

DEUTERONOMY 21

compiled and written by Gary Kukis

Deuteronomy 21:1–23

Regulations about Murder, Marriage and Rebellious Sons

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Document Navigation

Preface	Quotations	Outline of Chapter
Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines	Doctrines Alluded to	Chapters Alluded to
Dictionary of Terms	Introduction	First Verse
Addendum	A Complete Translation	Chapter Word Clouds

Links to the completed chapters of Deuteronomy are found here ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). This chapter is a part of that study.

Sometime ago, I did a verse-by-verse exegesis of the books of the Pentateuch, and, in my opinion, did not really give these books the full treatment that they deserved. Here, I am going back and redoing the book of Deuteronomy. All of the information from that previous study will be included in here and this study will eventually supplant the shorter study of the book of **Deuteronomy** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). From time to time, there will be concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because I do not always do a good job in the end editing this material.

One more thing: **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them.¹ However, if you ever doubt a translation of a phrase or a verse, these translation tables will tell you exactly where that translation came from.

¹ This was done as a result of the complaints of a close friend, now face to face with the Lord, who said that I intermingled the Hebrew and the explanation so much that he did not like it. Therefore, all of the Hebrew exegesis is visually set apart and may be easily skipped over.

Preface:

There are many [chapter commentaries](#) on the book of Deuteronomy. This will be the most extensive examination of Deuteronomy 21 available, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

Quotations:

This should be the most extensive examination of Deut. 21 available, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text.

Outline of Chapter 21:**Introduction**

vv.	1–9	Ceremony for the Unsolved Murder
vv.	10–14	Taking a Wife from Enemy Captives
vv.	15–17	The Protocol of Inheritance
vv.	18–21	The Execution of the Disobedient Teen
vv.	22–23	Defiling the Land with a Hanging Corpse

Addendum**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:**

Preface	Quotations	
Introduction	Matthew Henry's Overview of Deuteronomy 21	
Introduction	The Prequel of Deuteronomy 21	
Introduction	The Principals of Deuteronomy 21	
Introduction	The Places of Deuteronomy 21	
Introduction	A Synopsis of Deuteronomy 21	
Introduction	Studying the Mosaic Law	
v.	2	Legalistic Confusion Associated with Deuteronomy 21:2
v.	3	Why is an animal taken to sacrifice from this city?
v.	4	The Parallels Between the Heifer and Jesus
v.	8	Scofield's Doctrine of Redemption
v.	10	Deuteronomy 21:10–14 Rape—a forced marriage? (Graphic)
v.	13	The Procedure for a Captive Woman to Become an Israelite Wife
v.	13	The Protections Afforded Captive Women
v.	13	The Pulpit Commentary on the Protection of Women in War
v.	13	Three Short Points from the Pulpit Commentary
v.	13	The Captive Wife is a Type
v.	14	Is this the loophole for legitimate illegitimate sex in the Bible?
v.	14	The Pulpit Commentary Summary of Deuteronomy 21:10–14
v.	14	Interpreting the Captive Wife in Deuteronomy 21:10–14
v.	14	Applying the Captive Wife to Today's Standards
v.	14	Deuteronomy and the Law of God
v.	15	The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Firstborn
v.	17	Jesus is the Firstborn
v.	17	Understanding and Interpreting Deuteronomy 21:15–17

- v. 17 **A Modern-Day Application of Deuteronomy 21:15–17**
- v. 18 **Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge References for Parental Authority**
- v. 21 **Purging Evil from Israel’s Midst**
- v. 21 **Deuteronomy 21:18–21 (graphic)**
- v. 21 **Deuteronomy 21:18–21 (graphic #2)**
- v. 21 **Stoning the Rebellious Teen**
- v. 21 **Applying the Principle of the Disobedient Son to Today**
- v. 21 **Increase in Juvenile Crime graphic**
- v. 21 **What do we learn from executing the disobedient teen today?**
- v. 21 **Three Things which Liberals Find to be Particularly Odious in Deuteronomy 21**
- v. 23 **The Dual Authorship of the Holy Scriptures**

- Addendum **Why Deuteronomy 21 is in the Word of God**
- Addendum **What We Learn from Deuteronomy 21**
- Addendum **A Complete Translation of Deuteronomy 21**
- Addendum **Word Cloud of Deut. 21 from the Kukis “Not So Literal” Translation**
- Addendum **Word Cloud of the Exegesis of Deuteronomy 21**

Chapter Outline		Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines	
Forward		Doctrines Covered and Alluded to Chapters of the Bible Alluded To	
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter		Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	
		Definition of Terms	
Introduction		Text	
		Addendum	
www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Deuteronomy	

Doctrines Covered	Doctrines Alluded To		
The Dual Authorship of Scripture	Firstborn	Inspiration	Polygamy
		Slave Market of Sin	Typology

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To			

Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			

Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. In addition to this, I will use a number of other more traditional technical theological terms which will be used and defined. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts as well.

Definition of Terms

Rebound (Restoration to fellowship with God)

In the New Testament, this is naming your sins to God, so that you are both restored to temporal fellowship with God and are then filled with the Spirit of God. In the Old Testament, naming your sins to God would result in a restoration of fellowship and, in some cases, the empowerment of the Holy Spirit once again (the Holy Spirit was not given to all Old Testament believers).

Redemption

Jesus Christ, by His blood on the cross, has purchased us.

Slave Market of Sin

We illustrate the doctrine of **redemption**, is by picturing yourself being sold as a slave in a slave market. You are unable to purchase yourself, as you do not have the wherewithal to purchase yourself. A slave does not have the money to purchase himself (he lacks the coin of the realm, so to speak). Only someone who is not inside of this slave market (a non-slave) can purchase you. No fellow slave can look you over and say, "I'd like to purchase this one." This is because he is in the same boat that you are in. He cannot purchase himself and he certainly cannot purchase you. Jesus Christ does not have a sin nature and He has not committed any personal sins, so that He can purchase us from the slave market of sin.

This concept is actually based upon the real historical example, where God purchased the Israelites from Egypt, and brought them out of bondage.

Type, Antitype, Typical

*A type is a preordained representation wherein certain persons, events, and institutions of the O.T. stand for corresponding persons, events, and institutions of the N.T. Types are pictures or object lessons by which God has taught His redemptive plan. They are a shadow of things to come, not the image of those things (Col. 2:17 Heb. 8:5 10:1).² See the **Doctrine of Typology** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).*

Some of these definitions are taken from

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1556
<http://www.bibledoctrinechurch.org/?subpages/GLOSSARY.shtml>
<http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf>
<http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d>
<http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/termsanddefs.htm>
<http://www.realtime.net/~wdoud/topics.html>
<http://www.theopedia.com/>

An Introduction to Deuteronomy 21

Introduction: Deut. 21 continues with a set of laws and legal matters, many of which Moses has come up with, being the Supreme Court Judge over all the Israelites for 40 years in the wilderness between Egypt and the land of Canaan. What is forgotten about Moses is (1) he was trained in the law and had probably studied the laws

² From <http://www.dake.com/dake/types.html> accessed July 30, 2013.

of several different nations and (2) he has probably encountered hundreds of different court cases, requiring him to make some general rulings which can become future guidelines for Israel as a nation.

The topics covered in Deut. 21 are not clarifications of the Law handed down by God to Moses; in fact, this portion of God's Word has no parallel anywhere else. Little matter—this is still the Word of God. Moses did not run out of things to say and decided to just start making up laws off the top of his head. He did not think, *you know, this topic wasn't covered yet; let me make a ruling on it.* He spoke (or, read from his notes) as inspired by God the Holy Spirit. And this portion of the Word of God is as inspired and is as meaningful as any other portion.

This passage begins interestingly enough with a dead body which has been disposed of out in a field. At first what appears to be required as a ceremony on behalf of the man who has been slain but which is actually performed on behalf of the city as part of an oath that no one in the nearest city committed the murder and no one in the city is a witness to same.

The next portion of Deuteronomy 21 deals with taking a captive woman for yourself as a wife. This Israelites would be involved in war for the next several years and God would allow for them to choose a wife from among the peoples whom they have conquered.

Thirdly, we deal with rules of inheritance under a polygamous marriage; and fourthly, the Bible reveals the simple key to dealing with rebellious teenagers. Finally, although an execution is public, the Bible forbids leaving the corpse of the criminal out to hang throughout the evening.

Fenton Farrar makes an interesting suggestion, which I discounted, at first. He says³ that the first 9 verses of this chapter have been misplaced and belong in Deut. 19 after v. 21 (others suggest the same thing). If these 9 verses are removed, then there is an interesting progression through Deut. 20 and 21. Deut. 20 deals with warfare, and Deut. 21:10–14 continue with that theme, suggesting that, when a war has been won, sometimes there are captives, and that single Israelite men might choose a wife from the captives (actually, this is not really confined to single Israelite men, suggesting that even a married man could take from the captives another wife—although that is not specifically stated).

Then we go from a man taking a wife, to the situation where a man has two wives and children from these two wives. He cannot play favorites which his children and place the child of the wife he loves above those children of the wife that he does not love (obviously, if a man takes a second wife, it is because his relationship with his present wife has soured somewhat).

Since we are talking about children, what about the disobedient child—the boy that both parents agree cannot be controlled? The Bible allows for that child to be executed, if both parents agree. In this way, this child is an example to other disobedient children.

Finally, since he is an example to other children, some criminals are hung on a tree, after they are executed, as an example to the people of that city. However, the city is not allowed to let the body be hung up overnight; it must be removed and buried.

So what we have here is a very interesting progression of laws and examples, where one leads to the next (with the exception of the first 9 verses, which does not appear to fit here). As an aside, only Fenton Farrar appears to make this assertion (although see his [footnote explanation](#)).

This is not much different from my own.

Matthew Henry's Overview of Deuteronomy 21

³ On p. 104 of http://thetenccommandmentsministry.us/ministry/ferrar_fenton/pdf/deuteronomy.pdf, footnote at the bottom of the page, accessed September 11, 2013.

In this chapter provision is made,

- I. For the putting away of the guilt of blood from the land, when he that shed it had fled from justice (Deut. 21:1–9).
- II. For the preserving of the honour of a captive maid (Deut. 21:10–14).
- III. For the securing of the right of a first-born son, though he were not a favourite (Deut. 21:15–17).
- IV. For the restraining and punishing of a rebellious son (Deut. 21:18–21).
- V. For the maintaining of the honour of human bodies, which must not be hanged in chains, but decently buried, even the bodies of the worst malefactors (Deut. 21:22, Deut. 21:23).

From Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21 chapter commentary.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Deuteronomy 21

Moses led two groups of Jews out of Egypt—adult slaves and their children (age 20 and below). Although these people, after being led out of Egypt and seeing many signs and miracles, they still rejected God’s provision and God’s direction. God told them to go into the land from the south and take it, and they refused, being afraid of the *giants in the land*.

As a result of their negative volition toward God’s orders, God took them further away from the Land of Promise, and they cooled their heels in the desert area between Israel and Egypt for the next 38½ years. During this time, all of the adults—Gen X—died the sin unto death (Moses, Joshua and Caleb being the notable exceptions); and their children—the Generation of Promise—came of age while living out in the desert.

Moses was going to lead these young men from the desert into the land of Canaan, except that he made a terrible mistake at the very end, striking a rock in order to get water, when God told him to merely speak to the rock (this destroyed the concept of type and antitype—Moses was to strike one rock one time, and that would produce the living waters for the children of Israel—Ex. 17). Instead, Moses, upset with the people, struck a second rock for water (Num. 20). For that reason—because he disobey God and thereby confused a type—Moses was unable to bring the children of Israel into the Land of Promise.

Most of the book of Deuteronomy is a set of sermons delivered by Moses to the children of Israel before they cross over into the Land of Promise.

What is really remarkable with the book of Deuteronomy is, in Exodus through Numbers, Moses is very careful to distinguish between God speaking and him speaking. That is, Moses wanted it to be very clear when God was laying down the law as over against when Moses was giving some historical narrative.

However, when we come to the book of Deuteronomy, Moses speaks to the people of Israel with divine authority. That is, the laws, code, and regulations found in the book of Deuteronomy are presented with the same authority as the laws given directly from God.

This prequel is identical to that found in Deut. 22.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Deuteronomy 21

Characters	Commentary
Moses	This is a part of several sermon which Moses gave to the people of Israel. These are the last sermons of Moses, as he will not travel over into Canaan with his people.
Generation of promise	After 40 years, the adults who left Egypt under the command of Moses have all died the sin unto death. The only ones who remain are their children, who are now adults and are ready to enter into the Land of Promise (Canaan).
<p>The people who follow are not actual people, but semi-fictional examples, much like saying, "Okay, let's say that Charley Brown did this." There is no actual Charley Brown doing something; but, a few years or decades later, there might be a Lucy Van Pelt who does the thing the Charley Brown is said to do. Then the principles laid out by Moses would then be applied to Miss Van Pelt.</p>	
<p>There is certainly the possibility that Moses dealt with cases like this as a supreme court judge over the Israelites out in the desert.</p>	
Elders, judges, Levites	These are those given legal authority in their region where a murder has been committed, but the killer cannot be ascertained.
A soldier and his wife taken from the captives of Israel	Soldiers of Israel are given the option of taking a wife from the foreign women who have been taken captive after a war. The text tells us what he can and cannot do.
The husband with two wives and several children	A man cannot favor the children of his favorite wife; he must give each child his due, regardless of his feelings toward the child's mother.
The mother and father and their disobedient son	If two parents have a child whom they cannot control, they can bring him to the city council to be executed. The procedure for this is described.
The corpse of a criminal	Although it is sometimes the desire of a population to hang the corpse of a particularly heinous criminal on some tree to rot, God does not allow for that. The dead body must be buried on that day he was executed.

Moses and the people listening are actual historical figures. Those named after are examples—Moses may have known a court case like this or he may have considered that such a court case might come up.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This way you can understand the places which are named in this chapter.

The Places of Deuteronomy 31

Places	Description

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Here is what to expect from Deuteronomy 21:

A Synopsis of Deuteronomy 21

The first nine verses deal with a murder which is unsolved. The victim is associated with the nearest city and an animal is judged and executed rather than the criminal who committed the murder. This is an indication that all crimes (and sins) must be dealt with by a righteous God. As mentioned earlier, this portion of Deut. 21 might be misplaced. Vv. 1–9

The Bible allows for a women, taken as captives from a beaten country, to be taken as a wives by any of the soldiers who defeated her country. This describes exactly how this can be done and what cannot be done. This is a very misunderstood portion of Scripture and some translations even misinterpret the meaning of this passage. Vv. 10–14

What happens if a man has two wives, and they both have born him children? Can he show preference to the children of his favorite wife? Of course not! Vv. 15–17

Let's say parents have so much trouble with one of their children that they cannot control him. What are their options? One option is to bring him before the city court and have him executed. Vv. 18–21

Finally, when it comes to displaying the corpse of a criminal as a deterrent, that body cannot be left up on display for more than that one day. It must be removed and buried before nightfall. Vv. 22–23

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Studying the Mosaic Law

If **Christ is the end of Law for righteousness to everyone that believes** (Rom. 10:4) and if we are justified by faith rather than by the works of the Law (Rom. 3:28 Gal. 2:16), then why do we study the Mosaic Law at all? Why don't we simply make the determination, *I am a believer in the Church Age; so this has nothing to do with me?*

When studying any of the books of the Law (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers or Deuteronomy), we need to be concerned with three principles: (1) accurately interpreting the law which is before us; (2) if there are there any contemporary applications of this law; and (3) if is there anything in the law which is **typical** of Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. It is understanding the Mosaic Law as it relates to these 3 principles which makes the Mosaic Law relevant to us today.

Accurately interpreting the Law:

As has become clear with the **Kaplan translation**, the Rabbis and Jewish theologians over the years completely warped and confused the issues of the Law. To give a few examples: they managed to come up with hundreds of examples of how to define works on the Sabbath, which turned a wonderful celebration of God into a legalistic holiday gotcha. At the same time, a Jewish man who worked on Saturday was to be executed, by order of the Mosaic Law. However, the rabbis had developed so many laws and regulations concerning the Sabbath that no

one could keep up with them all, and no one could go their entire life without violating the Sabbath (by their rules and regulations). Logically, nearly every Jew should have been executed for violation of the Sabbath.

Another distortion of the Mosaic Law by the rabbis: in Deut. 21:18–21, a child who could not be controlled could be taken before the court of the city and executed. For reasons that make little sense to me, this was later confined, by the **rabbis**, to ages 13 through 13¼. However, there is nothing in that passage which even suggests such a restriction.

There are also misinterpretations codified in many translations—the idea that a soldier could take a female captive home, have sex with her after a month, and then discard her at any time after that (see the **Good News Bible**, the **Easy to Read Version**, **God’s Word™** or the **Bible in Basic English** for Deut. 21:10–14); or the idea that a rapist could, by law, marry his rape victim (see the **Expanded Bible**, **Kaplan translation**, the **NET Bible** and the **NIV ©2011**—along with **Today’s NIV** and the **New International Readers Version**—of Deut. 22:25–29). These mistranslations, which are misinterpretations of these passages, put God and His Word in a bad light. These passages must be correctly interpreted and understood.

Application of the Mosaic Law

There are many things found in the Mosaic Law which we will never see in modern society—the execution of disobedient teens (Deut. 21:18–21) or the execution of those who violate the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14). Is it our duty as believers to try to institute such laws in society? Should we elect representatives who promise that they will start executing disobedient teens? If not, why not; and if not, why study these laws at all?

Not everything in the Bible is written to us, nor should we expect to take every law in the Bible and turn it into the law of the land for our present-day society. Paul, for instance, nowhere suggests such a thing, but, instead, tells us that we are not under the Law (see the book of Galatians).

However, on the other hand, it is very likely that many of these laws will be the law of the land during the Millennium. Furthermore, there are proper applications which we should be able to make, spring-boarding from these laws to their possible application in modern society.

Types and Antitypes

Finally, many of these laws—certainly all of the ceremonial ones—look forward to the ministry of Jesus Christ and His death on our behalf on the cross. In perhaps every case they are **typical**—that is, the people of that day did not sacrifice a lamb without spot and blemish and think, “This will be the sacrifice of the Messiah for us.” However, God the Father knows the future, and therefore gives such laws which, when associated with events in the New Testament, suddenly become clear as typical of these future events.

Conclusion

Therefore, every attempt will be made to correctly interpret each law as presented by God (Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers) or by Moses (Deuteronomy); the essence of each law will be examined and up-to-date, modern-day applications will be given, whenever possible; and, when a passage is clearly typical of our Savior, that will be pointed out, will all pertinent parallels clearly laid out.

One of the fascinating aspects of the book of Deuteronomy is, this is just Moses teaching and some of these things come directly from his experience of dealing with the people of Israel as their leader. What he says in this book is taken as if from the mouth of God. Jewish tradition may call the book of Deuteronomy the *second law*, but it is never considered to be of a secondary nature. Christians and Jews alike view these words of Moses to be every bit as inspired as the rest of the books of the Pentateuch.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Ceremony for the Unsolved Murder

As mentioned earlier, several translators suggest that these first 9 verses are out of place and better placed in Deut. 19. This allows for a more logical flow from Deut. 20 to 21. See the note which goes along with this first verse in *The Voice*.

Kukis slavishly literal:

For is found a slain man in the ground (which Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you to possess her), lying in the field and he is not known who killed him.

Kukis moderately literal:

When a slain man is found on the ground (which [land] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you to inherit it), lying in an unpopulated area and it is not known who killed him,...

Kukis not so literal:

If a man is found slain on the ground, in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, and that man is lying dead in an unpopulated area, and it is not known who killed him,...

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation⁴; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W. Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

⁴ I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. Taken from <http://targum.info/targumic-texts/pentateuchal-targumim/> and first published in 1862.

Ancient texts:

Targum (trans. By Cook)	If a male be found slain upon the ground, <u>unburied</u> , in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit, lying down, <u>and not hanged on a tree in the field, nor floating on the face of the water</u> ; and it be not known who did kill him:...
Latin Vulgate	When there will be found in the land, which the Lord your God will give you, the corpse of a man slain, and it is not known who is guilty of the murder,...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	For is found a slain man in the ground (which Y ^e howah your Elohim is giving to you to possess her), lying in the field and he is not known who killed him.
Peshitta (Syriac)	If a person is found slain in the land which the LORD your God gives you to possess, lying in the field, and it is not known who has slain him;...
Septuagint (Greek)	And if one should be found slain <u>with the sword</u> in the land, which the Lord your God gives you to inherit, having fallen in the field, and they do not know who has killed <i>him</i> ,...
Significant differences:	The Latin lacks <i>to inherit it</i> in the first sentence, which is found in the Hebrew. The targum, as is often the case, has several additional phrases.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Unsolved homicides If a corpse is found on the ground the Lord your God is giving you to possess, lying in a field, and the identity of the killer is unknown,.
Contemporary English V.	Suppose the body of a murder victim is found in a field in the land the LORD your God is giving you, and no one knows who the murderer is.
Easy English	Rules about murder, marriage and sons who refuse to obey You may find the dead body of a man that is lying in a field. Someone has killed him, in the country that the *Lord your God is giving to you.
Easy-to-Read Version	"In the land that the Lord your God is giving you, a man might be found murdered in a field. But no one knows who killed him.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"Suppose someone is found murdered in a field in the land that the LORD your God is going to give you, and you do not know who killed him.
<i>The Message</i>	If a dead body is found on the ground, this ground that GOD, your God, has given you, lying out in the open, and no one knows who killed him,...
New Century Version	A Person Found Murdered Suppose someone is found murdered, lying in a field in the land the Lord your God is giving you as your own, and no one knows who killed the person.

New Living Translation

Cleansing for Unsolved Murder

"When you are in the land the Lord your God is giving you, someone may be found murdered in a field, and you don't know who committed the murder.

The Voice

Moses: If a murder victim is found lying *on the ground* in the open field, anywhere in the territory the Eternal your God is giving you to live in, and no one knows who the killer was, *then perform a special ceremony to remove the bloodguilt from your land.*

Israelite teachers and scribes are fond of organizing material using mnemonic devices. If two writings share a key word, phrase, or idea, it is considered clever and attractive to put them next to one another. This principle is applied often as the first law in Deuteronomy 21:1 begins by using some Hebrew words similar to those at the end of the last law in the previous group. Even though the second law in 21:10 is really about marriage, it begins, "When you go to battle against your enemies," transitioning from the warfare laws. The third law follows because it starts by talking about marriage, even though it's really about the inheritance rights of sons. And the next law also talks about sons—except that they're so disobedient, they need to be executed. So the final law in the group is about executions. These language techniques are intended to help the Israelites memorize the laws.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

'And if anyone is found murdered with a knife, and [his body is] left in a field in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to inherit, and no one knows who did it;...

Beck's American Translation

When a Murderer Isn't Known

"If you find anyone lying murdered in a field in the country the Lord your God gives you to possess, but nobody knows who killed him,...

Christian Community Bible

Laws and rights

If the corpse of a slain man is found in the land which Yahweh, your God, will give you, and it is not known who killed him, ² your judges and leaders shall go out to measure the distance between the victim and the surrounding cities to ³ determine which city is nearest to the dead man. Vv. 2–3a are included for context.

God's Word™

This is what you must do if you find a murder victim lying in a field in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. If no one knows who committed the murder,...

New Advent (Knox) Bible

When, in this land of thine, a dead man's body is found and there is no knowing who slew him,...

New American Bible

"If the corpse of a slain man is found lying in the open on the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you to occupy, and it is not known who killed him, ... [1-9] This paragraph is best read immediately after Deut 19:21. The slain man may not necessarily have been murdered; he may have been killed by a wild beast. But the blood of the slain cries out to God from the soil where it was shed; cf Genesis 4:10. Therefore a religious ceremony of propitiation is here prescribed in order to avert God's anger on the community.

New American Bible (R.E.)

Absolution of Untraced Murder.

If the corpse of someone who has been slain is found lying in the open, in the land the LORD, your God, is giving you to possess, and it is not known who killed the person, ... [21:1-9] This law has to do with absolving the community of bloodguilt that accrues to it and to the land when a homicide occurs and the murderer cannot be identified and punished.

NIRV

What to Do When You Don't Know Who Killed Someone

Suppose you find someone who has been killed. The body is lying in a field in the land the Lord your God is giving you to take as your own. But no one knows who the killer was.

New Simplified Bible

»This is what you must do if you find a murder victim lying in a field in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you. If no one knows who committed the murder,...

Today's NIV

Atonement for an Unsolved Murder

If someone is found slain, lying in a field in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who the killer was,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear

When the desecrated are found fallen in the field in the property which Yahweh your God gives you to possess it, but knowing not who smote him:...

Bible in Basic English

If, in the land which the Lord your God is giving you, you come across the dead body of a man in the open country, and you have no idea who has put him to death:...

The Expanded Bible

A Person Found Murdered

Suppose someone is found murdered [^La corpse], lying in a field in the land the Lord your God is giving you as your own [possession], and no one knows who killed [^Lstruck] the person.

Ferar-Fenton Bible

When a corpse was found fallen in a field in the land which your EVER-LIVING GOD gives you to possess, and it is not known how killed,... F.F. has a "restored order" for this chapter of Deuteronomy. Not sure if I will cover that or not. He places this passage after Deut. 19:21. Footnote: These first nine verses of Ch. xxi. have been evidently misplaced by some transcriber, and should be at the end of Ch. xix., as I now place them, as they complete the subject dealt with by Moses. I therefore restore them to their proper position. The reader, however, will probably ask my reasons for these alterations which I make in the arrangement of the text in Ch. xix.-xxi. They are as follows: I had always felt that the accepted order of the matter had become confused by some very ancient transcribers, and therefore consulted scholars whom I believed to be fully competent to assist me in a rectification, by which I proposed to bring the thought of the speeches of Moses in those chapters to a perfectly consecutive current of meaning. All agreed with me that the old text had been confused, but would not venture to decide whether my new proposed arrangements were correct. I was disappointed, so at last appealed to my talented friend the Reverend John Bowen, B.D., Rector of St. Lawrence, Pembrokeshire, who is an accomplished Classic and Oriental Scholar, and he kindly consented to co-operate with me, and I accepted his exact and careful amendments to my suggestions, feeling convinced that they were right. The confusion of the text at the various points noted in my margin, I think, arose at the time when our present text was copied on to a roll of skins, from the original stone plates or tablets upon which Moses engraved the Speeches for record in the Ark of Witnesses, as stated by Aliazer, his Editor, in Ch. xxxiii., v. 24, of Deuteronomy. The Scribe then evidently confused the order of the plates. The fact that the various passages implicated contain about the same number of words, I take as an indication that my view is the right one. My learned and judicious friend, the Rev. J. Bowen, however, informs me that a previous commentator upon this part of Deuteronomy, who had noted the confusion in the records, has suggested an even earlier period for its origination. He believed, and Mr. Bowen seems to agree with him, that it was made at the time when, in accordance with the command of Moses, the Law was engraved, "deeply cut," upon the pillars set up, and covered with some enduring chemical plaster, in the Yale of the Jordan, upon the passage of Joshua and his Army. That there the autographic tablets of Moses were in these paragraphs misarranged, and subsequent transcribers failed to rectify the error. I leave my readers to decide which theory has the best weight of evidence to support it. - F. F.

NET Bible®

Laws Concerning Unsolved Murder

If a homicide victim [Heb "slain [one]." The term נָלַל (khalal) suggests something other than a natural death (cf. Num. 19:16; Num. 23:24; Jer. 51:52; Eze. 26:15; Eze. 30:24; Eze. 31:17–18).] should be found lying in a field in the land the Lord

your God is giving you [The Hebrew text includes "to possess it," but this has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.], and no one knows who killed [Heb "struck," but in context a fatal blow is meant; cf. NLT "who committed the murder."] him,... When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote.

NIV, ©2011

Atonement for an Unsolved Murder

If someone is found slain, lying in a field in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who the killer was,.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"If, in the land ADONAI your God is giving you to possess, a murder victim is found lying in the countryside; and the perpetrator of the murder is not known;...
exeGeses companion Bible	<u>THE TORAH ON UNKNOWN ASSASSINS</u> When you find someone pierced on the soil Yah Veh your Elohim gives you to possess - fallen in the field and know not who pierced him:...
Kaplan Translation	<i>The Unsolved Murder</i> [This is what you must do] when a corpse is found fallen in the field in the land that God your Lord is giving you to occupy, and it is not known who the murderer is. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	If one be found slain in ha'adamah which Hashem Eloheicha giveth thee to possess it, lying in the sadeh, and it be not known who hath slain him;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	In case someone mortally wounded is found on the ground that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you to tenant it, having fallen in the field, and it is not known who smote him fatally,...
Context Group Version	If one is found slain in the land { or earth } which YHWH your God gives you to possess it, lying in the field, and it is not known who has struck him;...
English Standard V. – UK	Atonement for Unsolved Murders "If in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess someone is found slain, lying in the open country, and it is not known who killed him,...
The Geneva Bible	If [one] be found slain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it, lying in the field, [and] it be not known who hath slain him:... This law declares how horrible murder is, seeing that because of one man a whole country will be punished, unless remedy is found.
Green's Literal Translation	If one is found slain in the land which Jehovah your God is giving to you, to possess it, lying in the field, and it is not known who has struck him;...
NASB	Expiation of a Crime "If a slain person is found lying in the open country in the land which the Lord your God gives you to [a]possess, and it is not known who has struck him,...
New King James Version	The Law Concerning Unsolved Murder "If anyone is found slain, lying in the field in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who killed him,...
New RSV	If, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you to possess, a body is found lying in open country, and it is not known who struck the person down,...
Syndein/Thieme	If one be found slain in the land which Jehovah/God your 'Elohim/Godhead gives you to possess it, lying in the field, and it be not known who has slain him...

World English Bible

If one be found slain in the land which Yahweh your God gives you to possess it, lying in the field, and it isn't known who has struck him;...

Young's Updated LT

"When one is found slain on the ground which Jehovah your God is giving to you to possess it—fallen in a field—it is not known who has struck him [down].

The gist of this verse:

A murder victim is found, but there are no witnesses and no suspects.

Deuteronomy 21:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
BDB gives this list of definitions: 1) <i>that, for, because, when, as though, as, because that, but, then, certainly, except, surely, since</i> ; 1a) <i>that</i> ; 1a1) <i>yea, indeed</i> ; 1b) <i>when (of time)</i> ; 1b1) <i>when, if, though (with a concessive force)</i> ; 1c) <i>because, since (causal connection)</i> ; 1d) <i>but (after negative)</i> ; 1e) <i>that if, for if, indeed if, for though, but if</i> ; 1f) <i>but rather, but</i> ; 1g) <i>except that</i> ; 1h) <i>only, nevertheless</i> ; 1i) <i>surely</i> ; 1j) <i>that is</i> ; 1k) <i>but if</i> ; 1l) <i>for though</i> ; 1m) <i>forasmuch as, for therefore</i> .			
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced <i>maw-TSAW</i>]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
châlâl (חָלַל) [pronounced <i>chaw-LAWL</i>]	<i>slain, fatally wounded, wounded, pierced; from a verb which means to bore, to pierce</i>	masculine singular noun (or adjective)	Strong's #2491 BDB #319
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'ādâmâh (אֲדָמָה) [pronounced <i>uh-daw-MAWH</i>]	<i>ground, soil, dirt, earth, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #127 BDB #9

With a voluntative, cohortative or jussive, the wâw conjunction means *that, so that*. It expresses *intention*. The wâw conjunction can express informal inference or consequence (*so, then, therefore*); especially at the beginning of a speech. The wâw conjunction can connect alternative cases or contrasting ideas and be properly rendered *or, but, yet*. The wâw conjunction can also be rendered *for*.

Translation: *When a slain man is found on the ground...* There will be the problem of an unsolved homicide which occurs now and again. That is what Moses is speaking of here. A man is found dead, lying on the ground.

Murders like this defiled the land. Num. 35:33–34 *So you shall not defile the land in which you are. For blood defiles the land. And the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him that shed it. So do not defile the land which you shall inhabit, in which I dwell. For I Jehovah dwell among the sons of Israel.* (MKJV) Therefore, because this defiled the land that God gave them, the people of Israel cannot simply ignore such a crime that has taken place. The guilt for this sin had to be dealt with, even though the one responsible for this crime is not known.

Deuteronomy 21:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>is giving, granting, is placing, putting, setting; is making</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yârash (יָרַשׁ) [pronounced yaw-RASH]	<i>to possess, to take possession of, to occupy a geographical area [by driving out the previous occupants], to take possession of anyone [or their goods]; to inherit, to possess; to expel, to drive out</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3423 BDB #439

Translation:...[\(which \[land\] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you to possess it\)](#),... Moses inserts that this is the land which God is giving to the Jews. This means that he is giving laws and application of law for their time when in the Land of Promise.

At this point in time, the Jews are on the east side of the Jordan, getting ready to cross over into the Land of Promise to take it. Moses has come up with some additional laws which would be helpful to them in the new land.

Moses reminds them that God has given them this land; they will be able to walk into the Land of Promise and take it.

Deuteronomy 21:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced naw-FAHL]	<i>falling, lying; is dying a violent death, being brought down</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5307 BDB #656

Deuteronomy 21:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961

Translation: ...lying in an unpopulated area... The word here is sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH], which means *field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area*. Strong's #7704 BDB #961. This means that there are no witnesses and likely that there is no physical evidence which can be evaluated.

This is logical that a murderer would attempt his crimes outside of a populated area, so that there are no witnesses, thus making a conviction much more difficult. In this way, the murderer might not even be suspected.

Deuteronomy 21:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to be known, to become known; to be instructed, to be taught by experience, to be punished</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
mîy (מִי) [pronounced mee]	<i>who, whom; whose, whomever; what; occasionally rendered how, in what way</i>	pronominal interrogative; the verb <i>to be</i> may be implied	Strong's #4310 BDB #566
nâkâh (נָכַח) [pronounced naw-KAWH]	<i>to smite, to assault, to hit, to strike, to strike [something or someone] down, to defeat, to conquer, to subjugate</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong #5221 BDB #645

Translation: ...and it is not known who killed him,... If there is anyone in this vicinity, they are unaware of the killing or unaware of who might have killed this person who is found.

Moses is saying that this incident cannot be ignored. They cannot simply open up a file box on this murder, keep in it a few pieces of physical evidence, and then file it away.

This ceremony will temporarily cover over the crime, as there will come a time for the paying of all debts and the administration of punishment for every crime. Isa. 26:21 *For behold, Jehovah comes out of His place to punish the people of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall reveal her blood, and shall no more cover her dead.* We may think of this as God finding the murderer and shaking him and punishing him; but the way that this is accomplished is, Jesus Christ will die for that sin; Jesus Christ will pay for the penalty by His substitutionary death. In many ways, this ceremony will reflect the manner in which our sins are dealt with.

The first verse reads: When a slain man is found on the ground (which [land] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you to inherit it), lying in an unpopulated area and it is not known who killed him,... This chapter begins like the prologue of a murder mystery. The scene here is an unsolved murder. The body was found out in a field and there are no witnesses and no suspects.

And have come forth your elders and your judges and they have measured unto the cities which [are] round about the slain [one]. Deuteronomy 21:2 **...then your elders and your judges will come out and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., round about] the slain man.**

...then your elders and judges will come out and measure to the cities which are near to the dead man.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	...then <u>two of the sages will proceed from the chief court of judgment</u> , and <u>three of your judges</u> , and will measure to the surrounding cities <u>which lie on the four quarters from the (spot where) the dead man (is found);...</u>
Latin Vulgate	...Your ancients and judges will go out, and will measure from the place where the body lies the distance of every city round about:...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And have come forth your elders and your judges and they have measured unto the cities which [are] round about the slain [one].
Peshitta (Syriac)	...Then your elders and your judges shall come forth, and they shall measure the distance to the cities which are round about him that is slain; ...
Septuagint (Greek)	...then your elders and your judges shall come forth, and shall measure the distances of the cities round about the slain man.
Significant differences:	The targum adds a lot of prose; the ancient translations, however, are very similar to the Hebrew.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	The judges and other leaders from the towns around there must find out what town is the closest to where the body was found.
Easy English	You may not know who has killed him. Then this is what you must do: Your leaders and *judges must measure how far the dead man is from the nearest towns.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then your leaders and judges must come out and measure the distance to the towns around the person that was killed.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Your leaders and judges are to go out and measure the distance from the place where the body was found to each of the nearby towns.
New Life Bible	...then your leaders and judges will go out and see how far it is to the cities that are around the dead man.
New Living Translation	In such a case, your elders and judges must measure the distance from the site of the crime to the nearby towns.
The Voice	⁵ Send for the priests, the descendants of Levi, the ones the Eternal your God chose to serve Him and to bless His name, because they're the ones who settle disputes and handle cases of injury like this [Verse 5 has been moved forward to aid in comprehension.]. ² Have your elders and judges measure the distance from the body to the nearby cities. V. 5 is included here for context.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	... your elders and judges must go there and measure the distances from the slain man to the cities round about.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	...elders and judges must betake themselves to the spot where he lies, and find by measurement which of the neighbouring cities is nearest at hand.
New American Bible (R.E.)	...your elders and judges shall go out and measure the distances to the cities that are in the neighborhood of the corpse.
NIRV	Then your elders and judges will go out and measure how far it is from the body to the nearby towns.
New Jerusalem Bible	...your elders and scribes must measure the distance between the victim and the surrounding towns,...
Revised English Bible	...your elders and your judges are to come out and measure the distance to the surrounding towns to establish which is nearest.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Your elders and your judges proceed, and they measure to the cities around the desecrated.
Bible in Basic English	Then your responsible men and your judges are to come out, and give orders for the distance from the dead body to the towns round about it to be measured;...
The Expanded Bible	Your elders and judges should go to where the body [corpse] was found, and they should measure how far it is to the nearby cities.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...your chiefs and magistrates shall go and measure to the towns that are round about the corpse,...
NET Bible®	...your elders and judges must go out and measure how far it is to the cities in the vicinity of the corpse [Heb "surrounding the slain [one]."].
NIV – UK	...your elders and judges shall go out and measure the distance from the body to the neighboring towns.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

exeGesés companion Bible	...then your elders and your judges come and measure to the cities all around the pierced:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	...your elders and magistrates shall go out and measure the distances from the corpse to the nearby towns.
Kaplan Translation	Your elders and judges [A total of five members of the Sanhedrin (Yad, Rotze'ach 9:1).] must go out and measure the distance to the cities around the corpse.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	...Then thy zekenim and thy shofetim shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the towns which are round about him that is slain;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	...then your elders and your judges will go forth and measure the distance to the cities that are around the mortally wounded one.
English Standard Version	...then your elders and your judges shall come out, and they shall measure the distance to the surrounding cities.
NASB	...then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure <i>the distance</i> to the cities which are around the slain one.
New RSV	...then your elders and your judges shall come out to measure the distances to the towns that are near the body.
Webster's Bible Translation	...then your elders and your judges shall come forth, and they shall measure to the cities which are round about him who is slain:...
Young's Updated LT	Then have your elders and your judges gone out and measured unto the cities which are round about the slain one.

The gist of this verse: Elders and judges will come out and determine which city is closest to the corpse.

Deuteronomy 21:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
z ^e qênîym (זְקֵנִים) [pronounced <i>zê-kay-NEEM</i>]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; used as a substantive; with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâphaṭ (שֹׁפְטִים) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>those judging, the ones judging [governing]; judges, governors</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047

Translation: ...then your elders and your judges will come out... There is a procedure when a murder has occurred, but there are no suspects. The elders and judges will come out, in part to look over the scene and consider the situation. Although that is not said, that is likely a part of this.

The elders represented the people in general; the men who were respected in their community; men who were older and wiser in almost all affairs. The judges were those who tried the various legal cases and had been elected or appointed (recall that there was never a specific method given for their office). With the priests represented in v. 5, we have people taken from all sectors of society in this matter.

Therefore, the elders represent the citizens in general while the judges represent the government leadership.

Deuteronomy 21:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâdad (מָדַד) [pronounced <i>maw-DAHD</i>]	<i>to stretch out, to extend; to measure</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #4058 BDB #551
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Deuteronomy 21:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ġyr (עִיר) [pronounced ġeer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ġâbîyb (בְּיָבֵיב) [pronounced saw ^b -VEE ^b V]	<i>those surrounding, surrounds; places round about, a circuit; all around; on every side</i>	substantive	Strong's #5439 BDB #686
châlâl (חָלַל) [pronounced chaw-LAWL]	<i>slain, fatally wounded, wounded, pierced; from a verb which means to bore, to pierce</i>	masculine singular noun (or adjective) with the definite article	Strong's #2491 BDB #319

Translation: ...and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., round about] the slain man. Their purpose is stated here, that they would determine how far away the nearest cities are. This would imply that people of that era had a way to measure long distances, although that method is not clearly laid out for us.

Israel will begin as a series of hamlets which will be held together through a road system and through the headship of Jesus Christ, so it would be most likely that the city nearest the body would contain the person or persons responsible for the death.

All that is being determined here is jurisdiction; to which city did this crime belong? Law enforcement agencies practice this sort of thing all the time.

Bear in mind what might happen while this is occurring—these elders who fan out in various directions may come across physical evidence or even across the man who committed this deed. So, even though the intention of this “measuring exercise” is to execute an animal vicariously for this crime, there is the slight possibility that the true killer might be found by this act.

Vv. 1–2 read: When a slain man is found on the ground (which [land] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you), lying in an unpopulated area and it is not known who killed him, then your elders and your judges will come out and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., round about] the slain man. There is an unsolved and unsolvable murder. There are no witnesses and no suspects. Therefore, this murder must be dealt with, as all crime must be punished, even if the guilty person is not known. The first thing to determine is, which city is nearest to this man. This presupposes a lot of small cities throughout the Land of Promise, which there would be (see Joshua 15, for example).

Sin and crime both affect the population where the sins or crimes are committed. Therefore, the ceremony which expiated the crime must occur in association with the people of that area where the crime occurred. This is why measurements are taken to find the city closest to the crime.

You certainly do not need to study what follows; read enough to see that all kinds of things are read into this text which are not there.

Legalistic Confusion Associated with Deuteronomy 21:2

Then your elders and your judges will come out...

Legalistic Confusion Associated with Deuteronomy 21:2

From the city or cities near to which the murder was committed, to make inquiry about it, and expiation for it; so Aben Ezra interprets it of the elders of the cities near, but others understand it of the elders of the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem; so the Targum of Jonathan, "then shall go out from the great sanhedrim two of thy wise men, and three of thy judges;" and more expressly the Misnah (l), "three go out from the great sanhedrim in Jerusalem;" R. Judah says five, "it is said "thy elders" two, and "thy judges" two," and there is no sanhedrim or court of judicature equal (or even), therefore they add to them one more.

...and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., round about] the slain man.

Maimonides (m) says, they do not behead the heifer for, nor measure, but to a city in which there is a sanhedrim: if it is found between two cities (that is, at an equal distance), both bring two heifers (Maimonides (n) says they bring one between them, which is most reasonable); but the city of Jerusalem does not bring an heifer to be beheaded: the reason is, because it was not divided to the tribes (o). This measuring, one would think, should be only necessary when it was not certain which was the nearest city; and yet Maimonides (p) says, even when it was found on the side of a city, which was certainly known to be nearest, they measured; the command, he observes, is to measure.

The point here is, there are a great many opinions put together by the rabbis which have no place as standing as accurate commentary. They are the laws of men rather than of God, which Jesus condemned (Matt. 23:1–39).

Both quotations from Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:2 (which has the references from which these opinions were mined).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

What we have here is not difficult: When a slain man is found on the ground (which [land] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you), lying in an unpopulated area and it is not known who killed him, then your elders and your judges will come out and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., round about] the slain man. There is an unsolved murder, and representatives of the people and of the government are brought out to determine which city has jurisdiction and, therefore, which city will be considered in the sphere of responsibility. How all of the other hoo-hah listed above was developed is beyond me, and exceeds the scope of Scripture.

And he has been the city the near unto the slain [one] and have taken elders of the city the that an heifer of a herd which has not been worked in her, which has not been drawn in a yoke.

Deuteronomy
21:3

And it has been, the nearest city to the slain man—the elders of that city will take a heifer of the herd, [one] which has not been made to work [and one] which has not been drawn by a yoke.

Once the nearest city to the slain man has been determined, the elders from that city will take a heifer which has not been yoked or made to work.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

...and the city which is nearest to the dead man, being the suspected one, let the chief court of justice take means for absolution (or disculpation). Let the sages, the elders of that city, take an heifer from the herd, not commixed, an heifer of the year, which hath not been wrought with nor hath drawn in the yoke:...

Latin Vulgate	...And the ancients of that city which they shall perceive to be nearer than the rest, shall take a heifer of the herd, that hath not drawn in the yoke, nor ploughed the ground,...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And he has been the city the near unto the slain [one] and have taken elders of the city the that an heifer of a herd which has not been worked in her, which has not been drawn in a yoke.
Peshitta (Syriac)	...And the elders of the city which is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer which has never been used for work nor has pulled in the yoke,...
Septuagint (Greek)	And it shall be that the city which is nearest to the slain man, the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which has not labored, and which has not borne a yoke.
Significant differences:	The targum, as usual, has a lot of extra text. The Latin appears to condense the text somewhat (based upon the English translation from the Latin).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Once it is determined which city is closest to the dead body, its elders must take a young cow that hasn't been used or yet pulled a plow,...
Contemporary English V.	The leaders from that town will go to their cattle herds and choose a young cow that has never been put to work.
Easy English	Then the leaders from the nearest town must take a young cow that has never pulled a plough.
Easy-to-Read Version	When you learn which town is nearest to the dead man, the leaders of that town must take a cow from their herds. It must be a cow that never had a calf. And it must be a cow that has never been used for work.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the leaders of the town nearest to where the body was found are to select a young cow that has never been used for work.
<i>The Message</i>	The leaders and judges of the city that is nearest the corpse will then take a heifer that has never been used for work, never had a yoke on it.
New Century Version	The elders of the city nearest the body must take a young cow that has never worked or worn a yoke,...
New Life Bible	The leaders of the city that is nearest to the dead man will take a young cow from the cattle. The cow must never have been worked or pulled a plow.
New Living Translation	When the nearest town has been determined, that town's elders must select from the herd a young cow that has never been trained or yoked to a plow.
The Voice	The elders of the city that's closest to the body <i>will have jurisdiction and offer a special sacrifice</i> . Have them take a heifer that has never been put to work pulling a yoke,...

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And from whichever city is nearest to him, the elders of that city must choose a heifer from the herd that has never worn a yoke or been worked,...
Christian Community Bible	...to ³ determine which city is nearest to the dead man. And the leaders of that city shall take a calf that has never been used for work or borne a yoke. The last word of v. 2 is included for context.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	It is for the elders of the nearest city to do what must be done. They will choose out from the herd a heifer that has never borne yoke or ploughed furrow,...
New American Bible	When it is established which city is nearest the corpse, the elders of that city shall take a heifer that has never been put to work as a draft animal under a yoke,...
New American Bible (R.E.)	When it is established which city is nearest the corpse, the elders of that city shall take a heifer that has never been put to work or worn a yoke;... Num. 19:2-3.

NIRV	The elders from the town that is nearest to the body will get a young cow. It must never have been used for work. It must never have pulled a load.
New Jerusalem Bible	...and establish which town is the nearest to the victim. The elders of that town must then take a heifer that has not yet been put to work or used as a draught animal under the yoke.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	The elders of that city that are nearest to the desecrated take an oxen heifer which never served, and which never followed the yoke.
Bible in Basic English	And whichever town is nearest to the body, the responsible men of that town are to take from the herd a young cow which has never been used for work or put under the yoke;...
The Expanded Bible	The elders of the city nearest the body must take a ·young cow [heifer] that has never worked or ·worn [^l pulled] a yoke,...
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then the head man of that town shall take a heifer from the herd, which has not worked, —which has not drawn wheels,...
HCSB	The elders of the city nearest to the victim are to get a cow that has not been yoked or used for work.
NET Bible®	Then the elders of the city nearest to the corpse [Heb "slain [one]."] must take from the herd a heifer that has not been worked - that has never pulled with the yoke -...

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	After it has been determined which town is the closest, the leaders of that town are to take a young female cow that has never been put to work or yoked for use as a draft animal.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and so be it, the city nearest to the pierced, even the elders of that city take a heifer of the oxen which neither served nor drawn in the yoke;...
Judaica Press Complete T.	And it will be, <i>that from</i> the city closer to the corpse, the elders of that city shall take a calf with which work has never been done, <i>and</i> that has never drawn a yoke,...
Kaplan Translation	The elders of the city closest to the corpse must then bring a female calf [Under two years old (Yad, Rotze'ach 10:2).], which has never been worked, and which has never drawn a load with a yoke.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	...And it shall be, that the town which is next unto the slain man, even the zekenim of that town shall take a heifer, which hath not been worked with, and which hath not pulled the ol (yoke);...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	And it will come to be that of the city nearest to the mortally wounded one, the elders of that city will take a heifer of the herd by which no one has been served and which has not drawn in a yoke.
Context Group Version	...and it shall be, that the city which is nearest to the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which has not been produced with, and which has not drawn in the yoke;...
English Standard Version	And the elders of the city that is nearest to the slain man shall take a heifer that has never been worked and that has not pulled in a yoke.
New RSV	The elders of the town nearest the body shall take a heifer that has never been worked, one that has not pulled in the yoke;...

Webster's Bible Translation	...And it shall be [that] the city [which is] next to the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer which hath not been wrought with, [and] which hath not drawn in the yoke;...
World English Bible	...and it shall be, that the city which is nearest to the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer of the herd, which hasn't been worked with, and which has not drawn in the yoke;...
Young's Updated LT	And it has been, the city which is near unto the slain one, even the elders of that city have taken a heifer of the herd, which has not been wrought with, which has not drawn in the yoke.

The gist of this verse: The ceremony will begin with a heifer taken from the city nearest the slain man; and this must be a heifer which has not been worked before or had a yoke upon it.

Deuteronomy 21:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
ġyr (רִיעַ) [pronounced <i>ġeer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
qârôb (בָּרֵךְ) or qârôwb (בֹּרֵךְ) [pronounced <i>kaw-RO^BV</i>]	<i>near [in place or time], contiguous, imminent, within a short pace; short, shortness; near in relation, intimate acquaintance; that which is familiar to us; one who brings aide to another; soon, presently</i>	masculine adjective; can be used as a substantive with the definite article	Strong's #7138 BDB #898
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
châlâl (חָלַל) [pronounced <i>chaw-LAWL</i>]	<i>slain, fatally wounded, wounded, pierced; from a verb which means to bore, to pierce</i>	masculine singular noun (or adjective) with the definite article	Strong's #2491 BDB #319

Translation: *And it has been, the nearest city to the slain man...* People will determine which city is nearest to the man who has been murdered. This is the city of primary jurisdiction as well as the city which will be associated with the crime in terms of responsibility.

A substitute will be taken from this city—a substitute for the person who did this deed (the assumption is, the person who committed this crime lives in the nearest city). Now, quite obviously, we do not know that to be true,

nor is the Bible asserting that the killer had to come from the nearest city. That is simply to city to be associated with the crime.

The idea is that every crime and every misdeed must be paid for. There is nothing wrong done by man that God may overlook. If the true criminal here is not determined, then a substitute must be punished. And when our sins are judged, God cannot overlook any of them. That would be a compromise to His righteousness and justice.

Deuteronomy 21:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
z ^e qênîym (זִקְנִיִּם) [pronounced <i>zê-kay-NEEM</i>]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; construct form	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
îyr (יַיִר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
ʿeg ^e lâh (עֵגֶלָה) [pronounced <i>geg^e-LAW</i>]	<i>heifer</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #5697 BDB #722
bâqâr (בָּקָר) [pronounced <i>baw-KAWR</i>]	<i>bull, cow, ox, collectively: herd, cattle, oxen</i>	masculine singular collective noun	Strong's #1241 BDB #133

Translation: ...—the elders of that city will take a heifer of the herd,... There are some details left out here; when that city has been determined, then the original elders and judges will go to that city and tell the elders of that city to get a heifer. This heifer is going to be the substitutionary beast which will be executed on behalf of the criminal who killed the man in this narrative.

Bear in mind that, Moses is just making up a scenario or he is dealing with a previous case history which he has come across, and he is going to tell the Israelites what needs to be done in case something like this happens.

This is a heifer who has never been worked nor has never had a yoke upon her. The last time that there was a call for a sacrifice of an animal which had not been yoked was in Num. 19:2 in the ordinance of the red heifer, immediately prior to the thirty-eight silent years. This was also related to purification from contact with the dead. In this context, the town itself, due to its proximity to the crime, is considered unclean.

Again, an unsolved murder cannot be allowed to simply stand, and eventually fade from view. It must be dealt with, if only ceremonially.

Deuteronomy 21:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʿâbad (עָבַד) [pronounced ġaw ^b -VAHD]	<i>to be worked; to be under very hard bondage [labor, servitude]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Pual perfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation:...[one] which has not been made to work... This is a heifer which has not yet been made to work.

This is an odd construction here. *Heifer* is a feminine singular noun, but the verb is a masculine singular with a preposition and the feminine singular suffix. I don't quite get this, as the verb is in the passive stem, which would mean that this was done to the heifer.

The idea here is, they could not take a heifer from this city who was worn out and worthless. This had to be a valuable animal, an animal of worth. When a sacrifice was required by God, it could not be a sacrifice of something which was no longer needed in that city.

Deuteronomy 21:3d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâshak ^e (מָשַׁח) [pronounced maw- SHAHK ^e]	<i>to draw out, to lure, to drag, to continue with something, to proceed to, to march to</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4900 BDB #604
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿôl (עֹל) [pronounced ġohl]	<i>yoke</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5923 BDB #760

Translation:...[and one] which has not been drawn by a yoke. This is a heifer who has never been made to be pulled along with an yoke.

Unlike the previous phrase, here the verb is a feminine singular verb, as we would expect.

Again, the innocent beast taken for this ritual could not be a beast who had given its time, and was ready to be killed anyway. This had to be a heifer whose worth or value had not yet been utilized.

Vv. 1–3 read: *When a slain man is found on the ground (which [land] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you), lying in an unpopulated area and it is not known who killed him, then your elders and your judges will come out and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., round about] the slain man. And it has been, the nearest city to the slain man—the elders of that city will take a heifer of the herd, [one] which has not been made to work [and one] which has not been drawn by a yoke.*

Now, why, in this city—which may not even be the city of the criminal—is an animal taken?

Why is an animal taken to sacrifice from this city?

1. No sin and no crime may go unpunished. God must deal with every sin committed by a people.
2. Now, quite obviously, there is not going to be a ceremony done every time a person thinks some evil thought, but there were ceremonies for rebound in the Levitical offerings.
3. The idea that no criminal act may go unpunished is parallel to God not allowing any sin to go unpunished.
4. God is perfect justice and perfect righteousness. He is unable to view sin and simply disregard it.
5. God cannot view a criminal act as heinous as murder without dealing with it.
6. God must deal with every sin and every crime; otherwise, God is not God.
7. Therefore, God requires from the nearest city a sacrifice to cover this crime.
8. As a city, there are laws and behavior which must be taught to each successive generation. The implication here is, this city did not pass along these values clearly to the next generation.
9. The heifer sacrificed cannot be a useless animal or an animal which has been completely used up; this must be an animal which is valuable to the city. Hence, it cannot have done work or borne a yoke.
10. Therefore, an heifer must be taken in substitute for the actual murderer, who is presumably from this city.

And, it ought to be obvious, that the substitutionary nature of this sacrifice points forward to Jesus Christ, Who will (future from this sermon) die for our sins.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And will lead down elders of the town the this the heifer unto a valley ever-flowing which he does not work in him and he is not sown. And have broken there [the neck of] the heifer in the valley.

Deuteronomy
21:4

The elders of that town will lead the heifer down into an ever flowing torrent, which (valley) has not been tilled and which (valley) has not been sown. There they will break the neck of the heifer in the torrent valley.

The elders of that town will lead this heifer down into well-watered valley which has not been plowed or sown. There, in that valley, they will break the neck of the heifer.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

...and the sages of that city will bring the heifer down into an uncultivated field, where the ground has not been tilled by work, nor sowed; and let them there behead the heifer from behind her with an axe (or knife, dolch) in the midst of the field.

Latin Vulgate	And they shall bring her into a rough and stony valley, that never was ploughed, nor sown: and there they <u>shall strike off the head</u> of the heifer.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And will lead down elders of the town the this the heifer unto a valley ever-flowing which he does not work in him and he is not sown. And have broken there [the neck of] the heifer in the valley.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer to a barren valley which has never been ploughed nor sown, and shall <u>slaughter</u> the heifer there in the valley;...
Septuagint (Greek)	And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer into a rough valley, which has not been tilled and is not sown, and they shall <u>slay</u> the heifer in the valley.
Significant differences:	The Latin appears to leave out <i>the elders of this town leading the heifer</i> .

The Hebrew appears to have the neck of the heifer broken. The Latin and targum both have the heifer being beheaded; the Syriac and Greek only speak of it being slain (based upon the English translations). The Hebrew verb found here is a rare one.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	...and those elders will take the cow down to a ravine with a flowing stream—one that has not been plowed or planted—and they will break the cow's neck right there in the river valley.
Contemporary English V.	They and some of the priests will take this cow to a nearby valley where there is a stream, but no crops. Once they reach the valley, the leaders will break the cow's neck. The priests must be there, because the LORD your God has chosen them to be his special servants at the place of worship. The LORD has chosen them to bless the people in his name and to be judges in all legal cases, whether property or injury is involved. The CEV incorporates several verses here.
Easy English	They must lead her down to a valley that no one has ploughed or planted. There must be a stream full of water. There they must break her neck.
Easy-to-Read Version	The leaders of that town must then bring the cow down to a valley with running water. It must be a valley that has never been plowed or had anything planted in it. Then the leaders must break the cow's neck there in that valley.
Good News Bible (TEV)	They are to take it down to a spot near a stream that never runs dry and where the ground has never been plowed or planted, and there they are to break its neck.
New Century Version	...and they must lead her down to a valley that has never been plowed or planted, with a stream flowing through it. There they must break the young cow's neck.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...then lead it into a valley that has never been tilled or planted, and slaughter the heifer there.
God's Word™	The leaders of that city will bring the heifer down to a river, to a location where the land hasn't been plowed or planted. At the river they must break the heifer's neck.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	...and in some wild and rugged glen, that was never ploughed or sown, this heifer must have its neck broken.
New American Bible	...and bringing it down to a wadi with an everflowing stream at a place that has not been plowed or sown, they shall cut the heifer's throat there in the wadi.
New American Bible (R.E.)	...the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a wadi with an everflowing stream at a place that has not been plowed or sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the wadi.
NIRV	The elders must lead it down into a valley. The valley must not have been farmed. There must be a stream flowing through it. There in the valley the elders must break the cow's neck.

New Jerusalem Bible	The elders of that town must bring the heifer down to a permanently flowing river, to a spot that has been neither ploughed nor sown, and there by the river they must break the heifer's neck.
New Simplified Bible	»The elders of that city will bring the heifer down to a river, to a location where the land has not been plowed or planted. At the river they must break the heifer's neck.
Today's NIV	...and lead it down to a valley that has not been plowed or planted and where there is a flowing stream. There in the valley they are to break the heifer's neck.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	The elders of that city descend the heifer which never served and never sowed into an everflowing riverbed, and behead the heifer in the riverbed.
Bible in Basic English	And they are to take the cow into a valley where there is flowing water, and which is not ploughed or planted, and there the neck of the cow is to be broken:...
The Expanded Bible	...and they must lead her down to a valley [wadi] that has never been plowed or planted, with a stream [wadi] flowing through it. There they must break the young cow's [heifer's] neck.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...—and the head man of that town shall cause the heifer to be taken down to a vale with a constantly flowing brook, which has not been cultivated nor reaped, and break the neck of the heifer at the brook.
NET Bible®	...and bring the heifer down to a wadi with flowing water [The combination “a wadi with flowing water” is necessary because a wadi (נַחַל, nakhal) was ordinarily a dry stream or riverbed. For this ritual, however, a perennial stream must be chosen so that there would be fresh, rushing water.], to a valley that is neither plowed nor sown [The unworked heifer, fresh stream, and uncultivated valley speak of ritual purity - of freedom from human contamination.]. There at the wadi they are to break the heifer's neck
NIV, ©2011	³ Then the elders of the town nearest the body shall take a heifer that has never been worked and has never worn a yoke ⁴ and lead it down to a valley that has not been plowed or planted and where there is a flowing stream. There in the valley they are to break the heifer's neck. V. 3 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	The leaders of that town are to bring the heifer down to a vadi with a stream in it that never dries up, to a place that is neither plowed nor sown; and they are to break the cow's neck there in the vadi.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and the elders of that city descend the heifer to a perennial wadi, - neither served nor seeded and break the neck of the heifer there in the wadi:...
Judaica Press Complete T.	...and the elders of that city shall bring the calf down to a rugged valley, which was neither tilled nor sown, and there in the valley, they shall decapitate the calf.
Kaplan Translation	The elders of the city shall bring the calf to a swiftly flowing [Yad, Rotze'ach 9:2; Ralbag; HaKethav VeHaKabbalah) Ethan in Hebrew; cf. Exodus 14:27, Psalms 74:15 (Chizzkuni). Or, 'harsh' (Sotah 45b; Rashi; cf. Numbers 21:24), 'fertile' (Radak, Sherashim; cf. Amos 5:24), or, 'rough' (Septuagint).] stream [(Yad, Rotze'ach; Radak, Sherashim; cf. Midrash Aggadah). Nachal in Hebrew. Or, 'valley' (Rashi; Septuagint), 'field' (Targum Yonathan), or, 'wadi' (Ibn Janach). See above note.], [the land around which [(Chizzkuni; cf. Minchath Chinukh 531).]] must never be [(Sefer HaMitzvoth, Negative 309; Makkoth 22a). There is a question as to whether the forbidden distance around the place where the calf was killed must be four cubits or fifty cubits (Yerushalmi, Sotah 9:5).] worked or sown. There at the stream, they shall decapitate [Araph in Hebrew (see Yerushalmi, Sotah 9:5). See

note on Exodus 13:13. However, there is a Midrashic opinion, that the calf is merely struck on the back of the neck so that it will run away and find the house of the murderer (Midrash Aggadah; Bachya.)] **the calf.**

Orthodox Jewish Bible

...And the zekenim of that town shall bring down the heifer unto a wadi with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the wadi;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version

The elders of that city will bring the heifer down to a perennial watercourse by which no one was served and it was not sown, and they will behead the heifer there in the watercourse.

Darby Translation

...and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto an ever-flowing watercourse, which is not tilled, nor is it sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the watercourse;...

Emphasized Bible

...and the elders of that city shall take down the heifer into a ravine with an everflowing stream, which is neither tilled nor sown,—and shall behead there the heifer in the ravine.

The Geneva Bible

And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifers neck there in the valley. That the blood shed of the innocent beasts in a solitary place, might make them abhor the fact.

Green's Literal Translation

And the elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to an ever-flowing stream, which is not plowed nor sown. And *they* shall break the heifer's neck there by the stream.

New RSV

...the elders of that town shall bring the heifer down to a wadi with running water, which is neither ploughed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the wadi.

Third Millennium Bible

...and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley.

Webster's Bible Translation

And the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer to a rough valley, which is neither tilled nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley;...

World English Bible

...and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer to a valley with running water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley.

Young's Updated LT

And the elders of that city have brought down the heifer unto a hard valley, which is not tilled nor sown, and have beheaded there the heifer in the valley.

The gist of this verse:

The elders are to take this heifer to a valley which is not been tilled nor sown with seed, and break the neck of the heifer there.

Deuteronomy 21:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yârad (יָרַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAHD</i>]	<i>to cause to go down, to cause to come down, to bring down, to lead down</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3381 BDB #432

Deuteronomy 21:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
z ^e qênîym (זקנים) [pronounced zê-kay-NEEM]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; construct form	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
îyr (עיר) [pronounced geer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
hûw' (הוא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
'êth (את) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'eg ^e lâh (עגלה) [pronounced geg ^e -LAW]	<i>heifer</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5697 BDB #722

Translation: [The elders of that town will lead the heifer down...](#) The elders of the city closest to the unsolved murder will lead this heifer down into a valley.

It is unclear whether the other elders came from, but this time, we are dealing with the elders from the city closest to the dead body. They have taken a heifer from their city and they will lead this heifer.

Deuteronomy 21:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
nachal (נחל) [pronounced NAHKH-al]	<i>brook, torrent; valley</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5158 BDB #636
'êthân (אתנן) [pronounced â-thawn]	<i>perennial, ever-flowing, permanent, constant; well-established</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #386 (#388?) BDB #450

This is a word used primarily of water; however, in reference to a nation or a person, this is one which has been around for a long time in a position of importance.

Translation: [...into an ever flowing torrent...](#) The valley is called *perennial, ever-flowing, well-established*; and what is suggested is, there is always water in this valley, in the torrent which runs through.

There are two words used to describe this valley: the word is nachal (נחל) [pronounced NAHKH-al], which is a *torrent of rushing water through a narrow channel*. Since a torrent or a river tends to run through a valley area, this word is also used to refer to the valley that a river might run through. Strong's #5158 BDB #636. In this verse, it is further modified by the adjective 'êthân (אתנן) [pronounced â-thawn] and which means *perennial, ever-*

flowing, and therefore, *permanent*. Strong's #386 BDB #450 (Strong's places this with the aleph's and BDB with the yod's). Therefore, this is a river which is continual; it does not dry up.

Clarke: *[This is] a rapid stream, probably passing through a piece of uncultivated ground where the elders of the city were to strike off the head of the heifer, and to wash their hands over her in token of their innocence. The spot of ground on which this sacrifice was made must be uncultivated, because it was considered to be a sacrifice to make atonement for the murder, and consequently would pollute the land.*⁵

The analogy would be to Jesus Christ, from Whom flow waters of everlasting; with Whom is great refreshment. As Jesus told the Samaritan women at the well: "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14b–15). This ever-flowing torrent indicates that there is to be chosen a river or stream wherein there is always water.

The heifer is going to represent the criminal and die in the stead of the criminal. Quite obviously, this parallels Jesus dying on our behalf, the Just for the unjust.

Deuteronomy 21:4c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
ʿăbad (עָבַד) [pronounced ăaw ^b -VAHD]	<i>to be worked, to be tilled [as land]; to make oneself a servant; to be served [as a king]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
bē (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: ...which (valley) has not been tilled... The valley that they need to go to is a valley which has never been tilled. This is parallel to Jesus Christ, Who has committed no sins. There are no furrows in Him.

Deuteronomy 21:4d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wē (or vē) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

⁵ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:4.

Deuteronomy 21:4d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâra' (זָרָא) [pronounced zaw-RAH]	<i>to be scattered [dispersed, sown]; metaphorically of a woman to be made fruitful; to [be caused to] conceive, to [become, be made] pregnant</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #2232 BDB #281

Translation: ...and which (valley) has not been sown. This is a valley where seed has never been sown. Again, this is analogous to the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom there was no sin nature.

The Pulpit Commentary: *The valley...through which a stream flowed, as is evident from its being described as neither...tilled nor sown; a place which had not been profaned by the hand of man, but was in a state of nature.*⁶

So, we want a place of great refreshment, but a place not plowed or seeded by man; all symbolic references to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Deuteronomy 21:4e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âraph (אָרַפַּח) [pronounced gâw-RAHF]	<i>to break the neck of an animal; figuratively to overthrow, to destroy; originally to pluck, to seize, to pull</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6202 BDB #791

This verb is a homonym; the other meanings are *to drip, to drop [down]*. This suggests the original meaning probably diverged into two branches. This word is not found very often in the Bible with either meaning.

