

March 24 and 31: 24:1-22; part 1 and 2

Verses 1-5: marriage and divorce

Verses 6-9 safeguarding life

Verses 10-22 people in need

I. Verses 1-5: marriage and divorce

*“When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,<sup>2</sup> and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s wife,<sup>3</sup> and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife,<sup>4</sup> then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.*

<sup>5</sup>*“When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.*

- a. We are still in Moses’ second speech.
- b. *The ESV Study Bible comments: This is a good example of “case law,” where vv. 1–3 present the situation (“When ...”) and v. 4 is the actual law (“then ...”). The law forbids the first husband taking back the wife he found no favor with after she is subsequently divorced or widowed. By charging his wife with some indecency, the first husband acquired her dowry—her father’s marriage present to her—when he divorced her.*
- c. *Remarrying, she was given a second dowry. This example then implies that, when her second marriage ended (either through death or through more trivial grounds of divorce), she was able to keep her second dowry. The first husband is forbidden to remarry her to acquire her second dowry. This law protects the woman from exploitation by her first husband. **This is the only OT law about divorce.** Elsewhere divorce is presupposed (e.g., Lev. 21:7, 14; Num. 30:9). See Jesus’ comments on this law in Matt. 5:31–32. In Matt. 19:7, Pharisees defend their position on divorce by appeal to this law; Jesus, however, appeals to the creation account (Gen. 1:27; 2:24) to show God’s ethical ideal. This law is a concession to hardness of hearts, preserving a minimum level of civility for the theocracy.<sup>1</sup>*
- d. We are still on laws dealing with the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment against adultery
- e. A man takes a wife and marries her

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.esv.org/Deuteronomy+24/>

- f. There is some indecency in her...
- g. It does not say what the indecency is. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares: *The basis for divorce in the biblical text is the dissatisfaction of the husband with his wife.*<sup>2</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary adds: *The situation described here has several conditions, so that it cannot be used as the basis for an overarching policy for divorce.*<sup>3</sup> Further, the Moody Bible Commentary shares that the issue is likely not adultery because adultery had a consequence of stoning. Dr Constable shares: *Two schools of rabbinic interpretation of this phrase developed in time. Rabbi Hillel's liberal position was that God permitted a divorce "for every cause" (Matt. 19:3), **for example, burning his breakfast.** Rabbi Shammai's conservative position allowed divorce only for fornication (sexual sin). Jesus said that God permitted divorce for fornication, but He warned against remarrying after such a divorce (Matt. 19:9).*<sup>4</sup>
- h. A few chapters ago we talked about adultery (Deut 22:13-21), the husband discovers the wife was not pure.
- i. As this section moves on it seems that it is trying to limit the husband by stating that he cannot remarry her.
- j. The New Testament references this: Matt 5:31; 19:7–9; Mark 10:4, 5<sup>5</sup>
- k. Jesus says that Moses wrote the divorce laws out of the hardness of their heart.
- l. Verse 2: she is remarried
- m. Verses 3-4 anticipates the second husband is divorced again or dies then the first husband cannot remarry the wife.
- n. That would be defiling and bring sin into the land the Lord gives them as an inheritance.
- o. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary shares: *The very unusual form of the Hebrew verb used in verse 4 makes it clear that the woman in this case is the victim, not the guilty party. She has been forced to declare her uncleanness by the uncharitable actions of the first husband, and the second marriage demonstrates that another husband has been capable of accommodating whatever impurity she was plagued with. The prohibition is aimed at preventing the first husband from marrying the woman again (in which case he might be able to realize some financial gain), whereas if the woman were impure the*

---

<sup>2</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Dt 24:1–4.

<sup>3</sup> The Moody Bible Commentary (Kindle Locations 11542-11543). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Constable, [Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible](#) (Galaxie Software, 2003), Dt 24:1.

