

# Deuteronomy 24 Commentary

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Moses on Mt Nebo (Deuteronomy 34:1+)  
Listen to Mt Nebo as you Ponder How Moses' May Have Felt

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deut

Source: Ryrie Study Bible

## Deuteronomy

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<b>ca. 2 Months</b> <b>Moses: Author</b> (Except Dt 34)							

**Deuteronomy 24:1** "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,

- **takes:** De 21:15 Dt 22:13 Ex 21:10
- **then let him:** De 24:3 Jer 3:8 Mt 5:31,32 Mt 19:7-9 Mk 10:4-12
- **divorce** Isa 50:1
- **send her:** De 22:19,29 Mal 2:16 Mt 1:19 Lu 16:18 1Co 7:11,12
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 21:14 "It shall be, if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes; but you shall certainly not sell her for money, you shall not mistreat her, because you have humbled her.

Matthew 19:7-9 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" 8 He \*said to them, "**Because of your hardness of heart** Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, **except for immorality**, and marries another woman **commits adultery**."

Mark 10:4-12+ They said, "Moses permitted a man TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY." 5 But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 "But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. 7 "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, 8 AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 10 In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. 11 And He \*said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; 12 and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."

Malachi 2:16+ "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

### DIVORCE OF A WIFE BECAUSE OF INDECENCY

Note that Dt 24:1-4 is not a general discussion on divorce, but a special case of divorce, remarriage, and divorce/death and remarriage to the original partner. Note also that Dt 24:1 begins with **WHEN** which is picked up again with **THEN** in Dt 24:4. This is not so much about divorce as it is an example of a "[case law](#)," which forbids the first husband from remarrying his former wife. The issue here is not divorce per se but remarriage following divorce. Pulpit Commentary suggests "These verses should be read as one continuous sentence, of which the [protasis](#) is in vers. 1-3, and the [apodosis](#) in ver. 4."

**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** (NRSV- "something objectionable" - not adultery or she would be stoned!) **in her, and he writes her a certificate of**

**divorce** (lit = "letter of cutting off") **and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house-** **NET** = "IF a man marries a woman and she does not please him because he has found something offensive in her, **THEN** he may draw up a divorce document, give it to her, and evict her from his house." Note the progression - marries, finds no favor, found some indecency, writes certificate of divorce, puts in her hand, sends her out. Send out means divorce, formally to her send away and no longer be in a socially recognized marriage relationship (Dt 21:14) Note this is a conditional statement that begins with **IF** and continues with **THEN**. The idea of **finds no favor** (Heb = [chen/hen](#) - includes ideas of grace, charm, Lxx = [charis](#) - grace) relates to the husband recognizing some existing condition as in Dt 22:14, 17 where "shameful deeds" speaks of her not being found a virgin.

This passage does not institute divorce, but assumes it. As **Keil** says "In these verses, however, divorce is not established as a right; all that is done is, that in case of a divorce a reunion with the divorced wife is forbidden, if in the meantime she had married another man, even though the second husband had also put her away, or had died."

**ESVSB** has an interesting note (not all commentaries agree with this and say the remarriage is forbidden to the first husband as it would constitute adultery - see Mt 5:32+ Mk 10:11+ -- Be a Berean on ESV's interesting comment) - By charging his wife with some **indecency**, the first husband acquired her **dowry**—her father's marriage present to her—when he divorced her. 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; Nu 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 (Ge 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.

**NET NOTE on indecency - Heb "nakedness of a thing."** The Hebrew phrase עֶרְוַת דָּבָר ('ervat davar) refers here to some gross sexual impropriety (see note on "indecent" in Dt 23:14). Though the term usually has to do only with indecent exposure of the genitals, it can also include such behavior as adultery (cf. Lev 18:6–18; 20:11, 17, 20–21; Ezek 22:10; 23:29; Hos 2:10). ([Deuteronomy 24](#))

**Utley** - It is difficult to draw too many universal truths from this context (AMEN TO THAT!). Even Jesus discussion about this passage and the issue of divorce is colored by the religious leaders' attempts to trap Him in controversy for the purpose of reducing His support among the people and to find legal/theological grounds to charge Him. Divorce has never been the best option!...The term "**favor**" is used of both God's favor (e.g., Gen. 6:8; Ex 33:17) and mankind's (e.g., Gen. 30:27; 33:8, 10, 15; Ruth 2:2, 10, 13). It means a favorable acceptance or attitude of responsiveness. Here it is negated. It recognized the fallen condition of human love, which is sometimes fickle and fleeting. This text has been a source of great controversy among the rabbis. Shammai (the conservative group of rabbis) said it only referred to adultery, while Hillel (the liberal group of rabbis) said it could refer to anything, even trivial things (i.e., bad food, bad in-law relations, found a prettier woman). In Israel only the husband had the legal right of divorce. **INDECENCY** is Literally this is "the nakedness of a thing". In Dt 23:14 the same term is used in a non-moral sense. This **cannot refer to proven adultery** because the automatic penalty was death (cf. Dt 22:22). Jesus, when quoting this text, seems to interpret it by the phrase "fornication" in Mt. 19:9, which was a Greek term ([porneia](#)) that involved **any sexual impropriety or unfaithfulness**. The term is meant to be ambiguous and, thereby covers the widest possible circumstances. Moses wrote this text to protect the rejected, vulnerable wife. It is shocking to me that Jesus asserts that this legal protection of divorce and remarriage was never God's intention (cf. Mt. 5:27–32; 19:7–12; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:14–18), but Moses' idea because of the **hardness of the hearts** of the Israelites. How many other things recorded in the Pentateuch are not the intended will of God? Jesus, as Lord of Scripture, showed His authority by correcting both OT texts and their interpretation (cf. Mt. 5:17–48; Mk 7:1–23). This is distressing to us modern evangelicals who put such an emphasis on the Bible as the "word of God" (and it surely is!), but we must remember that Jesus is the Living Word and we only have a fraction of all the things He did and said (cf. John 20:30). The Bible is primarily designed to first give us salvation (cf. John 20:31; 2 Ti 3:15) and then to guide us in living the Christian life (cf. 2 Ti 3:16–17). We have all the information that we need to be saved and live a life pleasing to God. We do not need additional rules and laws. The texts we have and the indwelling Spirit guide us from the texts we have into the areas of uncertainty. I am reminded that Jesus commented that all Scriptural teaching on how to live for God is summed up in only two priority statements (cf. Matt. 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–28): Deut. 6:4—love God completely Lev. 19:18—love your neighbor as yourself ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - Even with cause, divorce was never to be seen as a preferred or easy option. The Hebrew word translated **divorce** has as its root the idea of "a hewing off, a cutting apart" – it is **the amputation of that which is one flesh** ([Commentary](#))

**C.S. Lewis** "(Christians) all regard divorce as something like cutting up a living body, as a kind of surgical operation. Some think that the operation is so violent that it cannot be done at all; others admit that it is a desperate remedy in extreme cases. **They are all agreed that it is more like having your legs cut off than it is like dissolving a business partnership or even deserting a regiment.**"

**Utley - “certificate of divorce”** This was a legal document of separation. It may have involved giving back the dowry. This later required an involved legal procedure which hopefully gave time for the partners to reconcile, but here it seems to be written by the husband or his representative (i.e., a Levite). Divorce and remarriage are also discussed in relation to priests in Lev. 21:7, 14 and Lev 22:13. It must have been common (cf. Nu 30:9). ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Guzik** - It was not enough for a man to just declare “we’re divorced” to his wife. The divorce had to be recognized legally just as the marriage had been, so a **certificate of divorce** – a legal document – must be issued, and properly served (puts it in her hand). ([Commentary](#))

**Merrill on sends her away** - She had thus been cut off and driven away from home and family, a punishment laden with indescribable shame and incalculable economic and social loss in that ancient Israelite world. (NAC-Dt)

**IVP Bible Background Commentary** - The basis for divorce in the biblical text is the dissatisfaction of the husband with his wife (as in the Middle Assyrian Laws). In that sense there must be clear grounds for the divorce (as in Hammurabi and the Middle Assyrian Laws). A “**bill of divorcement**” is drawn up specifying these particulars (see Jer 3:8), which, if it follows the manner of other legal proceedings, would be reviewed by a body of elders, and testimony would be given (as in Hammurabi’s laws). For further information see Deuteronomy 22:29.

**J Vernon McGee** - Now you may wonder why remarriage was put on that kind of basis. Well, because God doesn't agree to wife-swapping, which this would amount to. There is to be no trading back and forth. This seems like a very easy form of divorce, does it not? It was very easy. Why did God permit it? Well, the Lord Jesus was approached with that question. “They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matt. 19:7-9). Unfaithfulness to the marriage vow was the only grounds for divorce. (There is some speculation about 1 Corinthians 7 opening up another reason or basis for divorce.) Jesus said that Moses was permitted to make this law because of the hardness of their hearts. There are a great many things which God permits in His permissive will. He permits it because of the hardness of our hearts. This is still true today in many cases of divorce. It is also true in many of our homes, and it is true in the personal lives of many individuals. God is merciful and gracious to us and permits things in our lives that are not in His direct will. It is His permissive will that manifests His grace to us. Knowing this, it would behoove some of the more spiritual brethren not to be so critical of other folk today. (Thru The Bible).

**Believer's Study Bible** note - No O.T. law deals comprehensively with the issue of divorce. In the texts that mention it, the focus is to place limitations on the practice (cf. Dt 22:19, 29). The conditions which permitted a bill of divorcement are first presented (vv. 1-3) as the circumstances for the law in v. 4, which is the focus of this passage. These verses do not institute, encourage, or approve divorce, but treat it as a practice already operating (cf. Matt. 19:6, note). The precise meaning of “uncleanness” (the same word used in 23:14, lit. “nakedness”) is no longer clear. It may refer to “indecentness” or “improper behavior.” It could not include adultery, which was punishable by death (except in cases where, for lack of evidence, a wife’s guilt was only indicated by the curse of barrenness -- cf. Num. 5:21, note). In any case, if the man had presented his wife the bill of divorcement, and she left his house, remarried, and then found herself divorced again, she could not return and be reunited to her first husband (v. 4). This law would have stopped the practice of “loaning” wives for procreation, if such a practice was occurring or being contemplated in ancient Israel. Without restriction and legislation, divorce could become “legal” polygamy or “sanctioned” adultery.