My version of e-sword mis-identifies this word as Strong's #6203 (which word does occur in this verse). However, both Owen and qBible.com agree on the verb.

shâm (שָׁמָּה) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb of place	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'eg ^e lâh (אֵגֶלָה) [pronounced g ^e eg ^e -LAW]	<i>heifer</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5697 BDB #722
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

⁶ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:4 (edited).

Deuteronomy 21:4e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced NAHKH-al]	<i>brook, torrent; valley</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5158 BDB #636

Translation: *There they will break the neck of the heifer in the torrent valley.* The neck of the heifer is broken, representing judgment which is brought upon the heifer, who is obviously innocent of any sort of charge. The heifer has never been yoked and the heifer has never plowed; so, the heifer represents Jesus as separate from the sin nature of man.

This heifer suffers for the crime of the murder. A heifer which has not worked is taken to a valley which has not been worked—a valley with rushing water—and has her neck broken there. The verb is 'âraph (אָרַפַּ) [pronounced *gaw-RAHF*] and we have only had this verb twice before in Ex. 13:13 34:20. This was related to the consecration of the firstborn. Actually, if the firstborn of a donkey has not been redeemed, then the neck of the firstborn donkey is broken. I don't believe that *beheading* is the sense of this word. Strong's #6202 BDB #791.

Breaking the neck is judgment upon the innocent. Quite obviously, the heifer did not commit this crime, so this is the innocent dying on behalf of the guilty.

Keil and Delitzsch: *Breaking the neck...was a symbolical infliction of the punishment that should have been borne by the murderer, upon the animal which was substituted for him.*⁷

The dead person's killer was not found, therefore he is not redeemed in the death of the killer. Therefore, the breaking of a neck is the substitution. The heifer which bears this guilt had to be one *full of growth and strength, and had not yet been ceremonially profaned by human use.*⁸ A death is required for the innocent shedding of blood, as per Gen. 9:5–6. So this sacrifice both speaks of an unprofaned Christ and a substitutionary punishment. The unusual mode of sacrifice distinguishes this animal from the sin-offering, where blood must be shed. Finally, the rushing water speaks of the cleansing which takes place.

The heifer and its killing is a type of Christ; particularly typical of His crucifixion.

The Parallels Between the Heifer and Jesus

The Heifer (Deut. 21:3–4) = the type	Jesus = the antitype
And it has been, the nearest city to the slain man—the elders of that city will take a heifer of the herd,...	There is a <i>nearness</i> or a <i>closeness</i> which must be established. Jesus must be fully man in order to die for our sins. For God is one, and there is one Mediator of God and of men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1Tim. 2:5–6; MKJV).
...[one] which has not been made to work...	This cannot be a sacrifice that is worn out; it cannot be the sacrifice of a man who has sinned.
...[and one] which has not been drawn by a yoke.	This cannot be a sacrifice of one under the control of the sin nature. For He has made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2Cor. 5:21; MKJV).

⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Deut. 21:5–6.

⁸ *Barnes' Notes*, Vol. 11, p. 310.

The Parallels Between the Heifer and Jesus

The Heifer (Deut. 21:3–4) = the type	Jesus = the antitype
The elders of that town will lead the heifer down into an ever flowing torrent,...	Jesus is the river of ever-flowing waters, always offering us refreshment from this life of evil. "The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him." (John 7:38; HCSB)
...which (valley) has not been tilled...	Jesus cannot be a man of sin. Christ committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth (1Peter 2:22).
...and which (valley) has not been sown.	Jesus cannot have a sin nature. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners and made higher than the heavens, who does not need, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice daily, first for his own sins and then for the people's sins. For He did this once for all, when He offered up Himself (Heb. 7:26–27; MKJV).
There they will break the neck of the heifer in the torrent valley.	Jesus is our substitute, the innocent dying for the guilty; the Just for the unjust. For Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, indeed being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit (1Peter 3:18; MKJV).

No sin, no crime, no offense can be overlooked. God's justice is perfect. No one can die for our sins, apart from Jesus, Who is perfect and undeserving of any judgment.

Each passage in the book of the Law should have some meaning, and this is what we take out of the first few verses of this chapter—the heifer being a type of Christ.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And have come forth the priests, sons of Levi, for in them has chosen Y^ehowah your Elohim to serve Him and to bless in a name of Y^ehowah. And by their mouth is every dispute and every injury [determined].

Deuteronomy
21:5

The priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward, for Y^ehowah your Elohim has chosen in them to serve Him and to bless in the name of Y^ehowah. Furthermore, by their mouth is every dispute and every injury [settled].

Also in this case, the priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward, for Jehovah your God chose them to serve Him and to give their blessings in His name. Furthermore, they will determine the outcome of every dispute and every injury.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

And the priests the sons of Levi shall draw near; for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to Him, and to bless Israel in His Name, and according to their words to resolve every judgment, and in any plague of leprosy to shut up, and pronounce concerning it;...

Latin Vulgate

And the priests the sons of Levi shall come, whom the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister to him, and to bless in his name, and that by their word every matter should be decided, and whatsoever is clean or unclean should be judged.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And have come forth the priests, sons of Levi, for in them has chosen Y ^e howah your Elohim to serve Him and to bless in a name of Y ^e howah. And by their mouth is every dispute and every injury [determined].
Peshitta (Syriac)	...And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near, for them the LORD your God has chosen to minister to him, and to bless in the name of the LORD; and by their word shall every lawsuit and every attack be <u>tried</u> ...
Septuagint (Greek)	And the priests, the Levites, shall come near, because the Lord God has chosen them to <u>stand by</u> Him, and to bless in His name, and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be <i>decided</i> .
Significant differences:	The Greek has <i>stand by</i> rather than <i>minister to, serve</i> . Both the targum and the Latin add a lot of extra words at the end of this verse. The Syriac seems to add an additional word at the end, which seems to be called for.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then the priests, the descendants of Levi, will step forward because the Lord your God selected them to minister for him and to bless in the Lord's name, and because every legal dispute and case of assault is decided by them.
Easy English	The *priests from the family of Levi must go there too. The *Lord your God has chosen them to do his work. They must also decide what is right and wrong among you.
Easy-to-Read Version	The priests, the descendants of Levi, must also go there. (The Lord your God has chosen these priests to serve him and to bless people in his name. The priests will decide who is right in every argument where a person is hurt.)
Good News Bible (TEV)	The levitical priests are to go there also, because they are to decide every legal case involving violence. The LORD your God has chosen them to serve him and to pronounce blessings in his name.
<i>The Message</i>	The Levitical priests will then step up. GOD has chosen them to serve him in these matters by settling legal disputes and violent crimes and by pronouncing blessings in GOD's name.
New Berkeley Version	The priestly sons of Levi must come forward, for they have been chosen by the LORD your God to be His ministers to bless in His name, and, by their decisions, to settle every dispute and every case of assault,...
New Century Version	The priests, the sons of Levi, should come forward, because they have been chosen by the Lord your God to serve him and to give blessings in the Lord's name. They are the ones who decide cases of quarreling and attacks.
New Life Bible	Then the religious leaders, the sons of Levi, will come near for the Lord your God has chosen them to serve Him and to bring good in the name of the Lord. Every question about what is right and every fight will be decided upon by them.
New Living Translation	Then the Levitical priests must step forward, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in the Lord's name. They are to decide all legal and criminal cases.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Thereafter, the Levite priests must go there (because they're the ones who Jehovah has chosen to represent Him and to praise His Name), and whatever they decide must stand.
Christian Community Bible	The priests, descendants of Levi, shall be present for they were chosen by Yahweh to minister and give the blessings in his name, and they are those who decide on all lawsuits or criminal cases.

God's Word™	The priests, the descendants of Levi, must come forward. The LORD your God has chosen them to serve him as priests and to bless people in the LORD'S name. Their decision is final in all cases involving a disagreement or an assault.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Priests must be there, of Levi's race; these are the men whom the Lord thy God has chosen to minister to him, and give their blessing in his name, and also to decide between right and wrong, clean and unclean.
New American Bible	The priests, the descendants of Levi, shall also be present, for the LORD, your God, has chosen them to minister to him and to give blessings in his name, and every case of dispute or violence must be settled by their decision.
New American Bible (R.E.)	The priests, the descendants of Levi, shall come forward, for the LORD, your God, has chosen them to minister to him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and every case of dispute or assault shall be for them to decide.
NIRV	The priests, who are sons of Levi, will step forward. The Lord your God has chosen them to serve him. He wants them to bless the people in his name. He wants them to decide all cases that have to do with people arguing and attacking others.
New Jerusalem Bible	The priests, the sons of Levi, will then step forward, these being the men whom Yahweh your God has chosen to serve him and to bless in Yahweh's name, and it being their business to settle all cases of dispute or of violence.
Today's NIV	The priests, the sons of Levi, shall step forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister and to pronounce blessings in the name of the LORD and to decide all cases of dispute and assault.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Approach the priests of the sons of Levi over any argument and any plague. Yahweh your God chose them to minister to him, and to have blessing in the name of Yahweh by their mouth.
Bible in Basic English	Then the priests, the sons of Levi, are to come near; for they have been marked out by the Lord your God to be his servants and to give blessings in the name of the Lord; and by their decision every argument and every blow is to be judged:....
The Expanded Bible	The priests, the sons of Levi, should come forward, because they have been chosen by the Lord your God to serve him and to give blessings in the Lord's name. They are the ones who decide cases of ·quarreling [accusation] and attacks.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then the priests of the sons of Levi shall approach, —for the LORD your GOD chose them to officiate, and to bless the name of the EVER-LIVING, and every contention and every dispute shall be decided by them, with all the Magistrates of the surrounding towns;....
NET Bible®	Then the Levitical priests [Heb "the priests, the sons of Levi."] will approach (for the Lord your God has chosen them to serve him and to pronounce blessings in his name [Heb "in the name of the Lord." See note on Deut 10:8. The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons to avoid redundancy.], and to decide [Heb "by their mouth."] every judicial verdict [Heb "every controversy and every blow."]).
NIV, ©2011	The Levitical priests shall step forward, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister and to pronounce blessings in the name of the Lord and to decide all cases of dispute and assault.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then the cohanim, who are L'vi'im, are to approach; for ADONAI your God has chosen them to serve him and to pronounce blessings in the name of ADONAI; they will decide the outcome of every dispute and matter involving violence.
exeGeses companion Bible	...and the priests the sons of Levi come near; for Yah Veh your Elohim

chooses them to minister to him
and to bless in the name of Yah Veh;
and by their mouth
is every dispute and every plague:...

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	The priests, sons of Levi, shall come forward; for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to pronounce blessing in the name of the LORD, and every lawsuit and case of assault [Or, "skin affection"; compare Deut. 24:8] is subject to their ruling.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And the kohanim, the sons of Levi, shall approach, for the Lord, your God, has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the Name of the Lord, and by their mouth shall every controversy and every lesion be <i>judged</i> .
Kaplan Translation	The priests from the tribe of Levi shall then come forth. (It is these [priests] whom God has chosen to serve Him and to pronounce blessings in God's name, and who are entrusted to decide in cases of litigation and leprous signs.)
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And the kohanim the Bnei Levi shall come near; for them Hashem Eloheicha hath chosen to minister unto Him, and to bless in the Shem of Hashem; and by their word shall every controversy and every assault be tried;...
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	"And the priests, the sons of Lēwi, shall come near, for יהוה your Elohim has chosen them to serve Him and to bless in the Name of יהוה, and by their mouth every strife and every stroke is <i>tried</i> .

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name [and presence] of the Lord, and by their word shall every controversy and every assault be settled.
Concordant Literal Version	Then the priests, the sons of Levi, will come close, for Yahweh your Elohim has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of Yahweh, and at their bidding every contention and every assault shall come to be settled.
Context Group Version	And the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near; for YHWH your God has chosen them to minister to him, and to esteem in the name of YHWH; and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be.
English Standard Version	Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to him and to bless in the name of the LORD, and by their word every dispute and every assault shall be settled.
New King James Version	Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of the Lord; by their word every controversy and every assault shall be <i>settled</i> .
New RSV	Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come forward, for the Lord your God has chosen them to minister to him and to pronounce blessings in the name of the Lord, and by their decision all cases of dispute and assault shall be settled.
World English Bible	The priests the sons of Levi shall come near; for them Yahweh your God has chosen to minister to him, and to bless in the name of Yahweh; and according to their word shall every controversy and every stroke be.
Young's Updated LT	"And the priests, sons of Levi, have come nigh—for on them has Jehovah your God fixed to serve Him, and to bless in the name of Jehovah, and by their mouth is every strife, and every stroke.

The gist of this verse: The priests will be called in to make final judgments on strife and assaults.

Deuteronomy 21:5a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgash (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-GASH</i>]	<i>to draw near, to be brought near</i>	3 rd person plural, Niphil perfect	Strong's #5066 BDB #620
kôhên (כֹּהֵן) [pronounced <i>koh-HANE</i>]	<i>priest</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3548 BDB #463
bânîym (בָּנִיִּם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
Lêvîy (לֵוִי) [pronounced <i>lay-VEE</i>]	<i>joined to, attached; garland, crown; and is transliterated Levi</i>	masculine singular, proper noun	Strong's #3878 BDB #532

Translation: [The priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward,...](#) In this and in every problem, the priests will play a part. This is both a criminal problem and a spiritual problem (all criminal problems are spiritual problems).

As we have often seen, the closer we are to the literal translation, the better chance we have to determine what is being said here. First, *sons of Levi* is not preceded by a definite article. As we have seen several times, the Levites are not synonymous with the priesthood. The priests are a subset of the Levites, through Aaron. [The sons of Amram were Aaron and Moses. And Aaron was set apart to sanctify him as most holy, he and his sons forever, to burn incense before the face of Y^ehowah, to minister to Him and to bless in His name forever \(1Chron. 23:13\).](#) The verse, as is often the case in the Hebrew, begins with the verb, which is followed by the subject—in this case, the priests, sons of Levi. That verb is *nâgash* (נָגַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-GASH*] and it means *come near, draw near, approach* in the Qal stem; here, it is found in the Niphal, which is the passive. The priests will be brought near, or drawn near. The Niphal is often used in worship. Strong's #5066 BDB #620. The next portion of the verse reads, literally, [for them has chosen Y^ehowah your \[singular\] God to serve Him \[or, minister to Him\] and to bless in \[the\] name of Y^ehowah.](#) This portion of the verse explains why they are chosen for this task. Their qualifications are that God specifically chose them, the priests, to serve Him and to bless others in His name.

Interestingly enough, we do not have clear legal training for the priests laid out in the Bible; but it is clear, by the time of Jesus, there was some sort of training which was available, as so many of the religious types seemed to *know* when Jesus was violating the Law (He never did). We may assume that, originally, the training was in the Word of God; but, then as rabbis continued to add their views on this and that passage, that an entire system of legalistic theology was built upon the truth, and was barely related to the truth.

On the one hand, I can appreciate the importance of legal training; on the other hand, given the liberal judges which we have which dismiss cases and give out light sentences for child abuse, I am not sure that the training does them much good.

Deuteronomy 21:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Deuteronomy 21:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
bâchar (בָּחַר) [pronounced baw-KHAHR]	<i>to choose; Gesenius also lists to prove, to try, to examine, to approve, to choose, to select; to love, to delight in [something], to desire</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #977 BDB #103
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shârath (שָׁרַח) [pronounced shaw-RAHTH]	<i>to serve, to minister</i>	Piel infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8334 BDB #1058

Translation: ...for Y^ehowah your Elohim has chosen in them to serve Him... The Levites had several responsibilities, and one of them included criminal prosecution. However, in this case, no one was being prosecuted, as this was an unsolved homicide.

Deuteronomy 21:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bârak ^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced baw-RAHK ^e]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1288 BDB #138

Deuteronomy 21:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...and to bless in the name of Y^ehowah. It appears that the Levites were to keep Israel tethered to God and to their dependence upon Him. Their ministry was closely involved with the spiritual life of Israel.

Deuteronomy 21:5d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘al (עַל) [pronounced gah]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
rîyb (רִיב) [pronounced ree ^b v]	<i>strife, dispute, controversy, legal contention, forensic cause; an argument used in a public discussion or debate</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7379 BDB #936
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

Deuteronomy 21:5d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nega ^c (נֶגַע) [pronounced NEH-gahg]	<i>bruise, injury, wound; swelling, eruption [on the skin]; mark [from a plague]; stripes [from beating]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5061 BDB #619

Translation: Furthermore, by their mouth is every dispute and every injury [settled]. It was quite common to have the elders of the city decide court cases; however, here, it is the Levites who appear to be involved in settling court cases. However, in the next verse, it will be clear that there is some participation by the elders in this situation as well.

Strife here is the Hebrew word רִיב (רִיב) [pronounced ree^bv], which means, *strife, dispute, controversy, legal contention, forensic cause; an argument used in a public discussion or debate*. These would refer to civil action between various citizens of Israel—a dispute about property, for instance. Strong's #7379 BDB #936.

The second noun is nega^c (נֶגַע) [pronounced NEH-gahg], which means, *bruise, injury, wound; swelling, eruption [on the skin]; mark [from a plague]; stripes [from beating]*. These refer to injuries or harm done from one Israelite to another. Strong's #5061 BDB #619.

It is at this point that many translators become creative. We have the common conjunction and a prepositional phrase followed by the absolute status quo verb *to be*, in the Qal imperfect. Literally, it is: **and in accordance with their mouth is [or, shall be]**. There is no verb for *settle*. They are giving testimony, which will be the final testimony as to the disposition of the case. The case will be *on account of their mouth* or *in accordance with their mouth*. Because of the high responsibility that God has placed upon them, what they say will be what is. Perhaps, I should say, what it is. We finish with: **every dispute and every assault [or, bruise, or injury]**. In other words, they are chosen because of their solemn profession to give testimony and what they say is the end of the matter. This is it.

Recall when a legal matter is appealed to the higher authorities in Deut. 17:9–11: “So you will come to the priests, the Levites, and the judge who is in this days and you will inquire, and they will declare the verdict in the case and you will do according to the mouth of the verdict which they declare to you from that place which Y^ehowah chooses; and you will be careful to observe according to all that they teach you. According to the mouth of the law which they teach you, and according to the verdict which they tell you, you will do; you will not turn aside from the word which they declare to you, to the right or the left.” When there is a the strong possibility of perjury being committed against one who stands accused of a crime, “...then both the men who have the dispute will stand before the face of Y^ehowah, before the face of the priests and the judges who are in those days, and the judges will investigate [the matter] thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness—he has accused his brother falsely; then you would do to him as he had intended to do to his brother. In this way you will purge the evil from among you.” (Deut. 19:17–19). These are the ones chosen by God to judge in His stead.

Finally, notice that these men in authority in their service do one of two things in God’s stead: they bless or they judge—when we stand before Jesus Christ at the great white throne, we will be blessed if we stand upon His righteousness and we will be judged if we stand upon our own (Rev. 20:11–15). These are essentially the two dispositions of our case at death. These who judge in His stead have an analogous authority on earth.

The Levites are brought in to have another set of eyes placed on this situation; one might say that they are brought out for oversight. This does not mean that the elders are up to anything, but the Levites are there just in case they are.

And all elders of the city the that near unto the slain [one] will wash their [two] hands over the heifer the broken neck one in the valley.

Deuteronomy
21:6

Then the elders of that city nearest to the slain man will wash their hands over the heifer [with] the broken neck in the valley.

Then the elders of that city which is nearest to the slain man, they will wash their hands in the valley over the heifer with the broken neck.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	...and all the elders of the city lying nearest to the dead man shall wash their hands over the heifer which hath been cut off in the <u>field</u> ,...
Latin Vulgate	And the ancients of that city shall come to the person slain, and shall wash their hands over the heifer that was killed in the valley,...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And all elders of the city the that near unto the slain [one] will wash their [two] hands over the heifer the broken neck one in the valley.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And all the elders of that city which is nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer which is slaughtered in the valley;...
Septuagint (Greek)	And all the elders of that city who draw near to the slain man shall wash their hands over the head of the heifer which was slain in the valley;...

Significant differences: The targum has *field* instead of *valley*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	All the elders of the city closest to the corpse will wash their hands over the cow whose neck was broken in the river valley.
Contemporary English V. Easy English	The town leaders will wash their hands over the body of the dead cow... All the leaders of that town must wash their hands over the cow whose neck they have broken. Someone has done a bad thing. But nobody knows who has done it. When an *Israelite washed his hands in clean water, he was showing something to everyone: He had not done the bad thing, nor agreed to it.
Easy-to-Read Version	All the leaders of the town nearest the murdered man must wash their hands over the cow that had its neck broken in the valley.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then all the leaders from the town nearest the place where the murdered person was found are to wash their hands over the cow...
<i>The Message</i>	Finally, all the leaders of that town that is nearest the body will wash their hands over the heifer that had its neck broken at the stream...
New Century Version	Then all the elders of the city nearest the murdered person should wash their hands over the young cow whose neck was broken in the valley.
New Life Bible	All the leaders of that city nearest to the dead man will wash their hands over the young cow whose neck was broken in the valley.
New Living Translation	"The elders of the town must wash their hands over the young cow whose neck was broken.
The Voice	Then <i>in the presence of the priests</i> , have those city elders wash their hands over the heifer's corpse and take an oath: "Our hands didn't shed this blood, and our eyes never saw who did. V. 7 is included for context.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

<i>God's Word</i> ™	All the leaders from the city which was nearest the murder victim must wash their hands over the dead heifer.
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New American Bible (R.E.)	Then all the elders of that city nearest the corpse shall wash their hands [a symbolic gesture in protestation of one's own innocence when human blood is unjustly shed; cf. Mt 27:24.] over the heifer whose neck was broken in the wadi, shall declare, "Our hands did not shed this blood [the blood of the slain, or the bloodguilt effected by the killing.], and our eyes did not see the deed. V. 7 is included for context.
NIRV	Then all of the elders from the town that is nearest to the body will wash their hands. They will wash them over the young cow whose neck they broke in the valley.
New Jerusalem Bible	All the elders of the town nearest to the victim of murder must then wash their hands in the stream, over the slaughtered heifer.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	All the elders of that city nearest the desecrated wash their hands over the beheaded heifer in the riverbed.
Bible in Basic English	And all the responsible men of that town which is nearest to the dead man, washing their hands over the cow whose neck was broken in the valley,...
The Expanded Bible	Then all the elders of the city nearest the ·murdered person [·corpse] should wash their hands over the ·young cow [heifer] whose neck was broken in the ·valley [wadi].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then the priests of the sons of Levi shall approach, —for the LORD your GOD chose them to officiate, and to bless the name of the EVER-LIVING, and every contention and every dispute shall be decided by them, with all the Magistrates of the surrounding towns; —to the corpse and wash their hands over the broken-necked heifer at the brook,.. V. 5 is included for context.
NET Bible®	...and all the elders of that city nearest the corpse [Heb "slain [one]."] must wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley [Heb "wadi," a seasonal watercourse through a valley].
NIV – UK	Then all the elders of the town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, and they shall declare: "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done. V. 7 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	All the leaders of the town nearest the murder victim are to wash their hands over the cow whose neck was broken in the vadi.
exeGesés companion Bible	...and all the elders of the city near the pierced, baptize their hands over the heifer whose neck they broke in the wadi:...
Judaica Press Complete T.	And all the elders of that city, who are the nearest to the corpse, shall wash their hands over the calf that was decapitated in the valley;...
Kaplan Translation	All the elders of the city closest to the corpse shall wash their hands over the decapitated calf at the stream.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And all the zekenim of that town, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	Then all the elders of that city, the ones nearest to the mortally wounded one, shall wash their hands over the beheaded heifer in the watercourse,...
Context Group Version	And all the elders of that city, who are nearest to the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley;...
English Standard Version	And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley,...

Green's Literal Translation	And all the elders of that city nearest to the one slain shall wash their hands by the stream, over the heifer whose neck was broken.
New RSV	All the elders of that town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the wadi...
Young's Updated LT	And all the elders of that city, who are near unto the slain one, do wash their hands over the heifer which is beheaded in the valley.

The gist of this verse: The elders of the city nearest the slain man were to wash their hands over the heifer which was offered as a substitute for punishment for the criminal act.

Deuteronomy 21:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (לכ) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
z ^e qêñîym (זקנים) [pronounced <i>zê-kay-NEEM</i>]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; construct form	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
ġyr (ריע) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
qârôb (ברק) or qârôwb (בורק) [pronounced <i>kaw-RO^BV</i>]	<i>near [in place or time], contiguous, imminent, within a short pace; short, shortness; near in relation, intimate acquaintance; that which is familiar to us; one who brings aide to another; soon, presently</i>	masculine adjective; can be used as a substantive with the definite article	Strong's #7138 BDB #898
'el (לא) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
châlâl (ללה) [pronounced <i>chaw-LAWL</i>]	<i>slain, fatally wounded, wounded, pierced; from a verb which means to bore, to pierce</i>	masculine singular noun (or adjective) with the definite article	Strong's #2491 BDB #319
râchats (רחץ) [pronounced <i>raw-BAHTS</i>]	<i>to wash, to bathe (oneself), to wash off (away); possibly to declare oneself innocent</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7364 BDB #934
'êth (אח) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Deuteronomy 21:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâdayim (יָדַיִם) [pronounced yaw-dah-YIHM]	<i>[two] hands; both hands</i> figuratively for <i>strength, power, control</i> of a particular person	feminine dual noun with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
‘al (עַל) [pronounced ‘áh]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
‘eg ^e lâh (עֵגֶל) [pronounced ‘ég ^e -LAW]	<i>heifer</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5697 BDB #722

Translation: Then the elders of that city nearest to the slain man will wash their hands over the heifer... Washing their hands suggested that they were not guilty and that there was nothing more than they could do. They certainly wanted to find the murderer, but there was no CSI at that time.

This is a solemn ceremony over which both the elders of the city and the priests of the city give their solemn testimonies. The sacrifice indicates that this is done before God. The ceremony indicates that they have had nothing to do with the matter and do not know anything about the matter at hand. The washing of the hands is a symbolic declaration to both innocence and the final disposition of a matter. Their innocence will be proclaimed in v. 7; and we all recall the famous washing of the hands by Pontius Pilate: **And when Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands in front of the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of this Man's blood—see yourselves."** (Matt. 27:24; see Psalm 26:6 as well).

Again, one can see God the Holy Spirit speaking through Moses. Pontius Pilate will allow the Romans to crucify Jesus on the demands of the Jews, but he will wash his hands of the situation. This is much like the elders washing their hands over the heifer. It is a parallel situation which looks forward to what would happen 1500 years hence.

Their hands, as elders, were clean, after this ceremonial washing. The people of that city were now cleared of this crime, ceremonially speaking. This does not mean that they had anything to do with committing the crime; but they are a part of the community associated with the crime and what happens in the community affects the entire community.

Deuteronomy 21:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘âraph (עֲרַפָּה) [pronounced ‘aw-RAHF]	<i>the one with the broken neck; figuratively the overthrown one, the destroyed one</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #6202 BDB #791
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
nachal (נַחַל) [pronounced NAHKH-al]	<i>brook, torrent; valley</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #5158 BDB #636

Translation:...[with] the broken neck in the valley. This simply identifies the heifer as the one whose neck was broken, which was done in lieu of the criminal. The valley simply indicates where all of this took place.

And they have testified and they said, “Our [two] hands did not shed the blood the this and our [two] eyes did not see. Deuteronomy 21:7 **They will then testify, saying, “Our hands did not shed this blood and our eyes did not see [what happened].**

They will then testify, saying, “We did not murder this man nor did we see what happened.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	...and shall answer and say: <u>It is manifest before the Lord that this hath not come by our hands, nor have we absolved him who shed this blood, nor have our eyes beheld.</u>
Jerusalem targum	Nor have our eyes seen who it is who hath shed it.
Latin Vulgate	And shall say: Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And they have testified and they said, “Our [two] hands did not shed the blood the this and our [two] eyes did not see.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen the victim.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, and our eyes have not seen <i>it</i> .

Significant differences: As usual, the targum has a lot of additional text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	They will then solemnly state: "Our hands did not shed this blood. Our eyes did not see it happen.
Contemporary English V.	...and say, "We had no part in this murder, and we don't know who did it.
Easy English	And they will say, "We did not kill the man. We did not see anyone kill him.
Easy-to-Read Version	These leaders must say, 'We did not kill this man. And we did not see it happen.
Good News Bible (TEV)	...and say, 'We did not murder this one, and we do not know who did it.
<i>The Message</i>	...and say, "We didn't kill this man and we didn't see who did it.
New Century Version	They should declare: "We did not kill this person, and we did not see it happen.
New Life Bible	Then they will say, 'Our hands have not killed him. Our eyes have not seen it.
New Living Translation	Then they must say, `Our hands did not shed this person's blood, nor did we see it happen.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'Then all the elders of that city who went out to the murdered man must wash their hands over the head of the heifer that was slaughtered in the valley and say, <i>Our hands didn't shed this blood and our eyes didn't witness it.</i> V. 6 is included for context.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	Then they must make this formal statement: "We didn't commit this murder, and we didn't witness it.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And the elders of this neighbouring city, close to the dead man [`Close to'; literally, in the Latin, `coming close to', but it does not appear from the context that the dead body was present when the heifer was slaughtered.], will wash their hands over the

heifer that lies slain in the glen, protesting, Not ours the hand that shed this blood; our eyes never witnessed the deed; be merciful, Lord, to Israel, the people thou hast claimed for thyself; do not charge Israel, thy own people, with guilt because it is stained with an innocent man's blood. So shall they be quit of all blame for the murder. Vv. 6 and 8 are included for context.

New American Bible

Then all the elders of that city nearest the corpse shall wash their hands [Wash their hands: a symbolic gesture in protestation of one's own innocence when human blood is unjustly shed; cf ? Matthew 27:24] over the heifer whose throat was cut in the wadi, and shall declare, 'Our hands did not shed this blood [This blood: the blood of the slain man as symbolized by the heifer's blood.], and our eyes did not see the deed. Absolve, O LORD, your people Israel, whom you have ransomed, and let not the guilt of shedding innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel.' Thus they shall be absolved from the guilt of bloodshed, and you shall purge from your midst the guilt of innocent blood, that you may prosper for doing what is right in the sight of the LORD. Vv. 6, 8 and 9 are included for context.

NIRV

They'll say to the Lord, "We didn't kill that person. We didn't see it happen.

New Jerusalem Bible

They must pronounce these words, "Our hands have not shed this blood and our eyes have seen nothing.

New Simplified Bible

»They will answer: 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did we see it.

Today's NIV

Then all the elders of the town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, and they shall declare: "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done. V. 6 is included for context.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear

They will answer and say, "Our hands never spilled this blood, and our eyes never saw it.

Bible in Basic English

Will say, This death is not the work of our hands and our eyes have not seen it.

The Expanded Bible

They should declare: "·We did not kill this person [·Our hands did not spill this blood], and ·we [·our eyes] did not see it happen.

Ferar-Fenton Bible

...and asseverate and say; "Our hands have not shed this blood, and our eyes did not see it.

NET Bible®

Then they must proclaim, "Our hands have not spilled this blood, nor have we [Heb "our eyes." This is a figure of speech known as synecdoche in which the part (the eyes) is put for the whole (the entire person).] witnessed the crime [Heb "seen"; the implied object (the crime committed) has been specified in the translation for clarity].

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Then they are to speak up and say, 'This blood was not shed by our hands, nor have we seen who did it.

exeGesés companion Bible

...and they answer and say,
Neither our hands poured this blood,
nor our eyes seen.

Judaica Press Complete T.

And they shall announce and say, "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see *this crime*."

Kaplan Translation

[The elders] [(Sotah 46a; Yad, Rotze'ach 9:3).] shall speak up and say, 'Our hands have not spilled this blood, and our eyes have not witnessed it.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And they shall answer and say, Yadeinu (our hands) are not guilty of shefach dahm (shedding blood), neither have our eyes seen it.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	...and they will respond and say: Our hands, they have not shed this blood, and our eyes, they have not seen it.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	...and shall respond, and say,—Our hands, shed not this blood, neither did, our eyes, see the deed.
English Standard Version	...and they shall testify, 'Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it shed.
NASB	...and they shall answer and say, `Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see <i>it</i> .
New RSV	...and they shall declare: `Our hands did not shed this blood, nor were we witnesses to it.
World English Bible	...and they shall answer and say, Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.
<i>Young's Literal Translation</i>	And they have answered and said, Our hands have not shed this blood, and our eyes have not seen.

The gist of this verse: The elders, after washing their hands, must take an oath that they did not kill this man and that they did not know who did.

Deuteronomy 21:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i>]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
It is reasonable to render this <i>speak [or, answer] loudly, speak up [in a public forum]</i> . ʿânâh occasionally has a very technical meaning of giving a response in court, and could be rendered <i>testify</i> . in some contexts, this word can mean <i>to sing</i> . BDB lists this on p. 777.			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾâmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
yâdayim (יָדַיִם) [pronounced <i>yaw-dah-YIHM</i>]	<i>[two] hands; both hands figuratively for strength, power, control of a particular person</i>	feminine dual noun with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâphak ^e (שָׁפַק) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHK^e</i>]	<i>to pour, to pour out, to shed; to heap up [on a mound]</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8210 BDB #1049

Deuteronomy 21:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Translation: They will then testify, saying, “Our hands did not shed this blood... These elders here now give their own testimony before God and before all that they had no hand in the killing of this man.

Who are the elders taking an oath before? This is why the Levites were brought in. They are taking an oath before the Levites, who are representatives of God in this matter.