<sup>5</sup> [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

*prohibition would be against her and would preclude a marriage relationship with anyone.*<sup>6</sup>

- p. Verse 5 gives the exemption from military service for one year after marriage. This allows them to have a child and develop their relationship. Deut. 20:7 was about a battle in which those engaged could go home. This is about the newly married and chapter 20:7 was the engaged. In Deut. 20:7 the exemption time was not stated. The New American Commentary points out: *Were he to go to war and lose his life, he obviously would have been “stolen” from her; indeed, even a protracted absence from one another could have been construed as theft, especially in the beginning days of marriage. Time together was a precious thing, too precious to be taken by government even in times of war.*<sup>7</sup>

II. Verses 6-9 safeguarding life

<sup>6</sup> “No one shall take a handmill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.

<sup>7</sup> “If a man is caught kidnapping any of his countrymen of the sons of Israel, and he deals with him violently or sells him, then that thief shall die; so you shall purge the evil from among you.

<sup>8</sup> “Be careful against an infection of leprosy, that you diligently observe and do according to all that the Levitical priests teach you; as I have commanded them, so you shall be careful to do. <sup>9</sup> Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt.

- a. This is an exposition of the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment against stealing.
- b. Moses is about to give 3 cases of danger to the life or livelihood of someone else. We have securing a pledge, we have kidnapping and then we have infection disease.
- c. Remember that Moses is setting up a Jewish nation state. Therefore,
- d. First, concerns securing a pledge. No one may take a handmill... as a pledge... I wanted to see a reference about that: *mill or an upper millstone. These were basic utensils for food preparation; if taken as a pledge or security for a loan, they would deprive the poor person of the means for grinding grain.*<sup>8</sup>
- e. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary of the Old Testament: *The millstone was made up of two stones, usually basalt. The lower millstone was heavy (sometimes nearly one hundred pounds), a flat or slightly curved stone upon which the grain was laid and then ground into flour with the upper, lighter stone (weighing four or five pounds), which was shaped to the hand of the worker. The poor, who could not buy processed grain from*

---

<sup>6</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament\*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Dt 24:4.

<sup>7</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, [\*Deuteronomy\*](#), vol. 4, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 319.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.esv.org/Deuteronomy+24/>

*others, had to grind it themselves each day. If they were forced to give their millstone in pledge for a day's labor, they could be left without the means to feed themselves.*<sup>9</sup>

- f. They were an agricultural society and so this was a very big deal.
- g. Second, we have kidnapping.
- h. In this case the kidnapping is one of their countrymen, of the Israelites. On top of that, he deals with him violently or sells him. The person must die.
- i. Purge the evil...
- j. Ex 21:16 *"Whoever kidnaps someone and sells him, or is caught still holding him, must surely be put to death.*
- k. The 3<sup>rd</sup> case has to do with infection disease. Moses tells them to obey the priests. Remember the 4 offices of leadership: prophet, priest, king, judge.
- l. Notice the words: "be careful": This is a warning about leprosy.
- m. They are told to follow their doctors orders.
- n. What did Moses command about leprosy? See Lev. 13:1-14 and verse 57
- o. Verse 9 is an example of Moses' sister Miriam (see Numbers 12:10). The NET Bible reminds us: **The reference is to Miriam's having contracted leprosy because of her intemperate challenge to Moses' leadership (Num 12:1-15). The purpose for the allusion here appears to be the assertion of the theocratic leadership of the priests who, like Moses, should not be despised.**<sup>10</sup>

### III. Verses 10-22 people in need

<sup>10</sup> "When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not enter his house to take his pledge. <sup>11</sup> You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. <sup>12</sup> If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge. <sup>13</sup> When the sun goes down you shall surely return the pledge to him, that he may sleep in his cloak and bless you; and it will be righteousness for you before the LORD your God.

<sup>14</sup> "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns. <sup>15</sup> You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it; so that he will not cry against you to the LORD and it become sin in you.

<sup>16</sup> "Fathers shall not be put to death for their sons, nor shall sons be put to death for their fathers; everyone shall be put to death for his own sin.

---

<sup>9</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament\*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Dt 24:6.

<sup>10</sup> Biblical Studies Press, [\*The NET Bible First Edition Notes\*](#) (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Dt 24:9.

<sup>17</sup> “You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow’s garment in pledge. <sup>18</sup> But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and that the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

<sup>19</sup> “When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. <sup>20</sup> When you beat your olive tree, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow.

<sup>21</sup> “When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow. <sup>22</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.

