most intimate group of followers truly understood the nature of his spiritual kingdom.[154] That they were not officers and guards who were willing to fight physically for Jesus' sake grows more out of the character of Christ than the character of his apostles. If his kingdom were earthly, Jesus would undoubtedly have had fighting men, officers, ὑπηρέται to protect him, but he did not. The ὑπηρέται in this passage appear to be hypothetical.

In Acts 13:5, Paul and Barnabas are said to have John (Mark) with them on their missionary journey "to assist them." In what capacity John Mark serves as ὑπηρέτης is

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153B. F. Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971, reprinted from The Speaker's Commentary), p. 260.

154E.g. Mark 8:31-33.

unclear. According to B. T. Holmes, the term at times sig-
nifies a person whose function involved looking after docu-
ments, thus John Mark's responsibility is to carry a gospel
document with him.[155] C. S. C. Williams similarly views
Mark's role as a special authority on the Old Testament who
may have furnished "proofs from the Old Testament that Jesus
was the Christ" and drew up "simple catechetical forms for
converts to learn by heart" and "interpreted (Saul's and
Barnabas') sermons to a Greek-speaking audience."[156] Others
suggest that his responsibility was to baptize while Saul
and Barnabas preached.[157] According to F. F. Bruce, John
Mark "may have begun to take notes of the kerygma, especially
as proclaimed by Peter. . . This would have made him a useful
companion to the missionaries. He may also have had first-
hand knowledge of some of the events of Passion week."[158]
Nowhere, however, is his specific work stated or implied.

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[155]B. T. Holmes, "Luke's Description of John Mark,"
Journal of Biblical Literature 54 (1935):69.

[156]C. S. C. Williams, A Commentary on the Acts of the
Apostles (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1957)
p. 136.

[157]For a discussion, see R. C. H. Lenski, The Inter-
pretation of the Acts of the Apostles (Columbus: The Wart-
burg Press, 1944), p. 498.

[158]F. F. Bruce, Acts of the Apostles: A Greek Text and
Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,
1952), p. 259.

More than likely his was a general service, doing whatever Saul and Barnabas asked of him.

Numerous questions arise with Luke's usage of ὑπηρετέω in Acts 13:36: "For David, after he had served (ὑπηρετήσας) the counsel of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was raised with his fathers . . ." The meaning in the Greek is unclear. Did David serve the counsel or purpose of God or did he serve "his own generation?" Did David fall asleep in his generation or through God's will?" Or, perhaps, did David in his generation serve the will of God? Though the language is somewhat vague, the emphasis of Paul's sermon at the synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia is clear: David's service (though performed under God's will) was temporary; but Christ who was sinless is able even now to forgive sins.[159]

The ὑπηρέτης of I Corinthians 4:1 can scarely be differentiated from διάκονος.[160] "This is how one should regard us," says Paul, "as servants of Christ (ὑπηρέτας Χριστοῦ) and stewards (οἰκονόμους) of the mysteries of God." The ὑπηρέτης of Christ has no individual significance, he can make no personal claims, the work is not his own. He belongs to Christ; Christ is his master and his authority.

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[159]vv. 37ff.

[160]cf. I Corinthians 3:5.

Οἰκέτης.

Οἰκέτης is one of many cognates in the _οἶκος_ word group[161] and generally refers in secular Greek to a servant, particularly a servant within a household or in charge of household duties. The general notion of the term is implied by Herodotus who speaks of certain Athenians who did not yet have servants.[162] He also uses the term to describe entire households, including evidently the wife and children.[163] Plato differentiates between _οἰκέται_ and _δοῦλοι_ in his Laws by describing a group of men who will become "like servants (_οἰκέται_) keeping no servants (_οἰκέτας_) nor any slaves (_δοῦλοι_)."[164] Aristotle writes that an ox takes the place of a servant (_οἰκέτης_) for the poor.[165] The treatment of the _οἰκέτης_ in the Greek world was basically the same as that of the _δοῦλος_ -- he is at the disposal of his master, under his will, obedient to his commands -- yet some were

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[161] A similar term -- _οἰκονόμος_ (steward) -- describes a chief slave, the manager of a household, administrator, and thus its emphasis is on appropriating responsibility and managing well rather than the subjective relationship of a slave to his master.