Deuteronomy 21:7b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gay-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
lôʾ (לֹא or אֵין) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
râʾâh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: ...and our eyes did not see [what happened]. They also testify that they did not see what happened. This would include that they were not aware of any plots which may have been hatched to kill this man.

The authorities in that area, the judges and the elders, are called upon to give testimony concerning the slain person found in the field nearest them. They give sworn testimony before God in a solemn ceremony that they were personally not involved and that they know nothing of this matter.

Forgive [or, cover over] Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, O Y^ehowah, and do not give blood innocent in a midst of Your people Israel.” And has pardoned to them the blood.

Deuteronomy
21:8

Forgive [lit., cover over] Your people Israel, whom You have purchased, O Y^ehowah, and You will not place innocent blood in the midst of Your people, Israel.” Therefore, the bloodguilt has been pardoned for them.

Forgive Your people Israel, O Jehovah, those whom You have purchased, and do not place guilt in the midst of Your innocent people, Israel.” Therefore, they have been pardoned for this murder.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	And the priests shall say: Let there be expiation for thy people Israel, whom Thou, O Lord, hast redeemed, and lay not the guilt of innocent blood upon Thy people Israel; but let him who hath done the murder be revealed. And they shall be expiated concerning the blood; but straightway there will come forth a swarm of worms from the excrement of the heifer, and spread abroad, and move to the place where the murderer is, and crawl over him: and the magistrates shall take him, and judge him. So shall you, O house of Israel, put away from among you whosoever sheds innocent blood, that you may do what is right before the Lord. This includes v. 9, but it is difficult to determine where that actually begins.
Latin Vulgate	Be merciful to your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, O Lord, and lay not innocent blood to their charge, in the midst of your people Israel. And the guilt of blood will be taken from them.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	Forgive [or, cover over] Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, O Y ^e howah, and do not give blood innocent in a midst of Your people Israel.” And has pardoned to them the blood.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Pardon, O LORD, thy people Israel, whom thou hast <u>saved</u> , and lay not innocent blood <u>upon</u> thy people Israel. And the guilt of blood shall be forgiven them.
Septuagint (Greek)	Be merciful to Your people Israel, O Lord, whom You have redeemed, that innocent blood may not be charged <u>on</u> Your people Israel; and atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood.
Significant differences:	The targum is filled with extra text, which include <i>excrement of the heifer</i> . The Syriac has <i>saved</i> rather than <i>redeemed</i> . The Hebrew has <i>in a midst of</i> ; the Syriac has <i>upon</i> and the Greek has <i>on</i> instead.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	LORD, please forgive your people Israel, whom you saved. Don't put the guilt of innocent bloodshed on your people Israel." Then the bloodguilt will be forgiven them.
Contemporary English V.	But since an innocent person was murdered, we beg you, our LORD, to accept this sacrifice and forgive Israel. We are your people, and you rescued us. Please don't hold this crime against us." If you obey the LORD and do these things, he will forgive Israel.
Easy English	Please accept this animal as a gift, *Lord, from your people *Israel, that you saved from Egypt. This man has not done anything wrong. But do not think that we have killed him." So you will pay the price for the murder because you kill the young cow. Then God will not remember this bad thing against you.
Easy-to-Read Version	Lord, you saved Israel. We are your people. Now make us pure [Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."].

	Don't blame us for killing an innocent man.' In this way, those men will not be blamed for killing an innocent man.
Good News Bible (TEV)	LORD, forgive your people Israel, whom you rescued from Egypt. Forgive us and do not hold us responsible for the murder of an innocent person.'
<i>The Message</i>	Purify your people Israel whom you redeemed, O GOD. Clear your people Israel from any guilt in this murder." That will clear them from any responsibility in the murder.
New Century Version	LORD, remove this sin from your people Israel, whom you have saved. Don't blame your people, the Israelites, for the murder of this innocent person." And so the murder will be paid for.
New Life Bible	O Lord, forgive Your people Israel whom You have set free. Do not put the guilt of killing a man who did no wrong on Your people Israel.' And they will be forgiven from the guilt of the man's death.
New Living Translation	O Lord, forgive your people Israel whom you have redeemed. Do not charge your people with the guilt of murdering an innocent person.' Then they will be absolved of the guilt of this person's blood.
The Voice	Eternal, please cover <i>the wickedness</i> of Your people Israel, the ones You delivered from slavery. Please don't consider your people Israel guilty of shedding innocent blood!" <i>If this ceremony is performed</i> , that city will be forgiven for the blood that was shed near it.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	<i>Be merciful to Your people IsraEl whom You have redeemed, O Lord, so that Your people IsraEl aren't held responsible for this innocent blood. And by doing this, the blood will have been paid for by them.</i>
Christian Community Bible	Forgive, O Yahweh, your people of Israel whom you rescued, and do not charge them with this shedding of innocent blood."
<i>God's Word</i> TM	LORD, make peace with your people Israel, whom you freed. Don't let the guilt of this unsolved murder remain among your people Israel." Then there will be peace with the LORD despite the murder.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	...be merciful, Lord, to Israel, the people thou hast claimed for thyself; do not charge Israel, thy own people, with guilt because it is stained with an innocent man's blood. So shall they be quit of all blame for the murder.
New American Bible (R.E.)	Absolve, O LORD, your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not let the guilt of shedding innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel." Thus they shall be absolved from the guilt of bloodshed, and you shall purge the innocent blood from your midst, and do what is right in the eyes of the LORD. V. 9 is included for context. Dt 19:13.
NIRV	Accept this payment for the sin of your people Israel. Lord, you have set your people free. Don't hold them guilty for spilling the blood of someone who hasn't done anything wrong." That will pay for the death of that person.
New Jerusalem Bible	O Yahweh, forgive your people Israel whom you have redeemed, and let no innocent blood be shed among your people Israel. May this bloodshed be forgiven them!"
New Simplified Bible	»'Forgive your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, O Jehovah. Do not hold us responsible for the murder of an innocent person.' Forgive them of bloodguilt.
Revised English Bible	Accept expiation, O LORD, for your people Israel whom you redeemed, and do not let the guilt of innocent blood rest upon your people Israel: let this bloodshed be expiated on their behalf.'
Today's NIV	Accept this atonement for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, LORD, and do not hold your people guilty of the blood of an innocent person." And the bloodshed will be atoned for.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Yahweh, atone for Israel and your people that you ransomed, and never give innocent blood to the center of your people Israel. Atone them by the blood."
Bible in Basic English	Have mercy, O Lord, on your people Israel whom you have made free, and take away from your people the crime of a death without cause. Then they will no longer be responsible for the man's death.
The Expanded Bible	LORD, ·remove this sin from [make atonement for] your people Israel, whom you have ·saved [redeemed; ransomed]. Don't ·blame your people, the Israelites, for the murder of this innocent person [·place the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel]." And so the murder will be ·paid [atoned] for.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Cover it to the people of Israel whom you have chosen, LORD, and lay not innocent blood on the breast of Your people of Israel." Then the blood shall be covered for them, and you will burn the innocent blood from amongst you,... A portion of v. 9 is included for context.
HCSB	LORD, forgive Your people Israel You redeemed, and do not hold the shedding of innocent blood against them.' Then they will be absolved of responsibility for bloodshed.
NET Bible®	Do not blame [Heb "Atone for."] your people Israel whom you redeemed, O Lord, and do not hold them accountable for the bloodshed of an innocent person." [Heb "and do not place innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel."] Then atonement will be made for the bloodshed.
New Heart English Bible	Forgive, LORD, your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not allow innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel." The blood shall be forgiven them.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	ADONAI, forgive your people Isra'el, whom you redeemed; do not allow innocent blood to be shed among your people Isra'el.' And they will be forgiven this bloodshed.
exeGesés companion Bible	Kapar/Atone, O Yah Veh, to your people Yisra El whom you redeemed; and give not innocent blood midst your people Yisra El. - and the blood kapars/atones.
Judaica Press Complete T.	"Atone for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, O Lord, and lay not <i>the guilt of</i> innocent blood among your people Israel." And so the blood shall be atoned for them.
Kaplan Translation	[The priests shall then say,] 'Forgive [Or, 'reveal the truth' (Midrash Aggadah; Bachya).] Your people, whom You, God, have liberated. Do not allow [the guilt for] innocent blood to remain with your people Israel.' The blood shall thus be atoned for.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	Kapper (atone), O Hashem, for Thy people Yisroel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not dahm naki (innocent blood) unto the charge of Thy people Yisroel. And the shefach dahm shall be atoned for.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	'וְהוֹיָה לְךָ, forgive Your people Yisra' ĕl, whom You have redeemed, and do not allow innocent blood in the midst of Your people Yisra' ĕl.' And the blood-guilt shall be pardoned to them.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Forgive, O Lord, Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not allow the shedding of innocent blood to be charged to Your people Israel. And the guilt of blood shall be forgiven them.
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Concordant Literal Version	Make a propitiatory shelter for Your people, Israel, whom You have ransomed, Yahweh, and let not guilt for the blood of the innocent remain among Your people, Israel. Thus a propitiatory shelter for them will be made concerning this bloodshed.
Context Group Version	Forgive, O YHWH, your people Israel, whom you have ransomed, and don't allow innocent blood [to remain] in the midst of your people Israel. And the blood shall be forgiven them.
Darby Translation	Forgive thy people Israel, whom thou, Jehovah, hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood to the charge of thy people Israel; and the blood shall be expiated for them.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Be propitious unto thy people Israel whom thou hast redeemed, O Yahweh, and do not impute innocent blood in the midst of thy people Israel. So shall they obtain propitiation for the guilt of shedding blood.
English Standard Version	Accept atonement, O LORD, for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not set the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel, so that their blood guilt be atoned for.'
The Geneva Bible	Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israels charge. And the blood shall be forgiven them. This was the prayer, which the priests made in the audience of the people.
Green's Literal Translation	O Jehovah, be merciful to Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not allow innocent blood in the midst of Your people Israel. And the blood shall be forgiven them.
NASB	Forgive [Lit Cover over, atone for] Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, O Lord, and do not place the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of Your people Israel.' And the bloodguiltiness shall be forgiven [Lit covered over, atoned for] them.
New King James Version	Provide atonement, O Lord, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood.
New RSV	Absolve, O Lord, your people Israel, whom you redeemed; do not let the guilt of innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel.' Then they will be absolved of blood-guilt.
Third Millennium Bible	Be merciful, O LORD, unto Thy people Israel, whom Thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto Thy people of Israel's charge.' And the blood shall be forgiven them.
Updated Bible Version 2.11	Forgive, O Yahweh, your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and don't allow innocent blood [to remain] in the midst of your people Israel. And the blood will be forgiven them.
World English Bible	Forgive, Yahweh, your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and don't allow innocent blood <i>to remain</i> in the midst of your people Israel. The blood shall be forgiven them.
Young's Updated LT	Receive atonement for Your people Israel, whom You have ransomed, O Jehovah, and suffer not innocent blood in the midst of Your people Israel; and the blood has been pardoned to them.
The gist of this verse:	The elders complete the oath and the crime is therefore covered over and not charged to Israel.

Deuteronomy 21:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced kaw-FAHR]	<i>cover, cover over [with]; spread over; appease, placate, pacify; pardon, expiate; atone for; give [grant] forgiveness</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #3722 BDB #497
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
pâdâh (פָּדָה) [pronounced paw-DAWH]	<i>to ransom, to purchase, to redeem; to let go [set free]; to preserve, to deliver [from danger]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6299 BDB #804
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *Forgive* [lit., *cover over*] *Your people Israel, whom You have purchased, O Y^ehowah,...* This is what the elders will ask of God. They ask for forgiveness for this murder which has occurred. In the Old Testament, *forgiveness* was a covering over of sin.

Wesley: *Though there was no mortal guilt in this people, yet there was a ceremonial uncleanness in the land, which was to be expiated and forgiven.*⁹

The word used here is kâphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced kaw-FAHR], which means *cover, cover over [with]; spread over; appease, placate, pacify; pardon, expiate; atone for; give [grant] forgiveness* in the Piel imperative. Strong's #3722 BDB #497. You will note the emphasis on a covering over. This is because Jesus Christ did not offer Himself up yet, in time, for sin. So sins were, until the cross, covered over. They were always there, but covered so that they could not be seen.

In the Old Testament, God is said to have *redeemed* Israel from Egypt. In many ways, their many decades of slavery was payment enough for their release. However, this is all a shadow of the redemption of Jesus Christ, Who will pay for our sins on the cross. The purchase of Israel from Egypt is the type; the redemption of our souls by the cross is the antitype.

⁹ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:8.

Scofield was a genius when it came to brevity.

Scofield's Doctrine of Redemption

Redemption: (Exodus type) Summary. Exodus is the book of redemption and teaches:

1. Redemption is wholly of God (Ex. 3:7 Ex. 3:8 John 3:16).
2. Redemption is through a person. (See Scofield's notes for [Ex. 2:2](#)). (John 3:16 John 3:17).
3. Redemption is by blood (Ex. 12:13 Ex. 12:23 Ex. 12:27 1Peter 1:18).
4. Redemption is by power (Ex. 6:6 Ex. 13:14 Rom. 8:2). (See Scofield's notes for [Isa. 59:20](#)). (See Scofield [Rom. 3:24](#)).
5. The blood of Christ redeems the believer from the guilt and penalty of sin. (1Peter 1:18) as the power of the Spirit delivers from the dominion of sin. (Rom. 8:2 Eph. 2:2).

From Scofield's notes for [Ex. 14:30](#) accessed September 13, 2013.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

God could require many things of Israel because He had purchased them and took them out of slavery. In the same way, God requires a great many things of us, because He has purchased us from the **slave market of sin** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)), and has given us life.

Deuteronomy 21:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לא or לוּא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
All of the BDB meanings for the Qal stem of nâthan are as follows: 1) <i>to give, put, set; 1a) (Qal); 1a1) to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote, consecrate, dedicate, pay wages, sell, exchange, lend, commit, entrust, give over, deliver up, yield produce, occasion, produce, requite to, report, mention, utter, stretch out, extend; 1a2) to put, set, put on, put upon, set, appoint, assign, designate; 1a3) to make, constitute.</i>			
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
nâqîy (נָקִי) [pronounced <i>naw-KEE</i>]	<i>acquitted, clean, cleared, free from [guilt, obligations, punishment], unpunished, guiltless, innocent</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5355 BDB #667
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's #none BDB #88

Deuteronomy 21:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qereb (קֵרֵב) [pronounced KEH-re ^b v]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7130 BDB #899
With the bêyth preposition, it means <i>in the midst of, among, into the midst of</i> (after a verb of motion).			
'am (עַם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>people; race, tribe; family, relatives; citizens, common people; companions, servants; entire human race; herd [of animals]</i>	masculine singular collective noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5971 BDB #766
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced yis-raw-ALE]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975

Translation: ...and You will not place innocent blood in the midst of Your people, Israel.” This appears to be lacking a word—we would say, ...and You will not place [the guilt for] innocent blood in the midst of Your people, Israel.” The word *blood* can also mean *bloodguilt*. So, how does you understand that concept of *blood guilt* with the word *innocent*? The innocent blood is the person who has been killed, and these elders are asking God not to place the guilt for this into the midst of Israel (in particular, into the midst of that particular city).

In this verse, the elders are continuing to speak. They ask for atonement or forgiveness of their town, as they are Israelites, ransomed, or paid for, by God. Then we have the adjective nâqîy (נָקִי) [pronounced naw-KEE] and it means *acquitted, cleared, free from, unpunished*. Strong's #5355 BDB #667. *Blood* here stands for *blood-guilt*, as it does in the next verse. It is the guilt from the murder.

We may extrapolate from this that Moses, along with the people, understood that God could hold a geographical area guilty for sins which are committed in that area. This goes along with blessing by association and cursing by association, as we have studied in the past.

Most of the translations see this as the end of the testimony that the elders are supposed to make.

This completes the oath that the elders were supposed to take, after the ceremony of the heifer: They will then testify, saying, “Our hands did not shed this blood and our eyes did not see [what happened]. Forgive Your people Israel, whom You have purchased, O Y^ehowah, and You will not place innocent blood in the midst of Your people, Israel.” (Vv. 7–8a; Kukis nearly literal) Then this will all be concluded with: Therefore, the bloodguilt has been pardoned for them. By this [lit., and], you will purge the innocent blood from your midst, for you will do the right [thing] in the sight of Y^ehowah. (Vv. 8b–9; Kukis nearly literal)

Deuteronomy 21:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-FAHR</i>]	<i>to be covered over [with], to be covered [with]; to be pardoned; to obtain forgiveness; to be expiated of a sin or crime</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Nithpael imperfect	Strong's #3722 BDB #497
That is a Nithpael, found only here with this verb.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1818 BDB #196

Translation: Therefore, the bloodguilt has been pardoned for them. You will notice both the passive verb combined with a change in person (the 3rd person masculine plural suffix). What is being forgiven is the crime or the sin of the murder.

Again we have kâphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced *kaw-FAHR*], which indicates a *covering over of something*, rather than complete and total forgiveness. The people of that nearby city will be pardoned for this crime which was committed.

This ceremony is not for the dead person but for the forgiveness and the covering over of the people of this town. There has been a murder and it is obvious that someone has done it. It is not going to be solved, so, after testimony has been taken, the sins of the town are taken away by this ceremony. “So you will not pollute the land in which you are; for blood pollutes the land and no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it. And you will not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I Y^ehowah am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.” (Num. 35:33–34). The key is that we must be removed from all vestiges of sin. And they called on Y^ehowah and said, “We earnestly pray, O Y^ehowah, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life, and do not put innocent blood upon us; for You, O Y^ehowah, have done as You please.” (Jonah 1:14).

And you will purge the blood the innocent from your midst for you will do the right [thing] in the [two] eyes of Y^ehowah.

Deuteronomy
21:9

By this [lit., and], you will purge the innocent blood from your midst, for you will do the right [thing] in the sight of Y^ehowah.

By doing this, you will purge the innocent blood from your midst, for you will do what is right before Jehovah.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	So shall you, O house of Israel, put away from among you whosoever <u>sheds</u> innocent blood, that you may do what is right before the Lord.
Latin Vulgate	And you will be free from the innocent's blood, <u>that was shed</u> , when you will have done <u>what</u> the Lord <u>has commanded you</u> .
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And you will purge the blood the innocent from your midst for you will do the right [thing] in the [two] eyes of Y ^e howah.
Peshitta (Syriac)	So shall you put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you, when you shall do that which is right in the sight of the LORD.
Septuagint (Greek)	And you shall take away innocent blood from among you, if you should do that which is good and pleasing before the Lord your God.

Significant differences: The Latin has *from among you* rather than *that was shed*. The targum also throws in some extra words and leaves out *from among you*.

The Latin also has something different than *doing that which is right before the Lord*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But you must remove [Or burn] innocent bloodshed from your community; do only what is right in the LORD's eyes.
Easy English	You will show that you have made yourselves right with God. You have not done this bad thing. And God has seen that you have done the right thing.
Easy-to-Read Version	In this way, you will do the right thing. And you will remove that guilt from your group.
Good News Bible (TEV)	And so, by doing what the LORD requires, you will not be held responsible for the murder.
<i>The Message</i>	By following these procedures you will have absolved yourselves of any part in the murder because you will have done what is right in GOD's sight.
New Century Version	Then you will have removed from yourselves the guilt of murdering an innocent person, because you will be doing what the LORD says is right.
New Life Bible	So you must take away the guilt of taking the life of a good man by doing what is right in the eyes of the Lord.
New Living Translation	By following these instructions, you will do what is right in the LORD's sight and will cleanse the guilt of murder from your community.
The Voice	You will remove the bloodguilt from your nation because you've done what the Eternal considers right.

The Hebrew practice of kipper is when one party makes a gift to another in order to reestablish a good relationship between two parties and remove bloodguilt. The emphasis is not so much on the gift itself (although it should be a worthy one), but on the first party's desire for reconciliation. When the kipper is a sacrificial animal resolving an offense that would otherwise be settled according to the principle of "a life for a life," the death of the animal is a substitution for what should have been the death of the murderer. This situation helps Christians understand what the sacrificial system provides for Israel before the Lord and what Jesus does for us on the cross. His death is a substitutionary sacrifice, but it is also a kipper, a gift that reestablishes our relationship with God.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	For, you must remove all innocent blood from among yourselves, if you wish to do what is good and pleasing before Jehovah your God.
Beck's American Translation	And so an atonement will be made for this bloodshed. You must get rid of the shedding of innocent blood if you are to do what the LORD considers right."

Christian Community Bible	So they shall be absolved from this blood; you shall have removed from your midst the guilt of innocent blood and have done what is right in the eyes of Yahweh.
God's Word™	This is how you will get rid of the guilt of an unsolved murder by doing what the LORD considers right.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Do my bidding, and the guilt of blood wrongfully shed shall never rest upon thee.
New American Bible	Absolve, O LORD, your people Israel, whom you have ransomed, and let not the guilt of shedding innocent blood remain in the midst of your people Israel.' Thus they shall be absolved from the guilt of bloodshed, and you shall purge from your midst the guilt of innocent blood, that you may prosper for doing what is right in the sight of the LORD. V. 8 included for context.
NIRV	So you will get rid of the guilt of killing someone who didn't do anything wrong. That's because you have done what is right in the Lord's eyes.
New Jerusalem Bible	You must banish all shedding of innocent blood from among you, if you mean to do what is right in the eyes of Yahweh.
New Simplified Bible	»Remove the guilt of innocent blood from your midst. Do what is right in the eyes of Jehovah's.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	You ignite the innocent blood from your center when you do right in the eyes of Yahweh.
Bible in Basic English	So you will take away the crime of a death without cause from among you, when you do what is right in the eyes of the Lord.
The Expanded Bible	Then you will have ·removed [banished; purged] from yourselves the guilt of ·murdering an innocent person [innocent blood], because you will be doing what ·the Lord says is right [·is right/virtuous in the eyes of the Lord].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and you will burn the innocent blood from amongst you, —for you must practice justice in the eyes of the EVER-LIVING.
NET Bible®	In this manner you will purge out the guilt of innocent blood from among you, for you must do what is right before [Heb "in the eyes of" (so ASV, NASB, NIV).] the Lord.
NIV, ©2011	Accept this atonement for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, Lord, and do not hold your people guilty of the blood of an innocent person." Then the bloodshed will be atoned for, and you will have purged from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood, since you have done what is right in the eyes of the Lord. V. 8 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Thus you will banish the shedding of innocent blood from among you, by doing what ADONAI sees as right.
exeGesés companion Bible	Thus you burn the innocent blood from among you, when you work straight in the eyes of Yah Veh.
Kaplan Translation	You shall thus rid yourself of [the guilt of] [(Ibn Ezra)] innocent blood in your midst, since you will have done that which is morally right in God's eyes.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	So shalt thou put away the guilt of dahm naki from among you, when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of Hashem.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	So you yourself shall eradicate the shedding of innocent blood from among you, for you shall do what is upright in the eyes of Yahweh.
English Standard Version	So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.

Green's Literal Translation	And you shall put away the innocent blood from among you, for you shall do that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah.
NASB	So you shall remove the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the eyes of the LORD.
Young's Updated LT	And you will put away the innocent blood out of your midst, for you will that which is right in the eyes of Jehovah.

The gist of this verse: This ceremony will absolve the community of the guilt of this crime.

Deuteronomy 21:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #859 BDB #61
bâ'ar (רָעַב) [pronounced <i>baw-GAHR</i>]	<i>to burn; to completely consume; to de-pasture; to take away, to [utterly] remove, to purge; to devour, to devastate</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1197 BDB #128
dâm (דָּם) [pronounced <i>dawm</i>]	<i>blood, often visible blood; bloodshed, slaughter; bloodguilt; blood of the grape [wine]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1818 BDB #196
nâqîy (נָקִי) [pronounced <i>naw-KEE</i>]	<i>acquitted, clean, cleared, free from [guilt, obligations, punishment], unpunished, guiltless, innocent</i>	masculine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #5355 BDB #667
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
qereb (בְּרֵךְ) [pronounced <i>KEH-re^bv</i>]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

Translation: By this [lit., *and*], you will purge the innocent blood from your midst,... There is a slightly interesting change of person here. I would have expected Moses to continue using the 2nd person masculine plural here, referring to the people of the city near where the murdered man was found; but Moses uses the 2nd person masculine singular throughout. Therefore, this can be understood as Moses referring either nation Israel or to each individual of that city (it cannot refer to the city, as that is a feminine singular noun).

Deuteronomy 21:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
yâshâr (יָשָׂר) [pronounced <i>yaw-SHAWR</i>]	<i>right, correct, accurate, lacking in contradictions, upright, straight, uniform, having internal integrity, even</i>	feminine singular adjective which acts like a substantive; with a definite article	Strong's #3477 BDB #449
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gáy-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual construct	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Together, the bêyth preposition and the construct form ‘îynêy (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>gee-NAY</i>], literally mean <i>in the eyes of</i> ; it can be understood to mean <i>in the opinion of, in the thinking of, in the estimation of; as ____ sees things to be, in the sight of</i> .			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...for you will do the right [thing] in the sight of Y^ehowah. Moses is expecting that each person will do that which is right in the sight of Y^ehowah their God. That which is right is following this particular set of instructions.

This ceremony is what is expected of them. As long as their testimony is true—they have done what is right in the eyes of God—then there will be no guilt imputed to the city. Again, all association with sin must be removed: “You will not pity him [one who has committed murder], but you will purge the blood of the innocent from Israel, that it may go well with you.” (Deut. 19:13). So there is no confusion here; the substitutionary animal sacrifice is purely symbolic and typical. If the real murderer is later discovered, he is not off the hook because of this ceremony. He would still have to stand trial and face the ultimate punishment.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Taking a Wife from Enemy Captives

We are now on a completely new topic. We go from an unpunished murder to falling in love with your enemy. The enemies spoken of here must be those who are outside the land of Canaan, as “Only in the cities of these people that Y^ehowah your God is giving you as an inheritance, you will not leave alive anything that breathes, but you will completely destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as Y^ehowah your God has commanded you.” (Deut. 20:14).

Deuteronomy 21:10–14 Rape—a forced marriage? (Graphic). From Discover-the-truth.com;¹⁰ accessed December 27, 2013.

As was suggested in the introduction, these first 9 verses might be better placed elsewhere in Deuteronomy, and, by that, this passage would follow organically from Deut. 20. In Deut. 20, there are a host of laws and regulations to be associated with going to war; and this passage deals with the prisoner march after the war.

When you go to war against your enemies and gives him Y^ehowah your Elohim to your hand and you have taken captive his captive; and you have seen in the captivity a woman of a beautiful of striking figure and you have desire for her and you have taken to yourself for a woman.

Deuteronomy
21:10–11

When you go to war against your enemies and Y^ehowah your Elohim gives them into your hands and you have taken them captive. You [may] see among the captives a beautiful woman with a striking figure, and you have a desire for her and you [want to] take [her] for yourself to wife.

When you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God gives them into your hands, and you have then taken your enemy into captivity. It may be that a woman with a beautiful figure among these prisoners captures your attention and you have a great desire to take her as your wife.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

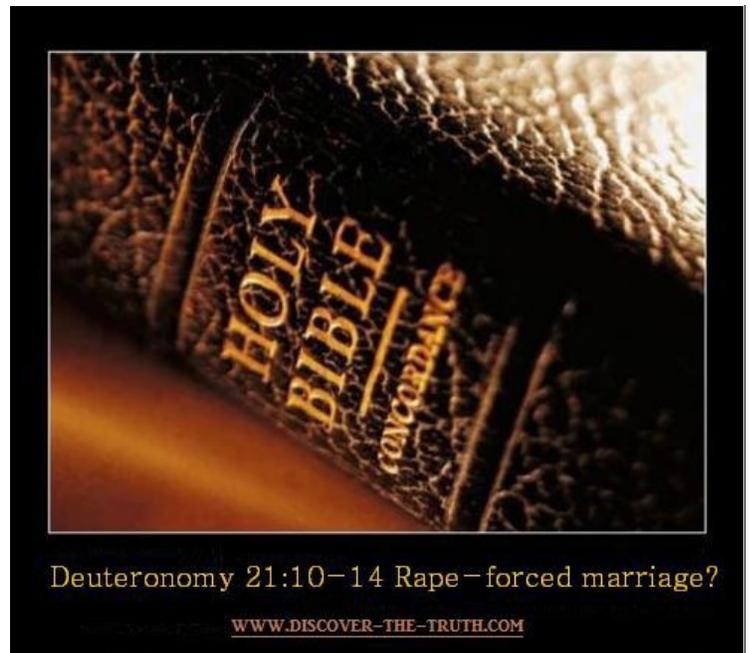
WHEN you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God shall deliver them into your hands, and you take some of them captive: if you see in the captivity a woman of fair countenance, and you approve of her, and would take her to you to wife;...

Latin Vulgate

If you go out to fight against your enemies, and the Lord your God deliver them into your hand, and you lead them away captives, And see in the number of the captives a beautiful woman, and love her, and wilt have her to wife,...

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

When you go to war against your enemies and gives him Y^ehowah your Elohim to your hand and you have taken captive his captive; and you have seen in the captivity a woman of a beautiful of striking figure and you have desire for her and you have taken to yourself for a woman.



¹⁰ I must admit to being surprised that this is a Islam apologetics site.

Peshitta (Syriac) When you go forth to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands, and you take them captive, And see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire her, and would have her for yourself as a wife;...
 Septuagint (Greek) And if when you go out to war against your enemies, the Lord your God should deliver them into your hands, and you should take their spoil, and should see among the spoil a woman beautiful in countenance, and should desire her, and take her to yourself for a wife,...

Significant differences: The Hebrew goes from masculine plural *enemies* to God delivering *him* into your hand. The English translation of the targum, Latin, Syriac and Greek all differ from this, although it is possible that they agree in those languages (in the Greek, it is *him*, but *hand* is still plural). Such differences are not a big deal.

The Latin appears to add a word or two before *captives*. The English translation from the Latin uses the word *love*, where *desire* or *attraction* are more appropriate.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible **Foreign wives**
 When you wage war against your enemies and the Lord hands them over to you and you take prisoners, if you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you fall in love with her and take her as your wife,...

Contemporary English V. From time to time, you men will serve as soldiers and go off to war. The LORD your God will help you defeat your enemies, and you will take many prisoners. One of these prisoners may be a beautiful woman, and you may want to marry her. But first you must bring her into your home, and have her shave her head, cut her nails, get rid of her foreign clothes, and start wearing Israelite clothes. She will mourn a month for her father and mother, then you can marry her. This includes vv. 12–13.

Easy English **When you marry a woman whom you have taken in war**
 When you go to war against your enemies, the *Lord your God will deliver them to you. You will take some of them to keep for yourselves. You may see among them a beautiful woman that you like. Then you can make her your wife.

Easy-to-Read Version "You might fight against your enemies, and the Lord your God might let you defeat them. You might carry your enemies away as captives. You might see a beautiful woman among the captives that you want to be your wife.

Good News Bible (TEV) "When the LORD your God gives you victory in battle and you take prisoners, you may see among them a beautiful woman that you like and want to marry.

New Century Version **Captive Women as Wives**
 When you go to war against your enemies, the Lord will help you defeat them so that you will take them captive. If you see a beautiful woman among the captives and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife.

New Life Bible "When you go out to battle against those who hate you, and the Lord your God gives them to you, and you make them go with you, and you see a beautiful woman and have a desire for her as a wife,...

New Living Translation **Marriage to a Captive Woman**
 "Suppose you go out to war against your enemies and the Lord your God hands them over to you, and you take some of them as captives. And suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you are attracted to her and want to marry her.

The Voice **Moses:** When you go to battle against your enemies and the Eternal, your True God, enables you to defeat them and take them captive, you may see a beautiful woman among the captives and be attracted to her and want to marry her.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	'And when you're going to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God allows you to conquer them and carry away loot; and if you then notice a woman with a pretty face among the captives whom you want to take as your woman;...
Beck's American Translation	<i>If You Marry a Prisoner</i> "When you go out to fight with your enemies and the LORD your God puts them in your hands and you take them prisoners and you see among the prisoners a beautiful woman with whom you fall in love, you may marry her.
Christian Community Bible	When you go to war against your enemies, and Yahweh, your God, delivers them over to you, if you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you fall in love with her and desire to have her as your wife, you shall bring her to your house. A portion of v. 12 is included for context.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	When the Lord gives thee victory over thy enemies in battle, and thou bringest back prisoners, dost thou see among them a woman so fair that she wins thy heart, and thou wouldst marry her?
New American Bible	"When you go out to war against your enemies and the LORD, your God, delivers them into your hand, so that you take captives, if you see a comely woman among the captives and become so enamored of her that you wish to have her as wife, ...
New American Bible (R.E.)	<i>Marriage with a Female Captive.</i> When you go out to war against your enemies and the LORD, your God, delivers them into your power, so that you take captives, if you see a beautiful woman among the captives and become so enamored of her that you wish to have her as a wife,... Dt 20:14.
NIRV	Getting Married to a Woman Who Is Your Prisoner Suppose you go to war against your enemies. And the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take them as prisoners. Then you notice a beautiful woman among them. If you like her, you can get married to her.
Today's NIV	Marrying a Captive Woman When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	When you proceed to war toward your enemies and Yahweh your God gives them in your hands, and you capture captives, and see with the captives a beautiful formed woman, and yearn for her, and you take her as your woman:...
Bible in Basic English	When you go out to war against other nations, and the Lord your God gives them up into your hands and you take them as prisoners; If among the prisoners you see a beautiful woman and it is your desire to make her your wife;...
The Expanded Bible	Captive Women as Wives When you go to war against your enemies, the Lord will help you defeat them [-give them into your hands] so you will take them captive. If you see a beautiful woman among the captives and are attracted to [desire; fall in love with] her, you may take her as your wife.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	When you advance to war with your enemies, and your Ever-living God gives them into your hand, and you take them captive, and see amongst the captives there is a beautiful woman, and you have a desire for her to take her to yourself as a wife, you shall take her into the sanctuary of your house,...
NET Bible®	<i>Laws Concerning Wives</i> When you go out to do battle with your enemies and the Lord your God allows you to prevail [Heb "gives him into your hands."] and you take prisoners, if you should see among them [Heb "the prisoners." The pronoun has been used in the translation for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.] an attractive woman whom you wish to take as a wife,...

