

Exodus 22:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

Analysis

And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.

'Entice' (יִפְתֶּה, yefateh) means seduce—consensual but unmarried sex. The man 'shall surely endow' (מָהַר יִמְהָרֶנָּה, mahor yimharenah)—pay bride-price and marry her. This protects the woman's reputation and future—in ancient culture, loss of virginity outside marriage ruined marriage prospects. The law forces responsibility: you engaged her sexually, now marry her. The bride-price compensates the father for daughter's diminished value. Deuteronomy 22:28-29 adds the marriage is permanent (he cannot divorce her). The law deters sexual immorality while protecting victims of seduction.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern cultures valued female virginity highly for marriage. This law protected seduced women from abandonment and destitution. The bride-price (mohar) was substantial, making seduction costly for men.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does forcing marriage after seduction protect the woman in ancient culture?
2. What principles about sexual purity and responsibility can Christians apply from this law?

Interlinear Text

וְכִי	יִפְתֶּה	אִישׁ	בְּתוּלָה	אִשָּׁה	לֹא	אֵת	שָׁהּ
H3588	entice H6601	And if a man H376	a maid H1330	H834	H3808	that is not betrothed H781	
וְשָׁכַב	עִמָּהּ	וַיִּמְהַר	וַיִּמְהַר	לָו	לְאִשָּׁה:		
and lie H7901	H5973	endow H4117	endow H4117	H0	her to be his wife H802		

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