[162] Herodotus 6.137.

[163] 7.170; 8.4, 106, 142. Cf. Aeschylus Agamemnon 733, Xenophon Cyropaedia 4.2,2.

[164] 763a; cf. 753d.   [165] Politics 1:1, 6.

evidently given positions of special responsibility.[166]

In the Septuagint, οἰκέτης takes the general meaning of servant, with the type and object of service dependent upon the context. The term is often used as virtually synonymous with δοῦλος. In Exodus 12:44, Moses is told to circumcize all servants (οἰκέτην) bought with money. In Leviticus 25:39, the Israelites are told that a brother that cannot pay his debts "shall not serve thee with the servitude of a slave (οὐ δουλεύσει σου δουλείαν οἰκέτου)." The nation of Israel is said to have been "slave (οἰκέτης) in the land of Egypt."[167] The term is connected with παῖς in Genesis 9 where the servant (παῖς) Chanaan is ordered to be a slave (οἰκέτης) to his brothers, literally a "bond-servant (παῖς οἰκέτης)."[168] In Genesis 50:17, 18, Joseph's brothers refer to themselves as servants (θεραπόντων) of God and servants (οἰκέται) of Joseph. In Exodus 32:13, Moses calls Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob servants (οἰκέται) of God. At times the word suggests an undesirable slavery, while at other times it is a more intimate term describing a familial relationship.

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[166] See R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 33.

[167] Deuteronomy 5:15.   [168] vv. 25, 26.

Philo and Josephus use the word with the meaning of both general servant and household slave. Philo speaks of becoming a servant (οἰκέτην) to wisdom.[169] In the Life of Josephus, Justus' domestic servant (οἰκέτης) is said to have died in battle.[170] In his treatise Against Apion, Josephus refers to "our women-folk and dependents (οἰκέτων)," evidently meaning both slaves and children.[171] By the time of the first century A.D., οἰκέτης had developed no special or technical meaning, implying merely a type of subordination usually centered around a house or family.

Οἰκέτης is found in the New Testament four times, translated "servant" in each case. In only one of these cases does the term identify specific individuals. The οἰκέται of Acts 10:7 are the domestic servants of Cornelius. They are a part of his "household" and "feared God" along with their master.[172] They were dispatched by Cornelius to Joppa to find Simon Peter.

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[169]The Posterity and Exile of Cain 138.

[170]341.

[171]2, 181.

[172]v. 2.

In Romans 14:4 Paul warns his readers against judging another man's servant. The οἰκέτης belongs to his master and therefore is responsible to him. Paul is questioning the right of individuals to meddle in the domestic affairs of others. The servant stands or falls under the scrutiny of his master, and therefore no other person can judge the merit of his work. On a larger scale, the man who is weak[173] is not to be judged by those who are strong, for Christ is the Master, and he "is able to make him stand."[174]

The οἰκέται in I Peter 2:18 are instructed to be submissive to their δεσπότης. The term in this passage seems to be parallel with δοῦλοι in similar Pauline passages.[175] As with Paul, Peter does not question the institution of slavery but seeks to remind his readers of their Christian responsibilities in whatever state they find themselves. They are to respect their masters not only if they are kind and gentle, but if they are overbearing as well. These domestic servants are reminded of the slavery of Christ "who suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps."[176]

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[173]vv. 1-3.

[174]v. 4.

[175]E.g. Ephesians 6:5, Titus 2:9.   [176]I Peter 2:21.

Finally, in Luke's gospel Jesus is quoted as saying, "No servant (οἰκέτης) can serve (δουλεύειν) two masters . . . ."[177] This passage is parallel to Matthew 6:24 which reads, "no one (οὐδείς)" rather no "no servant." Why Luke chooses the word for domestic servant and not Matthew is unclear. Perhaps οἰκέτης is used because Luke places the story after the parable concerning the dishonest steward (οἰκονόμον). The cognates οἰκέτης and οἰκονόμον are compatible in this passage, the former describing a subordinate relationship and the latter a managerial responsibility, each appropriate within its context. The language in Luke 16 is certainly more specific than that of Matthew 6, for the house servant is committed to service in one house only and cannot serve two household masters. Likewise, no man can serve both God and mammon.

