

# Deuteronomy 19:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.

## Analysis

**Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark** (לֹא תִסֵּג גְבוּל רֵעֲךָ, lo tasig ge'vul re'akha)—the verb nasag (נָסַג) means to move back, to encroach. Ancient boundary markers (ge'vul, גְבוּל) were typically stone pillars marking inherited land allotments. Moving them was theft disguised as surveying, a crime difficult to prove and easy to commit.

The phrase **which they of old time have set** (אֲשֶׁר גָּבְלוּ רִאשֹׁנִים, asher gavlu rishonim) appeals to ancestral authority—these boundaries were established during Joshua's original land distribution and represent God's sovereign allotment. To move them is to challenge divine providence itself. Proverbs 22:28 and 23:10 repeat this prohibition, and Job 24:2 condemns landmark-movers alongside the worst criminals. The prophets denounced rulers who seized land by moving boundaries (Hosea 5:10).

This law protected family inheritance in perpetuity, preventing powerful landlords from gradually absorbing smaller holdings—a constant temptation in agricultural societies.

## Historical Context

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In ancient agricultural economies, land was the primary form of wealth and security. The Joshua-era land distribution (c. 1400 BC) allotted each tribe and family specific inheritances, intended to remain in perpetuity. Without modern surveying technology, stone markers established boundaries. Moving these markers was a surreptitious form of theft that disproportionately harmed the poor and powerless, who lacked resources to contest encroachment. Later biblical history shows this law was frequently violated—wealthy landowners consolidated holdings, creating the latifundia estates that the eighth-century prophets condemned (Isaiah 5:8, Micah 2:2).

## Related Passages

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**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What modern equivalents exist to "moving landmarks"—subtle forms of theft disguised as legitimate activity?
2. How does respect for property rights reflect the eighth commandment's deeper principle of respecting God's sovereign distribution of resources?

## Interlinear Text

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ל א	תָּסִיג	גִּבּוֹל	רֵעֶךָ	אֲשֶׁר	גָּבֵלוּ
H3808	Thou shalt not remove	landmark	thy neighbour's	H834	have set
	H5253	H1366	H7453		H1379
רֵאשֵׁי יָמִים	בְּנִחְלָתְךָ	אֲשֶׁר	תִּנְחַל		
which they of old time	in thine inheritance	H834	which thou shalt inherit		
H7223	H5159		H5157		
בְּאֶרֶץ	אֲשֶׁר	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	נִתְּנָה	לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:
in the land	H834	that the LORD	thy God	giveth	H0 thee to possess
H776		H3068	H430	H5414	H3423

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 22:28** (Parallel theme): Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.

**Deuteronomy 27:17** (Parallel theme): Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.

**Job 24:2** (Parallel theme): Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof.

**Hosea 5:10** (Parallel theme): The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

**Proverbs 23:10** (Parallel theme): Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: