

Subordination to God Requires Suppression of One's Own Desires; All Subordinate Either to the Flesh or to God: the Status of Bondservant: Willing Submission

- 2) We read the following regarding this word in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 8:42-43, 45:

ὑποτάσσω, [*hupotassō*]. By nature the strivings of the **σάρξ** [*sarx*: the sin nature] resist submission to God's demand, Romans 8:7. On the other hand pious Judaism, by clinging to observance of the Torah as a way of salvation, resists the saving work of God in Christ, Romans 10:3 ["For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." (NASB)]. In both cases, submission is refused because renunciation of one's own sinful or pious will is demanded.

Luke 2:51 stresses that the growing Jesus subordinated Himself to His parents ["And He (Jesus) went down with them (his parents) and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them." (NASB)].

New Testament exhortation suggests that the general rule demands readiness to renounce one's own will for the sake of others. This word which belonged originally to the sphere of worldly order is now filled with new content as a term *for* order. The (submission) of those who are properly subordinate does not stay the same when done under the control of dependence on the Lord, though externally it is rendered in exactly the same way as by others; for the demand now has a specific Christian basis as the community is subject to Christ.

Titus 2:9 - Bondservants [δοῦλος, *doulos*: those that sell themselves into slavery to others] are to be subject [ὑποτάσσω, *hupotassō*] to their own masters in everything, to do what is wanted and not talk back,

v. 10 - not to pilfer, but showing all good faith, in order to do credit to the teaching of God our Savior in everything.

The middle (voice) embraces a whole series of meanings from subjection to authority on the one side to considerate submission to others on the other.

- 3) The word *doulos* is often translated "slave" in English Bibles but the better selection would be "bondservant" which is explained in:

NET Bible. (Dallas: Bible Studies Press, 2001), 2232:

Titus 1:1 From Paul, a slave² of God and apostle of Jesus Christ, to further the faith of God's chosen ones and the knowledge of the truth that is in keeping with godliness.

²**Translators note.** Traditionally, "servant" or "bondservant." Though *δοῦλος* (*doulos*) is normally translated "servant," the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. (Arndt and Gingrich, 205) notes that "servant" for 'slave' is largely confined to Biblical translations and early American times; in normal usage at the present time the two words are carefully distinguished." The most accurate translation is "bondservant," in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. But as this is archaic, few today understand its force.

Study note. Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord's slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. It was especially associated with famous Old Testament personalities, including such great men as Moses (Joshua 14:7), David (Ps 89:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 9) and Elijah (2 Kings 10:10); all these men were "servants of the Lord."

- 4) Paul uses *doulos* to proclaim his position of bondservant in relation to Christ in Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1; and Titus 1:1; likewise, James in James 1:1, Peter in 2 Peter 1:1, Jude in Jude 1:1, and John in Revelation 1:1.
- 5) Those who willingly put themselves under the command authority of another – *hupotassō* – also understand that when doing so they subscribe to God’s protocol system which requires willing subordination to its policies – *nomos*. This concept is amplified by the word *doulos*, generally translated “slave.” Important analysis is provided by:

Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 2:273-76:

δοῦλος [doulos]. C. The Word Group in the New Testament. 2. Christians as δοῦλοι [douloi: bondservants] of God and Christ. Most references to the (servitude) of Christians speak of it in relation to Christ, on the solid basis of New Testament Christology. (p. 273)

Prominent in the theological use of the word group in the New Testament is the idea that Christians belong to Jesus as His (bondservants), and that their lives are thus offered to Him as the risen and exalted Lord. This notion is more comprehensive and far-reaching than the word group itself and thus appropriates many other words and word groups (e.g., ἐξαγοράζω, [exagorazō: redemption]).

It is everywhere assumed that men were (slaves) before they became believers. This assumption is based on the insight that (servitude) implies obedience to the will of another. In this case, whether voluntary or compulsorily, ἐλευθερία [eleutheria: freedom] is lost and the state of dependence reached which constitutes the situation of the (slave). The (servitude) in which Paul sees men apart from Christ is to ἁμαρτία [hamartia: the sin nature (Romans 6:6)], to ἐπιθυμία [epithumia: the lust patterns (Titus 3:3)], and even to the Jewish νόμος [nomos: Law (Romans 7:1 ff.)]. As Paul, sees it, non-Christians are so controlled by these forces that they cannot do anything outside their sphere of influence. (p. 274)

The status of the Christian is characterized by the fact that by the death of Jesus he is rescued from the (servitude) of powers which aimed to subjugate him and to separate him from God. Paul describes this liberation in terms of redemption. In distinction from their previous (servitude), the new status in which Christians are set is that of υἰοθεσία [huiiothesia: adoption as sons]. This includes the thought of ἐλευθεσία [eleuthesia: freedom], but only to the degree that this is demanded by contrast with the prior (servitude). Paul never uses the term (freedom) to describe the essential nature of the new state. The freedom granted by Christ has the negative import of making him independent of any human authority and of giving him the option of remaining in the old (servitude) or subjecting himself to it again, whereas previously he could not decide against the (servitude) in which he was held. The thought of freedom is for Paul of no constitutive significance for the new status of the Christian. The attainment of (adoption) does not mean the attainment of autonomy in every sphere of life, in relation to God as well as to sin. It means the establishment in an organic relationship to God through His own intervention, which brings to an end the previous relationship of tension and separation. This relationship finds expression in the demonstration of ὑπακοή [hupakoē: obedience] towards God by those who are liberated through Christ. Thus the new state of the Christian comes under the thought of service, though in a very different sense from the earlier usage.

The connexion of those liberated from the (servitude) of the world, sin and death to the One who has liberated them links up with the occasional use of the term for commitment to God. This naturally results from the goal of redemption, which is obedience rather than autonomy. 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. This commitment is expressed linguistically by calling those who are thus obligated to Christ His (bondservants). (p. 275)

There is no path to an orderly relationship with God, or to service which is pleasing to Him, apart from that of unconditional commitment to Him, so that by His work and Word He exercises sovereign rule over the relationship of man to God and God to man, and therefore over man's whole conduct. (pp. 275-76)

- 6) From the words *hupotassō*: subordination and *doulos*: bondservant, we are able to discern the biblically desired relationship between the believer and God.