The Servant Words Compared

Though each servant word has its unique etymology and basic emphasis, the words as found in both secular and Biblical Greek are hard to differentiate and are at times used almost interchangeably in the New Testament. Meanings often vary from context to context and from author to author.

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[177]Luke 16:13.

Perhaps through grouping the words according to basic backgrounds and meaning, individual differences can be considered and collective implications drawn so that the concept of service in the New Testament can be further defined.

The δοῦλος word group represents the extreme in terms of subjection. No other servant word is characterized by the same type of submissiveness that is inherit in the δοῦλος. The δοῦλος has no will of his own; he is totally controlled by his master. While the οἰκέτης is also subject to his master, the distinction between master and slave is less severe. In the secular Greek literature the οἰκέται are often respected members of the household who assume important responsibilities. The word occasionally even includes the non-servants of a household -- the wife, children, and dependents. παῖς too finds its norm in subjection but, because of its connotations of "child" both in terms of age and descent, it often describes a relationship with a master more intimate than that of the οἰκέτης or δοῦλος. παῖς is often used as an endearing term, though the notion of submission is never lost. Δοῦλος, οἰκέτης, and παῖς can often refer to the same individual and are at times synonymous in the Greek literature. The uses of the terms in the New Testament overlap as well. Both Paul and Peter, for example, instruct Christian slaves as to their Godly

responsibilities to their master. Paul uses δοῦλος;[178]
Peter uses οἰκέτης.[179] Δοῦλος and παῖς are both descrip-
tive of the relationship of men to God. Παῖς is used rarely
in this sense in the New Testament and is used only of David
and Christ. Δοῦλος θεοῦ is found frequently and is the
norm for all Christians in their relationship to God. Δοῦλος,
οἰκέτης, and παῖς each find their definition in terms of a
subjective relationship to a master.

Διακονία, on the other hand, is defined not by its
subjection (though the διάκονος may be a slave subject to
his master) but by its work for the sake of another. The
work of the διάκονος is often menial and physical, yet it
is rendered to the other's advantage. The ὑπηρέτης and the
θεράπων are also defined more by their service than by their
subjection. The ὑπηρέτης in Greek literature is sometimes
paid wages for his work which is often voluntary. The term
is used of an apprentice learning his master's skills and
applies to virtually anyone who willingly accepts a role of
subordination to another. Ὑπηρεσία can describe general
service of almost any nature. Θεραπεία also refers to any

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[178]Ephesians 6:5, Titus 2:9.

[179]I Peter 2:18.

kind of general service. The θεράπων may be a free man or a slave but his service is willingly given on behalf of another. Because of its connotation of healing, θεραπεία is generally seen as freer and more tender than that of the ὑπηρέτης and certainly that of the δοῦλος, οἰκέτης, and παῖς. Likewise, the service of the διάκονος is often depicted as a service of love rendered for the advantage of another without regard for self. These three terms are at times synonymous in the New Testament. Timothy is called by Paul a διάκονος θεοῦ [180] as Moses is seen as God's θεράπων.[181] Several men in the New Testament are called διάκονοι Χριστοῦ.[182] Similarly, Paul speaks in I Corinthians 4:1 of ὑπηρέτης Χριστοῦ. Paul often describes the ministry of the Christians as the διάκονία of the word and of the gospel.[183] Luke characterizes the men who delivered him accounts of Jesus' life as ὑπηρέται γενόμενοι τοῦ λόγου.[184] Though διάκονος, ὑπηρέτης, and θεράπων and their cognates each retain their specific and unique backgrounds and meanings, they find some commonality

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[180]I Thessalonians 3:2.

[181]Hebrews 3:5.

[182]II Corinthians 11:23, I Timothy 4:6, Colossians 1:7.

[183]E.g. Acts 6:4, Ephesians 3:7, Colossians 1:23.

[184]Luke 1:2.

in their relation to service for the sake of others rather than subjection to a master.

