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MINISTRIES

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Marrying a Rapist

Sometimes understanding the intent of our Creator’s commandments is not always intuitive and requires some careful consideration and thought.

For example, Deuteronomy 22 appears to instruct a woman to marry her rapist.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, 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.

This verse should be compared to **Exodus 22:16-17**:

“If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29 is not talking about rape, but fornication between a man and a woman.

Depending on which English translations you use, the text can be a bit misleading, especially the NIV.

But when the rest of the context is considered, it is clear that this passage is about fornication, not rape.

Deuteronomy states "if they are found out", meaning caught fornicating, the man has no choice but to pay the dowry to her father and marry her, just like what it says to do in Exodus.

Consider verses 25-27 of the same chapter in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 22:25-27

“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. 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, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.

The implication here is that the betrothed woman is being forced to have sex without her consent, hence the fact that the text even mentions she "cried for help" (verse 27).

In verses 28-29, however, there is no mention of the woman crying for help, thus indicating that the woman of 28-29 willfully chose to have sex.

Moreover, both parties are held accountable in the case of fornication, because it's consensual.

In the case of rape, however, only the man is punished.

When the Bible IS referring to rape, the text uses a completely different word for "forces her" (*chazaq*).

Instead, Deuteronomy 22:28 uses a word (*taphas*) that is most commonly interpreted as "takes"

The Hebrew word "tapas" means to "take hold of something," to grasp it in hand, and (by application) to capture or seize something.

In Genesis 4:21, it used for "handling" the flute.

That, coupled with the fact that the verse says "if THEY be found", implying both were guilty, this verse obviously refers to consensual sex.

It's similar to what we nowadays call a "shotgun" wedding. They had to get married.

We hope that this clears up the common confusion surrounding this verse.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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