- a. The first part deals with a neighbor. Certainly, we can think of the command, to “love one’s neighbor as oneself” (Matt. 22:37-39).
- b. Ex 22:26-27 is a cross reference
- c. I like what the ESV Study Bible shares: *The dignity of the poor person, who is forced into a loan, is preserved, and violence or theft is guarded against.*
- d. Verse 11: the man will bring the pledge out.
- e. The IVP Bible Backgrounds Commentary of the Old Testament: *It was a common business practice in the ancient Near East for a person to “make a pledge” (i.e., offer as collateral) a portion of his property as a guarantee of paying off a debt or other financial obligation. For instance, the Code of Hammurabi and Hittite laws stipulate the pledging of land or planted fields. Hammurabi and Middle Assyrian laws both deal with the legal rights of persons who have been taken in pledge for a debt. **What is distinctive about the Deuteronomic law, as compared to the older version in the covenant code (Ex 22:26–27), is its emphasis on protecting both the humanitarian rights and the personal honor of the debtor.** Thus the creditor may not enter the debtor’s house to take an object in pledge. Instead, the debtor’s dignity is preserved by maintaining the sanctity of his personal dwelling and by giving him the opportunity to choose what will be offered. In this way the poor are treated on a par with all other Israelites.*<sup>11</sup>
- f. Verses 12-13: it seems that the pledge is his cloak and so this is a matter of giving him something to sleep in. The cloak doubled as a blanket.
- g. Verse 13 says when he returns the pledge by evening it will be righteousness before the Lord their God.
- h. Verses 14-15 deal with NOT oppressing a servant. This applies to Israelites and non-Israelites. They are to give them the wages the same day. If they do not give them the wages the same day they will cry out to the Lord and it will be a sin to them.

---

<sup>11</sup> Victor Harold Matthews, Mark W. Chavalas, and John H. Walton, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament\*](#), electronic ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), Dt 24:10–15.

- a. Cross reference: Lev 19:13; 25:35–43; Deut 15:7–18; Prov 14:31; Amos 4:1; 1 Tim 5:18<sup>12</sup>
- b. → This is powerful, not taking care of your employees is a sin.
- c. May this be a reminder to us that God cares of about those in need.
- i. Verse 16: Everyone pays for their own sins.
- j. Verse 17: do not pervert justice, alien, orphan, widow are in mind and they are mentioned 4 more times in verses 19-22. It seems that taking a widow’s garment is an example of perverting justice. Cross reference about perverting justice: Ex 23:9; Lev 19:33; Deut 1:17; 10:17; 16:19; 27:19<sup>13</sup>
- k. The New American Commentary shares: *In such circumstances not even her clothing could be taken as a pledge, suggesting, perhaps, that loans to her were to be made without collateral of any kind.*<sup>14</sup>
- l. The alien, orphan and widow were the most vulnerable.
- m. Verse 18: There is a reminder about their slavery and a reminder that this is a command from the Lord. Verse 18 and verse 22 both end with the statement: “remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing.” Verses 19-22 are bracketed within that statement.
- n. Verse 19-21 give three examples of leaving food for the alien, orphan and the widow.
- o. Cross reference: Lev 19:9-10; 23:22
- p. The New American Commentary shares: *The story of Boaz and Ruth provides a later application of this principle.*<sup>235</sup> *Ruth was fully aware of her right as an alien and a widow to glean from the fields of anyone with whom she found favor (Ruth 2:2). This suggests that not everyone in Bethlehem would have been inclined to allow her to do so, certainly not without permission at least. Boaz not only gave such permission to Ruth (and to many others, v. 4) but commanded his reapers to leave even the sheaves behind so that Ruth could have more than leftovers (vv. 15–16). The narrative thus provides an example of the actual application of covenant prescription to life in the land. Ruth was a Moabite, a foreigner in Israel, just as Israel had been a foreigner in Egypt. So as never to forget the Lord’s gracious deliverance of his people from enslavement, they in turn were to deliver the weakest among them from social and economic bondage.*<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, [Deuteronomy](#), vol. 4, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 323.

<sup>235</sup> E. F. Campbell, Jr., *Ruth*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), 111–12.

<sup>15</sup> Eugene H. Merrill, [Deuteronomy](#), vol. 4, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 324.