**Indecency (nakedness) 06172. עָרְוָה ‘erwāh:** A feminine noun expressing nakedness, the state of being without clothing or covering of any kind. This word can pertain to physical nakedness for either a man or a woman (Gen. 9:22, 23; Ex. 20:26); however, it is more often used in a figurative sense. Indecentness, ugliness, repulsiveness, i.e., any act. or condition that is not proper or morally repugnant. When used with the verbs gālāh (1540), meaning to uncover or remove, and rā’āh (7200), meaning to see, one finds a common euphemism for sexual relations—to uncover one’s nakedness (Lev. 18:6; 20:17). On the other hand, when combined with the verb kāsāh (3680), meaning to cover, one finds a common idiom for entering into a marriage contract (Ezek. 16:8). Nakedness is also a symbol of the shame and disgrace of Egypt (Isa. 20:4); Babylonia (Isa. 47:3); and Jerusalem (Ezek. 16:37). Furthermore, when in construct with dābār (1697), meaning a word, matter, or thing, this term forms an idiom for indecent or improper behavior (Deut. 23:14[15]; 24:1). When in construct with the word ’ereṣ (776), it can refer to exposed or undefended areas (Gen. 42:9, 12).

**Swanson** - n.fem.; **1. genitals, pudenda**, i.e., private, personal parts of the body, especially the external sexual organs (Ge 9:22); **2. unprotected, vulnerable, formally, naked**, i.e., to be in a state or condition in which harm can come, and be virtually without defenses (Ge 42:9); **3. indecentness, ugliness,**

**repulsiveness**, i.e., any act. or condition that is not proper or morally repugnant, with a possibly focus on bodily functions (Dt 23:15]; 24:1), note: Dt 24:1 is sometimes interp as strictly sexual in nature; **4. unit:** גְּלוּה (gā-lā(h) 'ēr-wā(h)) sexual relations, formally, expose the nakedness, i.e., to have physical, sexual intercourse (Lev 18:6–20:21 passim), note: in an improper relationship, this is a dishonorable, shameful act; **5. unit:** גְּלוּה (gā-lā(h) 'ēr-wā(h)) strip bare, take off all clothing, formally, expose the nakedness, i.e., to remove all clothing until naked (Eze 16:37; 23:10), note: in public, this is a dishonorable, shameful act.; **6. unit:** בֶּשֶׂר עֲרוּה (bā-śār 'ēr-wā(h)) waist section, i.e., the section of the body from the lower stomach to the upper or middle thigh (Ex 28:42) ([Dictionary of Semantic Domains - Hebrew](#))

**Erwah 40 verses** - bare(1), indecency(1), indecent(1), nakedness(48), shame(1), undefended parts(2). Gen. 9:22; Gen. 9:23; Gen. 42:9; Gen. 42:12; Exod. 20:26; Exod. 28:42; Lev. 18:6; Lev. 18:7; Lev. 18:8; Lev. 18:9; Lev. 18:10; Lev. 18:11; Lev. 18:12; Lev. 18:13; Lev. 18:14; Lev. 18:15; Lev. 18:16; Lev. 18:17; Lev. 18:18; Lev. 18:19; Lev. 20:11; Lev. 20:17; Lev. 20:18; Lev. 20:19; Lev. 20:20; Lev. 20:21; Deut. 23:14; Deut. 24:1; 1 Sam. 20:30; Isa. 20:4; Isa. 47:3; Lam. 1:8; Ezek. 16:8; Ezek. 16:36; Ezek. 16:37; Ezek. 22:10; Ezek. 23:10; Ezek. 23:18; Ezek. 23:29; Hos. 2:9

**Vine - 'erwah (06172, עֲרוּה)**, “nakedness; indecent thing.” Thirty-two of the 53 occurrences of this noun are in the social laws of Lev. 18, 20. The rest of its appearances are scattered throughout the various periods of Old Testament literature with the notable exception of poetical literature. This word represents male or female sexual organs. In its first biblical appearance 'erwah implies shameful exposure (Ge 9:22-23) This word is often used of female nakedness (the uncovered sex organs) and is symbolical of shame. In Lam. 1:8 plundered, devastated Jerusalem is pictured as a woman whose nakedness is exposed. To uncover one's nakedness is a frequent euphemism for cohabitation (Lev 18:6)

**Divorce** (see note [below](#))

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#### Guzik has a lengthy note on this passage -

She finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her: This describes the grounds of divorce and indicates that a certificate of divorce could not be written for just any reason. It had to be founded on these two important clauses.

i. There has to be some uncleanness in her. Some later Rabbis defined uncleanness as anything in the wife which might displease the husband. At the time of Jesus, some Rabbis taught that if a wife burned her husband's breakfast, he could divorce her.

ii. But Jesus carefully and properly defined what uncleanness is in Deuteronomy 24:1. He said, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery (Matthew 19:9). Jesus rightly understood that uncleanness refers to sexual immorality, a broad term referring to sexual sin, which includes, but is not restricted to, sexual intercourse with someone who is not your spouse. The Hebrew word translated uncleanness in itself implies the meaning of sexual immorality; it is literally, “nakedness of a thing.”

iii. So, if a husband finds some uncleanness in her, he has the right to give his wife a certificate of divorce. But he is not obligated to do so. It must also be that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her. In other words, it must be that the husband is so troubled at his wife's sexual immorality that he simply cannot look upon her with favor in his eyes any more. The lack of favor in his eyes must be because of her uncleanness.

iv. This helps us understand what Jesus said in Matthew 19:8: Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. If a woman did not have a hard heart, she would never commit sexual immorality against her husband, and there would be no need for divorce. If a husband did not have any hardness in his heart, he could forgive and still look upon his wife with favor in his eyes, even though she was guilty of sexual immorality. But because God knows there is hardness in our hearts – both in the offending and offended parties – He grants permission for divorce.

v. In the days of Jesus, Rabbis taught that it was the duty of a godly man to divorce his wife if she displeased him. Both Moses and Jesus make it clear that God permits divorce in certain circumstances, but never commands it.

vi. Yet, if someone has Biblical grounds of divorce (which, according to 1 Corinthians 7:15, includes abandonment by an unbelieving spouse), they certainly do have permission to divorce, and God does not “hold it against them,” unless of course, He has specifically told them to not divorce and they are disobeying His specific word to their lives.

He writes her a certificate of divorce: Most people think that in ancient Israel, only husbands had the right to divorce their wives, and wives did not have the right of divorce. But what is said here may be intended to be applied to both husband and wife. Jesus, in Mark 10:12 says and if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, clearly saying that in His day, a wife had the right to

#### **QUESTION - [Deuteronomy 24](#) What does Deuteronomy 24 teach about divorce?**

**ANSWER** - Deuteronomy 24:1–4 discusses the Mosaic Law related to [divorce](#) in ancient Israel. Several observations on this passage follow:

First, in order for a divorce to be granted, there had to be a problem related to “indecent.” Verse 1 reads, “If then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her . . .” (ESV). The Hebrew phrase used here was generally a reference to sexual indecency such as adultery (Leviticus 18:6–18) or indecent exposure (Deuteronomy 23:14). Jewish leaders would long debate what was considered “indecent,” but the original wording clearly referred to indecent sexual behavior.

Second, a formal divorce certificate was required: “He writes her a certificate of divorce [and] gives it to her” (verse 1). A husband could not simply express his desire to be divorced and move on with his life. He was required to provide a written legal certificate, which would have required witnesses to the event.

Third, the divorced couple was no longer to live together: the husband “sends her from his house” (verse 1). Living together as an unmarried couple was not acceptable, and a divorced couple was considered unmarried.

Fourth, the divorced woman could remarry another man: “After she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man” (verse 2). The text does not explicitly teach the woman must remarry, but neither does it prohibit a divorced woman from doing so. In that society, a single woman would have had few other options than to seek another husband or to return to her father’s household.

Fifth, the divorced spouse could not later remarry the first partner, if that partner had remarried: “Her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again” (verse 4).

The New Testament teachings regarding divorce offer additional insight into this topic. Jesus reminded the religious leaders that God never intended divorce: “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning” (Matthew 19:8). The “beginning” refers to Adam and Eve as one man and one woman in lifelong marriage—God’s original design.

Jesus also taught that sexual immorality was one legitimate reason for divorce: “I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery” (Matthew 5:31). The apostle Paul added, “A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife” (1 Corinthians 7:10–11). Another instruction is also provided for Christians with an unbelieving spouse: “If the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances” (1 Corinthians 7:15).

Though divorce was not part of God’s original plan for marriage, sinful humanity demanded it, and the Mosaic Law addressed occasions when it was permissible. Jesus and the New Testament teachings affirm the original intent of marriage as being a lifelong relationship between a man and woman while specifying limited occasions when divorce is acceptable.

**Deuteronomy 24:2 and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife,**

- Lev 21:7,14 22:13 Nu 30:9 Eze 44:22 Mt 5:32 Mk 10:11 1Co 7:15
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **REMARRIAGE OF WOMAN PERMITTED**

**and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife** - When the divorce is final, the wife had the right to remarry. It is neither condoned nor prohibited.

**Morris - another man's wife.** Although divorce and remarriage were permitted in the Mosaic laws, Christ has reminded us that this is contrary to God's creative will for believers, except under very special circumstances (Matthew 19:3-9).

**Deuteronomy 24:3 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,**



- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And if the latter husband turns against** (hates - Heb = [sane](#); Lxx = [miseo](#)) **her and writes her a certificate** (seper - document, writing, scroll) **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 - NET** = "If the second husband rejects her and then divorces her, gives her the papers, and evicts her from his house, or if the second husband who married her dies" This assumes another hypothetical situation like that in verse 1. If the second husband also divorces her or dies is the setting and the conclusion is stated in Dt 24:4.