Λειτουργός is used at times in the New Testament in terms of general service rendered to another, often virtually synonymous with διάκονος. For example, earthly rulers are called both λειτουργοί and διάκονοι.[185] In Romans 15 and II Corinthians 9, the collection of money for the Jerusalem Christians is called both λειτουργία and διακονία. Epaphroditus' service to Paul in response to his physical needs is termed λειτουργία.[186] However, the λειτουργός word group is used most frequently in the sense of a cultic or sacerdotal ministry. The ministry of priests is described as λειτουργία in the New Testament.[187] Paul participates figuratively in a λειτουργία on behalf of the Philippian Christians[188] as does Jesus in a more significant way for all of mankind.[189] Similarly in its one New Testament reference, ἱερουργέω depicts its etymological background in describing the priestly work of Paul in the service of the gospel for

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[185]Romans 13:4, 6.

[186]Philippians 2:25, 30.

[187]Luke 1:23, Hebrews 8:2.

[188]Philippians 2:17.

[189]Hebrews 8, 9, and 10.

the sake of the Gentiles.[190] Λατρεύω is also used in a cultic sense in the New Testament with virtually no distinction from λειτουργέω and ἱερουργέω, other than its unique emphasis on sacrifice. The ritual duties of priests mentioned in Hebrews 9:1, and the ministry of priests in the tent,[191] are examples of this specialized meaning of the term. But λατρεία and λατρεύω are used in the New Testament in a broader sense as well. Λατρεία is descriptive of general worship to God[192] as well as specific acts of worship.[193] Furthermore, λατρεία in Romans 12:1 describes the life of the Christian that is given completely in sacrificial service to God. The λειτουργέω, ἱερουργέω, and λατρεύω word groups are very closely related in the New Testament in referring to priestly ministry, yet the backgrounds and implications of each are unique.

Each of the servant words has specific applications in specific contexts, yet three basic functions or relationships are expressed by nine terms. In increasing order of severity παῖς, οἰκέτης, and δοῦλος and their cognates describe the

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[190] Romans 15:16.

[191] Hebrews 13:10.

[192] Hebrews 12:28.

[193] Acts 26:7.

subjugation of man's will to man or God. Ὑπηρέτης, θεράπων, and διάκονος and their cognates depict service rendered for the sake of another. The λειτουργία, λατρεία, and ἱερουργέω word groups generally refer to priestly ministry.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The concept of servitude as found in the New Testament is of major significance in terms of the relationship of the Christian to God and his subsequent response to his fellow-man. Numerous terms are used in various contexts denoting types of service rendered. Each of the servant words has a unique philological background and offers special contributions to the overall understanding of service in the New Testament. From a comparative study of these words in the New Testament, several conclusions can be drawn as to the significance of service for the Christian.

1. <u>Service requires subjection</u>. The δοῦλος word group in both Biblical and secular literature denotes a complete subjugation of one will to another, a slavery which is all-encompassing and totally binding. In the New Testament, all men are considered to be slaves in some form. By his very nature, man is the δοῦλος of whatever overcomes him,[1] of whatever he chooses to obey.[2] For the man who lives apart

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[1]II Peter 2:19.   [2]Romans 6:6.

from Christ, his slavery is to sin. No other word could adequately describe the plight of the sinner than δουλεία, for the δοῦλος τῆς ἁμαρτίας is under the total control of sin. Sin masters the will and therefore the behavior of the sinner. The sin which reigns in the heart of the Christless man molds him according to its desires, causing him to obey its passions. Sin's slave is bound up in the service of Satan, under sin's authority.

Freedom is possible for the δοῦλος of sin only through death -- Christ's and the sinner's. Christ's death provides manumission through the symbolic purchasing of the sinner's life. Christ has ransomed the sinners through the offering of his blood. Since man cannot overcome his slavery to sin through his own power, Christ's death is necessary in order to free the sinner from his bondage. But the sinner's death is also required, for the sinner must die to his own selfish will, to the power of the law of sin. In so doing, he is joined with Christ in his death thus achieving release from sin's control.