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Marrying a Captive Woman

When you go to war against your enemies and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"When you go out to war against your enemies, and ADONAI your God hands them over to you, and you take prisoners, and you see among the prisoners a woman who looks good to you, and you feel attracted to her and want her as your wife;...
exeGesés companion Bible	<u>THE TORAH ON THE CAPTURED WOMAN</u> When you go to war against your enemies and Yah Veh your Elohim gives them in your hands and you capture them, and among the captives, see a woman fair in form and are attached to her, and you take her as your woman;...
Kaplan Translation	<i>Woman Captives</i> When you wage war against your enemies, God will give you victory over them, so that you will take captives. If you see a beautiful woman among the prisoners and desire her, you may take her as a wife [He can marry her immediately if she agrees to convert to Judaism (Yevamoth 47b; Yad, Melakhim 8:5). However, some maintain that he must still wait three months before being intimate with her (Kesef Mishneh ad loc.). See note on Deuteronomy 21:13.].
Orthodox Jewish Bible	[KI TETZE] When thou goest forth to milchamah against thine enemies, and Hashem Eloheicha hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, And seest among the captives an eshet yefat to'ar (a woman who is beautiful of form), and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to be thy wife;...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version	When you go forth for battle against your enemy, and Yahweh your Elohim delivers him into your hand, and you capture his captives, and you see among the captives a woman of lovely shape and are attached to her and take her to yourself as a wife,...
English Standard V. – UK	Marrying Female Captives "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire to take her to be your wife, and you bring her home to your house, she shall shave her head and pare her nails. V. 12 is included for context.
NASB	Domestic Relations "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take them away captive, and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife for yourself, then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim [Lit do] her nails. V. 12 is included for context.
New King James Version	Female Captives "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your wife, then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. V. 12 is included for context.

A Voice in the Wilderness When you go out to war against your enemies, and Jehovah your God has delivered them into your hand, and you have taken them captive, and you see among the captives a woman with a beautiful figure, and desire her and would take her for your wife,...

Young's Updated LT "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and Jehovah your God has given them into your hand, and you have taken captive its captivity; and you have seen in the captivity a woman of fair form, and you have delighted in her, and you have taken to you for a wife.

The gist of this verse: If after winning a battle, you as a soldier notice a beautiful woman among the prisoners whom you desire, you may take her to be your wife.

Deuteronomy 21:10a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
mil ^c châmâh (מִלְחָמָה) [pronounced <i>mil-khaw-MAW</i>]	<i>battle, war, fight, fighting; victory; fortune of war</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4421 BDB #536
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah!</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
'âyab (אֵיבָב) [pronounced <i>aw-YA^BV</i>]	<i>enemy, the one being at enmity with you; enmity, hostility</i>	masculine plural, Qal active participle with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #340 & #341 BDB #33

As a singular substantive, this is spelled 'ôyêb (אֵיבָ) [pronounced *oh-YAY^BV*]. As Strong's #340, this is the Qal active participle of the verb; as Strong's #341, this is the substantive. It is precisely the same word, despite the different Strong's #'s.

Translation: *When you go to war against your enemies...* Moses sets up another situation. These situations are very specific, and if they occur or if something like this occurs, then we apply the principles which we take from this situation.

Moses continues to speak using 2nd person masculine singular verbs and suffixes. So, even though I would have thought to use a masculine plural here, for the people of Israel to go to war, Moses speaks to individuals who are going to war. So Moses is speaking to the individual soldier here.

Enemies is in the plural, but it will be reduced to a singular as well.

Deuteronomy 21:10b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יָד) [pronounced <i>yawd</i>]	<i>hand; figuratively for strength, power, control</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #3027 BDB #388

Translation: ...and Y^ehowah your Elohim gives them into your hands... I took a few liberties in translating this text. It actually reads that *Y^ehowah your Elohim gives him into your hand...* So the *enemies* are reduced to a masculine singular, looking at their army as a whole. So this is all very personalized, as in, *Jehovah your God has given him into your [2nd person masculine singular suffix] hand...* God sees to the overall victory; but each man take a part in the war, and Moses is speaking now to individual men.

Finding a singular here, where we expect to find a plural is known as a heterosis¹¹ [pronounced *HEHT-eh-ROH-sis*] of number, where there is an exchange of one thing for another—in this case, an exchange of the singular for the plural (we expected a masculine plural suffix, but get a masculine singular suffix here instead). This is not necessarily something which is done for emphasis, but could simply be a peculiarity of Moses' speaking.

The people of Israel would enter into the Land of Promise and they would take it. God not only gave them permission; God required this of them. Now, although there would be a wholesale slaughter of some of their enemies, some would be taken as captives (which meant, they would become slaves).

In case you are concerned at this time about, *what if there are believers among these people they defeat?* This was covered in Deut. 20:10 *When you approach a city to fight against it, you must make an offer of peace.* People knew who the Israelites were. They knew that God led them out of Egypt and then purified them in the desert (they may not have known what God was doing to them in the desert, but they knew that Israel walked out of Egypt, under a great many signs and wonders, and then went into the desert). So when the Jews came knocking on the front door of the city, the people in the city knew who they were and knew about their God.

¹¹ *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*; E. W. Bullinger; ©originally 1898; reprinted 1968 Baker Books; p 510. This particular example is found on p. 529.

Throughout the Old Testament, there are examples of individuals and peoples from other countries who placed their faith in Y^ehowah Elohim, the God of Israel. There is no reason to think that those named in the Bible make up an exhaustive list.

Deuteronomy 21:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâbâh (שָׁבַח) [pronounced <i>shaw^b-VAW</i>]	<i>to lead away captives, to take captive</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7617 BDB #985
sh ^e bîy (שָׁבִי) [pronounced <i>sh^{eb}-VEE</i>]	<i>captives, captivity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7628 BDB #985

Translation: ...and you have taken them captive. ... We continue with the masculine singular nouns and suffixes. This soldier is leading away captive his captive, which refers to the entire enemy army. Moses speaks to the individual soldier almost as if he has done it; but each man plays a part here.

It was taken for granted in the ancient world that a conquering army could take as slaves the people who have been conquered. Deut. 20:13–14 *Yahweh your God having handed it over to you, you will put the whole male population to the sword. But the women, children, livestock and whatever the town contains by way of spoil, you may take for yourselves as plunder. You will feed on the spoils of the enemies whom Yahweh your God has handed over to you.* (NJB mostly)

However, this needs to be taken in context with the entirety of this passage: 'When you advance on a town to attack it, first offer it peace-terms. If it accepts these and opens its gates to you, all the people inside will owe you forced labour and work for you. But if it refuses peace and gives battle, you must besiege it. Yahweh your God having handed it over to you, you will put the whole male population to the sword. But the women, children, livestock and whatever the town contains by way of spoil, you may take for yourselves as plunder. You will feed on the spoils of the enemies whom Yahweh your God has handed over to you. That is how you will treat towns far away and not belonging to the nations near you. But as regards the towns of those peoples whom Yahweh your God is giving you as your heritage, you must not spare the life of any living thing. Instead, you must lay them under the curse of destruction: Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, as Yahweh your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the detestable things which they do to honour their gods: in doing these, you would sin against Yahweh your God.' (Deut. 20:10–18; NJB mostly). Apart from those whom God has dedicated to the sword—to be destroyed—the Jews were to take a different tact with the people whom they had to war with.

Deuteronomy 21:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Deuteronomy 21:11a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shib ^e yâh (שִׁבְיָהּ) [pronounced shib ^e -YAW]	<i>exiles, captivity, captives; state of captivity</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7633 BDB #986
'îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #802 BDB #61
yâpneh (יָפֵה) [pronounced yaw-FEH]	<i>fair, beautiful, attractive; handsome</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3303 BDB #421
tô'ar (תָּאֵר) [pronounced TOH-ahr]	<i>a striking figure, an eye-catching form, a form which stands out, which catches your eye, which gets your attention; a form</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #8389 BDB #1061

Translation: ...You [may] see among the captives a beautiful woman with a striking figure,... What you see is a woman of *form*. The masculine noun is tô'ar (תָּאֵר) [pronounced TOH-ahr] and it appears to refer to a *striking figure, an eye-catching form* or, simply, a *form*. It is a word used of males (Gen. 39:6 1Kings 1:6), cattle in dreams (Gen. 41:18), children (Judges 8:18) and of women (Gen. 29:17). Generally speaking, it is a *form which stands out, which catches your eye, which gets your attention*. BDB refers to it as *something gazed at*. Strong's #8389 BDB #1061.

Many of those in the service have some control over those whom they take prisoner, and when one army defeats another, that army and their people are often taken into captivity as slaves.

As an aside, this was a legitimate reason for slavery. One country beats down another country, and they take their territory and take them all into captivity. This is an extreme example. Many times, when one army defeated another army, then their people were allowed to remain in their homes, and they often paid tribute (a tax) to those who defeated them. At other times, all or much of the population is destroyed, like dealing with a pack of rabid dogs.

In war, this could have been precipitated by those who have been beaten; this may have been an ongoing struggle which continued for many years; and this may have been a result of aggression by the conquering army. However, it is more rare for a conquering army to come in and take everyone away into slavery.

The Jews did fight some wars of aggression; and when this is studied, this is often over very degenerate peoples. When Israel took the land, they did fight a war of aggression, but they also offered terms of peace from the outset, which few took them up on it.

In general, the Jews did not take many captives when they invaded the Land of Promise (Joshua 6:17–18). And they were not to intermarry with those people either (Deut. 7:3). However, there were no doubt some exceptions

(Joshua 2:1–21) and this principle in vv. 10–14 would be applied mostly to Israel fighting wars with the surrounding countries.

In the situation herein described, the Jews have defeated an army and their particular people are not controllable or God has required for them to be taken into slavery. There is the possibility that a soldier might see a woman among these people whom he desires. This is a woman, even though taken in slavery, looks quite remarkable to him. She stands out from the crowd to him.

Deuteronomy 21:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châshaq (חַשַּׁק) [pronounced <i>khaw-SHAHK</i>]	<i>to join together, to cleave to; to be attached to, to long for, to burn in love for; to love</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2836 BDB #365
Often followed by the bêyth preposition.			
It's use in Deut. 21:11 suggests that this is a superficial desire rather than a deep love.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: ...and you have a desire for her... The soldier has a great desire for this woman. He has seen her, and he cannot stop thinking about her.

The word *châshaq* (חַשַּׁק) [pronounced *khaw-SHAHK*] (also found in Deut. 7:7 10:15) is combined with the prefixed preposition *bêyth*. Together, they mean *placed his love in, set his love with* (taking into account the preposition which follows). This verb means *to join together, to cleave to; to be attached to, to long for, to burn in love for; to love* and is commonly combined with the *bêyth* preposition. Strong's #2836 BDB #365. Since the soldier looks at this woman and is strongly drawn to her, quite obviously this is not a deep abiding love, but a strong desire.

Quite obviously, what is presented here is somewhat of a superficial desire, but this is the way that God made men. We see an attractive woman and we are attracted. She captures both our attention and our imagination. However, God, through Moses, will not allow this desire to result in the abuse of the woman who is desired. God does not allow a captive woman to be taken as a mistress or as a sex slave.

So, you have rounded up all of the captives and there is a person that you observe among the captives that catches your eye. In fact, you are so taken by her beauty that you even think to yourself, that's the kind of woman I would marry. This passage gives a procedure for doing such a thing.

When the Israelites slaughtered Midian, they were allowed to keep alive the young women who were virgins for themselves (Num. 31:16–18).

Deuteronomy 21:11c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: ...and you [want to] take [her] for yourself to wife. Instead of sending such a woman into slavery, the soldier is allowed to take the woman as a wife.

Although we in modern society believe that the woman ought to have a say in this, it is reasonable to suppose that, when this is put to the woman, she has some say in the matter. It is unlikely that she is completely forced into this arrangement. However, Moses does not go into detail at this point.

Clarke: No forcible possession was allowed even in this case, when the woman was taken in war, and was, by the general consent of ancient nations, adjudged as a part of the spoils. The person to whose lot or share such a woman as is here described fell, might, if he chose, have her for a wife on certain conditions; but he was not permitted to use her under any inferior character.¹²

For those who know women, when a woman is made to do something which she finds unequivocally unpleasant, she has her ways of making her feelings known. Few people are surprised by how a woman really feels. So, even though this aspect is not really discussed, and even though it does not appear that she is given a choice in the matter, there will be a period of time of adjustment, which certainly will allow her the opportunity to indicate how she feels about this entire matter. The soldier who wants this woman, will spend a month with her, and it will become very clear during that month's time how this woman feels about him, his God, and Israel.

Although this may seem odd to us today, it is not really all that odd. For the Israelites at that day and time, taking captives of those defeated would be a usual thing. Although we tend to take male soldiers captive today, it is not unusual for our own soldiers to develop friendships and even find love with women of the area where they are fighting. I don't know what the percentages are, but some men are naturally attracted to exotic women (women of another country). Therefore, just as a Vietnam vet might carry anger toward the Vietnamese for many decades, other Vietnam vets have married Vietnamese women and have developed lifelong families which have continued here in the United States. My point being is, this is not all that odd. It is going to happen in war, and Moses is giving an approach to this which will protect both the woman and Israel.

¹² Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:11.

You will note what is never allowed—the Jewish soldiers are not allowed to go in and rape the women of the enemy. This destroys the soul of the soldier who does such a thing.

And you have brought her unto a midst of your house and she has shaved her head and she has fashioned her nails and she has put off her garment of captivity from upon her. And she has remained in your house and she has wept for her father and her mother a month of days and after so you will go in unto her and you have married her and she has become to you for a woman.

Deuteronomy
21:12–13

Then you will bring her into the midst of your home and she will shave her head, fashion her nails, and remove her captivity clothing from upon her. She will remain in your home and she will weep for [both] her father and her mother for a full month. Afterwards, you will go in unto her and you have [therefore] married her and she has become your wife.

You will bring this woman into your home and she will shave her head, cut back her nails, and remove the captivity clothing that she was wearing. She will remain in your home for a full month while she mourns for her mother and father. After this, you will go in unto her and have, by this, married her and she has become your wife.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	...then you will take her into your house, and let her cut off the hair of her head, pare her nails, and put off the dress of her captivity, and, dipping herself, become a proselyte in your house, and weep on account of the idols of the house of her father and mother. <u>And you will wait three months to know whether she be with child</u> ; and afterwards you may go to her, <u>endow her</u> , and make her your wife.
Latin Vulgate	You will bring her into your house: and she will shave her hair, and pare her nails, And will put off the raiment, wherein she was taken: and will remain in your house, and mourn for her father and mother one month: and after that you will go in unto her, and will sleep with her, and she will be your wife.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And you have brought her unto a midst of your house and she has shaved her head and she has fashioned her nails and she has put off her garment of captivity from upon her. And she has remained in your house and she has wept for her father and her mother a month of days and after so you will go in unto her and you have married her and she has become to you for a woman.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then you shall bring her home to your house; and she shall shave her head and pare her nails; And she shall put off the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and mourn for her father and her mother a full month; and after that you shall go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and should bring her within your house; then shall you shave her head, and trim her nails, and <u>shall take away</u> her garments of captivity from off her, and she shall abide in your house, and shall mourn her father and mother for a full month; and afterwards you shall go in to her and dwell with her, and she shall be your wife.

Significant differences: *A midst of* is found in the Hebrew, but not so translated into the Syriac or Latin (or by the targum). The Greek appears to have the man taking away her garments; but the Hebrew, it is the woman who puts off her own garments.

The targum has several extra phrases at the very end.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	...bringing her into your home, she must shave her head, cut her nails, remove her prisoner's clothing, and live in your house, mourning her father and her mother for one month. After that, you may consummate the marriage. You will be her husband, and she will be your wife.
Easy English	You must bring her into your home. Then she must cut off her hair and cut the hard material at the end of her fingers. And she must change her clothes. Let her live in your house and weep for her parents for a whole month. Then you can become her husband and she can become your wif.
Easy-to-Read Version	You must then bring her into your house. She must shave her head and cut her nails. She must take off the clothes she was wearing that showed she was taken in war. She must stay in your house and be sad about losing her father and her mother for a full month. After that, you may go to her and become her husband. She will be your wife.
<i>The Message</i>	When you go to war against your enemies and GOD, your God, gives you victory and you take prisoners, and then you notice among the prisoners of war a good-looking woman whom you find attractive and would like to marry, this is what you do: Take her home; have her trim her hair, cut her nails, and discard the clothes she was wearing when captured. She is then to stay in your home for a full month, mourning her father and mother. Then you may go to bed with her as husband and wife. Vv. 10–11 are included for context.
New Century Version	Bring her into your home, where she must shave her head and cut her nails and change the clothes she was wearing when you captured her. After she has lived in your house and cried for her parents for a month, you may marry her. You will be her husband, and she will be your wife.
New Living Translation	If this happens, you may take her to your home, where she must shave her head, cut her nails, and change the clothes she was wearing when she was captured. She will stay in your home, but let her mourn for her father and mother for a full month. Then you may marry her, and you will be her husband and she will be your wife.
The Voice	Bring her back to your house, and then have her shave her head and cut her nails and exchange her <i>old</i> clothes she was wearing when she was captured <i>for new ones</i> . Let her stay in your house and mourn for her father and mother for a month. Only after that may you, <i>as her husband</i> , have sexual relations with her. She will be your <i>fully legal</i> wife and you her husband.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...when you bring her home, you must shave her head, cut her nails, and remove the clothes she was wearing when she was captured. Thereafter, she must be allowed to mourn for her father and mother in your home for a month. Only after that may you may have sex with her, live with her, and take her as your woman.
Christian Community Bible	...you shall bring her to your house. First, she shall shave her head and clip her nails. She shall take off the dress of a captive and stay in your house. And she will mourn for her father and mother for a month, after which you may have relations with her. So you shall be her husband and she your wife.
<i>God's Word™</i>	Bring her into your home. She must shave her head, cut her nails, and no longer wear the clothes she was wearing when you captured her. Then she may live in your house and mourn the loss of her father and mother for one month. After that, you may sleep with her. Then you will become husband and wife.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Take her, then, into thy house; and there she must shave her head and pare her nails close, and lay aside the garb of a captive, that she wore till now. Let her have a month, dwelling in thy house, to bewail the loss of her father and mother; then thou mayest take her to thy bed and make her thy wife.
New American Bible	...you may take her home to your house. But before she may live there, she must shave her head and pare her nails [Shave her head . . . : these symbolic actions are

meant to signify the purification of the woman from her pagan defilement or perhaps the end of her period of mourning for her previous husband.] and lay aside her captive's garb. After she has mourned her father and mother for a full month, you may have relations with her, and you shall be her husband and she shall be your wife.

New American Bible (R.E.)	...and so you take her home to your house, she must shave her head, cut her nails [these symbolic actions probably signified the transition or change of status of the woman or perhaps the end of her period of mourning for her previous husband or family.], lay aside her captive's garb, and stay in your house, mourning her father and mother for a full month. After that, you may come to her, and you shall be her husband and she shall be your wife.
NIRV	Bring her home. Have her shave her head. Have her cut her nails. Have her throw away the clothes she was wearing when she was captured. Let her live in your house and sob over her parents for a full month. Then you can go to her and be her husband. And she will be your wife.
New Jerusalem Bible	'When you go to war against your enemies and Yahweh your God delivers them into your power and you take prisoners, and among the prisoners you see a beautiful woman, and you fall in love with her, and you take her to be your wife and bring her home; she must shave her head and cut her nails, and take off her prisoner's garb; she must stay inside your house and mourn her father and mother for a full month. You may then go to her and be a husband to her, and she will be your wife. Vv. 10–11 are included for context.
New Simplified Bible	»When you go to war with your enemies and Jehovah your God hands them over to you, you may take them captive. »If you see a beautiful woman among the captives and your heart is set on her, you may marry her. »Take her to your home. She should shave her head and cut her nails. »She should no longer wear the clothes she was wearing when you captured her. She may live in your house and mourn the loss of her father and mother for one month. After that you may marry her. Vv. 10–11 are included for context.
Revised English Bible	Bring her into our house; there she must shave her head, pare her nails, and discard the clothes which she had when captured. For a full month she is to stay in your house mourning for her father and mother. After that you may have intercourse with her, and be man and wife.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	Bring her into your house, shave her head, and do her fingernails. She turns the raiment of her captivity from over her, and dwells in your house, weeping for her father and her mother for a moon of days. So afterwards, you come into her, and marry her, and she is your woman.
Bible in Basic English	Then take her back to your house; and let her hair and her nails be cut; And let her take off the dress in which she was made prisoner and go on living in your house and weeping for her father and mother for a full month: and after that you may go in to her and be her husband and she will be your wife.
The Expanded Bible	Bring her into your home, where she must shave her head and cut her nails and change the clothes she was wearing when you captured her. After she has lived in your house and cried for her parents [“father and her mother”] for a month, you may marry her. You will be her husband, and she will be your wife.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...you shall take her into the sanctuary of your house, and uncover her head, and pare her nails, and she shall put off the clothing in which she was captured, and reside in your house, and weep for her father and mother the space of a month, and after that you can go to her and marry her, and she shall be your wife.
NET Bible®	...you may bring her back to your house. She must shave her head [This requirement for the woman to shave her head may symbolize the putting away of

the old life and customs in preparation for being numbered among the people of the Lord. The same is true for the two following requirements.], **trim her nails, discard the clothing she was wearing when captured** [Heb "she is to remove the clothing of her captivity" (cf. NASB); NRSV "discard her captive's garb."], **and stay** [Heb "sit"; KJV, NASB, NRSV "remain."] **in your house, lamenting for her father and mother for a full month. After that you may have sexual relations²⁴ with her and become her husband and she your wife.**

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Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	...you are to bring her home to your house, where she will shave her head, cut her fingernails and remove her prison clothing. She will stay there in your house, mourning her father and mother for a full month; after which you may go in to have sexual relations with her and be her husband, and she will be your wife.
exeGesex companion Bible	...bring her midst your house: and she shaves her head and works her nails and she turns aside the clothes of her captivity and settles in your house; and weeps over her father and her mother a moon of days: and after that you go in to her and marry her and she becomes your woman.
Judaica Press Complete T.	You shall bring her into your home, and she shall shave her head and let her nails grow. And she shall remove the garment of her captivity from upon herself, and stay in your house, and weep for her father and her mother for a full month. After that, you may be intimate with her and possess her, and she will be a wife for you.
Kaplan Translation	In such a case [That is, if she does not immediately wish to convert (Yad, <i>ibid.</i>)], when you bring her home, she must shave off her head [To make her less attractive (Ibn Ezra). Also as a sign of purification and new status; see Leviticus 14:8, Numbers 8:7 (Chizzkuni).] and let her fingernails grow [(Targum; Rashi; Yad, Melakhim 8:5). Literally, 'make her nails.' Or, 'cut her fingernails' (Chizzkuni; Septuagint). Both opinions are found in the Talmud (Yevamoth 48a; Sifri; cf. HaKethav VeHaKabbalah).] She must take off her captive's garb [To remove from her any taint of idolatry (Midrash Aggadah). Also to make her less attractive (Rashi; Rashbam; Ibn Ezra).] and remain in your house a full month [Actually, the man could not marry her for 90 days (Yevamoth 48b; Yad, Melakhim 8:5). He thus would have to wait an additional two months after her mourning period was over.], mourning for her father and mother [As well as their idolatrous religion, which she must abandon (Yevamoth 48b; Yad, Melakhim 8:5; Ramban). This is an act of mercy (Moreh Nevukhim 3:41). This delay also gives the girl a chance to accustom herself to Judaism and refrain from mentioning idolatrous deities (Midrash Aggadah). Thirty days is a normal mourning period; see Numbers 20:29.]. Only then [After converting her to Judaism. She is given 12 months to make up her mind to convert, after which she is sent away (Yad, Melakhim 8:7). However, others maintain that she may be converted against her will (Ramban).] may you be intimate with her and possess her, making her your wife [Some say through a regular marriage ceremony (Yad, Melakhim 8:6), while others maintain that she becomes his wife through intercourse alone (Ramban). In either case, she has the full rights of a wife, as in Exodus 21:10 (Sifri).].

Orthodox Jewish Bible Then thou shalt bring her home to thine bais, and she shall shave her rosh, and trim her nails; And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine bais, and mourn her av and her em a full month; and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her ba'al, and she shall be thy isha.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails [in purification from heathenism] And put off her prisoner's garb, and shall remain in your house and bewail her father and her mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.
Concordant Literal Version	...then you will bring her into the midst of your household, where she will shave her head and pare her nails. She will put away the garment of her captivity from her and dwell in your house. Then she will lament her father and her mother a month of days, and afterward you may come to her and may possess her, and she will become yours as a wife.
Context Group Version	...then you shall bring her home to your house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; and she shall put the clothing of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in your house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that you shall go in to her, and be her man { or husband }, and she shall be your woman { or wife }.
The updated Geneva Bible	Then you will bring her home to your house [Signifying that her former life must be changed before she could be joined to the people of God.]; and she will shave her head, and pare her nails; And she will put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and will remain in your house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month [As having renounced parents and country.]: and after that you will go in unto her, and be her husband, and she will be your wife. This was only allowed in the wars, otherwise the Israelites could not marry strangers.
Modern KJV	...then you shall bring her home to your house. And she shall shave her head and dress her nails. And she shall put off the clothing of her captivity, and shall remain in your house, and shall sorrow for her father and her mother a full month. And after that you shall go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.
New King James Version	...then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife.
New RSV	When you go out to war against your enemies, and the Lord your God hands them over to you and you take them captive, suppose you see among the captives a beautiful woman whom you desire and want to marry, and so you bring her home to your house: she shall shave her head, pare her nails, discard her captive's garb, and shall remain in your house for a full month, mourning for her father and mother; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. Vv. 10–11 are included for context.
Webster's updated Bible	Then you will bring her home to your house, and she will shave her head, and pare her nails: And she will put off from her the raiment of her captivity, and will remain in your house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that, you will go in to her, and be her husband, and she will be your wife.
Young's Updated LT	Then you have brought her in unto the midst of your household, and she has shaved her head, and prepared her nails, and turned aside the raiment of her captivity from off her, and has dwelt in your house, and bewailed her father and her mother a month of days, and afterwards you will go in unto her and have married her, and she has been to you for a wife.

The gist of this verse: You may take this female prisoner into your home, and she will change out of her native clothing, cut off all of her hair, and mourn her parents for a full month. After that, you may have intimate relations with her and make her your wife.

Deuteronomy 21:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bôw' (אָבוּ) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>eh</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
tâvek ^e (אֶתְּ) [pronounced <i>taw-VEK^e</i>]	<i>midst, among, middle</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8432 BDB #1063
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: Then you will bring her into the midst of your home... You are a soldier and you have been struck by the beauty of one of your captives. Most of these captives are removed from their homeland and are going into slavery. However, you have seen a woman in this group who really appeals to you, so you will bring her into your home.

Deuteronomy 21:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâlach (אָלַח) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to shave [one's beard or head], to shave off, to cut off; to shave oneself; metaphorically to shave [a land by fire and sword], to devastate</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1548 BDB #164
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
rô'sh (רֹאשׁ אוֹ שָׂרָף) [pronounced <i>rohsh</i>]	<i>head [of a man, city, state, nation, place, family, priest], top [of a mountain]; chief, prince, officer; front, choicest, best; height [of stars]; sum</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7218 BDB #910

Translation: ...and she will shave her head,... While in your home, she will shave her head. This removes what makes a woman beautiful. Even at this point you may look at this woman and think, “Hmm, maybe I have misjudged this woman’s beauty.”

The shaving of the head represents several things: it is often a part of a purifying or cleansing ceremony when closely associated with death, as we have seen in Lev. 14:8–9 Num. 6:9 8:7; it is symbolic of the woman leaving her old life and beginning a new life; it is symbolic of mourning (v. 13 Isa. 15:2); it is symbolic of humiliation (2Sam. 10:4–5); it is symbolic of capture by the enemy (Micah 1:16); it is symbolic of personal disgrace (1Cor. 11:5); and, it is symbolic of God’s judgment upon a people (Isa. 3:17).

Deuteronomy 21:12c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong’s # BDB #251
‘âsâh (אָסָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #6213 BDB #793
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
tsippôren (צִפּוֹרִים) [pronounced <i>tsip-POH-ren</i>]	<i>nail [of a finger]; stylus-point, finger-nail; with the point of a diamond</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong’s #6856 BDB #862

Translation: ...fashion her nails,... On the one hand, I would assume her nails, also a symbol of femininity, are cut off as well, along with her hair. However, the verb here means *to do, to make* and there is no corresponding word which would mean *to make shorter*. So, by the translation, it sounds as though she *does her nails* as women do their nails today. Perhaps this in part identifies her as a woman, as her hair has been shorn.

Although most of the translations have that she will cut off her nails, the verb here is the very common verb ‘âsâh (אָסָה) [pronounced *gaw-SAWH*], which means *to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture*. Strong’s #6213 BDB #793. I realize that this may seem out of place for the woman to shave off her hair, but then to do her nails. Perhaps it is the one aspect of beauty that the woman is allowed here. There is no real agreement from commentators¹³ at this point. The context would seem to indicate that she is to make herself seem less feminine, but the verb suggests that she is making this aspect more feminine. I would lean toward the latter, myself.

¹³ Clarke suggests that she is painting her nails red in Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:13 (and he goes off on the weird tangent about it). The Pulpit Commentary has her cutting her nails down to a proper size and shape in *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 12:13. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, in Deut. 21:10–14 suggest that she is allowing her nails to grow uncut.

Deuteronomy 21:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çûwr (ור) [pronounced <i>soor</i>]	<i>to cause to depart, to remove, to cause to go away; to take away; to turn away from</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
sîm ^{el} lâh (שִׂמְלֵהָ) [pronounced <i>sim^e-LAW</i>]	<i>[covering, outer] garment, mantle, clothing, cloth</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8071 BDB #971
sh ^e bîy (שְׁבִי) [pronounced <i>sh^{eb}-VEE</i>]	<i>captives, captivity</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7628 BDB #985
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5920, #5921 BDB #752

Together, they mean *from upon, from over, from by, from beside, from attachment to, from companionship with, from accompanying [in a protective manner], from adhesion to, from*. Some translators rendered this *away from*.

Translation: ...and remove her captivity clothing from upon her. You may have been taken by this woman by the clothing that she wore, but that is to be replaced. There is no indication that she will run about naked; but she will no longer wear the clothing of her people, which could be quite distinct from the Jews.

Her captive's clothing is literally *her clothing of captivity*. This is nothing more or less than the clothes she was wearing when taken captive. She has not been garbed in some sort of a convicts uniform; nor, at capture did she change into anything different.

What appears to be the case is, some women who were taken captive would dress up to be attractive to their captors. Rather than being enslaved, these women would be looking to be taken as wives or as mistresses (not just by the Jews, but by nearly all nationalities). So if a woman was so dressed up, it revealed that she was open to such an arrangement. It could even indicate positive volition toward the God of Israel when being taken prisoner by the Israeli army.

Seba, and ancient Jewish writer notes: *The daughters of Heathens used to adorn themselves in raiment of silk, and purple, and fine linen, and needlework, to allure and entice men with them; and therefore the law obliges to put off her beautiful garments, and clothe her with old worn out ones, that she might be less agreeable to him; though the putting off her fine clothes, and being clad with sordid*

ones, might be only as a token of mourning; as it was customary at such times to lay aside richer clothing, and put on sackcloth.¹⁴

Therefore, so that the soldier was not blinded by the woman's beauty, those things which help to enhance the woman's beauty were removed from her, so that he would have a month to see the woman at her worst and to get to know the soul of this woman.

This is the idea behind these regulations that Moses is imposing here. He is protecting the women captives and he is doing what he can to see that Israel maintains strong marriages based upon a soul connection as over against a physical desire. The physical desire is obviously accommodated, but confined to a marriage where soul rapport has been achieved first.

Deuteronomy 21:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâshab (בָּשַׁב) [pronounced yaw-SHAH ^{BV}]	to remain, to stay; to dwell, to live, to inhabit; to sit	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3427 BDB #442
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: *She will remain in your home...* She is going to remain in this man's home over this time. So this man is going to see this woman at her worst.

Like it or not, the Bible treats women much differently than men. On the one hand, you perhaps have noticed that there is very little volition here allowed the woman. On the other hand, you will note that she has been allowed to live and she is not placed into a life of slavery. Her native dress, the captive's clothing, is also removed. This woman has all of her previous life removed from her—parents, hair and clothing.

Gill: *The plain meaning is, that when a Jewish soldier was passionately in love with a captive, and was desirous of making her his wife, he was to take her home to his house, where she was to remain, to see whether his passion of love would subside, or the woman become a proselyte, or however till certain rites were observed, and then he was permitted to marry her.*¹⁵

Keil and Delitzsch: *The intention of these laws was...to give her time and leisure to loosen herself inwardly from the natural fellowship of her nation and kindred, and to acquire affection towards the fellowship of the people of God, into which she had entered against her will, that her heart might*

¹⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:13. He was citing R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror. Hammor, fol. 146. 2.

