

Deuteronomy 22:22

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-22/deuteronomy-2222/>

Moses condemns adultery. If a man has sexual intercourse with a married woman, both of them shall die.

Verse 22 describes the next case concerning marriage. This situation in this case is *if a man is found lying with a married woman* (v. 22). The phrase *lying with* is a Hebrew idiom referring to sexual relations and here refers to adultery. The penalty for this was quite harsh—*both of them shall die*.

Moses then emphasized that both *the man who lay with the woman, and the woman* were to die for their sin. This was to protect the integrity of the covenant with the LORD and the family. If, however, the partners were not caught in the act but a husband suspected his wife of sexual infidelity, then the married woman was to go through a ritual before the priest who would settle the matter ([Numbers 5:11-31](#)).

Adultery was also an offense against the true God because this sin breaks God's design for marriage. God always intends for marriage to be the union of one male with one female ([Gen. 2:24](#)). That is why the penalty for such a crime was capital punishment ([Leviticus 20:10](#)). In this case both *the man and the married woman* deserved death because both were defiled ([Leviticus 18:20](#)).

The reason for imposing capital punishment given here was to *purge the evil from Israel*. This would remove the *man and married woman* from the Israelite community and thus ensure that the people of God were not contaminated. The Israelite community needed to get rid of this sexual misconduct so that they might live righteously before the Suzerain (Ruler) God, the one who called them to be a "holy nation" to Him ([Exodus 19:5-6](#); [Leviticus 19:2](#)).

The Canaanite religions were filled with sexual immorality. Sexual immorality is based on serving our own appetites at the expense of others. It is at its root exploitative. Thus it is not surprising to read the long list of exploitative behaviors common in the Canaanite culture as listed in [Leviticus 18](#). Perhaps the ultimate in exploitative behaviors was child sacrifice ([Leviticus 18:21](#)).

When Jesus confronted the woman caught in adultery, the scribes and Pharisees asked Jesus whether she ought to be stoned, as the law required ([John 8:5](#)). They intended to trap Jesus. If Jesus said “yes” she should be stoned, as the Law prescribed, and people stoned her, then He would be breaking the Roman law, which did not allow the Jews to execute. So Jesus could be accused of murder under Roman law, and they could accuse Him and ask that He be crucified (which was their desire). If Jesus said “no” the woman should not be stoned, then the scribes and Pharisees could accuse Him of being against the Law of Moses, and He would lose support among the people.

Interestingly, Jesus did not ask “Where is the man?” If the scribes and Pharisees sought to truly follow the law, they would have sought to see both the man and woman stoned. Instead, He simply said, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her” ([John 8:7](#)). In doing this, Jesus was upholding the principle of truth, while also pursuing faith and mercy ([Matthew 23:23](#)).

Biblical Text:

²² If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.