

Deuteronomy 15:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee;

Analysis

And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee; because he loveth thee and thine house, because he is well with thee—The servant may choose permanent servitude out of love (אהב, ahav, covenant loyalty). This voluntary submission transforms the relationship: no longer debt-bondage but devoted service. **He is well with thee** (טוב לו עמך, tov lo immakh)—prosperity found in relationship, not independence.

This pictures the believer's relationship to Christ: **I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine** (Song 6:3). We're freed to leave but choose to stay: **Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life** (John 6:68). Voluntary submission to Christ isn't slavery but supreme freedom: **His service is perfect freedom** (Book of Common Prayer). The ear-piercing ceremony (next verse) symbolizes permanent identity in the master's household.

Historical Context

A servant choosing permanent status might do so for economic security, personal affection, or commitment to the master's children. This provision acknowledged that freedom isn't always economic independence—sometimes relationship and security surpass autonomy's appeal.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. Have you made the voluntary decision to serve Christ permanently, not just accept forgiveness?
2. How does the servant saying 'I love thee' (personal devotion) transform obedience from duty to delight?
3. What does it mean practically to find your 'good' (prosperity, well-being) in relationship with Christ rather than independence?

Interlinear Text

אֵלֶּא אֶלְيָהוּ יֹאמֶר רַבִּי וְיַהְיָה
H1961 H3588 **And it shall be if he say** H559 H413 H3808 **unto thee I will not go away** H3318

בַּיִת בְּ אֶלְעָנָת רַבִּי מִשְׁעָנָת
H5973 H3588 **from thee because he loveth** H157 H853 H1004 **thee and thine house** H3588

בְּאֵת וְאֶלְעָנָת
because he is well H0 H5973

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 40:8 (Parallel theme): I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

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