**Divorce** (03748) כְּרִיתוּת **keritut** from [karath](#) = to cut: A feminine noun meaning divorce the act. of ending a marriage (Dt 24:1, 3; Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8+). If a man was to find that his wife was unfaithful or any uncleanness in her, he was able to write a certificate of divorce that resulted in her expulsion from his house (Deut. 24:1). Metaphorically, the Lord asked where Israel's certificate of divorce was. She should have had one to act so loosely (i.e., following other gods [Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8]). סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוּת (sē-ṣēr kerî-tût) **written certificate of divorce**, i.e., a deed giving notice by a husband to a wife of impending divorce, thus releasing the woman to marry (Dt 24:1, 3; Isa 50:1; Jer 3:8).

**Vine** - **keritut** from [karath](#) = to cut) refers to a "bill of divorcement." This word implies the cutting off of a marriage by means of a "bill of divorcement": "When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" (Deut. 24:1).

**Kerirtut** 4 times Deut. 24:1; Deut. 24:3; Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8

**Deuteronomy 24:4 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.**

- **Her former:** Jer 3:1
- **shall:** Lev 18:24-28 Jos 22:17-18
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 18:24-28+ 'Do not defile yourselves by any of these things; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. 25 'For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. 26 'But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall not do any of these abominations, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you 27 (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); 28 so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.

### HOW TO BRING SIN ON THE NATION

**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** ([chata'](#)) **on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance** ([nachalah](#)) - Note the progression of the conjunction THEN. The point is that now the first husband cannot remarry her. The reason is stated that she had been defiled, which is the Hebrew word [tame](#) that is used to describe something or someone being made ceremonially unclean. Septuagint uses the verb [miaino](#) which speaks of ceremonial or moral defilement. The **abomination** ([toebah](#)) is not that she was **defiled** but that the husband would remarry her, for this **sin** would affect the entire nation. Note the sin is not divorce (that might come as a surprise) but the sin is the first husband taking back his wife after another husband!

**Utley** - The original couple are encouraged to reconcile (legal procedure of the bill of divorcement), but once separated and the wife remarries, reconciliation is forbidden! This is the purpose of all of the conditions found in vv. 1–3. This may have been a way to protect the second marriage. **has been defiled**" The defilement seems to be related to knowing two different men sexually, which would make the original husband taking her again a type of **adultery**! The ambiguity of the wording of the paragraph makes it difficult to pronounce universal spiritual principles. This is not a context on the evil of divorce and remarriage, but on the first husband taking his divorced wife again after a second marriage. Divorce and remarriage were common and not condemned in the

ancient Near East. ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Utley** notes that "Two Prophets use this passage metaphorically to describe God's dealing with Israel's faithlessness (Isa 50:1; Jer 3:1, 8). Going after other gods was considered "spiritual adultery." (AKA "PLAYING THE HARLOT - ISRAEL WAS GOD'S WIFE! - Jer 31:32, Isa 54:5) ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

Isaiah 50:1 Thus says the LORD, "Where is the certificate of divorce By which I have sent your mother away? Or to whom of My creditors did I sell you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, And for your transgressions your mother was sent away.

Jeremiah 3:1; 8 God says, "If a husband divorces his wife And she goes from him And belongs to another man, Will he still return to her? **Will not that land be completely polluted?** But you are a harlot with many lovers; Yet you turn to Me," declares the LORD. (3:8) "And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also.

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) has an interesting comment on **has been defiled**: "The very unusual form of the Hebrew verb used in Dt 24:4 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 prohibition would be against her and would preclude a marriage relationship with anyone"

**Guzik** - Her former husband who divorced her must not take her back: This is a strong law, saying that if a divorced woman marries again, she could not return to her first husband, should her second marriage end through divorce or death. To break this law was an abomination before the Lord.

b. An abomination before the Lord: It seems that it might be a good thing for the first husband and wife to get back together. But this command is made because God wanted both marriage and divorce to be seen as serious, permanent things. One couldn't be married or divorced casually; it had to be carefully thought out because it was permanent.

i. This law would also strengthen the second marriage; it would discourage a spouse from thinking they might as well just leave their second marriage and go back to their first partner. ([Commentary](#))

**Deuteronomy 24:5 "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 man**: De 20:7 Ge 2:24 Mt 19:4-6 Mk 10:6-9 1Co 7:10-15 Eph 5:28,29 Tit 2:4,5
- **happiness**: Pr 5:18 Ec 9:9 1Co 7:29
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.

## THE NEWLYWED RULE

**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** - This humane rule is similar to the instruction regarding men going to war in Dt 20:7-9 "And who is the man that is engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him depart and return to his house, otherwise he might die in the battle and another man would marry her." One purpose of this rule was to insure an heir would be produced in this family.

**and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken** - The husband is to bring joy to his wife, to make her glad, to cheer her up. In this context happiness does not just automatically "happen," but involves a conscious (Spirit enabled, Word centered) choice of in the heart of the husband to bring joy to his wife and thereby please the LORD.



This recalls the words of Paul

Ephesians 5:28-29+ So husbands ought also to **love their own wives** as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it, just as Christ also does the church,

**Guzik - Bring happiness to his wife:** This is an important job for every husband. Even as before the Lord, we find our lives by losing them (Matthew 10:39), so a husband will find the most happiness if he will bring happiness to his wife. As the role of the husband in Ephesians 5 is described, we see that God emphasizes the essential oneness between husband and wife. The husband cannot make his wife happy without also bringing happiness into his own life.. A happy wife is the foundation for a happy home; a bitter or contentious wife makes for a miserable home. A continual dripping on a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike (Proverbs 27:15). Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman. (Proverbs 21:9). Better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and angry woman (Proverbs 21:19).([Commentary](#))

[Believer's Study Bible](#) note - This maxim is positive in thrust and is presented to fortify the marriage. The new husband was freed from military service or any public burdens to devote himself and all his energies to his newly established home. This is one of the ways God expressed His approval of marriage and encouraged the blossoming of a beautiful union. This divinely inspired admonition reiterates the husband's responsibility to love and cherish his wife (cf. Eph. 5:28-29) and suggests that even the state should honor the sanctity of the home.

**Rejoice** (08055) **samah** meaning to rejoice; to be joyful, to delight in, be elated, to have a feeling or attitude of joy and happiness, with an outward expression of that joy, in this case to from the husband to his wife. Is your wife your source of joy? Do you delight in her? Do you seek (enabled by the Word and Spirit) to make her happy? This is God's good and acceptable and perfect will for husbands!

**NIDOTTE** "Joy should also be prominent in family relationships. Moses exhorts the new husband to devote himself to make his wife happy (Deut. 24:5) and the sage counsels the husband to rejoice in the wife of his youth (Pro. 5:18). Although the father of a fool cannot rejoice (Pro. 17:21), a wise son brings great joy and delight to his father (10:1; 15:20; 23:24–25; 27:11; 29:3)."

**Deuteronomy 24:6 "No one shall take a hand mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge.**

- **shall take:** Ex 22:26-27 Rev 18:22
- **life:** De 20:19 Ge 44:30 Lu 12:15
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Exodus 22:26-27 "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, 27for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am gracious.

Judges 9:53 But a certain woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelech's head, crushing his skull.

### **PLEDGES THAT ARE NOT ALLOWED**

**No one shall take a hand mill or an upper millstone in pledge, for he would be taking a life in pledge-** NET = "One must not take either lower or upper millstones as security on a loan, for that is like taking a life itself as security." You had to have both upper and lower to grind the grain. To take one makes the **hand mill** unusable. The point is clear that taking either of these items potentially takes away the person's ability to sustain themselves, their means of earning a living and supporting one's family. It would be cruel to take these and bring starvation to the man's family. Kindness says do not take these as a **pledge** or security or surety by temporarily possessing these objects belonging to the debtor, as a security for repayment of a loan.

The basic principle is that poor persons could not be required to provide collateral which consisted of items necessary to their life, for to do so would be like **taking a life**.

There is a similar instruction in Deuteronomy 24:17 "You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, **nor take a widow's**

garment in pledge."

**Guzik** - This warns Israel against taking advantage of each other in times of great need. We must take care that we never unfairly profit from the poverty or difficulty of others. Non-essential items could be taken as a pledge. Although interest could not be charged on a loan to an Israelite in need, a pledge could be taken – collateral to guarantee the repayment of the loan. This command forbids the taking of collateral that would take away a man's ability to provide for his family, and get himself out of debt. ([Commentary](#))

**TSK** - Small hand-mills, which ground at one time only a sufficient quantity for a day's consumption; hence they were forbidden to take either of the stones to **pledge**, because if they did, they would be deprived of the means of preparing their necessary food, and the family be without bread. On this account they are called in the text, a man's life. The same reason holds good against receiving in **pledge** for debt, any instrument of labor, by which men earn their livelihood.

**Utley** - "in pledge" This term, "in pledge," (BDB 286, KB 285) basically means "to bind." When one borrows he is obligated to repay. To secure this repayment (without interest to a fellow Israelite) the creditor could take something of value and hold it: grinding stone, Dt 24:6, garments, Dt 24:17; Ex 22:25–27; Job 24:7, 10, ancestral land and houses, Neh. 5:3 (possibly Job 24:2), an essential animal, Job 24:3, essential help, the children, Ex 21:7; Lev. 25:39–43; 2 Kgs. 4:1; Job 24:9. **Each of these items were a necessary part of daily agricultural existence.** To remove any one of these jeopardized the family, **even life itself.** YHWH's compassion and care for Israel was to be emulated by those Israelites who had resources. God would bless them for their compassion. They would be given more so that they could share more (cf. v. 13; 2 Cor. 9:6–10). ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) millstone was necessary for survival. The millstone was made up of two stones, usually basalt. The lower millstone was heavy (sometimes nearly one hundred pounds) (**ED: THUS USED BY JESUS IN Mt 18:6, Mk 9:42+, Lk 17:2+, cf Rev 18:21+**) 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 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.

