

Deuteronomy 15:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

Analysis

Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever—The ear-piercing ceremony created permanent, visible identity. The **door** (דלת, deleth) represented the household; the pierced ear signified: 'I belong here.' The once-freed servant now bears voluntary marks of devotion.

Paul echoes this: **I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus** (Galatians 6:17). Baptism serves similarly—public identification with Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). The pierced ear taught Israel that covenant relationship involves visible, permanent commitment. We're not secret disciples but branded sheep: **The Lord knoweth them that are his** (2 Timothy 2:19). Christ Himself bears permanent marks—**Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails** (John 20:25)—scars of His voluntary submission to the Father's will.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern documents record various ownership marks (tattoos, brands, ear-piercings). Israel's practice was unique in being voluntary (not forced) and domestic (household belonging, not chattel slavery). The pierced ear became a visible testimony to the master's benevolence.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What 'marks' (habits, commitments, sacrifices) visibly identify you as Christ's willing servant?
2. How does Christ's permanent scars (nail prints) demonstrate His voluntary submission to redeem you?
3. In what ways does baptism function as your 'ear-piercing'—public, permanent identification with Christ?

Interlinear Text

וְלָקַחְתָּ	אֶת	הַמֶּרְצָעַ עַ	וְנָתַתָּ ה	בְּאָזְנוֹ	וּבֶדֶל לָת
Then thou shalt take	H853	an aul	and thrust	it through his ear	unto the door
H3947		H4836	H5414	H241	H1817
וְהָיָה	לְךָ	עַבְדְּךָ	עוֹלָם	וְאֵי	
H1961	H0	and he shall be thy servant	for ever	H637	
		H5650	H5769		
לְאִמָּתְךָ	תַּעֲשֶׂה	כֵּן:			
And also unto thy maidservant	thou shalt do				
H519	H6213	H3651			

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org