

DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 22

Various Laws

“You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray and ignore them. You shall take them back to your brother. 2 And if he does not live near you and you do not know who he is, you shall bring it home to your house, and it shall stay with you until your brother seeks it. Then you shall restore it to him. 3 And you shall do the same with his donkey or with his garment, or with any lost thing of your brother's, which he loses and you find; you may not ignore it. 4 You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fallen down by the way and ignore them. You shall help him to lift them up again. 5 “A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD your God. 6 “If you come across a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs and the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young. 7 You shall let the mother go, but the young you may take for yourself, that it may go well with you, and that you may live long. 8 “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring the guilt of blood upon your house, if anyone should fall from it. 9 “You shall not sow your vineyard with two kinds of seed, lest the whole yield be forfeited,[a] the crop that you have sown and the yield of the vineyard. 10 You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together. 11 You shall not wear cloth of wool and linen mixed together. 12 “You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself.

22:1–4 One's brother is anyone in need, friend or enemy! (TLSB)

22:1 Stray animals were a common problem in an agrarian society. The Lord requires positive action to restore a neighbor's lost livestock. (TLSB)

not ignore it. See vv. 3–4. The Biblical legislation was intended not only to punish criminal behavior but also to express concern for people and their possessions. (CSB)

Lit, “hide oneself,” i.e., try to avoid the inconvenience or expense of helping. (TLSB)

22:2 Obligation held, even if the brother was distant or unknown. (TLSB)

22:4 The situation is different, but the mandate is the same. (TLSB)

22:5 Probably intended to prohibit such perversions as transvestism and homosexuality, especially under religious auspices. The God-created differences between men and women are not to be disregarded (see Lev 18:22; 20:13). (CSB)

Male and female are visibly distinct. Wearing the other's clothing gives the appearance of reversing God's natural order. (Such practices likely involved homosexuality or foreign cults.) (TLSB)

22:6–7 Legislation unique to Dt protects the potential future food source rather than allowing an immediate short-term gain. (TLSB)

22:8 Roofs in ancient Near East were flat and used for drying and storing produce, socializing, and sleeping in warm weather. Negligence in providing a low restraining wall or railing around the edge of the roof would amount to homicide if someone fell from it and died. (TLSB)

22:9–11 These three laws forbidding the mixing of dissimilar items served as object lessons reminding the people that they belonged to the Lord and were to be separate from the surrounding nations with their false gods and abominable practices. (TLSB)

22:10 The ox was ritually clean, but the donkey was unclean (14:3–8). They are also of differing sizes and strengths, so this law protects the weaker. (TLSB)

22:12 tassels. Characterized priestly clothing and reminded Israel that they are to strive to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex 19:6). Also a clear reminder to keep the Lord’s Law as a response to His saving them from bondage (Nu 15:39–40). (TLSB)

22:1–12 God gives a variety of laws governing brotherly love, maintaining distinctions in the created order, and keeping Israel unto Himself. Love is the fulfilling of the Law in both our relationship to God and to one another. Our Savior, Jesus, did not come “to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). It is in His serving us, atoning for all our sins, and opening for us the door to heaven that we are set free from concern for self and are enabled to turn our attention to serving others (cf Jn 13:34). • Praise be to You, O God, for setting us apart in this world as new creations in Christ. Strengthen us through Your means of grace to keep us ever in the faith and to be servants to our neighbors and witnesses of Your love in Christ to all. Amen. (TLSB)

Laws Concerning Sexual Immorality

13 “If any man takes a wife and goes in to her and then hates her 14 and accuses her of misconduct and brings a bad name upon her, saying, ‘I took this woman, and when I came near her, I did not find in her evidence of virginity,’ 15 then the father of the young woman and her mother shall take and bring out the evidence of her virginity to the elders of the city in the gate. 16 And the father of the young woman shall say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to this man to marry, and he hates her; 17 and behold, he has accused her of misconduct, saying, “I did not find in your daughter evidence of virginity.” And yet this is the evidence of my daughter's virginity.’ And they shall spread the cloak before the elders of the city. 18 Then the elders of that city shall take the man and whip him, 19 and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name upon a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife. He may not divorce her all his days. 20 But if the thing is true, that evidence of virginity was not found in the young woman, 21 then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done an outrageous thing in Israel by whoring in her father's house. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. 22 “If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel. 23 “If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. 25 “But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. 26 But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, 27 because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her. 28 “If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, 29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her. He may not divorce her all his days. 30 “A man shall not take his father's wife, so that he does not uncover his father's nakedness.

22:13–15 hates her. Rejects her, accusing her of premarital unfaithfulness. (TLSB)

evidence. Sheet or garment marked with blood from the night the marriage was consummated. (TLSB)

22:14 *evidence of virginity*. A blood-stained cloth or garment (see vv. 15, 17, 20). (CSB)

22:18 He is degraded by whipping for defaming the girl and her family. (TLSB)

22:19 *hundred sheke*. A heavy fine—several times what Hosea paid to buy Gomer back (Hos 3:2) or what Jeremiah paid for the field at Anathoth (Jer 32:9). It may have been about twice the average bride-price (see note on v. 29). The high fine, in addition to the no-divorce rule, was intended to restrain not only a husband's charges against his wife but also easy divorce. (CSB)

Levied because the man's accusation would have forced his bride's father to return the bride-price. Severe and public punishments would prevent slanderous charges. (TLSB)

she shall be his wife. The man loses his right to ever divorce the woman, which is really a protection for her. (TLSB)

Major Social Concerns in the Covenant

1. Personhood

Everyone's person is to be secure (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17; Ex 21:16–21, 26–31; Lev 19:14; Dt 24:7; 27:18)

9. Fruit of the Ground

Everyone is to share the fruit of the ground (Ex 23:10–11; Lev 19:9–10; 23:22; 25:3–55; Dt 14:28–29; 24:19–21).