#### Related Resource:

- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Mill, Millstone](#)

**Handmill** [07347](#). מִלּוֹחַ **mīlōḥ**, מִלּוֹחִים **mīlōḥīm** : A masculine noun referring to a millstone, a pair of millstones, upper and lower circular-shaped, relatively flat stones to grind grain (Ex 11:5; Nu 11:8; Dt 24:6; Isa 47:2; Jer 25:10) The two millstones are used in a hand mill to grind grain. It was considered a difficult and arduous task to grind meal (Isa. 47:2); but it was a sign of a thriving town or community (Jer. 25:10).

[Complete Biblical Library](#) - The hand mill consisted of two small stones between which grain could be ground. Millstones must be very hard, capable of grinding wheat, corn, rice and other grains. Mills were of various sizes and capacities, but every family had one. The larger mills had two circular stones about two feet in diameter and one-half foot thick. The lower stone is called the "nether millstone" (see Job 41:16, 24), and the upper stone is the "rider" (see Judg. 9:53; 2 Sam. 11:21). The nether stone was fixed to the floor, elevated slightly in the center as a convex surface at the very top. The upper stone had a concave center fitting the nether stone. There was a hole in the top of the rider through which the grain was introduced a handful at a time. The rider had a stick attached as a handle by which a person could turn the upper stone and thereby grind the grain between the stones. Such family mills received constant daily use and the law of God disallowed taking one of the stones in pledge for a loan or debt (Deut. 24:6), since the food, the very life of the family, was bound to the mill.

5v - handmill(1), millstones(4). - Exod. 11:5; Num. 11:8; Deut. 24:6; Isa. 47:2; Jer. 25:10

**Pledge** [02254](#) חָבַל **ḥābal**, חֲבָלִים **ḥōḇēlym**: A verb meaning to take a pledge, to destroy. This verb is translated in a variety of ways. Most commonly, it means taking a pledge for such things as a loan (Ex. 22:26 = "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets." - SO HE WILL NOT BE COLD DURING SLEEP!; Deut. 24:6; Ezek. 18:16; Amos 2:8). The word is used in Job in reference to debts (Job 22:6; 24:3, 9). It also describes the destruction of the wicked (Pr. 13:13; Isa 32:7) or destruction of property (Isa. 10:27; 13:5). This word can also mean to corrupt (Neh. 1:7; Job 17:1). Zechariah used it in a metaphor describing the union between Israel and Judah (Zech. 11:7, 14). Song 2:15 "Catch the foxes for us, The little foxes **that are ruining** the vineyards, While our vineyards are in blossom."

[Complete Biblical Library](#) - The verb of the first root, "to bind," does not occur in the OT. The verb of the second root, meaning "to take a pledge," may possibly be linked to the idea of binding. Exodus 22:26 refers to

taking a neighbor's cloak as a pledge (cf. Amos 2:8). Proverbs 20:16 and 27:13 actively encourage taking the cloak of someone acting as guarantor for a stranger, but Deut. 24:17 does not allow taking a widow's cloak as a pledge. The case of a worker, whose coat was taken as a pledge for a debt overnight, is recorded on a potsherd found at Metsad Hashavyahu. Here, the worker complained that he needed his cloak, and that the keeping of the garment overnight was a violation of his legal rights. Deuteronomy 24:6 similarly prohibits taking even a single millstone as an assurance, since that would threaten a person's livelihood. Rabbinic interpretation declares that taking one's means of eating is tantamount to taking one's life as a pledge. Eliphaz accused Job of unjustly demanding security from others, leaving them unclothed and naked, while Job saw actions such as taking the widow's ox or even a mother's child as a guarantee as being typical of the evil of his day (Job 22:6; cf. 24:3, 9). **The third root means "to act corruptly" in the Qal.** In the Piel (the intensive action form) the sense becomes "to spoil" or "to destroy." When Nehemiah heard of the devastation in Jerusalem, he fasted and prayed to God, repenting of the corrupt actions of his people and asking for restoration (Neh. 1:7). Job spoke of his spirit "being corrupt" (KJV), although both RSV and NIV translate the phrase "My spirit is broken" (Job 17:1). Elihu also used the term, suggesting the case of a man confessing his guilt to God and promising not "to offend" again (Job 34:31). **Destruction** is the end of those who despise instruction (Prov. 13:13), while God may "destroy" the works of those whose mouths lead them into sin (Ecc. 5:6). God's destroying power may, however, be used for the deliverance of his people, e.g., when He destroys the yoke from their neck (Isa. 10:27) or destroys evil nations such as Babylon (Isa. 13:5). Isaiah also revealed that the Creator God is Maker of both the blacksmith who produces weapons and the "ravager" (RSV) who destroys (Isa. 54:16). Villains devise evil plans to destroy the poor (Isa. 32:7) while the "little foxes that ruin the vineyards" are mentioned in SS 2:15. **The fourth root means "to travail," "to conceive" or "to bring forth,"** and it occurs only in the Piel. The Song of Songs speaks of a mother delivering a child as "being in travail" (8:5). The other use of this root is metaphorical. The wicked one is described as "being pregnant" with evil and "conceiving" mischief (Ps. 7:14).

13 verses - debt(1), ever take(1), hold him in pledge(2), labor(2), pledge(4), retain(1), take(3), take a pledge(1), taken as pledges(1), taken pledges(1), taking a in pledge(1), travails(1). Exod. 22:26; Deut. 24:6; Deut. 24:17; Job 22:6; Job 24:3; Job 24:9; Ps. 7:14; Prov. 13:13; Prov. 20:16; Prov. 27:13; Cant. 8:5; Ezek. 18:16; Amos 2:8

**Deuteronomy 24:7 "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."**

- **found:** Ex 21:16 Eze 27:13 1Ti 1:10 Rev 18:13
- **then that:** Ex 21:16 22:1-4
- **and:** De 19:19
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 21:16 "He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death.

### KIDNAPPING WARRANTS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT!

**If a man is caught kidnapping any of his countrymen of the sons of Israel, and he deals with him violently**(NLT = treats him as a slave) **or sells him, then that thief shall die** - **NET** = "If a man is found kidnapping a person from among his fellow Israelites, and regards him as mere property and sells him, that kidnapper must die. In this way you will purge evil from among you." **Countrymen = sons of Israel. Kidnapping** is literally in Hebrew = to **steal a life** (a soul)! (Isn't this what murder does? It "steals a life!" - Kidnapping is the only theft which is punished by death. People are more valuable than property!) Dt 5:19+ commanded them "You shall not steal." Ex 21:16+ said "He who kidnaps a man, whether he sells him or he is found in his possession, shall surely be put to death." Stealing any of the covenant people was to be punished by death. While it does not say, presumably kidnapping those who were not countrymen (brothers, Israelites), would also fall under this rule.

**Treats violently 06014. עָמַר 'āmar:** verb means to act as a master or superior force over another and to treat as a slave, treating them harshly and without humane consideration or compassion (Dt. 21:14). To be brutal

physically (Dt. 24:7). It can also refer to a person who binds and ties up sheaves of grain, i.e., ties grain stalks into bundles and transports out of the field (Ps. 129:7). Only 3x - Deut. 21:14; Deut. 24:7; Ps. 129:7

**Guzik** - Kidnapping was usually done in the ancient world not so much for return and ransom, but so that one could sell the one abducted to slavery, just as was done to Joseph by his brothers (Genesis 37:28).([Commentary](#))

**So you shall purge the evil from among you** - See note on Dt 22:21. Purging/removing evil is a repeated theme in Deuteronomy and the phrase **purge the evil** is found only in Deuteronomy (Deut. 13:5; Deut. 17:7; Deut. 17:12; Deut. 19:19; Deut. 22:21; Deut. 22:22; Deut. 22:24; Deut. 24:7) Note the phrase **from among you** emphasizing the need to maintain national purity and Dt 22:22+ helps understand "among you" as indicating the nation of Israel. This same thought comes up toward the end of the book of Judges indicating that despite the incredible apostasy of Israel during the 300 years of Judges, they still understood some of the basic tenets that had been established by Moses in the book of Deuteronomy!

Judges 20:13+ "Now then, deliver up the men, the worthless fellows in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and **remove this wickedness from Israel.**" But the sons of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brothers, the sons of Israel.

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) slave trade in ancient Near East. While slaves were bought and sold throughout the ancient Near East (see Ge 37:28–36), it was forbidden by law for persons to kidnap free citizens and sell them as slaves (compare Ex 21:16). Both the Deuteronomic law and Hammurabi's laws condemned the kidnapper to death. In this way some restraint was placed on slave traders adding to their stock by simply taking stray children or unlucky adults. The vast majority of persons who did end up on the slave block either were sold to the slavers by their own families or were prisoners of war.

**Deuteronomy 24:8 "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.**

- Lev 13:1-14:57 Mt 8:4 Mk 1:44 Lu 5:14 17:14
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### WARNING REGARDING LEPROSY

**Be careful** ([shamar](#); Lxx - [prosecho](#) - [present imperative](#)) **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** - For more discussion on the diagnosis of skin diseases by the priests see **notes** on Lev 13:1-14:57. Keep in mind **leprosy** here does not definitely refer to [Hansen's Disease](#) (although some cases may have been this disorder), but covered many different things including skin, clothes, leather, houses. Since detailed instructions were available in Leviticus 13-14 the implication is that those scrolls were available to consult at this time (interesting thought but not 100% certain of this).

[IVP Bible Background Commentary](#) The Deuteronomic injunction simply reinforces the prerogatives and authority of the priests to determine whether a person had the skin condition (probably psoriasis or other skin disease, since Hansen's disease was unknown in the Near East until the Hellenistic period) and, when it was cured, to perform a purification ritual.

