

The Gospel and God's Righteousness

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(3)

Romans 1:1-17

A. Paul's Credentials: Enslavement to Christ, Romans 1:1-7

Romans 1:1-7 (NASB)

¹ Paul, **a bond-servant** [**doulos -devoted slave**] of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, **set apart for the gospel of God**,
² which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures,
³ concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh,
⁴ who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name's sake,
⁶ among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;
⁷ to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Romans 1:1-7) Introduction: no person is a true follower of Jesus Christ unless he is *enslaved by Christ*. In fact, it is *impossible* for a person to belong to Christ unless he is *enslaved by Christ*. This is the shocking message Paul wants to get across to the believers at Rome.

1. He was a slave of Christ (v.1).
2. He was an apostle of God (v.1).
3. He was set apart to the gospel of God (v.1-4).
4. He had received God's grace and God's mission (v.5).
5. He acknowledged the enslavement of others (v.6-7).

1. (Romans 1:1) Servant— Slave (doulos): Paul was a “slave” of Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:1 (NASB)

¹ “Paul, a **bond-servant** of Christ Jesus, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.”

The word “slave” (**doulos**) in Greek and (**ebed**) in Hebrew means far more than just a servant. It *means* a slave totally possessed by the master. It is a **bond-servant** bound by law to a master.

Bondservant: **Doulos**, the common New Testament word for servant. Although in Greek culture it is most often referred to the **involuntary, permanent service of a slave**.

Paul elevates this word by using it in its Hebrew sense to describe a servant who willingly commits himself to serve a master he loves and respects ([Exodus 21:5-6](#); [Galatians 1:10](#); [Titus 1:1](#); cf. [Genesis 26:24](#); [Numbers 12:7](#); [2 Samuel 7:5](#); [Isaiah 53:11](#)).

[Exodus 21:5-6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ “But if the **slave** plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man,'

⁶ then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and **he shall serve him permanently**.

[Galatians 1:10 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁰ For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, **I would not be a bond-servant of Christ**.

[Titus 1:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ Paul, **a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ**, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

[Genesis 26:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴ The Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, **For the sake of My servant Abraham**."

[Numbers 12:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ Not so, **with My servant Moses**, He is faithful in all My household;

[2 Samuel 7:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ "Go and say **to My servant David**, 'Thus says the Lord, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?'

[Isaiah 53:11 \(NASB\)](#)

¹¹ As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, **My Servant**, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

A look at the slave market of Paul's day shows more clearly what Paul meant when he said he was a "slave of Jesus Christ."

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him; therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.

2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence. He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.

3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service. He was at the master's disposal any hour of the day or night. So it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ—hour by hour, day by day, and night by night.

4. The slave's will belonged to his master. He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the Master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul belonged to Christ. In fact, he said that he fought and struggled **“to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”** ([2 Corinthians 10:5](#)).

[2 Corinthians 10:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ *We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, **and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,***

5. There is a fifth and most precious thing that Paul meant by **“a slave of Jesus Christ.”** He meant that he had the highest and most honored and kingly profession in all the world. Men of God, the greatest men of history, have always been called **“the servants of God.”** It was the highest title of honor. The believer's slavery to Jesus Christ is no cringing, cowardly, or shameful subjection. It is the position of honor—the honor that bestows upon a man the privileges and responsibilities of serving the King of kings and Lord of lords.

1. Moses was the *slave* of God ([Deut. 34:5](#); [Psalm 105:26](#); [Malachi 4:4](#)).
2. Joshua was the *slave* of God ([Joshua 24:29](#)).
3. David was the *slave* of God ([2 Samuel 3:18](#); [Psalm 78:70](#)).
4. Paul was the *slave* of Jesus Christ ([Romans 1:1](#); [Phil. 1:1](#); [Titus 1:1](#)).
5. James was the *slave* of God ([James 1:1](#)).
6. Peter was the *slave* of Jesus Christ ([2 Peter 1:1](#)).
7. Jude was the *slave* of God ([Jude 1](#)).
8. The prophets were the *slaves* of God ([Amos 3:7](#); [Jeremiah 7:25](#)).
9. Christian believers are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ ([Acts 2:18](#); [1 Cor. 7:22](#); [Ephes. 6:6](#); [Col. 4:12](#); [2 Tim. 2:24](#)).

1. Moses was the *slave* of God ([Deut. 34:5](#); [Psalm 105:26](#); [Malachi 4:4](#)).
[Deuteronomy 34:5 \(NASB\)](#)

⁵ So Moses the **servant** [*‘ebed*] **of the LORD** died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

[Psalm 105:26 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁶ He sent **Moses His servant** [*‘ebed*], And Aaron, whom He had chosen.

