

Deuteronomy 22:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again.

Analysis

And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. The law extends beyond convenient situations to require effort even when restoration is difficult. Distance or anonymity does not excuse the obligation to preserve neighbors' property.

Bringing lost property unto thine own house requires taking responsibility and bearing cost of caring for it. The finder must feed and shelter the animal until the owner is found, accepting inconvenience and expense to benefit the neighbor.

The phrase until thy brother seek after it implies active searching by the owner while the finder provides safe keeping. Both parties have responsibilities - the finder preserves, the owner seeks. Community flourishing requires mutual effort.

The promise thou shalt restore it to him again emphasizes returning, not claiming ownership despite investment in caring for it. Faithfulness requires restoring what belongs to others without demanding compensation.

Historical Context

In ancient Israel without centralized lost-and-found systems, this law created informal network of mutual care. Finders became temporary stewards, preserving property for later restoration.

The requirement to house and feed animals until claimed could involve significant expense, demonstrating that covenant love requires real sacrifice, not mere convenience.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does this law teach about responsibility even when restoration is difficult or costly?
2. How does taking on expense to benefit unknown neighbors demonstrate covenant love?
3. Why is it significant that the finder cannot claim ownership despite investment in care?
4. What does mutual responsibility (finder preserves, owner seeks) teach about community?
5. How might this principle apply to contemporary situations of lost or abandoned property?

Interlinear Text

וְאִם	לֹא	יָבִין	אֶחָיְךָ	אֵלַיְךָ	וְאִם
H518	H3808	be not nigh	And if thy brother	H413	H3808
		H7138	H251		
	יָדַעַתָּה	וְאִם	לֹא	יָבִין	אֵלַיְךָ
	unto thee or if thou know	him not then thou shalt bring	H413	it unto	
	H3045	H622		H8432	
	בֵּיתְךָ	וְהִיא	עִמָּךְ	עַד	שֶׁדֶרְשׁ
thine own house	H1961	H5973	H5704	seek	And if thy brother
H1004				H1875	H251
		וְהִשְׁבַּתָּהּ	לּוֹ:		
	after it and thou shalt restore it to him again	H0			
	H7725				

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