**MacArthur's** note on Lev 13:2 - This is a term referring to various ancient skin disorders that were sometimes superficial, sometimes serious. It may have included modern leprosy (Hansen's disease). The symptoms described in Lev 13:2, 6, 10, 18, 30, and 39 are not sufficient for a diagnosis of the clinical condition. For the protection of the people, observation and isolation were demanded for all suspected cases of what could be a contagious disease. This biblical leprosy involved some whiteness (v. 3; Ex 4:6), which disfigured its victim but did not disable him. Naaman was able to exercise his functions as general of Syria's army, although a leper (2Ki 5:1, 27). Both OT and NT lepers went almost everywhere, indicating that this disease was not the leprosy of today that cripples. A victim of this scaly disease was unclean as long as the infection was partial. Once the body was covered with it, he was clean and could enter the place of worship (see Lev 13:12–17). Apparently the complete covering meant the contagious period was over. The allusion to a boil (Lev 13:18–28) with inflamed or raw areas and whitened hairs may refer to a related infection that was contagious. When lepers were cured by Christ, they were neither lame nor deformed. They were never brought on beds. Similar skin conditions are described in Lev 13:29–37 and Lev 13:38–44 (some inflammation from infection). **The aim of these laws was to protect the people from disease, but more importantly, to inculcate into them by vivid object lessons how God desired purity, holiness, and cleanness among His people.** ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**BSB** - The biblical term "**leprosy**" ([tsaraath](#)) denoted any scaly condition of human skin or even of inanimate objects. It might have

included, but was not identical to, modern leprosy or Hansen's disease. It might also have included ringworm, scabies, forms of dermatitis, mildew, fungus, etc. This extended section on leprosy is important because in the Scriptures leprosy frequently symbolizes sin (cf. Ps. 38:3-8; Isa. 1:6). The repulsive features of sin are vividly illustrated in leprosy: **(1)** Leprosy portrays the internal nature of sin (cf. James 1:14). **(2)** Leprosy is a loathsome disease, showing the exceeding despicableness of sin (cf. Ro 7:13). **(3)** Leprosy isolates someone both from society and from the services of the sanctuary, just as sin separates a man from the presence of God (cf. Isa. 59:2; Rev. 21:27). **(4)** Leprosy, like sin, is an illness that grows progressively worse (cf. James 1:15). **(5)** Leprosy is considered to be a contagious disease (cf. Lev 13:45-46); sin is also contagious in that when the clean and the unclean come together, the unclean invariably contaminates the clean. Although there is no record in the Scriptures of the healing of leprosy apart from God (cf. Nu 12:13; 2 Kin. 5:14, 15; Mt. 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14; 17:11-19), the Bible does not present leprosy as an incurable disease. The very fact that a man declared to be free of leprosy was to undergo a ceremonial purification is evidence of that. It is to be remembered, however, that these requirements were ceremonial and not curative. Nonetheless, the purification procedure becomes a beautiful picture of the Person and work of our new High Priest in cleansing us from sin: **(1)** the priest seeks the leper, not the leper the priest (Lev 14:3; cf. Luke 19:10); **(2)** the priest goes outside the camp (Lev 14:3; cf. Heb. 13:11-13); **(3)** the cleansing is not possible without the shedding of blood (Lev 14:5, 6; cf. Heb. 9:22); **(4)** the freed bird is identified with the slain bird (vv. 6, 7; cf. Rom. 6:3-5).

**Leprosy** (06883) **tsaraath** is a "feminine noun referring to a skin disease, leprosy. It refers to a skin disease on humans (Lev. 13:2, 3, 8; 2Ki. 5:3) but also to similarly appearing mold, mildew, or fungus in garments, walls of houses, etc. (Lev. 13:47, 49, 51, 52, 59). Most translations still render this as leprosy, but many scholars hold that it refers to leucoderma, etc. (The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament)

**Holman Bible Dictionary** - A generic term applied to a variety of skin disorders from psoriasis to true leprosy. Its symptoms ranged from white patches on the skin to running sores to the loss of digits on the fingers and toes. For the Hebrews it was a dreaded malady which rendered its victims ceremonially unclean—that is, unfit to worship God (Leviticus 13:3). Anyone who came in contact with a leper was also considered unclean. Therefore, lepers were isolated from the rest of the community so that the members of the community could maintain their status as worshipers. Other physical disorders or the flow of certain bodily fluids also rendered one unclean (see Leviticus 12:1-14:32; Leviticus 15:1-33 ). Even houses and garments could have "leprosy" and, thus, be unclean (Leviticus 14:33-57 ). Jesus did not consider this distinction between clean and unclean valid. A person's outward condition did not make one unclean; rather that which proceeds from the heart determines one's standing before God (Mark 7:1-23; compare Acts 10:9-16). Therefore, Jesus did not hesitate about touching lepers (Mark 1:40-45) and even commanded His disciples to cleanse lepers (Matthew 10:8 ). Jesus even made a leper the hero of one of His parables (Luke 16:19-31 ). ([Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

A person with leprosy, apart from the telltale malignant raw flesh and white hair, was to be otherwise identified by tom clothes, announcement of "unclean" when in the streets and was to live isolated from the community.

#### Deuteronomy 24:9 "Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt.

- **Remember:** Lu 17:32 1Co 10:6,11
- **Miriam:** Nu 5:2 Nu 12:10-15 2Ki 7:3 2Ch 26:20,21
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Numbers 12:10-15+ (**CONTEXT** = [Miriam's Rebellion](#)) But when the cloud had withdrawn from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow. As Aaron turned toward Miriam, behold, **she was leprous**. 11 Then Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord, I beg you, do not account this sin to us, in which we have acted foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 "Oh, do not let her be like one dead, whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes from his mother's womb!" 13 Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "O God, heal her, I pray!" 14 But the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again." 15 So Miriam was shut up outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was received again.

**ALWAYS A GOOD THING  
TO NOT LOSE MEMORY**



**Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the way as you came out of Egypt** Recall in Numbers 12 both Aaron and Miriam complained about Moses' leadership and marriage to a Cushite woman, and God responded by affirming Moses' leadership and inflicting Miriam with leprosy. Moses' functioning like a priest interceded with Yahweh and she was restored after seven days. To remember Miriam would also be a reminder not to rebel against God's established authority of the priests!

**NET NOTE** agrees writing that "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." ([Deuteronomy 24](#))

**Pulpit Commentary** - here the people are counseled by Moses to follow the directions of the priests in this case, however painful it might be for them to submit to the restrictions that would be thereby imposed upon them, remembering what the Lord did to Miriam the sister of Moses

**Deuteronomy 24:10** "When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not enter his house to take his pledge.

- **When:** De 15:8
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REGULATIONS REGARDING PLEDGES

**When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not enter his house to take his pledge**- NLT = "do not enter his house to pick up the item he is giving as security." The poor man's dignity was to be preserved. Furthermore on entering his house one might be tempted to take other things of his.

**Guzik** points out that "The idea of taking collateral for a loan is valid, because it encourages personal responsibility in the one receiving the loan." ([Commentary](#))

**Pulpit Commentary** - If one had to take a pledge from another, he was not to go into the house of the latter and take what he thought fit; he must stand without, and allow the debtor to bring to him what he saw meet to offer. He might stand outside and summon the debtor to produce his pledge, but he was not insolently to enter the house and lay hands on any part of the owner's property.

**Ryrie** - Vs. 24:10-13 Though a fellow Israelite could not be charged interest on a loan, **apledge** could be taken, but no **pledge** that would jeopardize his livelihood or his life (e.g., a millstone, v. 6; or his mantle used as a cover when asleep, v. 13, cf. Amos 2:8; or his daily wage, vv. 14-15).

**Pledge 05667. עֲבוֹט 'əbôṭ:** A masculine noun indicating a pledge, an article taken by the loaner as a security for a loan, something given, put forth to stand as collateral (Deut. 24:10–13), especially for a loan. Only used in this section - Deut. 24:10; Deut. 24:11; Deut. 24:12; Deut. 24:13

**IVP Bible Background Commentary** **regulations concerning a pledge.** 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.

**Deuteronomy 24:11** "You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you.

- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CREDITORS TO STAY OUT OF DEBTOR'S HOUSE



**You shall remain outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you-** Stay out of his house!  
**NET** = "You must stand outside and the person to whom you are making the loan will bring out to you what he is offering as security." If you entered you might say "I want that beautiful one over there!, etc" The privacy of the debtor's home was protected by God's instruction.

**Utley** - A **pledge** was a physical object, in this context, a man's outer garment used as security for a loan (cf. vv. 11–13). These garments were not very valuable, but were necessary to the daily needs of the poor. Taking a man's garment was more than security for a loan. It was an expression of contempt for the poor man. In God's eyes all humans are valuable because they bare His image and likeness (cf. Ge 1:26–27). God's covenant people must recognize the value and worth He places on humans and respond appropriately! ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Deuteronomy 24:12 "If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge.**

- De 24:17 Job 22:6 24:3,9
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

Exodus 22:26-27+ "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, 27 for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am gracious.

### **DON'T KEEP A CLOAK OVERNIGHT**

**If he is a poor man, you shall not sleep with his pledge-** NLT picks up the essence of this instruction = "If your neighbor is poor and gives you his cloak as security for a loan, do not keep the cloak overnight." This pledge refers to the poor man's outer cloak which provided a sleep covering from the often chilly nighttime temperatures. And so this rule simply calls for the creditor showing mercy and kindness for the poor man so that he won't freeze at night!

**NET Note** - Heb "may not lie down in his pledge." What is in view is the use of clothing as guarantee for the repayment of loans, a matter already addressed elsewhere (Deut 23:19–20; 24:6; cf. Exod 22:25–26; Lev 25:35–37). Cf. NAB "you shall not sleep in the mantle he gives as a pledge"; NRSV "in the garment given you as the pledge." ([Deuteronomy 24](#))

**Thomson** - "During the day the poor while at work can and do dispense with this outside raiment, but at night it is greatly needed, even in summer. This furnishes a good reason why this sort of pledge should be restored before night" (, 'Land and the Book,' 1:192, 500).