The emancipation from the slavery of sin necessitates a new servitude, a relinquishing of man's will to the will of God. The man who would follow the Lord must belong to him. The ransom offered to free man from the dominion of sin binds him to the Redeemer so that the will of the Christian is

subsumed under the will of Christ. No forgiveness of sins is possible apart from a voluntary slavery, an absolute and binding commitment to God through his son. The New Testament perspective of δουλεία is distinct from the Greek and Jewish traditions in that service is the basis of all relationships for the Christian. Greatness in the kingdom of God is reserved for the δοῦλος of God and man.

πᾶις and οἰκέτης join δοῦλος in describing the slave subject to his master. The root meaning of πᾶις is "child," and the service implied is somewhat more intimate than that of the δοῦλος. Both David and Jesus are called πᾶις θεοῦ in the New Testament. Οἰκέτης is used in the New Testament always of the personal slave of a human master, generally referring to a household servant. Neither πᾶις nor οἰκέτης assume the extreme nature of the servile relationship of the δοῦλος to his master. Ultimately, the man who would be a servant of God must lose his own will, submerging it under the all-encompassing will of God.

2. <u>Service requires ministering to the needs of others.</u> Διακονία has its roots in physical service, especially menial service rendered for the sake of another. In both secular and Biblical Greek, the service can be either voluntary or involuntary. In either case, the διάκονος is more defined

by his service than by his subjection. As with δουλεία, διακονία is viewed generally as undesirable in classical Greek and in the Septuagint, but in the New Testament it is viewed as the dynamic of the Christian's relationship with God and his fellowman. Two types of διακονία can be distinguished in the New Testament: physical and spiritual. The serving of physical needs is essential to the task of the church and is reflective of the Biblical injunction to love one's neighbor, but spiritual διακονία is seen as more important. Through the ministry of the word, the gospel of Christ is shared with those whose spiritual needs are great. The man separated from God is served with a ministry of the new covenant,[3] a ministry which brings life through the power of the Spirit. The διακονία of the Christian to the unbeliever is a ministry of reconciliation,[4] a service in which the sinner is restored into the favor of God through the agency of Christ's death. Ultimately, the whole church is involved in διακονία as each Christian has been given various gifts by God. These gifts not only serve to usher the lost man into the presence of God but are designed to build up the body of Christ as well.

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[3]II Corinthians 3:6.

[4]II Corinthians 5:18.

In terms of activity rendered for the sake of others, διάκονος is joined by ὑπηρέτης, θεράπων, and occasionally λειτουργός. Ὑπηρέτης is most often descriptive of an attendant, guard, or officer. John Mark, for example, was the special assistant to Saul and Barnabas.[5] In two places ὑπηρέτης is virtually synonymous with διάκονος in describing ministers of the word[6] and servants of Christ.[7] Θεραπεία strays from the normal reference to the act of healing in only two places in the New Testament. In Acts 17, Paul emphasizes to the Athenians that the true God is not served with human hands.[8] In Hebrews 3:5, Moses is called God's θεράπων, freely and tenderly offering service to the Father. Occasionally λειτουργία is descriptive of general service rendered for the advantage of others. In Romans 13, earthly authorities are called both διάκονοι and λειτουργοί. Physical needs are provided for in the λειτουργία to the Jerusalem Christians[9] and to Paul by Epaphroditus.[10] In each of these instances the service administered is not defined by its subjection but by its activity for the sake of others.

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[5]Acts 13:5.   [6]Luke 1:2.   [7]I Corinthians 4:1.

[8]v. 25.

[9]Romans 15:27 and II Corinthians 9:12.

[10]Philippians 2:25, 30.

3. <u>Service involves priestly ministry</u>. Three of the servant words find their New Testament emphasis in neither subjection nor service rendered on behalf of others but in priestly ministration or worship Λειτουργός and λατρεία are virtually synonymous in the New Testament, the latter perhaps implying a stronger notion of sacrifice. Both are used to describe the ritual duties of priests.[11] Λειτουργία is descriptive of Paul's work on behalf of the Gentiles[12] and specifically the Philippian Christians,[13] as well as Jesus' service to all of mankind through his death.[14] Λατρεία at times refers to the worship of the Christians even to the sacrificial giving of their lives in service to God. Ιερουργέω, found only in Romans 15:16, characterizes Paul's priestly ministry in the service of the gospel for the sake of the Gentiles.

