

# By Your Command...

## Let us start in the OT

1 Samuel 3:3-11

- Samuel had an attitude of service to Eli and the Temple
  - His function was simple – service to both and that God would be honoured.
- Samuel demonstrates the attitude of service in his response to hearing what he thinks is the voice of Eli in the night. He does not question nor hesitate when he is roused several times, even in error. He looks to serve.
- Eli instructs Eli in the proper response to the Lord  
*'Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.'* 1 Samuel 3:9  
(remember that Eli had experience, though his own calling had been dimmed by his inaction with his wicked sons).
- Samuel sleeps not only close physically but close emotionally and spiritually to the place of the Lord. His attitude is one of availability towards the Lord, though he likely does not 'know' the full extent of this at his age (thought to be around 12).
- John Gill, in commenting on this verse, reinforces the strength of the *call* from the Lord "By a voice which came forth from the most holy place, from between the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty". Samuel is called from the holy place where they knew the Lord dwelt.

Side note about the result of inappropriate actions by those who should serve the Lord. Eli and his sons are killed by the Lord and his house decrease, as prophesized after the sons acted wickedly. This is a clear demonstration of God's command that one who takes on the role of prophet but abuses it must die (Deut 18:20).

The term used in 1 Samuel 3:9 for slave/servant is (עֶבֶד) 'ebed in Hebrew and δοῦλος (bond servant) in Greek in the Septuagint (LXX).

## Now let us jump forward to the NT

How do the Apostles characterize their relationship to Christ?

Romans 1:1, Romans 6:16, Titus 1:1, James 1:1, Jude 1:1, Revelation 1:1, and 2 Peter 1:1 (Simon Peter, a bond-servant **and** apostle of Jesus Christ)

In every case, the word used is δοῦλος

And Christ is said to have taken the form of a bond servant

“but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:7

And this characterization is not restricted to only the apostles

“Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ”  
Col 1:7 and Col 4:7

Nor is it limited to only men

And Mary said, "Behold, the bond slave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word ... “Acts 1:38

In all of these cases (and numerous others), though the English rendering of these verses may vary a bit by translation, the original word is the always the same.

### **Initial characteristic of a δούλος or bond-servant, bond-slave**

- servitude without the negative sense of bondage that is usually associated with it today.

The related verb **δουλώω** is used in Rom 6:18 and 6:22 to indicate becoming bond slaves leading to righteousness and eternal life. Further, commentaries on the verb note that it implies the active committing of ones self to this position of service.

In the more global sense, in the OT, in Isaiah 49:3, the LXX uses the same word to describe the position of God’s people and the overall purpose of that position:

He said to Me, "You are My *Servant*, Israel,  
In Whom I will show My glory." Is 49:3

This paradigm is replicated in the position of bond slave of Christ in the NT:

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**? For you have been **bought** with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body.**”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

## The Overall Picture

What is laid out is: 1. a macro-paradigm in both the Old and New Testaments and then 2. a macro-paradigm in the over-arching function of the Israel. The model in the Old Testament is shown applied to individuals, while in the New Testament it is shown as applying to the full range of Believers. All these together are represented by the more global picture through the Nation of Israel shown in Isaiah.

## Summary Characteristics of the Bond-Servants

- Belong to the Lord as Master.
- Christ's interests and plans are the underlying motivation of their thoughts
- Joy and delight stems from the Master's satisfaction and delight
- It is the bond servant's privilege to engender the Master's delight.

## Paul's Attitude as a Bond-Servant in 1st Thessalonians

- Concern for the believers before himself, often at his own expense
- His glory is only in their glory before the Lord.

“For who is our hope or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? **For you are our glory and joy.**”

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20

## Back to 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 3

A summary demonstration of the NT position of bond-servant of Christ.

*“Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.”* models the simple attitude for the bond servant believer.

This mirrors the single minded and focused attitude contained in Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2 “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

**What could this look like?**

In prayer - simply coming as a bond servant glorifying the Father with but one expectation, the Father's will.

In life - rejoicing not only at having been redeemed, but in the provision of life in all it's aspects by the Lord. Seeing that glory continually.

In living - filtering ALL of life through the mandate as bond servants to build up and glorify Lord, whatever that may entail.

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**Do we come as Eli instructed saying  
“Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.”?**