

Deuteronomy 21:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

Analysis

וְהִסְכִּיחַ אֶת-שִׁמְלַת (שִׁמְלָת)—Removing the simlat shivyah (garment of captivity) symbolizes leaving her former life behind. This echoes Paul's language of putting off the old self and putting on the new (Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9-10).

And shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month (וְיִשְׁבֶּה בְּבֵיתְךָ וְבָכֶתֶה אֶת-אָבִיה וְאֶת-אָמֶה יְרֵחַ יְמִים)—The verb bakah (bewail/weep) with a month's duration honors her grief. Her parents may be dead or lost forever—she needs time to mourn before embracing new life. This compassionate provision recognizes her humanity and emotional need.

Historical Context

No other ancient Near Eastern law code gave female war captives time to grieve their losses before being used sexually. This law treats the woman as a person with legitimate emotional needs, not merely as property. The month also allowed her to prove she wasn't pregnant by another man.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 – Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 – Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 – Definition of faith

James 2:17 – Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does honoring someone's need to grieve before moving forward reflect Christ's compassion for those in transition and loss?
2. What modern equivalents exist where powerful people should respect the emotional needs and dignity of the vulnerable rather than exploiting them?

Interlinear Text

וְיִרְאֶה	אַתָּה	שְׁמַלְתָּה	שְׁבֵן הַ	מַעַל יְפָ
And she shall put	H853	the raiment	of her captivity	H5921
	H5493		H8071	H7628
וַיִּשְׁבֶּה	בְּבֵית בָּ	וּבְכָתָה	אַתָּה	אָב יְפָ
from off her and shall remain	H3427	in thine house	H1004	and bewail
	H1		H1058	H853
				her father
אָל יְפָ	תָּבִא	כִּי	אָמַת הַ	אָל יְפָ
and her mother	month	a full	and after	H413
H517	H3391	H3117	H310	H935
לְבָ	לְבָ	לְאִשָּׁה:		
וּבְקִימָת הַ	H1167	H1961	H0	and she shall be thy wife
			H802	