**MacArthur** - Lending to the poor was permitted, but without 1) interest (Dt 23:19, 20); 2) coercion to repay; and 3) extension of the loan beyond the sabbatical year (Dt 15:1, 2).([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Deuteronomy 24:13 "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.**

- **return:** Ex 22:26,27 Job 24:7,8 29:11-13 31:16-20 Eze 18:7,12,16 33:15 Am 2:8 2Ti 1:16-18
- **the sun:** De 24:15 2Co 9:13,14 Eph 4:26
- **will be:** De 6:25 Dt 15:9-10 Ge 15:6 Ps 106:30,31 112:9 Isa 58:8 Da 4:27 Jas 1:27 2:13-23
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

Deuteronomy 6:25+ **"It will be righteousness** for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us.

Amos 2:8 (THE PROPHET AMOS ACCUSES THE JEWS OF BREAKING THIS RULE - About 7 centuries later in 755 BC) "On garments taken as pledges they stretch out beside every altar (NET = They stretch out on

clothing seized as collateral), And in the house of their God they drink the wine of those who have been fined (NET = drink wine bought with fines).

## RETURN CLOAK PLEDGE WHEN SUN DECLINES

**When the sun goes down you shall surely return the pledge to him, that he may sleep in his cloak-** The Hebrew verb for return is repeated ("return, return") for emphasis which is picked up by the phrase "surely return."

**TSK** - in his own raiment: The raiment here referred to was most likely the same as the {hyke} of the Arabs, a long kind of blanket, resembling a Highland plaid, generally about six yards in length, and five or six feet broad; in which they often carry their provisions, as well as wrap themselves in, in the day, and sleep in at night, it being their only substitute for a bed. How necessary, then, it was to restore the {hyke} to a poor man before the going down of the sun, that he might have something to repose on, will sufficiently appear from these considerations.

**And bless you** - In this context the idea is the debtor may speak words invoking divine favor, with the intent that the creditor will have favorable circumstances or state at a future time. **Utley** adds that "YHWH defends the poor, widow, alien, and orphan's rights and person. To abuse them caused a reaction from YHWH Himself (e.g., Exod. 22:23; Deut. 15:9; 24:15)!" ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Bless** (01288) **barak** is a verb which literally can mean to kneel (to go to one's knees - Camel in Ge 24:11, Solomon in 2Chr 6:13) as contrasted with standing position or even a bowing at the waist). And so barak can refer to an act of adoration sometimes on bended knee. To give divine blessings (Ge 1:22, 9:1-7) To esteem greatly or adore God for His blessings (Ge 24:48, Ps 103:1) To invoke blessings upon another (Ge 24:60, 27:4, 27)

**And it will be righteousness for you before the LORD your God-** **NET** = "it will be considered a just deed by the LORD your God." **NLT** = "the LORD your God will count you as righteous." **Righteousness** is the state of doing what is required according to a standard, in this case God's standard of dealing kindly and equitably with a debtor.

**THOUGHT** - We are all debtors to Yahweh and He has dealt kindly with us in paying the ransom price for our sin debt, even paying with the precious blood of His only begotten Son, Christ Jesus. (1 Pe 1:18+).

**Utley** - "it will be righteousness for you" The Septuagint (**ED**: TRANSLATES RIGHTEOUSNESS WITH [eleemosune](#) - see [word study](#)) understands this term as it is used here to refer to Jewish "almsgiving" (cf. Dt 6:25; 15:7-11; Mt. 6:1-4). (See Utley's special topic [Almsgiving](#)) ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Background** - Israel has long, hot, and dry summers. A hot and dry wind blows in the summer from the southern desert region. The average temperatures are in the range of 22.2°C (72°F) to 37.8°C (100°F) in the summer. Temperatures occasionally run in the extremely high range of 44.4°C (111.9°F) to 46.1°C (115°F) in the Negev Desert in the south. Winters are mild in the central and southern regions and cold along the Mediterranean coast. The cold season is wet in the north and west but brings little rainfall in the south. The average temperatures are between 6.1°C (43°F) to 22.8°C (73°F) in the winter, but the daily sunshine lasts from 6 hours to 8 hours. **Night temperatures occasionally drop below freezing in the desert. Mountainous regions are cold and windy**, with at least one snowfall event each year at altitudes above 750 meters. The altitude, latitude, and proximity to the ocean affect the weather. Spring and autumn are short, mild, and mostly dry. (from [Weather Atlas](#))

**Righteousness** (06666) **tsedaqah** from **tsedeq** = rightness, righteousness) conveys the idea of that which is straight and so one who is upright or righteous is one who walks a straight path. The root thought is that which conforms to an ethical or moral standard. The first use of **tsedaqah** in Ge 15:6<sup>±</sup> is informative as it describes the **righteousness** that God decreed of Abram when he believed in the Lord and His promises (especially the promise of the Seed, the Messiah - Gal 3:8<sup>±</sup>, Gal 3:16<sup>±</sup>).

**Deuteronomy 24:14 "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.**

- Lev 25:40-43 Job 24:10,11 31:13-15 Pr 14:31 22:16 Eze 22:7 Am 2:7 4:1 8:4 Mal 3:5 Lu 10:7
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

Leviticus 25:40-43+ 'He shall be with you as a hired man, as if he were a sojourner; he shall serve with you until the year of jubilee. 41 'He shall then go out from you, he and his sons with him, and shall go back to his family, that he may return to the property of his forefathers. 42 'For they are My servants whom I brought out from the land of Egypt; they are not to be sold in a slave sale. 43 '**You shall not rule over him with severity, but are to revere your God.**

Leviticus 19:13+ You shall not **oppress** your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are **not** to remain with you all night until morning.

## **DO NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE HIRED, POOR & NEEDY**

**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** - NLT has a good paraphrase = "Never take advantage of poor and destitute laborers, whether they are fellow Israelites or foreigners living in your towns." **Oppress** is **asaq** (see below) and in Lxx is **apadikeo** (only here in entire Bible) which means to withhold wrongfully. **Oppress** could be by not paying wages punctually and/or subjecting the laborers to harsh working conditions.

**Oppress** 06231. אָשַׁק 'āšaq: A verb -- qal = oppress, wrong, extort; pual = be abused, to be crushed. It means to defraud. It refers to extorting or exploiting someone (Lev. 6:2, 4), especially a servant. It has the sense of cheating or robbing in some contexts (Lev. 19:13); keeping what is rightfully someone else's. A righteous person does not oppress or exploit another person (1 Sa 12:3, 4). Job thought that God was oppressing him (Job 10:3). God will curse the one who oppresses others (Ps 72:4; 105:14). To oppress another person is to abuse, to revile one's Creator (Pr 14:31). Even the poor may be oppressors. (Pr 28:3). It is used to designate the guilt of blood on a person (Pr 28:17). In its passive usage, it refers to a person who is abused or defrauded in some way (Isa. 23:12). The prophets spoke strongly against the oppressors of the poor (Amos 4:1; Mic. 2:2; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5). It is significant that in a number of usages of אָשַׁק and its derivatives is explicitly indicated in the context (Deut 24:14; Jer 7:6; Amos 4:1). People most likely to be mistreated and socially oppressed were those without adequate defence of their rights, viz., the widow, orphan, sojourner, and the poor. אָשַׁק and its derivatives thus have strong overtones of "extortion" and "despoliation":

**Swanson** אָשַׁק ('ā-šāq): **1. (qal) oppress, mistreat**, i.e., treat a disadvantaged member of society unjustly with the effect of causing one to suffer ill treatment (1Ch 16:21; Job 10:3; Ps 72:4; 105:14; 119:121, 122; Pr 14:31; 22:16; 28:3; Ecc 4:1b; Isa 23:12; 52:4; Jer 7:6; 21:12; Eze 22:29b; Am 4:1; Zec 7:10), note: in some of these contexts the oppression can refer to economic or financial oppression; (qal pass.) oppressed, be tormented (Dt 28:29, 33; Ps 103:6; 146:7; Pr 28:17; Ecc 4:1a; Jer 50:33; Hos 5:11+); (pual) crushed (Isa 23:12); **2. (qal) defraud, extort, cheat, formally, oppress or mistreat**, i.e., steal or rob from disadvantaged persons in a financial or business transaction which has unjust leverage in favor of rich over the poor, and so creating suffering and undue torment of the poor or disadvantaged (Lev 5:21,23; 19:13; Dt 24:14; 1Sa 12:3, 4; Eze 18:18; 22:29a; Hos 12:8; Mic 2:2; Mal 3:5); **3. (qal) flow heavily, rage**, i.e., have a condition of a large quantity of a mass flow from a source along a descending path (Job 40:23+) ([Dictionary of Semantic Domains - Hebrew](#))

**35 verses** - crushed(1), defrauded(2), extorted(1), got(1), laden(1), oppress(11), oppressed(9), oppresses(3), oppressor(2), oppressors(2), practiced(2), rages(1), rob(1). Lev. 6:2; Lev. 6:4; Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14; Deut. 28:29; Deut. 28:33; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 12:4; 1 Chr. 16:21; Job 10:3; Job 40:23; Ps. 72:4; Ps. 103:6; Ps. 105:14; Ps. 119:121; Ps. 119:122; Ps. 146:7; Prov. 14:31; Prov. 22:16; Prov. 28:3; Prov. 28:17; Eccl. 4:1; Isa. 23:12; Isa. 52:4; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 21:12; Jer. 50:33; Ezek. 18:18; Ezek. 22:29; Hos. 5:11; Hos. 12:7; Amos 4:1; Mic. 2:2; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

**Deuteronomy 24:15** "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.

- **his**: Lev 19:13 Pr 3:27,28 Jer 22:13 Mt 20:8 Mk 10:19 Jas 5:4
- **sets his heart on it** Ps 24:4 25:1 86:4
- **So that he will not cry** De 15:9 Ex 22:23,24 Job 31:38 34:28 35:9 Pr 22:22,23 23:10,11 Isa 5:7 Jas 5:4

- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 19:13+ 'You **shall not oppress** (**'āšaq**) your neighbor, nor rob him. The wages of a hired man are not to remain with you all night until morning.