¹⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:12.

cherish love to the God of Israel, who had given her favour in the eyes of her master, and had taken from her the misery and reproach of slavery. But her master becoming her husband.¹⁶

Matthew Henry: *This was [all] done in token of her renouncing idolatry, and becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion. The shaving of her head, the paring of her nails, and the changing of her apparel, signified her putting off her former conversation, which was corrupt in her ignorance, that she might become a new creature. She must remain in his house to be taught the good knowledge of the Lord and the worship of him: and the Jews say that if she refused, and continued obstinate in idolatry, he must not marry her.*¹⁷

Compare to 2Cor. 6:14 **Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?** (ESV) This would suggest that some agreement and understanding has been achieved between the victorious soldier and the defeated heathen woman. That is, she has come to believe in the God of Israel.

Deuteronomy 21:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâkâh (בָּכָה) [pronounced <i>baw-KAW</i>]	<i>to weep [for] (in grief, humiliation, or joy), to weep [bitterly], to weep upon [i.e., to embrace and weep], to cry [for], to bewail</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #1058 BDB #113
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'âb (אָב) [pronounced <i>aw^bv</i>]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced <i>aim</i>]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

¹⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Deut. 21:12–14. This was edited to keep the comments I liked from Keil and Delitzsch and to throw out the rest

¹⁷ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

Deuteronomy 21:13c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yerach (יָרַח) [pronounced YEH-rakh]	<i>a month, a lunar month; a new moon</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3391 (& #3394) BDB #437
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398

Translation: ...and she will weep for [both] her father and her mother for a full month. She will be given a month's time to mourn for her parents, which was the typical time spend mourning for the loss of a loved one.

She has, out of free choice, come from a heathen culture where her mother and father have despised the God of Israel. This is why this people find themselves at war with Israel.

Every normal person will mourn the passing of their parents, believers or not. In fact, the loss of one's parents who are unbelievers is much more tragic as they will never be seen again.

After she is given a month to mourn, then the male Israelite is given her as his wife. This gives her time to adjust and to let go the attachments of her former life and to prepare herself for an entirely new life.

For those who believe that one month is really not enough time, one has to keep in mind what is happening here. The woman has just had her city or country defeated and her parents killed (or enslaved); the soldier is not at war, but living at his home all of the time; and these two people, knowing what is expected of them, are making a decision whether or not to spend the rest of their lives together. It is not as if they are going on a few dates over a period of a month. Bear in mind, the woman also probably understands that, if the man does not keep her, then she will be free to go (this is assuming that the soldier has shown her where this is found in the Word of God). This will certainly be a consideration when this woman considers just how cooperative and friendly she will be.

There is something else important about this time frame (which probably could be adjusted somewhat by the individuals involved). Moses did not want to take the chance that, if this couple lives together for too long, they may have sex before committing marriage to one another.

Deuteronomy 21:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'achar (אַחַר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced kane]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485

These two words together literally mean *after so*; however, they appear to mean *afterward, afterwards, after these things, after this, [and] after that*. See Gen. 15:14 23:19 25:26 Lev. 14:36 Deut. 21:13 1Sam. 10:5.

Deuteronomy 21:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: *Afterwards, you will go in unto her...* At this point, assuming that you feel the same way, after spending a month with this woman not looking her best or feeling her best, you consummate the marriage. This is a euphemism here for sex.

Deuteronomy 21:13e

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bâ'al (לַעֲב) [pronounced baw-AHL]	<i>to marry, to be lord [husband] over; to rule [dominion] over, to possess—used primarily in relationship to a wife or mistress</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1166 BDB #127
My e-sword KJV+ has the noun instead here.			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
îshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: *...and you have [therefore] married her and she has become your wife.* In this, in having sex with this woman, you have become her lord and she has become your wife.

vv. 10–13 read as follows: When you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God gives them into your hands, and you have then taken your enemy into captivity. It may be that a woman with a beautiful figure among these prisoners captures your attention and you have a great desire to take her as your wife. You will bring this woman into your home and she will shave her head, cut back her nails, and remove the captivity clothing that she was wearing. She will remain in your home for a full month while she mourns for her mother and father. After this, you will go in unto her and have, by this, married her and she has become your wife.

The Procedure for a Captive Woman to Become an Israelite Wife

1. Interestingly enough, Israelites were, in general, not to marry foreign wives. This is one of the conspicuous exceptions.
2. There are several things which must all come together at the same time. The woman must be spared and being taken into slavery as a prisoner; and a soldier must see her and have a great desire for her. This was not a minor matter; this would affect the lives of these two people for the rest of their lives.
3. The soldier makes a request for this woman, probably to his commanding officer, and so he brings her home.
4. In the woman's mind, she does not know if she is being taken into his home to be his slave or to be sexually abused. However, neither is the case. The man may not simply take her home and have sex with her.
5. They then have a month together in his home, and one would assume that there is a great deal of talking which takes place. She is going to ask, "Just what the heck is going on?" And he is going to explain what the Scriptures allow. Obviously, this man has to know Bible doctrine. He has to know at least this passage. Given all of the places where people kept verses, it is very likely that this man will have this Scripture written down somewhere to show her.
6. This woman is going to know about the Jews and their God; and she is going to have an opinion about this. The kind treatment which she receives may modify her opinion somewhat.
7. After a month, they are going to know if they want to spend the rest of their lives together. If this woman hates this man, she is going to find ways to make herself unattractive to him (knowing that he must simply let her go free if this does not work out).
8. This man has a month to evaluate their relationship as well. He determines her personality and intelligence and whether they are compatible to him. This is a decision which is forever; this will become the mother of his children.
9. Although this appears to be completely the determination of this soldier, one may reasonably assume that this woman makes her own feelings known. She warms up to him and his God or she does not. If she does not, there is a pop out clause in the next verse.
10. If this woman hates this man, and, after 2–3 weeks, that becomes clear and that there is no way to reconcile this, the man is unlikely going to force himself on her. This would go against the Law of Moses, which has one woman becoming the wife of one man.
11. This is quite a bit different from wars then and wars now. It is not at all unusual for soldiers to rape all of the women they have a chance to—whether on their side or on the other side. This is so much different from that approach. There is no sex here until marriage, and one would assume that this is a mutually agreed upon decision. There are few men who want to spend the rest of their lives with a woman who cannot be reconciled to him.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The procedures herein described actually served to protect women from enemy nations.

The Protections Afforded Captive Women

1. When men are involved in wholesale killing, as occurs in war, they are sometimes prone to do evil.

The Protections Afforded Captive Women

2. It is not abnormal for some armies to be given time by the leaders to raid a city and to take whatever they desire to take.
3. Often this includes rape of the women in the conquered or soon-to-be conquered population by the soldiers who are winning. We have examples of this in the [Congo](#), in [Somalia](#), and throughout the world where [war is being fought](#).
4. Moses recognizes that there will be natural attraction that will occur, and he allows for it.
5. However, Moses does not allow for rape in war or for a man to accumulate a bevy of sex slaves from war.
6. The woman taken in war is taken in marriage, and marriage protects the woman. The man provides for the woman and for their children.
7. Therefore, for that day and time, this was protection being provided by God, through Moses, for the women of enemy nations.
- 8.

The Pulpit Commentary sums this up rather nicely: *Any one who is acquainted with the fearful license practiced among many nations towards female captives taken in war, can surely appreciate the humanizing influence which the injunction in this paragraph was intended to exert. The law here laid down may or may not be abstractly the best; but if it was the best that the people could bear: if it would certainly lift up the people a step higher in their regard for womanly honor: if, moreover, it would have the effect of enforcing a restraint upon the passions of men at that most perilous of all times, even that of war, then the hallowed influence which was shaping Hebrew legislation becomes clearly manifest. A woman taken captive as a prisoner of war was not to be a plaything of passion, but was to be dealt with honorably; to feel that she might part with the symbols of slavery, enter into relation with the covenant people, become invested with the rights of a daughter of Israel, and learn to worship, love, and glorify Israel's God! (For details, see the Exposition, and also valuable remarks in Keil and Jameson.) And if, in the issue, there was no true and proper home for her, she was to have that most precious of blessings liberty!*¹⁸

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

In fact, the Pulpit Commentary also covers this same topic in points.

The Pulpit Commentary on the Protection of Women in War

1. Here is a Divine protest against the tendency of men to make woman a mere tool of passion. This book is the charter of woman's honor and happiness.
2. Our God would aim at bringing about the true nobility of woman, by means of educating the people up to the standard at which it shall be a point of honor with them to insist upon it.
3. To secure this end, Spate laws should be stringently framed.
4. Not even in war-time, nor in connection with our soldiery, is it ever to be tolerated that woman should be at the mercy of the stronger sex.
5. The right place of woman is in the love and protection of one to whom she is dearer than his own soul; and no more honorable place need she desire than that assigned her by Solomon in his description of "a virtuous woman." Many of the holy women of Scripture illustrate this.
6. Under the gospel, woman's position is yet more strikingly asserted. "In Christ Jesus there is... neither male nor female." In religious relationship man and woman are, caeteris paribus, on an equal footing.
7. While, in the home, the wives are to be in subjection to their own husbands, yet the sway of the husband is to be with a love pure and tender, like that of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it is only where the purifying and love-creating power of the gospel is known, that woman rises to her right position in the home, the family, the social circle, and the nation. The legislation on her behalf, which Moses began, has been going

¹⁸ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

The Pulpit Commentary on the Protection of Women in War

on under Judaism and Christianity for long ages, with what results we know in our happy homes. But how much we are indebted for these happy homes to the influence of Jewish and Christian law, can best be told by those who know the dark places of the earth, still "full of the habitations of cruelty.

From *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

3 short and important points concerning war are made by the Pulpit Commentary.

Three Short Points from the Pulpit Commentary

1. That the tumult and disorder of war is no excuse for immoral license.
2. We are to consider the situation and feelings of those whose circumstances place them at our mercy.
3. Natural affections are to be respected underneath all differences of creed and race.

From *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

One could make a case that, Americans, in time of war, are held to similar standards, and are not allowed to simply abuse the people of the other side in war—not their soldiers and not their helpless women and children. This is, like so many other things, an integral part of our Christian heritage.

Surprisingly enough, I did not see this mentioned much by the commentators which I review and often quote.

The Captive Wife is a Type

The Captive Wife	The Parallel
The woman taken in captivity is a slave.	The Israelites would be slaves to Egypt. We are slaves to our sin nature.
The woman taken in captivity deserves to spend a life in slavery followed by death.	There is nothing in Israel to recommend them. Our study of Israel in the desert shows them to be faithless and short-sighted. The unbeliever in the Church Age has nothing in him to recommend him to God.
Taking the woman out of a life of servitude is a gift; it is a blessing to that woman.	God taking Israel out of Egypt is a great blessing to Israel. God taking us as believers out of a life destined to end in death is a great undeserved blessing for us.
The soldier takes the wife in marriage, making her a part of Israel.	God takes Israel as His wife, making Israel a part of His plan. God takes the Church as His wife, making us a part of His plan.

Properly, the typology looks forward to Israel being enslaved to Egypt.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

And it was if you have not taken pleasure in her and you have send her away to her soul. And selling you have not sold her in the silver—you have not treated as a slave in her below that, you have oppressed her.

Deuteronomy
21:14

But if it is [that] you have not taken pleasure in her, then you will send her away wherever she wishes [lit., *according to her soul*]. You will definitely not sell her on account of silver—you will not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.

If, on the other hand, you do not delight in her, then you will send her away as she wishes. You will, under no circumstances, sell her as a slave for money—you may not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	But if you have no pleasure in her, then you may send her away, <u>only with a writing of divorce</u> : but you will in no wise sell her for money, nor make merchandise of her, <u>after you have had intercourse with her</u> .
Jerusalem targum	If you have no pleasure in her, you may send her away with power over herself; but you will in no wise sell her for money, nor make merchandise of her; because <u>your power over her is given up</u> .
Latin Vulgate	But if afterwards she please you not, you will let her go free, but you may not sell her for money nor oppress her by might because you have humbled her.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And it was if you have not taken pleasure in her and you have send her away to her soul. And selling you have not sold her in the silver—you have not treated as a slave in her below that, you have oppressed her.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall let her go where she will; but you shall not sell her at all for money; you shall not make a harlot of her, for sake of a gain, because you have humbled her.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it shall be if you do not delight in her, you shall send her out free; and she shall not by any means be sold for money, you shall not treat her contemptuously, because you have humbled her.

Significant differences: All of the ancient translations interpret *to her soul* as a reference to *free will*. The targum has a *writing of divorce*, which is not found in the Hebrew.

The two targums end with an interpretation, both very different from one another. *Oppressed* in the Hebrew could be rendered *humbled*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	But if you aren't pleased with her, you must send her away as she wishes. You are not allowed to sell her for money or treat her as a slave because you have humiliated her.
Contemporary English V.	Later on, if you are not happy with the woman, you can divorce her, and she can go free. But you have slept with her as your wife, so you cannot sell her as a slave or make her into your own slave.

Easy English	You may not like her. Then let her go where she wants. You must not sell her or make her into a slave. You must not do that because she has had sex with you, as your wife.
Easy-to-Read Version	If you are not pleased with her, then you must divorce her and let her go free. You cannot sell her. You must not treat her like a slave. Why? Because you had sexual relations with her.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Later, if you no longer want her, you are to let her go free. Since you forced her to have intercourse with you, you cannot treat her as a slave and sell her.
New Berkeley Version	However, if you no longer find delight in her, you shall send her away to go where she pleases, under no circumstances may you sell her for money or enslave her, for you have humbled her.
New Century Version	But if you are not pleased with her, you must let her go anywhere she wants. You must not sell her for money or make her a slave, because you have taken away her honor.
New Life Bible	If you are not pleased with her, you should let her go wherever she wants. But do not sell her for money or act as if she were a servant because you have put her to shame.
New Living Translation	But if you marry her and she does not please you, you must let her go free. You may not sell her or treat her as a slave, for you have humiliated her.
The Voice	If you are ever displeased with her and divorce her, you must give her freedom and send her anywhere she wants to go. You're not allowed to sell her into slavery, and you can't turn her into your own slave because you humiliated her.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then, if you aren't happy with her, you must send her away free. She can't be sold, nor may you mistreat her; because, you've dishonored her.
Beck's American Translation	"But if then you don't like her anymore, let her go away where she pleases. Don't sell her for money or mistreat her as a slave, because you sexually humbled her."
Christian Community Bible	If in time she does not please you anymore, you shall set her free. You shall not sell her for money, nor make her your slave, since you have taken her by force.
<i>God's Word</i> TM	But if it happens that you are no longer pleased with her, let her go wherever she wants. You must never sell her or mistreat her as if she were a slave, since you've already had sex with her.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	But if, afterwards, she does not answer thy mood, she must go free; thou hast no power to sell her or exercise lordship over her, when once thou hast robbed her of maidenhood.
New American Bible	However, if later on you lose your liking for her, you shall give her her freedom, if she wishes it; but you shall not sell her or enslave her, since she was married to you under compulsion.
New American Bible (R.E.)	If later on you lose your liking for her, you shall give her her freedom, if she wishes it; you must not sell her for money. Do not enslave her, since you have violated her.
NIRV	But suppose you aren't pleased with her. Then let her go where she wants to. You must not sell her. You must not treat her as a slave. You have already brought shame on her. Dt 15:12-18; 22:13-19, 28-29; 24:1-3; Jer 34:15-16.
New Jerusalem Bible	Should she cease to please you, you will let her go where she wishes, not selling her for money: you must not make any profit out of her, since you have exploited her.
New Simplified Bible	»Later if you are not happy with the woman you may divorce her. She may go free. But you have slept with her as your wife, so you cannot sell her as a slave or make her into your own slave.
Revised English Bible	But if you no longer find her pleasing, let her go free. You must not sell her or treat her harshly, since you have had your will with her.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	If you have no pleasure in her, send her soul. But never sell her for silver, and never barter for her, for you humbled her instead.
Bible in Basic English	But if you have no delight in her, you are to let her go wherever she will; you may not take a price for her as if she was your property, for you have made use of her for your pleasure.
The Expanded Bible	But if you are not pleased with her, you must let her go anywhere she wants. You must not sell her for money or make her a slave, because you have ·taken away her honor [humiliated; exploited her].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	But if it then happens that you do not like her, you shall free her for life,--you shall not sell her for money,--you shall not treat her as a slave, because you have degraded her.
NET Bible®	If you are not pleased with her, then you must let her go [Heb “send her off.” The Hebrew term שְׁלַחְתָּהּ (shillakhtah) is a somewhat euphemistic way of referring to divorce, the matter clearly in view here (cf. Deut 22:19, 29; 24:1, 3; Jer 3:1; Mal 2:16). This passage does not have the matter of divorce as its principal objective, so it should not be understood as endorsing divorce generally. It merely makes the point that if grounds for divorce exist (see Deut 24:1-4), and then divorce ensues, the husband could in no way gain profit from it.] where she pleases. You cannot in any case sell [The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates by the words "in any case."] her [The Hebrew text includes "for money." This phrase has not been included in the translation for stylistic reasons.]; you must not take advantage of [Or perhaps "must not enslave her" (cf. ASV, NAB, NIV, NRSV, NLT); Heb "[must not] be tyrannical over."] her, since you have already humiliated [You have humiliated her. Since divorce was considered rejection, the wife subjected to it would “lose face” in addition to the already humiliating event of having become a wife by force (21:11-13). Furthermore, the Hebrew verb translated “humiliated” here (אַנָּה, ‘anah), commonly used to speak of rape (cf. Gen 34:2; 2Sam 13:12, 14, 22, 32; Judges 19:24), likely has sexual overtones as well. The woman may not be enslaved or abused after the divorce because it would be double humiliation (see also E. H. Merrill, Deuteronomy [NAC], 291).] her.
NIV, ©2011	If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	In the event that you lose interest in her, you are to let her go wherever she wishes; but you may not sell her for money or treat her like a slave, because you humiliated her.
exeGesés companion Bible	And so be it, if you delight not in her, send her away as her soul desires; but in selling, you neither sell her for silver, nor tyrannize her, because you humbled her.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Then, should you no longer want her, you must release her outright. You must not sell her for money: since you had your will of her, you must not enslave her.
Kaplan Translation	If you do not desire her, however, you must send her away free [However, she must agree not to return to idolatry (Ramban; Ralbag). Some also maintain that she cannot be forcibly sent back to her parents (Ramban). If she is married, she requires a divorce like any other woman (Lechem Mishneh on Yad, Melakhim 8:6). However, those who maintain that she is forcibly converted and married by intercourse alone maintain that she might not need a formal divorce (Ramban: Tur).]. Since you have had your way with her [Or, 'violated;' see Deuteronomy,

22:24.], you may not sell her for cash or keep her as a servant [Or, 'enjoy her services' (Sifri; Rashi; Radak, Sherashim; Yad, Melakhim 8:6). Hithamar in Hebrew; see Deuteronomy 24:7. Or, 'lord over her' (Ramban; Saadia); 'do business with her' (Targum; Rashbam; Ibn Janach); 'deceive her' (Ibn Ezra), or, 'treat her contemptuously' (Septuagint).].

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for kesef, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

And if you have no delight in her, then you shall let her go absolutely free. You shall not sell her at all for money; you shall not deal with her as a slave or a servant, because you have humbled her.

Concordant Literal Version

Should it come to be that you find no delight in her, then you will dismiss her to go at her soul's desire. You shall not sell, yea sell her for silver; you shall not make a chattel of her, inasmuch as you have humiliated her.

English Standard Version

But if you no longer delight in her, you shall let her go where she wants. But you shall not sell her for money, nor shall you treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her.

Green's Literal Translation

And it shall be, if you do not delight in her, you shall send her away at her desire; and you shall not at all sell her for silver; you shall not treat her as a slave, because you have humbled her.

NASB

It shall be, if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes [Lit according to her soul]; but you shall certainly not sell her for money, you shall not mistreat her [Or enslave], because you have humbled her.

New King James Version

And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have humbled her.

New RSV

But if you are not satisfied with her, you shall let her go free and not sell her for money. You must not treat her as a slave, since you have dishonoured her.

Syndein/Thieme

And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall let her go where she will. {he is to get rid of her hair, her cosmetics and fancy clothes - once he really gets to know the real her, then he can marry her. If he is not happy after seeing her like this, then he is to let her go.} But you shall not sell her at all for money, you shall not make merchandise of her, because you have humbled her.

Webster's updated Bible

And it will be, if you will have no delight in her, then you will let her go where she will; but you will not sell her at all for money; you will not make merchandise of her, because you have humbled her.

Young's Updated LT

"And it has been—if you have not delighted in her, that you have sent her away at her desire, and you will not at all sell her for money; you will not tyrannize over her, because that you have humbled her.

The gist of this verse:

The soldier can stop the marriage before it takes place.

Deuteronomy 21:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or וי) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Deuteronomy 21:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
The particle ʾîm (אִם) can be used as a demonstrative (<i>lo, behold</i>), an interrogative (usually expecting a negative response and often used with other particles and rhetorically), and as a conditional particle (<i>if, though</i>); an indication of a wish or desire (<i>oh that, if only</i> ; this is a rare usage).			
lôʾ (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
châphêts (חָפֵץ) [pronounced khaw-FATES]	<i>to will, to desire, to take pleasure in, to delight in, to long to, to be inclined to; to move, to bend down</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2654 BDB #342
bê (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88

Translation: *But if it is [that] you have not taken pleasure in her,...* If you do not give this passage much thought, this appears to be fairly open-ended—that is, it appears as if the soldier can send this woman packing before they are married or later on. No problem. All that has to happen is, this woman does not delight him; he no longer takes pleasure in her. And then, good bye, darling, don't let the door hit you on the behind on your way out.

The other way of looking at this, which is accurately dividing the Word of God, is, quite obviously, after this month is over, the man either wants to continue with this marriage thing or not. On the one hand, he marries her, as per v. 13; on the other hand, he will send her away, as we have in this verse.

The reason that I would look at this passage in this way is, there are laws dealing with marriage, divorce and remarriage in the Mosaic Law. Once they are married, then they adhere to those laws. How he met his wife and the circumstances of his marriage are no longer relevant, because they are married. So this makes this passage a bit less open-ended than it might appear at first.

Marriage is viewed as sacrosanct by God, so it makes little sense that, because this woman was taken as a captive, that she gets treated worse than the wife of an Israelite. That is, it makes little sense that, a year from now or 10 years from now, the husband can look this gal over, figure he can do better in the next battle, and send her away because he no longer takes pleasure in her. This would violate the sanctity of marriage, which is found throughout the Old and New Testaments.

However, if—and this is entirely a possibility—that a month has passes, and he has listened to the complaining of this woman for the past month (and she would have a great deal of complain about, as Israel's army has killed her parents and destroyed her home), this woman who once really caught this guy's eye does not seem to be the gal that he had expected her to be. Then, before he has consummated the marriage, he can change his mind.

Most males have had the opportunity to meet a woman who is physically what they consider to be absolute perfection—her hair color, her smile, her eyes, her figure—everything about her is perfect. But then, she opens her mouth and you find out what she is thinking (or you discover her shocking lack of thought) and suddenly, she is no longer this paragon of beauty anymore, because she just has this very, very ugly soul. Given the way that this woman catches the eye of this soldier—walking among a group of prisoners—this soldier quite frankly does not know a single thing about this woman except that she is physically beautiful to him.

Deuteronomy 21:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shâlach (שלח) [pronounced <i>shaw-LAKH</i>]	<i>to send, to send off, to send away, to dismiss, to give over, to cast out, to let go, to set free, to shoot forth [branches], to shoot [an arrow]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nepesh (נפש) [pronounced <i>NEH-fesh</i>]	<i>soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5315 BDB #659

Translation: ...then you will send her away wherever she wishes [lit., according to her soul]. Again, this does not appear to be a new set of laws for divorce, specifically for marrying a captive; but simply the alternate to taking this woman as a wife.

In any case, what this woman got out of the deal is, she was either made this man's wife or she was set free.

*The Pulpit Commentary: At the very worst, she regained her liberty. The love had in this case proved transient she had not pleased him they would not be happy together. In such a case she was given a legal title to liberty. If not loved, she had the next best privilege of being free.*¹⁹

There are several good commentators who suppose that the man might send away this wife at any time in the future, including Gill²⁰ and Calvin.²¹ Furthermore, there are translations noted at the beginning which give that distinct impression as well. There are a number of reasons why I strongly disagree with this view, which will be covered at the end of this verse. There is no reason to think that the morality expected by God should be suspended simply because this woman was originally a heathen woman.

¹⁹ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

²⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:14.

²¹ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Deut. 21:14.

Deuteronomy 21:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced <i>maw-KAHR</i>]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
mâkar (מָכַר) [pronounced <i>maw-KAHR</i>]	<i>to sell, to sell [betroth] [a daughter]; to sell [deliver over] [a people]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4376 BDB #569
b ^e (בּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Although the bêyth preposition is primarily a preposition of proximity, it can also mean <i>in, among, in the midst of; at, by, near, on; throughout; before, in the presence of, upon; with; to, unto, upon, up to; in respect to, on account of; because of; by means of, about, concerning.</i>			
keçeph (כֶּסֶף) [pronounced <i>KEH-sef</i>]	<i>silver, money; silver [as a metal, ornament, color]; shekels, talents</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3701 BDB #494

Translation: You will definitely not sell her on account of silver... The soldier was not allowed to take this woman and simply sell her. He could not think this out and say, "Hmm, maybe I don't want to marry this babe; I bet I could get ___ shekels for her on the open market."

This may also help to explain the use of the bêyth preposition in this passage. This phrase seems perfect for the lâmed preposition, but a bêyth preposition is used instead. This suggests that the soldier thinks about this, and then realizes that he could make a little money on this.

Furthermore, this would discourage other soldiers of just grabbing a pretty woman out of the captives, taking her home, waiting a month, and then selling her.

Deuteronomy 21:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to manipulate, to deal tyrannically with; to treat as a slave</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #6014 BDB #771

Deuteronomy 21:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath, in the place [in which one stands] [when found in accusative position]</i>	preposition	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
When followed by the relative pronoun, tachath means <i>whereas, because, because that</i> .			
'ânâh (אָנָּה) [pronounced ġaw-NAWH]	<i>to oppress, to depress, to afflict; to persecute; to intimidate; to humble; to deal harshly [with someone]; to harangue [harass, provoke, hassle]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #6031 BDB #776

Translation:...—*you will not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.* The word used here is the Piel (intensive stem) of 'ânâh (אָנָּה) [pronounced ġaw-NAWH], which means (in the Piel), *to oppress, to depress, to afflict; to persecute; to intimidate; to humble; to deal harshly [with someone]; to harangue [harass, provoke, hassle]*. There is no overriding reason to assume that this means that the soldier had sex with this woman. Strong's #6031 BDB #776. As a soldier, he defeated this woman's people and participated in the killing of her mother and father. Then he took her out of the captives—the future slaves—and made it seem as if he would marry her. She must shave her head and live in his home. Then he changes his mind. All of what he has done, to that point, is the humble, afflict and intimidate her. It would take this oppression to a new level to then, after all this, sell her as a slave.

There are two views expressed concerning this verse. The first is that the son of Israel could “sample the wares” of this woman (so to speak) and then dump her if he did not like her. The primary reason given for this is that when it reads *you have humbled her*, the word is 'ânâh (אָנָּה) [pronounced ġaw-NAWH] and it is said to be used twelve times for men who have sexually forced themselves upon women (Gen. 34:2 Deut. 22:24, 29 Judges 19:24 20:5 2Sam. 13:12, 14, 22, 32 Lam. 5:11 Ezek. 22:10–11). That means this word is used about seventy times where rape is not involved. This word 'ânâh (אָנָּה) [pronounced ġaw-NAWH] is also a homonym; it is a very common word used in two entirely different ways (it also means *to answer*; it is used over 300 times in that manner). This word is also used to denote grace-orientation, as we noticed when we studied this word before in Num. 12:3. This same word is found in reference to afflicting slaves (Gen. 15:13 Ex. 1:11 Psalm 105:18), for afflicting those in war (Num. 24:24) and for God's afflicting those under discipline (1Kings 11:39 2Kings 17:20 Nahum 1:12). In this context it is very clear how this woman was afflicted—her country was just defeated by the Israelites and her parents and brothers (if any) were also just killed. She has been taken by force to become a man's wife who has been a part of those who just destroyed her family and country. It is in this way she was humbled. My point here is, you cannot point to this Hebrew word and say, unequivocally, that it means that the man has had sex with this woman. Strong's #6031 BDB #776.

Matthew Henry: *If, upon second thoughts, he that had brought her to his house with a purpose to marry her changed his mind and would not marry her, he might not make merchandise of her, as of his other prisoners, but must give her liberty to return, if she pleased, to her own country, because he*

had humbled her and afflicted her, by raising expectations and then disappointing them (Deut. 21:14); having made a fool of her, he might not make a prey of her. This intimates how binding the laws of justice and honour are, particularly in the pretensions of love, the courting of affections, and the promises of marriage, which are to be looked upon as solemn things, that have something sacred in them, and therefore are not to be jested with.²²

v. 14 reads: **But if it is [that] you have not taken pleasure in her, then you will send her away wherever she wishes [lit., according to her soul]. You will definitely not sell her on account of silver—you will not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.** Even though this is not for today, I at first had trouble with this verse. I was quite concerned at the first read-through that this was an allowance by God for an Israelite to try any captive woman that he so chooses and to cut her loose if he later decided that he really didn't like her that much. However, this is the incorrect interpretation. We have dealt with the word *humble* and have interpreted it correctly for this context. The man would be able to send the woman away sometime during the month of the butch haircut. It would be illogical for this to occur any time after their marriage was consummated for several reasons: there are already a whole set of rules for marriages which would be considered null and void for foreign captive women, which is contrary to the concept of marriage. The implication is that such a woman never really becomes a Jewess. This would allow any male who is taken by any female captive to say, "I want this one"; and they are given free reign to *play house* until he grows tired of her. This would completely distort the grace and the permanence of God to the heathen captive woman to know that at any time, her husband could decide to dump her.

However, this passage gives the woman a month to grieve, the man a month to be in close contact with her during this time of mourning, which is not the best of circumstances for either of them. After a month, he will have some idea as to whether he would be willing to spend the remainder of his life with her. With the shaved head, the attraction would have to come from the soul. Again, the *humbling* referred to is not that he has had sex with her, nor does it mean that he has raped her. The humbling has just been described in context: **"When you go out to battle against your enemies and Y^howah your God delivers them into your hand and you take them away captive."** (Deut. 21:10). In fact, this verse specifically states, euphemistically, that they have not had sexual contact: **"...and if it comes to pass that you do not delight [or take pleasure] in her."** That is sexual contact and it did not occur.

There are obviously even Bible translators who interpret this as meaning that the soldier has had sex with her, and therefore, cannot simply sell her into slavery. Furthermore, nearly every left-wing website which dislikes the Bible also interprets this passage in this way.

Is this the loophole for legitimate illegitimate sex in the Bible?

1. Quite obviously, looking at this passage in one way would suggest that, a soldier to take as many women prisoners as he wanted to his home (one at a time), "try them out" and then let them go free at any point in the future.
2. Understanding this passage in that way means that, after each war, and prisoners are led out, every single man can take his pick of the women prisoners and check them out.
3. This interpretation makes marriage very open-ended. It suggests that, at any point in time after marriage, the man can send his wife of however many years packing, just so long as he does not sell her.
4. In fact, since polygamy was not specifically barred in the Mosaic Law, this would also be an opportunity for married men as well.
5. Throughout the Bible, virginity of the woman and an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman is emphasized, from Gen. 2 forward. How does it make sense for a man be given the opportunity to have sex with whatever captive he sees, and then, a month or many months (or years) later, decide, "Naw, she isn't the one for me."
6. The Bible is also quite concerned about the widows and orphans. There is no reason to assume that an Israelite soldier can pick a woman, live with her as man and wife for a year or two, and then throw her and her children out of his home. This would go against the other teachings found in Scripture.

²² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

Is this the loophole for legitimate illegitimate sex in the Bible?

7. If interpreted in this particular way—wherein any soldier can have his pick of the female prisoners after each war—then there is a tremendous likelihood of hundreds if not thousands of out-of-wedlock births as a result of these soldiers taking a woman home, trying her out, and then discarding her if he change his mind.
8. That would result in hundreds or even thousands of women abandoned with their children inside of Israel, with no means of support.
9. That interpretation allows for multiple sex partners, pregnant women being turned out of the household, and for hundreds or thousands of illegitimate births—for every battle victory. All of this contradicts the clear teaching of the Bible on male-female relationships elsewhere.
10. If this is the correct way to interpret this passage, then, knowing the sexual desires of men, why don't we have many examples of this in the Bible? Why don't we have illegitimate sons popping up all over the place, and coming back to speak to their soldier-father who rejected his mother?
11. What makes far more sense, and is in keeping with the rest of the Mosaic Law, is, this man has a choice after one month: he can keep the woman as his wife, marry her and have sex with her; **or** he can cut this woman loose, not molested, not raped, nor impregnated; simply humbled because the soldier chose her and then decided against her.

It should not seem strange that people who dislike the Bible are looking to interpret the Bible in any way that makes the Bible look bad. It is quite unfortunate that generally good Bible commentators have made this same mistake.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

As mentioned before, this is to keep the soldiers of Israel from “choosing wives” from the captives, and then turning around and selling them later for money.