Ultimately, the New Testament concept of priestly ministry involves the giving of one's very life for the sake of those who are Christless. The λειτουργόν Χριστού by his nature is giving of himself in the priestly service of the gospel of God. God's servant willingly offers his own body

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[11] Λειτουργία -- Luke 1:23, Hebrews 8:2; λατρεία -- Hebrews 9:1.

[12] Romans 15:16.   [13] Philippians 2:17.

[14] Hebrews 10:10.

as a "living sacrifice" to God, thus involving himself in
"spiritual worship (λογικὴν λατρείαν)."[15] True worship,
then is not a ministry of external form but of internal
response to the mercies of God, not only for the worshipper,
but also in behalf of those in the world who are the real
recipients of the Christian's priestly ministry.

4. <u>Service demands sacrificial discipleship</u>. The
mark of service to Christ is discipleship. Christ's servant
is one who will follow him at any cost. Therefore, disciple-
ship necessitates hating one's self: "He who loves his life
shall lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will
keep it for eternal life."[16] The man whose heart is right
has such an attitude of love that the affairs of this world
appear by comparison to be hatred. Serving Christ requires
losing one's life for the sake of the master; it requires
suffering. In every passage referring to the ministry of
the word, the broader context includes the idea of suffer-
ing.[17] In each instance those involved in the proclamation
of the gospel took to heart Jesus' exhortation to hate his
own life. The man who follows Christ must be willing to
share in the very suffering which ultimately led to the
death of the Master himself.

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[15]Romans 12:1.   [16]John 12:25.

5. <u>Christ is the model servant</u>. Though each of the
servant words has unique implications in the New Testament,
the overall impact is threefold: The Christian is a slave
under the all-encompassing will and guidance of God; he
serves his fellowman within and outside the church physi-
cally and spiritually according to need; he is involved in
a priestly ministry in terms of his work on behalf of those
who are lost, the sacrificial offering of his own life for
God's sake, and his continual worship of God accompanied by
reverence and awe. But each of these avenues of service
would be meaningless were it not for the example set by the
master servant himself. Christ's function as the Messiah
was not one of being served but one of serving. Christ was
the ultimate δοῦλος , God's faithful servant. He was God's
faithful servant as a child tending to his Father's business.
He was God's faithful servant in his submission to baptism
at the commencement of his earthly ministry. He was God's
faithful servant through Satan's temptations, through perse-
cution by his oppressors, through the misconceptions of his
friends. He was God's δοῦλος <u>par excellence</u> in his march
toward death, in his desire that God's will be done, in his

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   [17]Ephesians 3:13; Colossians 1:23-25; I Thessalonians
3:2-4; I Peter 1:6-11; Acts 6, 7.

action before his accusers, in his agony on the cross, in his triumphant resurrection. But his servitude was apparent not only through his subjection and obedience to God even unto death, it was illustrated by the loving actions administered to his fellowman. Christ as διάκονος was the embodiment of love, the compassionate servant offering unrestrained mercy. His every action emanated from a generous heart and was rendered for the ultimate benefit of those he served. He healed the eyes of those who could not see as well as those whose spiritual eyes had been blinded. He opened the ears of those who could not hear and those whose ears had shut out the calling of God. Christ's was a ministry of footwashing, a ministry of healing, a selfless ministry for the advantage of those in need, culminating in the giving of his own life for the sake of the people. Likewise, his priestly ministry was enacted through his death. Since "every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifice,"[18] Christ as the great high priest offered his life as a sacrifice for sins, thus sanctifying those who believe in him. Though his body was given "once for all,"[19] his priestly ministry is continuing through his intercession in the offering of prayers

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[18]Hebrews 8:3.

[19]Hebrews 10:10.

to God on behalf of God's children. Whether through his
subjection, his activity for the sake of those whom he loves,
or his priestly ministry, Christ's servitude is the ground
and source of the Christian's ministry, for Christ not only
shares in man's servitude but is the well-spring from which
the strength and motivation to serve flow.

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