Malachi 3:5+ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who **oppress** (**'āšaq**) the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me," says the LORD of hosts.

**You shall give him his wages on his day before the sun sets, for he is poor and sets his heart on it**- NET = "You must pay his wage that very day before the sun sets, for he is poor and his life depends on it." **Sets his heart on it** means he is counting on it! He needs it to buy food for his family. Why would the owner not pay him? One reason is he would want to assure the man would return the next day for more work. Day laborers were to be paid on the day they labored because they lived day to day on these wages!

**So that he will not cry against you to the LORD and it become**(be counted against you as) **sin in you** - You can be sure God cares and hears the cry of the poor, alienated and outcast! While the poor man is not necessarily cursing the oppressor/defrauder, he is certainly not calling on God to bless him (as in Dt 24:13)! And further God clearly states that to oppress and defraud is to become guilty of **sin** against Him. Is this withholding of wages not simply another form of stealing? (Rhetorical question). It is notable that in context we see the antithesis between **righteousness** (v13) and **sin**.

This passage reminds me of James words

**Behold**, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you,**cries out against you**; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting **has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth** (Jas 5:4+)

**Deuteronomy 24:16 "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."**

- 2Ki 14:5,6 2Ch 25:4 Jer 31:29,30 Eze 18:20
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Jeremiah 31:29-30 "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge.' 30 "But **everyone will die for his own iniquity**; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge.

2 Kings 14:6 But the sons of the slayers he did not put to death, according to what is written in the book of the Law of Moses, as the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for the sons, nor the sons be put to death for the fathers; but each shall be put to death for his own sin."

### **PERSONAL SIN PERSONAL GUILT**

**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** - NLT = "Parents must not be put to death for the sins of their children, nor children for the sins of their parents. Those deserving to die must be put to death for their own crimes." Ezekiel makes it crystal clear that "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself." (Ezek 18:20)

**Pulpit Commentary** - Among heathen nations it was common for a whole family to be involved in the penalty incurred by the head of the family, and to be put to death along with him (cf. Esther 9:13, 14; Herod., 3:118, 119; Ammian. Marcell., 23:6; Curtius, 6:11, 20; Claudian, 'In Eutrop.', 2:478; Cicero, 'Epist. ad Brut.', 12, 15). Such severity of retribution is here prohibited in the penal code of the Israelites.

**Ryrie** - Every person was accountable for his own wrongdoing, but one's children were inevitably affected by the consequences of

his sin (cf. Dt 5:8-10). Though God in His righteous and just sovereignty might extend the penalty of sin to include the greater family (Josh. 7:24-26), earthly judges had no jurisdiction beyond the individual criminal (2 Ki 14:6; 2 Chr 25:4). (Ryrie Study Bible)

**Guzik** applies this to real life - It is wrong for a parent to automatically blame themselves for their wayward children; though they may have a part in the problem, it isn't always the case. There are instances when God commands that a whole family be punished for sin, such as with the family of Achan in Joshua 7:16-26. When God deals with a whole family, it shows that there must have been some conspiracy between family members, for each is responsible for his own sin. ([Commentary](#))

One also recalls the punishment in "Korah's Rebellion" - see Nu 16:24-32 which describes the death of household members of Dathan and Abiram; and of Korah, although some of Korah's offspring were spared indicating they did not commit this sin personally (see Nu 26:11).

**Utley** - This verse is very similar to Ezek. 18:1-32; 17:12-20; Jer. 31:29-30; and 2 Kgs. 14:6. It focuses on the rare OT concept of individual responsibility. This is a balance to Exod. 20:5; 34:7; Nu. 14:18. The OT usually focuses on corporality (cf. Deut. 5:9). Notice the three-fold use of the VERB **"put to death"** (all Hophal IMPERFECTS). Rebellion is a serious matter! Disobedience has consequences! This law does not refer to rebellion against God (e.g., idolatry), but to actions designated civil (e.g., acts against established civil authority or acts against a covenant partner). **Humans are held responsible for personal sins, but often these sins are related to family or cultural practices. All of us are historically, culturally conditioned. We make choices, but these choices are limited by precedent. Society, family, and individuals are inseparably bound together! All are affected by parents, culture, and personal choices! God judges society, families, and individuals.** Human freedom is a wonderful/terrible gift! ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - The death of Saul's 7 grandsons (2Sa 21:5-9) is a striking exception of national proportion grounded in God's sovereign wisdom, as was the death of David and Bathsheba's first son (2Sa 12:14). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Deuteronomy 24:17 "You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge.**

- **pervert:** De 16:19 27:19 Ex 22:21,22 23:2,6,9 1Sa 12:3,4 Job 22:8,9 Job 29:11-17 Ps 82:1-5 94:3-6,20,21 Pr 22:22,23 31:5 Ec 5:8 Isa 1:23 Isa 3:15 Isa 33:15 Jer 5:28 Jer 22:3 Eze 22:7,29 Am 5:7-12 Mic 2:1,2 7:3 Zec 7:10 Mal 3:5 Lu 3:14 Jas 2:6
- **nor take:** Ex 22:26-27
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 1:23 (MAJOR PERVERSION OF JUSTICE ABOUT 700 YEARS LATER) Your rulers are rebels And companions of thieves; Everyone loves a bribe And chases after rewards. They do not defend the **orphan**, Nor does the **widow's plea** come before them.

Exodus 22:21+ "You shall not wrong a **stranger** (ALIEN) or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 23:9+ "You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a **stranger** (ALIEN), for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:33-34+ 'When a **stranger** (ALIEN) resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. 34 'The **stranger** (ALIEN) who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

### DO NOT PERVERT JUSTICE

**You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan**(lit - fatherless) - NLT = "True justice must be given to foreigners living among you and to orphans" These (and widows) were landless and dependent on others. The idea of **pervert** ([natah](#)) in this context is to "bend" justice and the Lxx picks this up using the verb [ekklino](#) meaning to turn aside, turning away from doing what is just and right.

**Utley** - **"You shall not pervert the justice due"** The VERB basically means "stretch out," "spread out" or "turn." Often this is used metaphorically of "turn to the right or left and leaving God's clearly revealed law" (cf. Deut. 5:32; 17:11, 20; 28:14; Josh. 1:7; 23:6). There are several places where the object of this turning/perverting is "justice" (BDB 1048, cf. Exod. 23:6; Deut. 16:19; 24:17; 27:19;



1 Sam. 8:3; Pro. 17:23; Lam. 3:35; and Amos 2:7). Justice is YHWH's will for everyone in Israelite society because it reflects His character and treatment of them (cf. Dt 32:4)...Moses' Law Code is different from the other ancient Mesopotamian Law Codes in its care for the poor, needy, and socially powerless! ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))

**Nor take a widow's garment in pledge** - NLT = "You must never accept a widow's garment as security for her debt." The parallel passage in Exodus gives us some sense of why this is wrong - "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else shall he sleep in? And it shall come about that when he cries out to Me, I will hear him, for I am gracious." (Ex 22:26-27+)

**NIDOTTE** helps understand why widows would need special attention in the Promised Land - The OT word "widow" not only evokes the notion of bereavement from having lost a husband (2 Sa 14:5), but at the same time the loss of economic and social protection and security. As long as the Israelites lived as semi-nomads in their tribes and clans and the family ties were still strong, the lot of the widow was not yet a problem. She returned to her parental home, where she shared in the protection and care of the clan and kept the possibility of a levirate marriage (Ge 38:11; Dt 25:5-10; Ru 1:8-11; cf. Mt 22:24). Later on when, after the settlement in Canaan, the tribalism gave way to the life in cities and villages, the widows became victims of the development of growing social contrasts. So they are often mentioned together with other poor and miserable people of Israelite society, like orphans (fatherless), aliens, or Levites (Job 29:13; 31:16; Jer 22:3; Zech 7:10), or in parallelism with divorced women (Lev 21:14; 22:13; Num 30:9; Ezek 44:22). The Israelite widow had no right of succession on the inheritance of her late husband (Nyström, *Beduinentum*, 141; de Vaux, *Institutions I*, 67). Under the heirs of a dead man (in sequence: son(s), daughter(s), brothers, father's brothers, nearest relatives), the widow is not mentioned (Num 27:8-11). In the apocrypha, Judith, who inherited rich possessions from the late husband, Manasseh, is told of as an abnormal exception (Jdt 8:7).. Having no means of support, a widow was often obliged to live from the charity of other people (Job 31:16) or to make debts for keeping herself and her children alive. The creditor then might take her only ox in pledge (Job 24:3). When she was not able to pay back the debts in due time, the creditor might come and take away her children, even her baby (Job 24:9), for using them later on as his slaves. In other cases the widow had to suffer robbery and oppression (Isa 10:2; Jer 7:6; 22:3) or even death (Ps 94:6) of herself and her fatherless children.

**Orphan (03490)**. **יָתוֹם** *yātôm*: A masculine noun meaning orphan, a fatherless child, an orphan with a dead father and a widowed mother, as a class of persons helpless and without resource. It is possibly in some contexts both parents are dead, but this is not explicitly stated. It refers to children who had no fathers or parental support group in Israel. They, along with widows, the poor, and the oppressed, were of special concern to the Lord (Ex. 22:22, 24; Deut. 16:11, 14; 24:17; 26:12; Ps. 10:18; 68:5; 146:9; Hos. 14:3). God works on their behalf (Deut. 10:18); and those who oppress them are under judgment (Deut. 27:19; Mal. 3:5). Job was concerned to care for them (Job 29:12; 31:17, 21). Israel as a whole did not care for them sufficiently (Job 24:3, 9; Ps. 94:6; Isa. 1:23; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 22:7).