God's laws are accommodations to human infirmities. To require from men summarily, and as the result of law, perfect conduct of life is impracticable. Hence legislation, to be successful, must be adapted to the case, and must lead by gradations to a nobler life. This law, though tolerant of lesser evil, is a marked amelioration of earlier custom a step towards order and purity.²³

The Pulpit Commentary Summary of Deuteronomy 21:10–14

- I. **Female beauty wins the hearts even of warriors.** There are other conquests, and nobler, than military conquests. Beauty snatches the palm from strength. In the very hour of victory the conqueror has laid all his spoils at the feet of a gentle woman. Love rules the camp. External beauty has its uses. Real beauty is the exponent of some hidden worth. It eloquently says, "There is some goodness here: search and find it out." And beauty has its perils too it may excite sexual passion which cannot be
- II. **Conjugal union is to result, not from sudden. Passion, but from well-trying love.** This sudden desire to have his captive as his wife was required to be tested by time. Calm reflection is to precede a union so full of possible results. Beauty may fling her robe of color about the haze of dawn, but the gray haze of dawn does not constitute the day. Mere bloom on summer fruit will not meet the hunger of the man. Marriage is a temple of God, and must not be built on an imaginary foundation. The charm of the fair captive's locks was to be temporarily removed, so that the lover's desire might rest, not on fleeting accessories, but on personal worth. Ill-assorted marriages are a fertile curse. Sympathy in religion is essential to a prosperous marriage union.
- III. **The natural feelings of woman, as woman, are to be scrupulously respected.** We may not understand all the purposes this Jewish law was designed to serve; but certain it is that, though a captive,

²³ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

The Pulpit Commentary Summary of Deuteronomy 21:10–14

the natural feeling of filial sorrow was to be allowed, yea, expected. To repress or root out the affectionate feeling of a daughter would be mutilation of the soul. A forgetful daughter will never be a worthy wife. Nothing in our external fortunes not even success in war warrants our playing the tyrant. It is for the benefit of the human race that woman should be treated on equal terms. Her fine endowments have a noble part to play in the culture of humanity.

- IV. **Marriage has its duties as well as its enjoyments.** By the custom of that barbarous age, the captive, whether male or female, became the absolute property of the captor. He could reduce her to slavery. But if he chose to make her his wife, he conveyed to her rights which could not be alienated. It became henceforth his duty to protect her and all her interests. She was secure against the lust of avarice. God threw around her the shield of his sacred Law. But the very necessity for this commandment disclosed the rampant greed for gain which rules in some men. Thankful ought we to be that God removes such a possible temptation out of our way. Not by God's consent is marriage ever contracted or terminated for the sake of money gain.

From *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

V. 14 reads: *If, on the other hand, you do not delight in her, then you will send her away as she wishes. You will, under no circumstances, sell her as a slave for money—you may not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.*

Interpreting the Captive Wife in Deuteronomy 21:10–14

1. It is a mistake to understand this verse to indicate that, at any point in time, the husband may just send this woman away. This needs to be taken in context.
2. Vv. 10–14 read: *When you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God gives them into your hands, and you have then taken your enemy into captivity. It may be that a woman with a beautiful figure among these prisoners captures your attention and you have a great desire to take her as your wife. You will bring this woman into your home and she will shave her head, cut back her nails, and remove the captivity clothing that she was wearing. She will remain in your home for a full month while she mourns for her mother and father. After this, you will go in unto her and have, by this, married her and she has become your wife. If, on the other hand, you do not delight in her, then you will send her away as she wishes. You will, under no circumstances, sell her as a slave for money—you may not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.* That is the entire context. So interpreting this must be in this context.
3. So, this soldier has seen a woman among the captives whom he greatly desires. There is a process that he must go through. He cannot simply take her home and marry her.
4. However, he is allowed to take her home, shave her head, and allow her time to mourn her parents.
5. Then, after a month has passed, he may take her as his wife.
6. However, after a month of being in the same house with this woman, he may no longer take pleasure in her. This woman who looked so beautiful may not be the woman for him. In that case, he lets this woman go wherever she wishes to go.
7. During this month's time, there is no sex. There is just that soldier and this woman, formerly a prisoner, in the house together (possibly with family), and that month is spent in getting to know one another.
8. Although the woman's volition is not spoken of in this context (Moses is speaking to the men who would become soldiers and to their descendants who would be soldiers), one may certainly understand that the volition of the woman would be a part of this. The woman is not taken as a house slave but as a wife; therefore, her will is clearly a part of the picture.
9. It is very possible that this woman does not want any part of this situation, and she makes this known.

Interpreting the Captive Wife in Deuteronomy 21:10–14

10. It is very possible that, once this guy gets to know this woman that he is not interested in her on any level.
11. As mentioned before, this man has to know the Mosaic Law; he has to have faith in Y^ehowah God, and if she takes no interest in this, that is definitely problematic.
12. At some point, while this woman is living at this man's home, and she has not been raped or enslaved, she is going to ask about that. At that point, the man is going to tell her about the Mosaic Law, and, very likely, give her the entire law, which indicates that, if he does not want her, then she can go free without even being enslaved.
13. In receiving such gentle treatment, the woman will no doubt want to know more about this Law of Moses, which, in many cases, could result in a greater interest in the God of the Jews, or a more resolute refusal to believe in this soldier's God.
14. However, in knowing the Word of God, this woman may also become decidedly more difficult to get along with or she may warm up to the idea of marriage, even to her captor.
15. Even though her volition is not spoken of until she is let go free, that is no reason to supposed that her volition did not operate during this month's time. If you think that this woman, for a month's time, just sat there passively and obediently in this man's home, then you do not know the psyche of the woman very well. My point is, this woman does not have to come out and say, "I would not marry you if you were the last man on earth." Women have great powers of subtlety and are often able to think circles around men when it comes to relationships.
16. If a month passes and he does marry her, then he must let this woman go free. He has humiliated her by killing her parents and bringing her into his home to be his wife and then rejecting her (even if she has engineered this rejection by her attitude).
17. There are two simple alternatives presented at the end of this month: (1) they marry or (2) they do not marry. If they do not marry, then she is free and can simply walk out this man's front door.
18. In the final verse, the will of the woman clearly becomes a part of this picture. If, for whatever reason, this does not result in marriage, then the woman is to go wherever she wants to go. Her volition, as a part of her soul, becomes a clear determining factor.
19. If a year or two or five years later, he does not take pleasure in her, then the regulations of marriage and divorce kick in. He may divorce her for uncleanness (moral impurity), but not for any other reason. The very fact that he has had sex with her and has made her his bride takes this into the realm of marriage. Deut. 24:1.

Interestingly enough, God had given His people system of laws in Exodus through Numbers, none of which included divorce. An interpretation which I am leaning towards is, there were a variety of practices which occurred under Moses or could potentially occur, and Moses sought to regulate these practices.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown summarize this: *According to the war customs of all ancient nations, a female captive became the slave of the victor, who had the sole and unchallengeable control of right to her person. Moses improved this existing usage by special regulations on the subject. He enacted that, in the event that her master was captivated by her beauty and contemplated a marriage with her, a month should be allowed to elapse, during which her perturbed feelings might be calmed, her mind reconciled to her altered condition, and she might bewail the loss of her parents, now to her the same as dead. A month was the usual period of mourning with the Jews, and the circumstances mentioned here were the signs of grief--the shaving of the head, the allowing the nails to grow uncut, the putting off her gorgeous dress in which ladies, on the eve of being captured, arrayed themselves to be the more attractive to their captors. The delay was full of humanity and kindness to the female slave, as well as a prudential measure to try the strength of her master's affections. If his love should afterwards cool and he become indifferent to her person, he was not to lord it over her, neither to sell her in the*

*slave market, nor retain her in a subordinate condition in his house; but she was to be free to go where her inclinations led her.*²⁴

We should certainly explore, how can we make this applicable to today's world.

Applying the Captive Wife to Today's Standards

1. This passage reads: *When you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God gives them into your hands, and you have then taken your enemy into captivity. It may be that a woman with a beautiful figure among these prisoners captures your attention and you have a great desire to take her as your wife. You will bring this woman into your home and she will shave her head, cut back her nails, and remove the captivity clothing that she was wearing. She will remain in your home for a full month while she mourns for her mother and father. After this, you will go in unto her and have, by this, married her and she has become your wife. If, on the other hand, you do not delight in her, then you will send her away as she wishes. You will, under no circumstances, sell her as a slave for money—you may not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.*
2. Quite obviously, what we find here is applied to a very specific time and place. Even Moses was not giving these instructions to be applied to the Canaanites in the land.
3. However, what is clear is, intermarriage was allowed—even with the women of enemy soldiers.
4. Such a union cannot be based upon lust alone.
5. Such unions must involve the volition of both parties.
6. The man of the victorious army cannot abuse the women he has conquered.
7. If there is a strong desire for a conquered woman, then a man must go through the normal channels of preparation for marriage. Such women were not to be taken simply in sport or for fun.
8. Although the object of one's faith is not made an issue of, it is clear that the man is familiar with the law of God—this is how he knows that he may choose such a woman as his wife. The would imply that he would want a woman open to being subject to the same Mosaic Law.
9. God designed sexual relations to occur within the confines of marriage between one man and one woman; warfare does not change these boundaries.

The treatment prescribed by Moses is exactly the opposite of what a liberal would want, which is often sex without consequences or commitment.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Deuteronomy is a very different book than Exodus, Numbers and Leviticus.

Deuteronomy and the Law of God

1. In Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, God speaks directly to Moses and gives him the law for his people, Israel.
2. In Deuteronomy, Moses already knows that he is not going over into the land with his people to take the land, but he develops several sermons to teach them before they cross over the Jordan.
3. The book of Deuteronomy is tricky in this regard: Moses speaks through the power of the Holy Spirit, so what he says is inspired; but, at the same time, he is giving his opinion on things.
4. In portions of Deuteronomy, Moses is taking these adults, who began in the desert as children and grew to adulthood, while their parents died the sin unto death. So Moses takes much of what they had gone through and explains it to them. He tells them what it all means.
5. Moses also provides some guidelines for these young people, who had never farmed, who had not made clothing before, who had not built houses before. Most of us have parents or mentors who have guided us along and we have learned how to do this or that from them. For the most part, these people to whom

²⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Deut. 21:10–14.

Deuteronomy and the Law of God

Moses spoke had lost their parents to the sin unto death, so they learned few if any skills from them. So, therefore, Charley Brown may inherit a farm in the Land of Promise, but when he begins farming, he has no guidance. No one is there to tell him what to do or what not to do, and he was not raised as a farmer. So Moses gives some basic outlines of things these young people need to know (young people, meaning age 20–40).

6. All of these people had sin natures, so they would look for any way to let their sin nature shine; if they could get around this or that law, they would try to do this. So Moses gave them some case law before there were any cases. He said, “What if this happens; then you will do this then that and then something else.”
7. However, the trickiest thing Moses had to do was to develop some laws simply because people have sin natures, and they are going to express them—such as, marriage and divorce. God did not design men and woman to get married, change their minds, and then get divorced. When quizzed about what Moses said about divorce, there was the following exchange:
 - a. Matt. 19:3–6 **And the Pharisees came near to Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every reason? But answering, He said to them, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning ‘created them male and female’? (Gen. 1:27) And He said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ (Gen. 2:24) Consequently, they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.”** So Jesus gives God’s view of marriage, which goes back to the very beginning—marriage is a forever thing. God designed one man for one woman, and that is what marriage is. They form a bond that no man should separate. So, this means, God did not design divorce; He only designed marriage.
 - b. So the pharisees press Jesus further. Matt. 19:7–9 **They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to ‘give a bill of divorce,’ ‘and to put her away’?” (Deut. 24:1) He said to them, “In view of your hardheartedness, Moses allowed you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, Whoever shall put away his wife, if not for fornication, and shall marry another, that one commits adultery. And the one who marries her who was put away commits adultery.”** Moses permitted divorce in Deuteronomy, but this is not God’s design. Moses regulated divorce because of their hard-heartedness (**scar tissue on the soul**), essentially giving some leeway here. Divorces were going to occur, so Moses would regulate them.
 - c. A good parallel is slavery. Slavery in the ancient world would occur. Therefore, God chose to regulate it. Man stealing was a crime punishable by death. So, you could not go into a country, and simply steal away men and then put them into slavery. When a nation was defeated in war, the population could be enslaved (they were not always enslaved). A person could sell himself into slavery to pay off his debts. The Bible provided regulations, while affirming that every man stands before God as an individual, and has value and worth before Him (for instance, the book of Philemon where a runaway slave comes to Paul as a believer, and Paul sends him back to his master, but asking that his master free him).
8. So, some of what Moses taught is quite tricky. Men were going to do things because they have sin natures. These things ought to be regulated to prevent men from further expressing their sin natures (e.g., killing a slave in anger). Without reference to how this master-slave relationship came about, Moses sets up some regulations in order to keep this institution from getting out of control.
9. We will see this when Moses gives some laws which deal with marrying more than one wife. Obviously, from Genesis, God did not design man for polygamy. God may have given Peggy Sue to Adam; but God did not give Peggy and Sue to Adam. However, because of the sin nature, men are going to marry more than one wife, if they can get away with it (David and Solomon are examples of this). So this needs to be regulated, even though God is not putting His stamp of approval on polygamy.
10. This helps to explain the book of Deuteronomy. There are some laws that God would not generally give.
11. This does not mean that God was unaware of the sin nature in the book of Exodus; God did give laws with the sin nature in mind, as these laws regulated the sin nature in society (in Israel).
12. Finally, Moses simply reemphasized portions of the Law which he believed needed to be reemphasized, like the Ten Commandments. Deut. 5

This doctrine may require some additional work in the future.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Vv. 10–14 read: When you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God gives them into your hands, and you have then taken your enemy into captivity. It may be that a woman with a beautiful figure among these prisoners captures your attention and you have a great desire to take her as your wife. You will bring this woman into your home and she will shave her head, cut back her nails, and remove the captivity clothing that she was wearing. She will remain in your home for a full month while she mourns for her mother and father. After this, you will go in unto her and have, by this, married her and she has become your wife. If, on the other hand, you do not delight in her, then you will send her away as she wishes. You will, under no circumstances, sell her as a slave for money—you may not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her. We must interpret this verse in its entire context, and it must be consistent with the rest of the Mosaic Law. For these reasons, we have concluded that this man could not simply pick a woman from the captives, keep her around his house for a few months or a few years, and then send her away. If a man took a woman of the captives into his home, then after her head is shaved and her attractive garments are shed, then he has exactly 1 month to determine if this is the woman who he wants to marry or not. Then they either get married, or he sets her free. The text is no more complex than this.

This is a tricky situation, and the soldier has one month in order to get this woman to respond to him, despite the fact that he was in the army which killed her parents and destroyed her city. This is no easy feat. Furthermore, the man, after a month, may come to the conclusion that this is a very attractive woman, but there is nothing more to his attraction than that. If that is the case, he must cut this woman free, unmolested.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The Protocol of Inheritance

The principle of vv. 15–17 is quite simple, but the translation here or there is quite difficult to smooth out.

When [there] are to a man two of women, the one loved and the one disliked; and they have born to him sons the loved [wife] and the disliked [wife]; and is the son the firstborn to the disliked [wife]. And he is in a day of his inheritance to his sons who is to him, he will not be able to give the rights of the firstborn to a son of the loved one upon faces of a son of the disliked [wife]—the firstborn. For to the first born, a son of the disliked [wife] he will acknowledge to give to him a mouth of two in all which he has acquired to him, for he is the first of his strength—to him a judgment of the firstborn birthright.

Deuteronomy
21:15–17

When [there] are two wives for a man—the one loved and the other unloved [lit., *hated*]*—*and the loved [wife] and the unloved [wife] have [both] given birth to sons for him; and the firstborn son is [from] the unloved [wife]. And it is in the day of the inheritance to his sons of what is theirs [lit., *his*], [that] he [the father] will not be able to give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the loved [wife] in preference to the son of the unloved [wife]—the [actual] firstborn. For to the firstborn, the son of the unloved [wife], he will [hereby] know to give to him a double portion [lit., *a command of two*] in all he has acquired, for he is the first of his strength—[so] to him [is] the custom of the rights [and privileges] of the firstborn.

Let's say that a man has two wives, one which he loves and one which he doesn't, and they both bear sons to him. Further, let's say that the wife that he does not love bears his firstborn. When it comes to the time of determining how his inheritance is to be distributed, he will not be able to treat the son of his loved wife as if he were the firstborn. He must give the double portion to the actual firstborn son, even if he is the son of the unloved wife, as he is the first of this man's strength and therefore he is due the rights and privileges of the firstborn.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	If a man have two wives, and one is beloved and the other hated, and they bear him sons, both the beloved and the hated (wife), and the first-born son be of the hated, it will be in the day that he devises to his sons the inheritance of the wealth that may be his, he will not be allowed to give the birthright portion to the son of the beloved, over the head of the son of the hated wife, to whom the birthright belongs; but (let him acknowledge) the birthright of the son of her who is disliked, and all that belongs to it, to give him the double portion of all that may be found with him, because he is the beginning of his strength, and to him pertains the birthright.
Latin Vulgate	If a man have two wives, one beloved, and the other hated, and they have had children by him, and the son of the hated be the firstborn, And he means to divide his substance among his sons: he may not make the son of the beloved the firstborn, and prefer him before the son of the hated. But he will acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, and will give him a double portion of all he has: for this is the first of his children, and to him are due the first birthrights.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	When [there] are to a man two of women, the one loved and the one disliked; and they have born to him sons the loved [wife] and the disliked [wife]; and is the son the firstborn to the disliked [wife]. And he is in a day of his inheritance to his sons who is to him, he will not be able to give the rights of the firstborn to a son of the loved one upon faces of a son of the disliked [wife]—the firstborn. For to the first born, a son of the disliked [wife] he will acknowledge to give to him a mouth of two in all which he has acquired to him, for he is the first of his strength—to him a judgment of the firstborn birthright.
Peshitta (Syriac)	If a man has two wives, one beloved and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the first-born son be hers that is hated; Then it shall be, when he makes his sons to inherit his property, it is unlawful for him to make the son of the beloved wife first-born before the son of the hated; But the first-born, the son of the hated, he must receive double portion of all that he has; for he is the first of his children; and the right of the first-born is his.
Septuagint (Greek)	And if a man has two wives, the one loved and the other hated, and both the loved and the hated should have born him children, and the son of the hated should be firstborn; then it shall be that whenever he shall divide by inheritance his goods to his sons, he shall not be able to give the right of the firstborn to the son of the loved one, having overlooked the son of the hated, which is the firstborn. But he shall acknowledge the firstborn of the hated one, to give to him double of all things which shall be found by him, because he is the first of his children, and to him belongs the birthright.
Significant differences:	Given the difficulty which I had with translating this, these all seem to be quite close in meaning throughout.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible **Right of the oldest son**

Now suppose a man has two wives—one of them loved and the other unloved. Both wives bear children, but the oldest male is the unloved wife's child. On the day when the man decides what will go to each of his children as an inheritance, he isn't allowed to treat his loved wife's son as the oldest male rather than his unloved wife's son, who is the real oldest male. Instead, he must acknowledge the unloved wife's son as the oldest male, giving to him two-thirds of everything that he owns, because that son is the earliest produce of his physical power. The oldest male's rights belong to that son.

Contemporary English V.

Later on, if you are not happy with the woman, you can divorce her, and she can go free. But you have slept with her as your wife, so you cannot sell her as a slave or make her into your own slave. Suppose a man has two wives and loves one more than the other. The first son of either wife is the man's first-born son, even if the boy's mother is the wife the man doesn't love. Later, when the man is near death and is dividing up his property, he must give a double share to his first-born son, simply because he was the first to be born.

Easy English

The rule about the son who is born first

A man may have two wives but he may love only one of them. Each wife may give birth to a son. The first son may be the son of the wife that he does not love. But the man must make this promise: After his own death, the first son will have twice as many of his good things as the second son. This is because that son was born first. The man must not promise twice as much to the son of the wife that he loves. Her son was not born first. The man must remember the son of the wife that he does not love. This son was born first and he must have twice as many of his father's good things. He has a special place in the family because he was born first.

Easy-to-Read Version

“A man might have two wives. And he might love one wife more than the other. Both wives might have children for him. And the first child might be the child of the wife he does not love. When the man divides his property among his children, he can't give the son of the wife he loves the things that belong to the firstborn [The first born child. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.] child. The man must accept the first child, the son of the wife he doesn't love. The man must give the first son a double share of all his things. Why? Because that child is his first child. The right of the firstborn child belongs to that child.

Good News Bible (TEV)

"Suppose a man has two wives and they both bear him sons, but the first son is not the child of his favorite wife. When the man decides how he is going to divide his property among his children, he is not to show partiality to the son of his favorite wife by giving him the share that belongs to the first-born son. He is to give a double share of his possessions to his first son, even though he is not the son of his favorite wife. A man must acknowledge his first son and give him the share he is legally entitled to.

The Message

When a man has two wives, one loved and the other hated, and they both give him sons, but the firstborn is from the hated wife, at the time he divides the inheritance with his sons he must not treat the son of the loved wife as the firstborn, cutting out the son of the hated wife, who is the actual firstborn. No, he must acknowledge the inheritance rights of the real firstborn, the son of the hated wife, by giving him a double share of the inheritance: that son is the first proof of his virility; the rights of the firstborn belong to him.

New Berkeley Version

“If a man has two wives, of whom he dislikes one and loves the other, each of them has borne him a son, and the first-born son is by the one he dislikes, he shall have no power to bequeath the rights of the first-born to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his first-born, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of the despised wife as his first-born, assigning to him a double share of all he possesses, for he is the first fruit of his powers; the birthright belongs to him. From very early times the first-born had special rights in Israel. Jacob gained the rights of Esau, but it cost him dearly.

New Century Version

The Oldest Son

A man might have two wives, one he loves and one he doesn't. Both wives might have sons by him. If the older son belongs to the wife he does not love, when that man wills his property to his sons he must not give the son of the wife he loves what belongs to the older son, the son of the wife he does not love. He must agree to give the older son two shares of everything he owns, even though the older son is from the wife he does not love. That son was the first to prove his father could have children, so he has the rights that belong to the older son.

New Living Translation

Rights of the Firstborn

"Suppose a man has two wives, but he loves one and not the other, and both have given him sons. And suppose the firstborn son is the son of the wife he does not love. When the man divides his inheritance, he may not give the larger inheritance to his younger son, the son of the wife he loves, as if he were the firstborn son. He must recognize the rights of his oldest son, the son of the wife he does not love, by giving him a double portion. He is the first son of his father's virility, and the rights of the firstborn belong to him.

The Voice

Suppose a man has two wives, and he *favors one over the other*, loving one and not loving the other. If they've both borne him sons, but the firstborn doesn't belong to his favorite wife, he can't designate the eldest son of his favorite wife as the firstborn instead. When he divides his property and gives his sons their inheritances, he must recognize his true firstborn, the eldest son of the other wife, and give him a double portion of all his property *as is customary for all men*. That son was the first one created by the man's generative power, so the rights of the firstborn belong to him.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

And if a man has two women and he loves one and doesn't care as much for the other, and both have given birth, and the son of the one he cares for less is the firstborn²⁵; when he divides his property among his sons as their inheritance, he may not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the woman that he loves more. He must recognize the rights of the firstborn and give him twice as much of the things he owns, because he's the first of his children, and he owns that birthright.

Here is one case where early Mormons may have been right; for, a deep study of the Bible shows that there are no laws forbidding polygamy, and that God in many cases actually directed and blest the taking of more than one wife and/or concubine, as in the case of Jacob. Outstanding polygamous men who were blest include Job, Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon, and many others. In fact, God symbolically spoke of Himself as having more than one wife in Ezekiel 23.

In the case of levirate marriage (taking the wife of a dead brother); polygamy may have actually been required by God, since the laws on this do not mention that the man who takes his brother's wife must not already be married.

Yes, the standard set by God in the Paradise was one husband and one wife. And at Deuteronomy 17:17, Israelite kings were instructed not to accumulate many wives. However, the reason given for this was so that they would not lead the kings away from pure worship, as happened in the case of Solomon, not because polygamy was immoral.

Another scripture that is often quoted to show that polygamy was forbidden to Christians is 1 Timothy 3:2. For, many Bibles quote Paul as writing that 'overseers (or bishops) should be husbands of one wife.' However, the fact that this statement had to be made proves that some Christians did have multiple wives. For more

²⁵ See <http://www.2001translation.com/Firstborn.htm> accessed September 10, 2013.

information on the proper translation of this verse, see the linked Note, [One-Woman Man](#).

It is interesting, though, that by the First Century, polygamy was not common among the Jews. Rather, as Jesus pointed out; the custom was to divorce wives and get new ones. But the reason for this change in custom appears to have been brought on by Roman occupation; for, polygamy was frowned on, if not forbidden by the Romans. And if so, here is an unusual case of ethnics setting moral standards for God's people.²⁶

Christian Community Bible

When a man has two wives and prefers one to the other, supposing that both of them bear him children, and the first-born is the son of the wife he loves less, then on the day he divides the inheritance among his children, he cannot give the right of the first-born to the son of the woman he prefers, at the expense of the true first-born who is the son of the woman he loves less. On the contrary, he should recognize the child of the woman he loves less as the first-born and give him a double share of all his property. He is his first-born, and to him belongs the right of the first-born.

God's Word™

A man might have two wives and love one but not the other. Both wives might have children, and the firstborn son might belong to the wife that the man doesn't love. When the day comes for the father to give his sons their inheritance, he can't treat the son of the wife he loves as if that son were the firstborn. This would show a total disregard for the real firstborn (the son of the wife he doesn't love). Instead, he must recognize the son of the wife he doesn't love as the firstborn. He must give that son a double portion of whatever he owns. That son is the very first son he had. The rights of the firstborn son are his.

New Advent (Knox) Bible

If a man twice married loves one wife and is weary of the other, and has children by both, but his first-born by the wife he spurns, how shall he divide up his possessions between them? He shall have no power to make the son of the loved wife his heir, in preference to that other. Recognize the first-born he must, though of the mother he be weary; a double share of all his goods belongs to the son that was engendered first; the birthright is his.

New American Bible

"If a man with two wives loves one and dislikes the other; and if both bear him sons, but the first-born is of her whom he dislikes: when he comes to bequeath his property to his sons he may not consider as his first-born the son of the wife he loves, in preference to his true first-born, the son of the wife whom he dislikes. On the contrary, he shall recognize as his first-born the son of her whom he dislikes, giving him a double share of whatever he happens to own, since he is the first fruits of his manhood, and to him belong the rights of the first-born.

New American Bible (R.E.)

Rights of the Firstborn.

If a man has two wives [Gn 21:9-13; 1 Kgs 1:5-21.], one loved and the other unloved, and if both the loved and the unloved bear him sons, but the firstborn is the son of the unloved wife: when he comes to bequeath his property to his sons he may not consider as his firstborn the son of the wife he loves, in preference to the son of the wife he does not love, the firstborn. On the contrary, he shall recognize as his firstborn the son of the unloved wife, giving him a double share of whatever he happens to own, since he is the first fruits of his manhood, and to him belong the rights of the firstborn. Gn 49:3-4.

NIRV

The Rights of the Oldest Son

Suppose a man has two wives. He loves one but not the other. And both of them have sons by him. But the oldest son is the son of the wife the man doesn't love. Someday he'll leave his property to his sons. When he does, he must not give the rights of the oldest son to the son of the wife he loves. He must give those rights to

²⁶ From http://www.2001translation.com/Christian_Morality.htm#_Polygamy accessed September 10, 2013.

his oldest son. He must do it even though his oldest son is the son of the wife he doesn't love.

He must recognize the full rights of the oldest son, even though that son is the son of the wife he doesn't love. He must give that son a double share of everything he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. So the rights of the oldest son belong to him.

New Simplified Bible

»If a man have two wives and loves one more than the other. The first son of either wife is the man's first-born son, even if the boy's mother is the wife he does not love. A man near death and dividing up his property must give a double share to his first-born son. This is because he was the first to be born.

»The day he wills his possessions to his sons, he should not put the firstborn son of the loved wife before the firstborn son of the unloved wife.

»He should acknowledge the firstborn son of the unloved wife. And give him a double portion of all that he has. He is the beginning of his strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

Revised English Bible

When a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, if they both bear him sons, and the son of the unloved wife is the elder, then, when the day comes for him to divide his property among his sons, he must not treat the son of the loved wife as his firstborn in preference to his true firstborn, the son of the unloved wife. He must recognize the rights of his firstborn, the son of the unloved wife, and give him a double share of all that he possesses, for he was the firstfruits of his manhood, and the right of the firstborn is his.

Today's NIV

The Right of the Firstborn

If someone has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear

When a man has two women, one loved and one hated, and the loved and the hated beget him sons, and the firstborn son is of the hated: In the day his sons has inherited what is his, he can not firstbirth the son of the loved in front of the firstborn son of the hated. He recognizes the firstborn son of the hated by giving him two for all the mouths found with him. For he's the first of his manhood, as the verdict for the his firstborn.

Bible in Basic English

If a man has two wives, one greatly loved and the other hated, and the two of them have had children by him; and if the first son is the child of the hated wife: Then when he gives his property to his sons for their heritage, he is not to put the son of his loved one in the place of the first son, the son of the hated wife: But he is to give his first son his birthright, and twice as great a part of his property: for he is the first-fruits of his strength and the right of the first son is his.

The Expanded Bible

The Oldest Son

A man might have two wives, one he loves and one he ·doesn't [^hhates; dislikes]. Both wives might have sons by him. If the ·older son [firstborn] belongs to the wife he ·does not love [^hhates; dislikes], when that man wills his property to his sons he must not give the son of the wife he loves what belongs to the ·older [firstborn] son, the son of the wife he ·does not love [^hhates; dislikes]. He must agree to give the ·older son [firstborn] two shares of everything he owns, even though the ·older son [firstborn] is from the wife he does ·not love [^hhates; dislikes]. That son was the first

·to prove his father could have children [^lof his virility], so he has the rights that belong to the ·older son [firstborn].

Ferar-Fenton Bible

When a man has two wives, and loves the one and dislikes the other, and they bear children to him, both the loved and the disliked, and the son of the disliked one is the eldest, when it comes to the time for his sons to inherit, he cannot make the son of his darling the eldest in place of the son of the disliked, who is eldest, but he must acknowledge the son of the disliked, who is the eldest, and give to him two parts of all he possesses, for he is the first fruits of his love. He is justly first-born.

NET Bible®

Laws Concerning Children

Suppose a man has two wives, one whom he loves more than the other [Heb “one whom he loves and one whom he hates.” For the idea of שָׂנֵא (sane’, “hate”) meaning to be rejected or loved less (cf. NRSV “disliked”), see Gen 29:31, 33; Mal 1:2-3. Cf. A. Konkel, NIDOTTE 3:1256-60.], and they both [Heb “both the one whom he loves and the one whom he hates.” On the meaning of the phrase “one whom he loves and one whom he hates” see the note on the word “other” earlier in this verse. The translation has been simplified for stylistic reasons, to avoid redundancy.] bear him sons, with the firstborn being the child of the less loved wife. In the day he divides his inheritance [Heb “when he causes his sons to inherit what is his.”] he must not appoint as firstborn the son of the favorite wife in place of the other [Heb “the hated.”] wife's son who is actually the firstborn. Rather, he must acknowledge the son of the less loved [See note on the word “other” in v. 15.] wife as firstborn and give him the double portion [Heb “measure of two.” The Hebrew expression פִּי שְׁנַיִם (piy shĕnayim) suggests a two-thirds split; that is, the elder gets two parts and the younger one part. Cf. 2 Kgs 2:9; Zech 13:8. The practice is implicit in Isaac’s blessing of Jacob (Gen 25:31-34) and Jacob’s blessing of Ephraim (Gen 48:8-22).] of all he has, for that son is the beginning of his father's procreative power [Heb “his generative power” (אִי, ’on; cf. HALOT 22 s.v.). Cf. NAB “the first fruits of his manhood”; NRSV “the first issue of his virility.”] - to him should go the right of the firstborn.

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The Right of the Firstborn

If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

"If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and unloved wives have borne him children, and if the firstborn son is the child of the unloved wife; then, when it comes time for him to pass his inheritance on to his sons, he may not give the inheritance due the firstborn to the son of the loved wife in place of the son of the unloved one, who is in fact the firstborn. No, he must acknowledge as firstborn the son of the unloved wife by giving him a double portion of everything he owns, for he is the firstfruits of his manhood, and the right of the firstborn is his.

exeGesés companion Bible

THE TORAH ON FIRSTBIRTHS

When a man has two women,
one beloved and one hated,
and they birth him sons
- both the beloved and the hated;
and if the firstbirth son be hers that was hated:

then so be it,
 the day his sons inherit what he has,
 that he cannot make the son of the beloved firstbirth
 face the son of the hated firstbirth:
 but he recognizes
 the son of the hated as the firstbirth,
 by giving him a twofold mouth
 of all they find with him:
 for he is the beginning of his strength;
 the judgment of firstrights is his.

Judaica Press Complete T.

If a man has two wives—one beloved and the other despised—and they bear him sons, the beloved one and the despised one, and the firstborn son is from the despised one. Then it will be, on the day he *the husband* bequeaths his property to his sons, that he will not be able to give the son of the beloved *wife* birthright precedence over the son of the despised wife—the real firstborn son. Rather, he must acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the despised *wife* and give him a double share in all that he possesses, because he *this firstborn son* is the first of his strength, then he has the birthright entitlement.

Kaplan Translation

The First-Born's Share

[This is the law] when a man has two wives, one whom he loves and one whom he dislikes, and both the loved and unloved wives have sons, but the first-born is that of the unloved one. On the day that [this man] wills his property to his sons, he must not give the son of the beloved wife birthright preference over the first-born, who is the son of the unloved wife. [Even if] the first-born is the son of the hated wife, [the father] must recognize him so as to give him a double portion of all his property. Since [this son] is the first fruit of [his father's] manhood, the birthright is legally his.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

If an ish have two nashim, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him banim, both the beloved and the hated; and if the bechor be hers that was hated; Then it shall be, on the yom when he wills his possessions to his banim, that he may not make the ben of the beloved bechor before the ben of the hated, which is indeed the bechar; But he shall acknowledge the ben of the hated for the bechor, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath; for he is the beginning of his strength; the mishpat habechorah (right of the firstborn) is his.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

If a man has two wives, one loved and the other disliked, and they both have borne him children, and if the firstborn son is the son of the one who is disliked, Then on the day when he wills his possessions to his sons, he shall not put the firstborn of his loved wife in place of the [actual] firstborn of the disliked wife—her firstborn being older. But he shall acknowledge the son of the disliked as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he was the first issue of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

Concordant Literal Version

In case a man should come to have two wives, the one loved and the other disliked, and they bear sons for him, the loved and the disliked, but the firstborn is the son of the disliked one, then it will come to be in the day when he gives allotments to his sons of that which is his, that he should not be able to treat as firstborn the son of the loved in preference to the son of the disliked, who is the firstborn. For he shall recognize the firstborn son of the disliked by giving to him a double share of all that is being found his; since he is the beginning of his virility, the customary right of the firstborn belongs to him.

