

Deuteronomy 22:28-29

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/deut/deut-22/deuteronomy-2228-29/>

Moses gave the law designed to protect an unengaged virgin who may have been a victim of rape.

In this next case of sexual impurity, Moses explained to the Israelites what to do *if a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered* (v. 28). The word *seizes* (Heb. “ḥāzāq,” “seize” or “grasp”) is the same Hebrew word as *forces her* in v. 25. The language used by Moses clearly shows that the girl was a victim of rape, not a consensual partner.

Moreover, in having sexual intercourse with the girl, the man took her virginity, making it almost impossible for her to either marry another man or enjoy a happy marriage since virginity was a condition of marriage in Israel ([Deuteronomy 22:13-21](#)). In such a case, there was no penalty for the girl since she was innocent.

The judgment then only applied to the man. The penalty for *the man who lay with her* (v.29) was threefold:

- First, the man was required to *give to the girl’s father fifty shekels of silver*. This was around two and one-half pounds of silver. This payment was to be given to the girl’s father as compensation for the bride-price he would have received from a bridegroom ([Exodus 22:16](#)).
- Second, the woman *shall become his wife because he has violated her*. Having sexual relations with the virgin girl would bring dishonor and shame upon her. So, the man was thus required to marry the girl and provide financially for her as well as protect her honor and lessen the damage that had been done.
- Third, he was not allowed to *divorce her all his days*. This may have been stipulated in order to serve as a deterrent against rape. If a marriage was consensual, divorce was allowed ([Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#)). However, in this instance, the man’s right of divorce was revoked. His financial and protective obligation to the woman was perpetual.

This penalty protected the rights of the girl, and imposed responsibility for the woman's welfare upon the man. In addition, it protected the rights of her father who could otherwise lose the full bride-price.

Biblical Text:

²⁸ If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, ²⁹ then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days.