**Swanson** - A masculine noun meaning orphan, a fatherless child. It refers to children who had no fathers or parental support group in Israel. They, along with widows, the poor, and the oppressed, were of special concern to the Lord (Ex. 22:22 [21], 24[23]; Deut. 16:11, 14; 24:17; 26:12; Ps. 10:18; 68:5[6]; 146:9; Hos. 14:3[4]). God works on their behalf (Deut. 10:18); and those who oppress them are under judgment (Deut. 27:19; Mal. 3:5). Job was concerned to care for them (Job 29:12; 31:17, 21). Israel as a whole did not care for them sufficiently (Job 24:3, 9; Ps. 94:6; Isa. 1:23; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 22:7). ([Dictionary of Semantic Domains - Hebrew](#))

**42 verses** - fatherless(7), fatherless children(1), orphan(26), orphans(8). Exod. 22:22; Exod. 22:24; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 24:17; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 24:20; Deut. 24:21; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 27:19; Job 6:27; Job 22:9; Job 24:3; Job 24:9; Job 29:12; Job 31:17; Job 31:21; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 10:18; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 82:3; Ps. 94:6; Ps. 109:9; Ps. 109:12; Ps. 146:9; Prov. 23:10; Isa. 1:17; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 10:2; Jer. 5:28; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 22:3; Jer. 49:11; Lam. 5:3; Ezek. 22:7; Hos. 14:3; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

**Widows (0490)** **אַלְמָנָה** *’almānāh*: A feminine noun meaning widow one whose spouse has died (Ge 38:11; Zec 7:10; Mal 3:5), note: often there is an associative meaning of a class of persons, low in status, meager in resources, and so pitiable that society was to take special effort to help them. The word **אַלְמָנָה** is spread all over the OT (55×), but is curiously missing in the outstanding widow story of Ruth and in Amos and Micah, the champions of social justice; The word occurs many times in the Law and the Prophets, where the well-being and care of the widow are the subject (Deut. 14:29; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 7:6; Zech. 7:10). Israel's concern for the widow was founded in the Lord's own concern (Ps. 68:5[6]; 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Jer. 49:11). Figuratively, the term occurs twice in reference to a devastated city: Jerusalem (Lam. 1:1) and Babylon (Isa. 47:8).

**54 verses** - fortified(2), widow(37), widow's(5), widowed(1), widows(11). Gen. 38:11; Exod. 22:22; Exod.



22:24; Lev. 21:14; Lev. 22:13; Num. 30:9; Deut. 10:18; Deut. 14:29; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 16:14; Deut. 24:17; Deut. 24:19; Deut. 24:20; Deut. 24:21; Deut. 26:12; Deut. 26:13; Deut. 27:19; 2 Sam. 14:5; 1 Ki. 7:14; 1 Ki. 11:26; 1 Ki. 17:9; 1 Ki. 17:10; 1 Ki. 17:20; Job 22:9; Job 24:3; Job 24:21; Job 27:15; Job 29:13; Job 31:16; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 78:64; Ps. 94:6; Ps. 109:9; Ps. 146:9; Prov. 15:25; Isa. 1:17; Isa. 1:23; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 10:2; Isa. 13:22; Isa. 47:8; Jer. 7:6; Jer. 15:8; Jer. 18:21; Jer. 22:3; Jer. 49:11; Lam. 1:1; Lam. 5:3; Ezek. 19:7; Ezek. 22:7; Ezek. 22:25; Ezek. 44:22; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5

**Deuteronomy 24:18 "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.**

- De 24:22 5:15 15:15 16:12
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MEMORY - A GOOD THING NOT TO LOSE

**But** - Contrast. Instead of perverting justice, remember when you received "perverted" treatment in Egypt. It would be a good motivator.

**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** - There is a saying "[been there, done that](#)." Well the Israelites had been there, oppressed and impoverished and alienated in Egypt and God had paid the ransom price to set them free, but memories of bad times are often lost or suppressed. Moses says dredge up this memory to make you a better, more fair and just, creditor and owner and citizen with your fellow citizens who are not as fortunate as you. **Therefore** is a term of conclusion, in this case the conclusion of their remembering is to take (a command not a suggestion) godly action regarding the poor, orphan and widowed.

The past does affect the future.

Israel was to remember and then act appropriately today!

-- Bob Utley

Memory is important and is mentioned three times in this chapter (Dt 24:9, Dt 24:18, Dt 24:22). Moses' Law Code is different from the other ancient Mesopotamian Law Codes in its care for the poor, needy, and socially powerless!

**Redeemed** (06299) [padah](#) means to redeem, ransom, buy and so to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress. The word is connected with the laws of the firstborn. As a reminder of slaying all the Egyptian firstborn but sparing the Israelites, God retained an eternal claim on the life of all Israelite firstborn males, both of men and of cattle. The latter were often sacrificed, "but all the firstborn of my children I redeem" (Exod. 13:15). God accepted the separation of the tribe of Levi for liturgical service in lieu of all Israelite firstborn (Num. 3:40ff.). However, the Israelite males still had to be "redeemed" ([padah](#)) from this service by payment of specified "redemption money" (Num. 3:44-51) (See Utley's special topic [Ransom/Redeem](#))

**THOUGHT** - It is good to periodically recall our own redemption from slavery against all odds! It would make us more compassionate in our dealing with others. One way we can remember today is by frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper...

When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; **do this in remembrance of Me.**" 25 In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; **do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.**" 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death (HIS CRUCIFIXION - OUR CO-CRUCIFIXION AND PAST REDEMPTION) until He comes (HIS RETURN AND OUR FUTURE REDEMPTION! - Eph 4:30). (1 Cor 11:24-26+)

**Deuteronomy 24:19 "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.**

- **When** : Lev 19:9,10 23:22 Ru 2:16 Ps 41:1
- **shall** : De 24:20,21 14:29 26:13
- **bless**: De 15:10 Job 31:16-22 42:12 Ps 41:1-3 112:9 Pr 11:24,25 14:21 Pr 19:17 Isa 32:8 58:7-11 Lu 6:35,38 14:13,14 2Co 9:6-8 1Jn 3:17-19
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 19:9-10+ 'Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 'Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the LORD your God.

Leviticus 23:22+ 'When you reap the harvest of your land, moreover, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field nor gather the gleanings of your harvest; you are to leave them for the needy and the alien. I am the LORD your God.'"

### GOD'S "GOVERNMENT WELFARE" PROGRAM

**When you reap your harvest in your field and have forgotten a sheaf** (NET = "some unraked grain" NLT = "forget to a bundle of grain") **in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow** This is God's government welfare program for His covenant people, but note it is not a "free ride," but calls for needy to exert effort/responsibility.

A famous illustration of this occurred in the story of Boaz and Ruth. Boaz, realizing he was next of kin to the unsuspecting Ruth, purposefully left scatterings of grain in his fields for her (Ru 2:15-18+).

When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, **'Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her. 16 "Also you shall purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles and leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."** 17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18 She took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took it out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied.

**in order that** (purpose clause) **the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands**- You do not do it manipulatively to get blessed by God (that's earned or merited) but we do it with a giving heart like God and are blessed (that's grace). Note the promise is not just bless you in the produce of your fields but **in all the work of your hands**. Is God a generous Giver? (Rhetorical) This is a variation on what Moses instructed earlier in Deuteronomy 15:10 "You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings."

**NET Note** - Heb "of your hands." This law was later applied in the story of Ruth who, as a poor widow, was allowed by generous Boaz to glean in his fields (Ruth 2:1-13). (AND BOAZ WAS BLESSED BECAUSE ONE FROM HIS LINE WOULD BE IN THE LINE OF MESSIAH!)

**Utley**- These agricultural regulations were meant to provide food for the poor and needy (see Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22; Ruth 2). This is called "gleaning."

There are several laws in Deuteronomy about providing food for the needy:

1. the third-year local tithe for the poor, Dt 14:28-29; Dt 26:12-15
2. food provided at the celebration of the Feast of Weeks/Feast of Booths, Dt 16:9-17
3. the yearly gleanings from the annual harvests, Dt 24:19-21 ([Deuteronomy 24](#))

**Deuteronomy 24:20** "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.

- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### GO OVER THE BOUGHS

## ONLY ONCE!

**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** - As with the grain left in the field, this would supply nourishment to those who were needy. God's welfare program is smart - He has the needy take some responsibility to receive His gift. This is a good pattern to practice in providing welfare for people!!! (Do you hear that federal government?)

**Deuteronomy 24:21 "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."**

- **gather:** De 24:19 Lev 19:9,10
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## VINES ARE TO ONLY HAVE A "ONCE OVER"

**When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not go over it again**(NET - "must not repeat the procedure"); **it shall be for the alien, for the orphan, and for the widow** - NLT = "When you gather the grapes in your vineyard, don't glean the vines after they are picked. Leave the remaining grapes for the foreigners, orphans, and widows."

**Deuteronomy 24:22 "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing."**

- De 24:18 5:14,15 7:8 Isa 51:1 2Co 8:8,9 Eph 5:1,2 1Jn 4:10,11
- [Deuteronomy 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REMEMBER WHO "BRUNG YOU TO THE DANCE"

The title is bad English but good and practical theology! This memory jogger should be frequently utilized by every soul that has been redeemed by the grace of Jehovah! (cf "[dance with the one that brought you](#)")

**THOUGHT-** When was the last time you remembered your day/time of rescue from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's Son? (Col 1:13-14+, Acts 26:18+).

**You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this thing-** NLT = "Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt. That is why I am giving you this command."

This is the verse John Newton printed out in large letters and hung it over his mantle piece as a constant reminder of God's amazing grace!

**Utley** - The Israelites were to have compassion on servants and aliens because they once shared this condition in Egypt. God was gracious to them; they, too, should be gracious to others! Several times in Deuteronomy the call to remember Israel's period of enslavement is used to stimulate current action:

1. all in the community to observe the Sabbath, 5:12–15
2. release the Israelite slave on the seventh year, 15:12–18
3. all in the community to participate in the Feast of Weeks, 16:9–17
4. do not pervert justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge, 24:17–18
5. do not reap all the way to the corners of the field and do not do a second reaping, 24:19–22
6. using other words, but with the same emphasis, obedience, 6:10–15; 8:2, 18 ([Deuteronomy 24 Commentary](#))