Malachi 4:4 (NASB)

⁴ "Remember the **law of Moses My servant** [**'ebed**], *even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel.*

2. Joshua was the *slave* of God (**Joshua 24:29**).

Joshua 24:29 (NASB)

²⁹ It came about after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, **the servant** [**'ebed**] **of the LORD**, died, being one hundred and ten years old.

3. David was the *slave* of God (**2 Samuel 3:18**; **Psalms 78:70**).

2 Samuel 3:18 (NASB)

¹⁸ "Now then, do *it!* For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of **My servant** [**'ebed**] **David** I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'"

Psalms 78:70 (NASB)

⁷⁰ He also chose **David His servant** [**'ebed**] And took him from the sheepfolds;

4. Paul was the *slave* of Jesus Christ (**Romans 1:1**; **Phil. 1:1**; **Titus 1:1**).

Romans 1:1 (NASB)

¹ Paul, a **bond-servant** [**doulos**] **of Christ Jesus**, called *as* an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,

Philippians 1:1 (NASB)

¹ Paul and Timothy, **bond-servants** [**doulos**] **of Christ Jesus**, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

Titus 1:1 (NASB)

¹ Paul, a **bond-servant** [**doulos**] **of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ**, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,

5. James was the *slave* of God (**James 1:1**).

James 1:1 (NASB)

¹ James, **a bond-servant** [**doulos**] **of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ**, To the twelve tribes who are dispersed abroad: Greetings.

6. Peter was the *slave* of Jesus Christ (**2 Peter 1:1**).

2 Peter 1:1 (NASB)

¹ Simon Peter, **a bond-servant** [**doulos**] **and apostle of Jesus Christ**, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ:

7. Jude was the *slave* of God ([Jude 1](#)).

[Jude 1:1 \(NASB\)](#)

¹ Jude, **a bond-servant** [*doulos*] **of Jesus Christ**, and brother of James, To those who are the called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ:

8. The prophets were the *slaves* of God ([Amos 3:7](#); [Jeremiah 7:25](#)).

[Amos 3:7 \(NASB\)](#)

⁷ Surely the Lord God does nothing Unless He reveals His secret counsel **To His servants** [*‘ebed*] **the prophets**.

[Jeremiah 7:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵ Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, **I have sent you all My servants** [*‘ebed*] **the prophets**, daily rising early and sending *them*.

9. Christian believers are said to be the slaves of Jesus Christ ([Acts 2:18](#); [1 Cor. 7:22](#); [Ephes. 6:6](#); [Col. 4:12](#); [2 Tim. 2:24](#)).

[Acts 2:18 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ Even on **my bond-slaves** [*doulos*], both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.

[1 Corinthians 7:22 \(NASB\)](#)

²² For he who was **called in the Lord while a slave** [*doulos*], is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

[Ephesians 6:6 \(NASB\)](#)

⁶ not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, **but as slaves** [*doulos*] **of Christ**, doing the will of God from the heart.

[Colossians 4:12 \(NASB\)](#)

¹² Epaphras, who is one of your number, **a bond-slave** [*doulos*] **of Jesus Christ**, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

[2 Timothy 2:24 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁴ The **Lord's bond-servant** [*doulos*] must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

(This point is built upon what William Barclay says. *The Letter to the Romans*. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1955, p.2).

[John 12:26 \(NASB\)](#) ([Romans 12:1](#); [1 Cor. 15:58](#)).

²⁶ If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, **there My servant** [*diakonos*] **will be also**; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

Romans 12:1 (NASB)

¹ Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, **which is your spiritual service** [*latreia*] {*divine service-worship*} **of worship**.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the **work** [*ergon*] {*hard work, to toil*} of the Lord, knowing that your **toil** [*kopos*] {*exhaustive work, with pain*} is not *in vain* in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:6-7 (NASB)

⁶ [**Laboring**] not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

⁷ With good will **render service** [*douleuō*] {*to be in bondage*}, **as to the Lord**, and not to men,

Colossians 3:23-24 (NASB)

²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,

²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ **whom you serve** [*douleuō*] {*to be in bondage*}.

Hebrews 12:28 (NASB)

²⁸ Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may **offer [serve]** [*latreuō*] {*render religious homage*} to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

Exodus 23:25 (NASB)

²⁵ But you shall **serve** [*‘abad*] {*to work, to serve, till, (causative) enslave*} the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.

Deuteronomy 10:12 (NASB)

¹² Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to **serve** [*‘abad*] {*to work, to serve, till, (causative) enslave*} the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Psalms 2:11 (NASB)

¹¹ **Worship [serve]** [*‘abad*] {*to work, to serve, till, (causative) enslave*} the Lord with reverence And rejoice with trembling.

Psalms 100:2 (NASB)

² **Serve** [*‘abad*] {*to work, to serve, till, (causative) enslave*} the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing.