

# Deuteronomy 22:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him;

## Analysis

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**The elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him**—yasar (ישר, "chastise") means to discipline, correct, or punish, often through physical beating (Proverbs 23:13). The corporal punishment publicly humiliates the false accuser, matching his attempt to publicly shame his innocent wife. The elders' judgment isn't arbitrary—they've examined evidence, heard testimony, and determined the husband's guilt.

This judicial punishment serves multiple purposes:

1. retribution for the crime of false witness and attempted injustice
2. deterrence against future false accusations
3. vindication of the innocent woman through visible punishment of her slanderer
4. restoration of community order by punishing covenant-breaking behavior.

Biblical justice is restorative and communal, not merely punitive and individual. The punishment fits the crime—public humiliation for one who sought to publicly shame.

## Historical Context

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Corporal punishment was standard in ancient judicial systems. Israel's law limited such punishment (Deuteronomy 25:3 restricts beatings to forty lashes) unlike many contemporary cultures that imposed unlimited brutality. The elders'

authority to execute judgment locally ensured swift justice without centralized bureaucracy. This decentralized system required wise, godly leaders in each community—a model requiring Israel's covenant faithfulness to function properly. When Israel apostatized, judicial corruption followed (Isaiah 1:23; Micah 3:11).

## Related Passages

## **John 3:16 — God's love and salvation**

## **Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith**

## 1 John 4:8 – God is love

## 1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

1. How does swift, certain punishment for false accusation protect both individuals and community integrity?
2. What does the public nature of both the accusation and the punishment teach about biblical justice being communal and restorative?

## Interlinear Text

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