

119

GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Marrying a Rapist

TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching addresses the claim that Deuteronomy 22:28–29 requires a woman to marry her rapist. It argues that understanding a commandment's intent requires careful attention to the surrounding passage and comparison with related instructions.

The teaching compares Deuteronomy 22:28–29 with Exodus 22:16–17. Exodus describes a man seducing an unbetrothed virgin, paying the bride-price, and marrying her, while also stating that her father may refuse the marriage.

It then turns to Deuteronomy 22:25–27, where a betrothed woman is assaulted in the open country. In that case, the woman has committed no offense, and the man alone is punished. The passage compares the attack to murder.

The teaching contrasts this case with verses 28–29, which it interprets as consensual fornication. It points to the wording about both people being found, and contrasts the details in this passage with the woman's cry for help in the preceding case.

Hebrew vocabulary is another part of the argument. The teaching distinguishes *chazaq* in the earlier case from *taphas*, also written *tapas* in the script, in verse 28. It explains that the latter word can mean taking hold of something, without itself establishing an assault.

The conclusion is that the passage concerns responsibility after consensual sexual relations rather than a command to marry a rapist. The teaching encourages readers to test their understanding through context and related passages rather than relying on an isolated English rendering.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The teaching examines Deuteronomy 22:28–29 in its surrounding context.
- It compares the passage with Exodus 22:16–17.
- Exodus describes seduction of an unbetrothed virgin.
- The Exodus passage allows the father to refuse the marriage.
- Deuteronomy 22:25–27 is presented as a case of rape.
- The assaulted woman in that case has committed no offense.
- The teaching reads verses 28–29 as consensual fornication.
- The wording about both people being found is part of its argument.
- The teaching distinguishes the Hebrew terms chazaq and taphas.
- Its conclusion depends on vocabulary, context, and comparison of passages.

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Basic

1. The teaching's main passage is in the book of _____.
2. The comparison passage concerning seduction is in _____.
3. In Exodus 22, the woman's _____ may refuse the marriage.
4. Deuteronomy 22:28–29 specifies fifty shekels of _____.
5. The teaching interprets verses 28–29 as _____ rather than rape.
6. In the rape case discussed, only the _____ is punished.

Challenging

1. The Hebrew term the teaching associates with force in the earlier case is _____.
2. The Hebrew term given for verse 28, also spelled tapas in the script, is _____.
3. The quoted passage compares the assault to attacking and _____ a neighbor.
4. The woman in verses 25–27 is described as _____.
5. The teaching points to Genesis 4:21 as an example involving the _____.
6. According to the quoted instruction in verses 28–29, the man may not _____ her all his days.

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the teaching compare Deuteronomy 22:28–29 with Exodus 22:16–17?
2. What protections for the assaulted woman does the teaching identify in Deuteronomy 22:25–27?
3. How does the teaching use the contrast between the two cases to explain its conclusion?
4. What role does the wording about both people being found play in the argument?
5. How does the discussion of Hebrew vocabulary affect the teaching's reading of an English translation?
6. What does this teaching illustrate about considering context before drawing conclusions about a commandment?

ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

Basic

1. Deuteronomy
2. Exodus
3. father
4. silver
5. fornication
6. man

Challenging

1. chazaq
2. taphas
3. murdering
4. betrothed
5. flute
6. divorce