

Deuteronomy 22:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:

Analysis

Unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death—explicit protection of the rape victim, with emphatic declaration of her innocence. The comparison **as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him** classifies rape as violent assault equivalent to murder, not mere sexual sin.

This analogy is profound: just as a murder victim bears no guilt for being killed, a rape victim bears no guilt for being violated. The verb qum (עַל, riseth against) conveys premeditated attack. God's law recognizes sexual assault as violent crime against personhood, not consensual immorality requiring shared punishment.

Historical Context

The comparison to murder elevated rape's legal and moral seriousness beyond other ancient Near Eastern codes. By treating rape as violent crime rather than property violation, Mosaic law affirmed women as persons bearing God's image (Genesis 1:27), not mere chattel whose value was determined by male ownership.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How should the church respond to sexual assault victims in light of God's clear declaration of their innocence?
2. What does this passage reveal about the image of God in every person and the violent evil of violating another's personhood?

Interlinear Text

לְפָנֶיךָ	לֹא	תִּשְׁעַל	ה	תִּשְׁעַל	רְא	אֵל
But unto the damsel	H3808	thou shalt do	H6213	him even so is this matter	H1697	H369
H5291			H4194		H1697	
לְפָנֶיךָ	לֹא	תִּשְׁעַל	מֵת	מֵת	כִּי	אֵל
But unto the damsel	no sin	worthy of death	H3588	H834	riseth	H6965
H5291	H2399					
עַל	אֵשׁ	רֵעַ	הוּא	וְרֹצֶחֶן	וְרֹצֶחֶן	כִּי
for as when a man	H5921	against his neighbour	H7453	and slayeth	H7523	H3651
H376				H5315		
רְא	תִּשְׁעַל					
him even so is this matter						
H1697						
רְא	תִּשְׁעַל					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 21:22 (Sin): And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:

