

*Legum ministri magistratus; legum interpretes iudices;
legum denique idcirco omnes servi sumus, ut liberi esse possimus.*¹

Bible Words: *libertus*



Libertus (*lib-ER-tus*) is a second declension masculine noun. It is related to the words “liberty” and “liberate.” It means “freedman.” Notice this is not a “freeman.” A *libertus* is a man who was once a slave but has been freed. (A female slave who had been freed was called a *liberta*.)

Read this article <https://quatr.us/romans/roman-freedmen-slavery-ancient-rome.htm> to understand why the freedmen were an important part of Roman society. When a slave was freed he changed his name. The form of his new name indicated his status as a freedman just as the form of his old name had indicated that he was a slave. When we see an inscription on a funerary monument or stone we can tell from the name if the man was a freedman. Read this worksheet:

<http://latininscriptions.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/resources/resources/AshLI-RomanNamesWORKSHEET3-FreedmenandFreedwomen.pdf>

to find out how this works. You will be able to fill in the answers to question A just by reading the worksheet although to answer part B you will need to download the slides of the inscriptions by going here:

<http://latininscriptions.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/resources/> scrolling down to **Roman Life topics for GCSE and WJEC/Roman Society/Roman Names 3** and clicking on the second bullet point: Roman Names 3 – Freedmen and Freedwomen.

Bible example:

*qui enim in Domino vocatus est servus **libertus** est Domini similiter qui liber vocatus est servus est Christi* 2 Corinthians 7:22.

Enim (*E-nim*) is another of those useful little words that can go in your indexed notebook. It means “even” or “also.” It is important to remember that *servus* really means a slave not a servant although the word “servant” is used in our English Bible. Notice that for *libertus* our Bible uses “freeman” not “freedman.”

¹ The magistrates are the ministers of the law; the judges the interpreters of the laws: we are therefore all the servants of the law, that we might be free. Cicero.