2. False Accusation

Everyone is to be secure against slander and false accusation (Ex 20:16; Dt 5:20; Ex 23:1–3; Lev 19:16; Dt 19:15–21).

10. Rest on Sabbath

Everyone, down to the humblest servant and the resident alien, is to share in the weekly rest of God's sabbath (Ex 20:8–11; Dt 5:12, 15; Ex 23:12)

3. Woman

No woman is to be taken advantage of within her subordinate status in society (Ex 21:7–11, 20, 26–32; 22:16–17; Dt 21:10–14; 22:13–30; 24:1–5).

11. Marriage

The marriage relationship is to be kept inviolate (Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18; see also Lev 18:6–23; 20:10–21; Dt 22:13–30).

4. Punishment

Punishment of wrongdoing shall not be excessive so that the culprit is dehumanized (Dt 25:1–5).

12. Exploitation

No one, however disabled, impoverished or powerless, is to be oppressed or exploited (Ex 22:21–27; Lev 19:14, 33–34; 25:35–36; Dt 23:19; 24:6, 12–15, 17; 27:18).

5. Dignity

Every Israelite's dignity and right to be God's freedman and servant are to be honored and

13. Fair Trial

Everyone is to have free access to the courts and is to be afforded a fair trial (Ex 23:6, 8; Lev

safeguarded (Ex 21:2, 5–6; Lev 25; Dt 15:12–18). 19:15; Dt 1:17; 10:17–18; 16:18–20; 17:8–13; 19:15–21).

6. Inheritance

Every Israilite's inheritance in the promised land is to be secure (Lev 25; Nu 27:5–7; 36:1–9; Dt 25:5–10).

14. Social Order

Every person's God-given place in the social order is to be honored (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16; Ex 21:15, 17; 22:28; Lev 19:3, 32; 20:9; Dt 17:8–13; 21:15–21; 27:16).

7. Property

Everyone's property is to be secure (Ex 20:15; Dt 5:19; Ex 21:33–36; 22:1–15; 23:4–5; Lev 19:35–36; Dt 22:1–4; 25:13–15)

15. Law

No one shall be above the law, not even the king (Dt 17:18–20).

8. Fruit of Labor

Everyone is to receive the fruit of his labors (Lev 19:13; Dt 24:14; 25:4).

16. Animals

Concern for the welfare of other creatures is to be extended to the animal world (Ex 23:5, 11; Lev 25:7; Dt 22:4, 6–7; 25:4).

22:22 Adultery (consensual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's spouse) was a crime (5:18) and punishable by death. It was destructive to the social order, defiled the land, and had to be purged (cf Lv 18:20, 24–30). The Code of Hammurabi (c 1728–1686 BC) ruled that adulterers were to be bound and thrown into a river. (TLSB)

22:23–29 These laws do not always clearly cover the difference between consent and force (rape). (TLSB)

22:23–24 Betrothal makes this woman another man's wife (a ruling also found in the Code of Hammurabi). The crime is thus adultery and punishable by death. With no evidence that she cried out for help, it is presumed to be consensual sex, and both are guilty of a capital crime. (TLSB)

22:25–27 Differs from vv 23–24 in that the man seizes the woman and her cries cannot be heard. (TLSB)

22:25 *seizes her*. Implies rape. (TLSB)

22:28–29 Since the woman is not betrothed, there is no adultery and hence no death penalty. The man is punished by a bride-price. (TLSB)

not divorce her. Thus providing for the woman and any child from this union. (TLSB)

22:29 *fifty shekels of silver*. Probably equaled the average bride-price, which must have varied with the economic status of the participants (see note on Ex 22:16). (CSB)

22:30 *his father's wife*. Refers to a wife other than his mother. (CSB)

uncover his father's nakedness. Lit. "uncover the corner of his father's garment." (CSB)

Adultery with a stepmother. To “cover” was a metaphor for taking a woman in marriage, thus this man uncovers his stepmother’s nakedness and invades the marital relationship. Occasionally, sons tried to take the headship role by having sexual relations with their father’s concubines (cf Gn 35:22; 2Sm 16:22; 1Ki 2:21). (CSB)

22:13–30 Laws are given concerning marriage, promiscuity, adultery, rape, and incestuous adultery. These laws protect individuals, the integrity of the family unit, and the social stability and purity of the nation. Our God has blessed us with the institution of marriage to provide family, companionship, and a God-pleasing outlet for sexual desire. Such an intimate union is in fact a reflection of the oneness God establishes with us through faith in the relationship of the Church (the Bride) with Christ (the Bridegroom who “gave Himself up for her” (Eph 5:25). • Lord Jesus Christ, keep us faithful and pure that our lives and marriages may honor You. Where we have fallen, forgive us our sins, enable us to forgive one another, and restore us by Your grace to wholeness. Amen. (TLSB)