

Deuteronomy 21:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails;

Analysis

Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails (גָּלַחַת אֶת־רָאשָׁה וְעָשָׂתָה אֶת־צְפָרְנִית)—The rituals of shaving her head (gillechah) and trimming nails mark transition from one identity to another. Some interpret this as removing her beauty to test the man's commitment; others see it as mourning ritual (cf. Jeremiah 16:6). Either way, the month delay prevents immediate sexual gratification.

Bringing her **home to thine house** (אֵלְתָּזֵךְ בֵּיתְךָ) signals protection, not immediate exploitation. The woman enters the household sphere before entering the marriage bed—a radical departure from treating captives as sexual objects to be used at the moment of conquest.

Historical Context

Ancient warfare typically involved immediate rape of female captives—trophy and humiliation. By requiring the soldier to bring the woman home and wait a month, the law introduces cooling-off period and forces consideration of long-term commitment rather than momentary lust.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does requiring a waiting period before acting on desire apply to modern decisions about relationships, purchases, and commitments?
2. What does bringing someone "home" before intimacy teach about the biblical order of covenant before consummation?

Interlinear Text

את	וְגַלְעָה	בֵּית	וְתָבִא	תְּבִא	אֶל	תְּבִא	תְּבִא	תְּבִא	תְּבִא	תְּבִא	תְּבִא	תְּבִא	
Then thou shalt bring	H935	her home	H413	to thine house	H8432	and she shall shave	H1004	and she shall shave	H1548	and she shall shave	H853	and she shall shave	H853
her head	H7218	and pare	H6213	her nails	H853	her nails	H6856						

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org