A Conservative Version

If a man has two wives, the one beloved, and the other regarded inferior, and they have borne him sons, both the beloved and the one regarded inferior, and if the

first-born son be hers who was regarded inferior, then it shall be, in the day that he causes his sons to inherit that which he has, that he may not make the son of the beloved the first-born before the son of the one regarded inferior, who is the first-born. But he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the one regarded inferior, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength. The right of the first-born is his.

Context Group Version

If a man have two women { or wives }, the one beloved, and the other spurned, and they have borne him sons, both the beloved and the spurned; and if the first-born son be hers that was spurned; then it shall be, in the day that he causes his sons to inherit that which he has, that he may not make the son of the beloved the first-born before the son of the spurned, who is the first-born: but he shall acknowledge the first-born, the son of the spurned, by giving him a double portion of all that he has; for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born is his.

English Standard V. – UK

Inheritance Rights of the Firstborn

"If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him children, and if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved [Or hated; also verses 16, 17], then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the unloved, who is the firstborn, but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the firstfruits of his strength. The right of the firstborn is his.

New King James Version

Firstborn Inheritance Rights

"If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the unloved, and *if* the firstborn son is of her who is unloved, then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, *that* he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the *true* firstborn. But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn *is* his.

New RSV

¹⁵ If a man has two wives, one of them loved and the other disliked, and if both the loved and the disliked have borne him sons, the firstborn being the son of the one who is disliked, ¹⁶ then on the day when he wills his possessions to his sons, he is not permitted to treat the son of the loved as the firstborn in preference to the son of the disliked, who is the firstborn. ¹⁷ He must acknowledge as firstborn the son of the one who is disliked, giving him a double portion* of all that he has; since he is the first issue of his virility, the right of the firstborn is his.

Syndein/Thieme

{Rules of the FirstBorn Firm}

If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated then it shall be, when he makes his sons to inherit that which he has, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn. But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he has for he is the beginning of his strength the right of the firstborn is his.

Webster's updated Bible

If a man will have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have borne him children, [both] the beloved and the hated; and [if] the first-born son be hers that was hated: Then it will be, when he makes his sons to inherit [that] which he hath, [that] he may not prefer the son of the beloved first-born, before the son of the hated, [which is indeed] the first-born: But he will acknowledge the son of the hated [for] the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he has: for he [is] the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born [is] his.

Young's Updated LT

“When a man has two wives, the one loved and the other hated, and they have borne to him sons (the loved one and the hated one), and the first-born son has been to the hated one; then it has been, in the day of his causing his sons to inherit that which he hath, he is not able to declare first-born the son of the loved one, in the face of the son of the hated one—the first-born. But the first-born, son of the hated one, he does acknowledge, to give to him a double portion of all that is found with him, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him is the right of the first-born.

The gist of this verse:

A man with more than one wife must treat the sons of the unfavored wife with as much respect as those of the favored wife.

Deuteronomy 21:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
<p>BDB gives this list of definitions: 1) <i>that, for, because, when, as though, as, because that, but, then, certainly, except, surely, since</i>; 1a) <i>that</i>; 1a1) <i>yea, indeed</i>; 1b) <i>when (of time)</i>; 1b1) <i>when, if, though (with a concessive force)</i>; 1c) <i>because, since (causal connection)</i>; 1d) <i>but (after negative)</i>; 1e) <i>that if, for if, indeed if, for though, but if</i>; 1f) <i>but rather, but</i>; 1g) <i>except that</i>; 1h) <i>only, nevertheless</i>; 1i) <i>surely</i>; 1j) <i>that is</i>; 1k) <i>but if</i>; 1l) <i>for though</i>; 1m) <i>forasmuch as, for therefore</i>.</p> <p>Kîy, like many of the small words in Hebrew, has a large number of uses: ❶ It is used as a relative conjunction, particularly after the verbs <i>seeing, hearing, speaking, knowing, believing remembering, forgetting</i> and in such cases means <i>that</i>. ❷ Although kîy is used for consecution and effect and rendered <i>to that, that</i>; it sometimes has an intensifying force and is rendered <i>so that, so even, even</i>. This is how it is used in this context. ❸ The connective can be used of time and be rendered <i>at that time, which, what time, when</i>. ❹ Kîy can be used of time, but in such a way that it passes over to a demonstrative power where it begins an apodosis (<i>then, so</i>). ❺ It can be used as a relative causal particle: <i>because, since, while, on account that</i>. When we find it several times in a sentence, it can mean <i>because...and</i> or <i>for...and</i>. ❻ It can also have a continuous disjunctive use here and be rendered <i>for...or...or</i> (when the second two kîy's are preceded by conjunctions). ❼ After a negative, it can mean <i>but</i> (the former must not be done because the latter is to be done).</p>			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
sh ^e nêy (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^en-Ā</i>]	<i>two, two of, a pair of, a duo of; both of</i>	dual numeral construct	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
nâshîym (נָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>naw-SHEEM</i>]	<i>women, wives</i>	feminine plural noun; irregular plural of Strong's #802	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: *When [there] are two wives for a man...* This certainly opens up a can of worms, does it not? We are dealing here both with having two wives and secondly, what if they both have children and the first born is the

son of the one disliked by the husband. In fact, this is the most-likely scenario. A man might get married young, have children young; and then, he becomes successful enough to afford a second wife and finds a younger woman that he prefers. In fact, with two women under one roof, it would be difficult to love them both and they would have trouble with the arrangement themselves. Due to their natural feistiness, there would likely be a strong preference for one or the other. What we also need to cover here is the [Doctrine of Polygamy \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)).

Moses is setting up a situation based upon what is the case for some men, even though this is not what God wants. A man has two wives. This is not God's plan. God did not design one man to be with two women. However, Moses is taking this as a given. Moses is assuming that this will happen, even though it is not in keeping with God's perfect plan.

Calvin: From this verse we see that polygamy did exist under the Mosaic laws, and that it was put under certain regulations; but it was not enjoined, Moses merely suffered it, because of the hardness of their hearts, as our Lord justly remarks in Matt. 19:8.²⁷ This is far more likely the case than a husband having two wives in succession (the first one having died), as Jamieson, Fausset and Brown suggest in Deut. 21:15–17. The simple fact is, God did not outlaw polygamy.

Why didn't God simply outlaw polygamy? God did outlaw adultery, and was quite specific in the way that adultery was to be outlawed, in part because this sets up a spiritual parallel. However, given the sin nature and the desires of the flesh, Moses recognized that once and awhile, a man would marry a woman that he should not have married. What do you do then? Polygamy at least allows for this woman to continue to be taken care of. Adultery and divorce would potentially allow for a woman to eventually be thrown out onto the streets.

There is the problem of simple survival in the ancient world of a woman with children but without a husband. Whereas today, this is a difficult task, in the ancient world, it was almost an impossible task. It is for the reason of a few widows and orphans that God instituted limited welfare (Deut. 26:12–13) as well as working welfare (Lev. 19:9–10 23:22) for such people.

It was much more difficult for a woman in the ancient world than it is in the United States today. Today, women are paid the government to remain single and to have children,²⁸ which is why we have so much of that (Uncle Sam assuming the role of father is one of the primary reasons that we have a breakdown of the family today).

So, God looked to keep a man, his wife and their children as one unit, above all else. So, there would be the rare situation when a man would take on another wife (this would not be common, as few men could afford to have two families). This was preferred over a woman with children fending for herself.

Quite obviously, this can get out of control, which is what we have with King David and his wives. King David had 10 wives and 10 mistresses (or thereabouts). Because he was king, his children became wards of the state. That is, they were supported by taxpayers, and David indulged his sons—he did not raise them properly. As a result, of his first batch of sons, not one of them was trained to be David's successor. In fact, his sons engaged in incest, murder, criminal activity and revolution, because they did not have David there to raise them (David's second group of sons, all born to Bathsheba, are a different matter altogether).

²⁷ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Deut. 21:15.

²⁸ A woman collecting various government benefits loses those benefits if she marries.

Deuteronomy 21:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone</i>	numeral adjective with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
ʿEchâd can function like an indefinite article, and be rendered <i>a certain [person, place or thing]</i> . ʿEchâd can be used elliptically to mean <i>one time, once</i> .			
Often, when ʿechâd is found twice in the same context, it means <i>...the one...and the other</i> or <i>one...and another</i> .			
ʾâhêb (אִהֵב) [pronounced aw-HAYV ^B]	<i>the one loved; the woman desired; possibly the one preferred</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle	Strong's #157 BDB #12
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿechâd (אֶחָד) [pronounced eh-KHAWD]	<i>one, first, certain, only; each, every; but it can also mean a composite unity; possibly particular; anyone</i>	numeral adjective with the definite article	Strong's #259 BDB #25
Often, when ʿechâd is found twice in the same context, it means <i>...the one...and the other</i> or <i>one...and another</i> .			
sânêʾ (שָׂנְאָה) [pronounced saw-NAY]	<i>to hate; in the participle, it is the ones hating; in the passive: those being hated by</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle	Strong's #8130 BDB #971

Translation:...—[the one loved and the other unloved](#) [lit., *hated*]—... So, why does a man marry a second wife? It is because he has a bad relationship with the first wife, and yet he has no legal reason to divorce her. So his first wife is unloved and the second wife is the wife he loves.

Clarke on [When \[there\] are two wives for a man—the one loved and the other unloved](#) [lit., *hated*]—...: *That is, one loved less than the other. This is the true notion of the word hate in Scripture. So Jacob Hated Leah, that is, he loved her less than he did Rachel; and Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I Hated, that is, I have shown a more particular affection to the posterity of Jacob than I have to the posterity of Esau.*²⁹

John Calvin: *God reminds us that He did not enact this law without cause; for, where polygamy was allowed, the mind of the husband was generally most inclined to the second wife; because, if he had loved the first with true affection, he would have been contented with her as the companion of his life and bed, and would not have thought of a second.*³⁰

The man is still required to take care of both women and to provide for both women and to take care of their children as well.

Money was set aside in Israel for *the widows and orphans*; but God set up a society where families generally stayed intact until death.

²⁹ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:15.

³⁰ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Deut. 21:15.

God's ideal, from the very beginning, is one man and one woman. However, man's sin nature would look to override God's plan whenever possible.

Deuteronomy 21:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
bânîym (בְּנֵי־אִם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'âhêb (אֲהֵבָהּ) [pronounced <i>aw-HAYV^B</i>]	<i>the one loved; the woman desired; possibly the one preferred</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #157 BDB #12
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Often, when 'echâd is found twice in the same context, it means ... <i>the one...and the other</i> or <i>one...and another</i> .			
sânê' (שָׂנְאוּ) [pronounced <i>saw-NAY</i>]	<i>to hate; in the participle, it is the ones hating; in the passive: those being hated by</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #8130 BDB #971

Translation: ...and the loved [wife] and the unloved [wife] have [both] given birth to sons for him;... Moses, throughout this portion of Deuteronomy, comes up with a variety of scenarios, and in this case, the man has married two women, and they both give sons to him.

Moses has been over this people for the past 40 years—he is to many of them their father figure, as their own parents have died the sin unto death. So Moses has seen how these people behave, so these situations are probably court cases which Moses has had to preside over.

Application: When I signed my first lease contract as a young adult, it was 2 pages long (actually, 1½ pages long plus room for signatures). You set the rate, the time period, and you knew that you were supposed to clean up the place after moving your stuff out. Now, the typical lease is 14 pages long (I write this in 2013) with addendums. The lease contract grew because of court cases. People went to court over this or that dispute, and Moses or one of his judges presided over it, and they had to make a ruling. So Moses is adding some case law or some precedents here to the legal system, just as we added pages to the lease contract to deal with this or that disagreement that might crop up (repairs is a big deal—something which I don't believe was found in the first contract, but which was added to later contracts).

So Moses is dealing probably with cases that have come before him, but which he does not want clogging up the court system. Furthermore, the idea is to take these various laws and the principles found in these laws, and to apply them to other circumstances which Moses has not foreseen.

When these passages in Deuteronomy are studied, what is often lost is the organic nature of the laws which Moses is coming up with. He did not just sit down and start thinking, “What about this; what about that?” He has been the Supreme Court Justice, who ruled over his people as a judge and as the final authority. So, in dealing with many of these disputes over a period of nearly 40 years, Moses has a mind filled with legal disputes and adjudications, either by him or by those he placed under him.

Moses was also specifically trained in the law as a young man. He was trained to become the pharaoh, and therefore, the study of law would have been first and foremost (and all of the disciplines which allowed him to study law).

Deuteronomy 21:15d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
b ^e kôwr (רִאשׁוֹן) [pronounced <i>b^eKOHR</i>]	<i>firstborn; metaphorically used for anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1060 BDB #114
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
sânîy' (שִׂנְאָה) [pronounced <i>saw-NEE</i>]	<i>hated, disliked; held in aversion</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #8146 BDB #971

Translation: ...and the firstborn son is [from] the unloved [wife]. In this case of the two wives, the firstborn son is the son of the unloved wife. Here is where the man's psyche is exposed—we would think that the man would have a natural love for his son, no matter what. However, that is not the case. If a man has a woman that he does not love, and she has his child, there is a reasonable chance that he will not love that child, and, as a result, not give that child his due. On the other hand, if a man loves a woman and she has his child, then that child is a result of their love, and he will better love and care for that child.

The complete **Doctrine of the Firstborn** can be found elsewhere (links follow this doctrine); this is the abbreviated version.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Firstborn

1. Two of the related Hebrew words are:
 - a. In the Hebrew, the word *firstborn* is b^ekôwr (רִאשׁוֹן) [pronounced *b^eKOHR*]. Metaphorically, this word is used for *anything which is chief or first of its kind* Strong's #1060 BDB #114.
 - b. The feminine noun is b^ekôwrâh (רִאשׁוֹנָה) [pronounced *b^ekoh-RAW*], which means *rights and responsibilities of the firstborn, privileges of the firstborn, birthright [of the firstborn]; primogeniture*. By virtue of being born first, each firstborn has certain rights and privileges which are bestowed upon him. We have several instances in the Bible where this is taken away. There was never, by

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Firstborn

God's Law, a set of definite rights and responsibilities which belonged to the firstborn. That was a matter of tradition and culture, but not Law. See Gen. 29:26. Strong's #1062 BDB #114.

2. The related Greek words:
 - a. The noun/adjective *prôtotokos* (πρωτοτόκος) [pronounced *proh-tot-OK-oss*], which means *firstborn [of man or animals]; the beginning [first] [of a new series]*. Used as an adjective only in Luke 2:7; elsewhere as a noun. Strong's #4416.
 - b. The neuter noun: *prôtotokia* (πρωτοτόκια) [pronounced *proh-toht-OHK-ee-ah*], which means *birthright, right [or privilege] of primogeniture, the right or advantages of the firstborn son*. This references the religious leadership of a family (the firstborn belongs to God); and the double-portion of the father's wealth went to him. Strong's #4415.
3. Webster gives us two sets of definitions for *first-born*, which is important in order to interpret the next point:
 - a. *First brought forth; first in the order of nativity; eldest; as the first-born son.*
 - b. *Most excellent; most distinguished or exalted. Christ is called the first-born of every creature.*¹
4. It is very important in the Bible, the first time a word is used. This often sets the tone and/or the parameters for this word.
 - a. When the first man born to a woman occurs in Scripture, he is named Abel but he is not called Adam and Eve's firstborn. We associate this term with the firstborn of Abel's flock which he brings to God to be sacrificed, a sacrifice which God respects (which sacrifice speaks of Jesus Christ). Gen. 4:4
 - b. The first time *firstborn* is used in the New Testament (Luke 2:7), it also refers to Jesus Christ (the only use of that term in the gospels). As an aside, this is because Luke presents Jesus as the *Son of man*.
5. It is in Gen. 25 where we have our first indication that being the firstborn carries with it some privileges (therefore, the rights of the firstborn did not originate with the Mosaic Law). This is the chapter where Esau, the firstborn, and Jacob interact with Isaac, their very old and mostly blind father. Jacob is after the blessing of the firstborn. As we go over the sub-points, bear in mind that the Mosaic Law is not been spoken yet and what we are examining here is more tradition than anything else.
 - a. Esau and Isaac were twins, with Esau being delivered first. Isaac came out next, holding onto the heel of Esau. God spoke to Rebekah concerning these two, saying that they would become two nations who would struggle against one another and that the older would eventually serve the younger (Gen. 25:22–26).
 - b. Unfortunately, both Isaac and Rebekah developed favorites—Isaac preferred his firstborn, Esau, the hunter; and Rebekah preferred Jacob, who apparently learned to cook (Gen. 25:27–29).
 - c. When Esau came in from the field, he was starving—hungry to the point of great weakness. Jacob had made a stew. When Esau asked for some, Jacob made Esau give up his birthright for a bowl of stew. Esau's rationalization is that he was so hungry, he was about to die and what good is a birthright after death? Just exactly what this birthright entailed is not told to us. We also do not know who was later told about the exchange of the birthright. It is never disclosed whether this was simply between Esau and Jacob, or whether Jacob informed his parents of this information; however, it is implied that this was known in their family in Gen. 27:36. Gen. 25:29–34
 - d. In Gen. 27, Jacob steals the blessing of his father to Esau. He pretends to be Esau (at the urging and help of his mother), and receives the blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau. This is not necessarily related to one being firstborn or not. Isaac simply, prior to his death, was going to bless Esau, but blessed Jacob instead. Jacob, when masquerading as his brother, identified himself several times to his father as his *firstborn*.
6. Jacob also blesses his own sons, referring to Reuben as his firstborn. Then he tells Reuben that he is spineless. Reuben lacked character and judgment. When he comes to Judah, Jacob says that his brothers would praise him and bow down to him, meaning that the descendants of his brothers would bow down and praise his Descendant. Actually, this has a double-fulfillment: it is fulfilled in the royal line which extends David to the last king of Judah; and this is fulfilled in our Lord as well, Whose humanity is in the line of Judah (Luke 3:23–33). What had happened was that Reuben, due to his lack of leadership,

The Abbreviated Doctrine of the Firstborn

- particularly with regards to the brothers' treatment of Joseph, lost his birthright. This is where Reuben, as the oldest brother, should have stepped in and laid down the law, but he did not. He lost the leadership aspect of his birthright to Judah and the double portion to Joseph. We will touch on this in 1Chron. 5:1–2, where the passage is properly exegeted (we will examine this probably after the book of Ruth).
7. Although, traditionally, the firstborn was seen as the primary continuation of the line of the father, and often due more blessing and inheritance, God blessed men based upon their regeneration and cursed men if they were negative toward Him. Gen. 41:51 49:3–4 1Chron. 5:1–2
 8. The Levites were taken as God's firstborn, instead of the firstborn from every family, as a tribe dedicated to Him. Num. 3:12, 45, 50 The close association with the number of Levites as compared to the number of firstborn was to indication (1) that redemption was involved in setting apart the firstborn; (2) setting apart the Levites as firstborn was analogous to God setting apart Jesus as His firstborn; and (3) the redemption had to be exactly the right amount. Jesus could not just go and suffer on the cross for awhile, and that would do the trick; He had to pay for the sins of all mankind. *Redemption*, by the way, means *payment*. This redemption was continued so that all of the firstborn had to be redeemed. Num. 18:15 Again, the idea was to connect redemption with the firstborn with a specific amount (a specific redemption amount).
 9. The Passover: The final judgment against Egypt was to kill their firstborn. This was a type of Christ. Ex. 11–12 Num. 8:16–18 9 Deut. 16:1–6 Psalm 105:36 135:8 136:10 (which passage associates God's love with striking them down) 1Cor. 5:7 Heb. 11:28
 - a. God calls Israel His *firstborn* in Ex. 4:22. The implication is that there could be another born of God. However, God used it in this way: Pharaoh was to let God's firstborn go or He would kill Pharaoh's firstborn (Ex. 4:23).
 - b. God has Moses threaten the Pharaoh with this in Ex. 11:4–6.
 - c. Death of the firstborn is a type of Christ, as Christ is the Firstborn of God. 1Cor. 5:7 Heb. 1:6
 - d. Prior to the carrying out of this curse, God instructs Moses in the Passover. All of Israel is to, by household, slaughter a lamb. What God says is chilling: "[The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight.](#)" (Ex. 12:6b). The blood of the lamb is then smeared on both sides and at the top of the door frame (Ex. 12:7, 22). That believers were passed over because of the blood about their door (matching the blood on our Lord's hands, head and feet), is a picture of God not judging us because He has judged His Firstborn in our stead. When God saw the blood of the Passover at the entrance of the house, God would not go into the house and kill the firstborn (Ex. 12:13, 23). Then they were to roast the lamb with fire without removing any part of it, and then to eat the lamb (Ex. 12:7–11). Fire speaks of God's judgment, which is put upon His Lamb rather than upon mankind, who deserves death.
 - e. Easton tells us about the Egyptian Pharaoh who was probably the one whose firstborn died during this time: *Menephtah is probably the Pharaoh whose first-born was slain. His son did not succeed or survive his father, but died early. The son's tomb has been found at Thebes unfinished, showing it was needed earlier than was expected. Some of the records on the tomb are as follows: "The son whom Menephtah loves; who draws towards him his father's heart, the singer, the prince of archers, who governed Egypt on behalf of his father. Dead."*²
 10. Jesus Christ is called the firstborn in Psalm 89:27.

This was taken from the [Doctrine of the Firstborn \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)).

¹ Noah Webster's 1828 Dictionary of American English from e-sword; topic: first-born.

² M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: first-born.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Application: v. 15 reads: [When \[there\] are two wives for a man—the one loved and the other unloved \[lit., hated\]—and the loved \[wife\] and the unloved \[wife\] have \[both\] given birth to sons for him; and the firstborn son is \[from\] the unloved \[wife\].](#) The principle here is, apart from which child is born and what is due to him, is that the

man bears a responsibility toward all of his children. In that era, there were not thousands of children being born out of wedlock every day, as is occurring in our society. Children were born into a home with a mother and a father, even though those parents may not have a deep and abiding love for one another. The father continued to have legal duties and responsibilities toward that son and that wife, regardless of how he felt.

Deuteronomy 21:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
nâchal (נָחַל) [pronounced <i>naw-KHAHL</i>]	<i>to give (as a possession), to cause to inherit; to distribute</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5157 BDB #635
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bânîym (בָּנָיִם) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: [And it is in the day of the inheritance to his sons...](#) There would come a time when a man would begin to consider what he owns and how this will be divided amongst his sons. Then, as now, the man would reach an age where his death becomes somewhat more real, and the distribution of his wealth has begun to become a part of his thinking.

Deuteronomy 21:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Deuteronomy 21:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...of what is theirs [lit., his],... What is being divided up is what the father has accumulated over the years. It may include possessions, land and/or a business.

In the ancient world, this apparently was divided up from father to sons. However, the Bible does have a famous incident where there are only daughters to consider (Num. 27:1–8).

Deuteronomy 21:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâkôl (יָכוֹל) [also yâkôwl (יָכוֹל)] [pronounced yaw-COAL]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
With the negative, this means <i>cannot, to be unable to, to lack the ability to, to be powerless to, to lack permission to, to lack the power to.</i>			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bâkar (בָּכַר) [pronounced baw-KAHR]	<i>to bear a firstborn; to give the right of primogeniture to anyone; to bear early or new fruit</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #1069 BDB #114
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'âhêb (אֲהֵב) [pronounced aw-HAYV ^B]	<i>the one loved; the woman desired; possibly the one preferred</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #157 BDB #12

Deuteronomy 21:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, ʿal and pânîym mean <i>upon the face of, facing, in front of, before (as in preference to), in addition to, overlooking</i> .			
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
sânê' (שָׂנְאָה) [pronounced <i>saw-NAY</i>]	<i>to hate; in the participle, it is the ones hating; in the passive: those being hated by</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #8130 BDB #971
b ^e kôwr (רִאשׁוֹן) [pronounced <i>b^eKOHR</i>]	<i>firstborn; metaphorically used for anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1060 BDB #114

Translation:...[that] he [the father] will not be able to give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the loved [wife] in preference to the son of the unloved [wife]—the [actual] firstborn. The firstborn has certain rights and privileges. Custom was, he would receive the double portion. Because I am the firstborn, I think that is a great idea, and if I could reinstitute this idea, I certainly would.

Now, the man has strong feelings for both of his wives—one he loves and the other he dislikes (or even hates). He cannot make a determination of the inheritance based upon how he feels about his wives. Similarly, a man cannot determine how to relate to his children based upon his feelings toward their mother.

Furthermore, the sons have a responsibility to their mothers at that point. The father's treatment of his sons help to define this responsibility to his sons.

Quite obviously, it was not the custom, in that day, for the husband's wealth to pass to the wife (or wives); but to his male sons. If there are only daughters, inheritance was possible as well (a court case which Moses presided over).

The idea was not that men are superior to women, but that the daughters would get married and they would participate in the inheritance of their husbands (that is, the husband would have a share in the land or get an inheritance from his father, and the wife would enjoy a portion of that).

We have already seen a case history of this: Jacob married two women and took on two mistresses. His Uncle Laban had tricked him into marrying Leah, the sister of the woman he loved. In fact, for that reason, God gave Leah her children first. Now Y^ehowah saw that Leah was hated and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because Y^ehowah has seen my affliction. Certainly now my husband will love me." Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, "Because Y^ehowah has heard that I am hated, He has therefore given me this son also." So she named him Simeon (Gen. 29:31–33).

The right of primogeniture did not originate with Moses in Deut. 21. It is first mentioned in Gen. 25, where it is obviously a common right or a tradition already at that time. This is where Esau, Jacob's older brother by a few seconds, is bribed into selling his birthright to Jacob. Jacob recognized its importance whereas Esau did not. These rights could be set aside for reasonable cause by the father, as Isaac did in the case of Jacob and Esau in Gen. 27:33; however, mere favoritism was not reason enough to favor one child over another when it came to the rights of the firstborn.

Here, he will not be allowed to place the son of the loved wife over and above the older son of the life whom he does not love. In other words, as the NIV Study Bible puts it: *the order of birth rather than parental favoritism governed succession, though the rule was sometimes set aside with divine approval (cf., e.g., Jacob or Solomon).*³¹

In fact, the preference of the parent is often worthless if the parent is a poor judge of character. Isaac certainly preferred Esau, his firstborn, over Jacob; and Esau, as a younger man, was not near as devious and as manipulative as was Jacob. However, the seed of Abraham was to pass through Jacob rather than through Esau, because Jacob was a believer who eventually experienced some limited spiritual growth (his son, Joseph, showed tremendous spiritual maturity). In fact, Joseph was practically the last one born, but to him belonged the birthright of Jacob, which meant the double portion (1Chron. 5:1–2). This is why through Joseph there are two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Reuben, the eldest, lost his position as firstborn because he was *unstable as water* (Gen. 49:3–4). Actually, what this means is, water assumes the shape of whatever it is poured into. Reuben adjusted his values and opinions to reflect those around him, rather than to take an unequivocal stand for what is right. Reuben today would be a politician. He knows how to give the people what they want and he knows what to say to gain the approval of those around him—but Reuben would not take a firm stand for what is right. He did not know how to lead. Recall, Reuben talked his brothers into placing Joseph into a pit as opposed to killing him; however, Reuben should have allowed Joseph to enjoy his freedom without any constraints, even if Reuben had to stand against all of his other brothers. Reuben knew what was right and could have enforced it—however, he chose not to (Gen. 37).

Deuteronomy 21:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b ^e kôwr (בְּכֹרֶת) [pronounced b ^e KOHR]	<i>firstborn; metaphorically used for anything which is chief or first of its kind</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1060 BDB #114
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
sânê' (שֹׂנְאֵה) [pronounced saw-NAY]	<i>to hate; in the participle, it is the ones hating; in the passive: those being hated by</i>	feminine singular, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #8130 BDB #971

³¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 266.

Deuteronomy 21:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâkar (נָכַר) [pronounced naw-KAHR]	<i>to contemplate, to behold, to recognize, to acknowledge, to be acquainted with, to know, to know how, to care for</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5234 BDB #647
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
Owen has that this is a feminine singular, but that is a mistake.			
peh (פֶּה) [pronounced peh]	<i>mouth [of man, animal; as an organ of speech]; opening, orifice [of a river, well, etc.]; edge; extremity, end</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6310 BDB #804
This word can be used metaphorically for a <i>spokesman, a messenger, an orator; a commandment, expressed purpose</i> . In 2Sam. 13:32, this is rendered <i>command, intent, order, appointment</i> by translators who are generally very literal in their translation.			
sh ^e nayîm (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced sh ^e n-AH-yim]	<i>two, a pair; a second [time]; again; a repetition, a repeating; cognate of a verb which means to repeat</i>	dual numeral substantive	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
The Pulpit Commentary says ³² that this means a <i>double portion</i> (literally, it is translated a <i>mouth of two</i>). They reference 2Kings 2:9 Zech. 13:8.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb to be is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to acquire, to be found, to be detected, to be discovered, to be present, to exist</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592

³² *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:17.

Deuteronomy 21:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: For the firstborn, the son of the unloved [wife], he will [hereby] know to give to him a double portion [lit., a command of two] in all he has acquired,... The word *mouth* above has several other meanings, and it is possible that in this case, it refers to a very strong custom—something which might even be codified into law in some cities or nations.

It was the custom in that day for the firstborn son to receive a double portion. So, let's say this man has saved \$100,000 and he has 4 sons. They do not all get \$25,000; the first born gets \$40,000 and the other three get \$20,000 each. That is the right of the firstborn.

This is simply a custom of that day and time, and it is enshrined into law here only to protect the rights of the firstborn. Parents today tend to divide up evenly their inheritance to go to their children (or grandchildren) evenly. This does not mean that this new customary division of property is wrong or right; it is simply what is done, as opposed to what was done in ancient times.

Moses is simply taking the traditions of his day and working around them. Here is the tradition and here is a situation where there is a father with more than one wife—here is how such a situation is to be dealt with, so that it does not need to go to court.

In fact, this is key to understanding the Mosaic Law and the book of Deuteronomy. There are traditions which build up over time, and much of the time, these traditions have a neutral moral value. When Moses is speaking, it was traditional to give the firstborn a double portion; today, damn it, that is not the case. There is no reason for the believer today to try to restore an ancient tradition whose time has come and gone. However, it was important to Moses to develop some laws which would, in effect, unclog the courts. So, having a great legal mind combined with a lot of legal training, as well as a great deal of experience, a portion of Deuteronomy was written simply to keep some disputes from coming to court. Quite obviously, when you and your next door neighbor (or one of your relatives) have a dispute, taking that dispute to court should be a last resort.

Deuteronomy 21:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
hûw' (אוה) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it; himself as a demonstrative pronoun: that, this (one); same</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> , is implied	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
rê'shîyth (תִּשְׁאָר) [pronounced ray-SHEETH]	<i>first fruit, firstling, first of one's kind, first, chief; a beginning, a former state; former times</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #7225 BDB #912

Deuteronomy 21:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Inexplicably, Owen (upon whom I depend to parse my verbs for me) lists this as a feminine singular construct, which makes little sense because (1) this is a plural noun (always found in the plural form) and (2) there is no noun for this to affix itself to as a construct.			
ʾôwn (און) [pronounced ohn]	<i>strength, power, vigor; substance, wealth; faculty, ability</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #202 BDB #20

Translation: ...for he is the first of his strength... The firstborn, even if he is the son of the unloved wife, is still the beginning or the first of the father's strength, substance and ability. In many ways, the firstborn son is the continuation of the line of his father.

Deuteronomy 21:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
mîsh ^e pâṭ (משפט) [pronounced mish ^e -PAWT]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

Gesenius organizes the meanings as follows:

(1) *a judgement*; including:

(a) *the act of judging*; (b) *the place of judgment*; (c) *a forensic cause, the setting forth of a cause, to appeal a judgment*; (d) *the sentence of a judge*; (e) *the fault or crime one is judged for*;

(2) *a right, that which is just, lawful according to law*; which set of meanings would include:

(a) *a law, a statute; a body of laws*; (b) *that which is lawfully due a person, a privilege, a legal privilege, the right of redemption, the right of primogeniture*; (c) *a manner, a custom*; (d) *a fashion, a kind, a plan*.

We could possibly add the meanings for the plural: *laws, responsibilities, privileges*. From the standpoint of the one under judgment, mîshepâṭ could mean *appeal*.

b ^e kôwrâh (בְּרוּכָה) [pronounced b ^e koh-RAW]	<i>rights and responsibilities of the firstborn, privileges of the firstborn, birthright [of the firstborn], primogeniture</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1062 BDB #114
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Translation:...—[so] to him [is] the custom of the rights [and privileges] of the firstborn. Because a child is the firstborn, he receives certain rights and privileges.

Barnes: *Moses did not originate the rights of primogeniture (compare Gen. 25:31), but recognized them, since he found them pre-existing in the general social system of the East. Paternal authority could set aside these rights on just grounds (Gen. 27:33), but it is forbidden here to do so from mere*

partiality.³³ As previously discussed, Reuben lost his place as firstborn, not because his mother was disfavored, but because he lacked character and leadership ability.

As has been mentioned before, many of these laws and customs have spiritual import.

Jesus is the Firstborn

1. God the Father would make God the Son His firstborn: Psalm 89:27 *And I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.* (Green's Literal translation)
2. In Luke 2, Jesus is taken to the Temple of God in what appears to be obedience to the Mosaic Law. *And when the eight days to circumcise Him were completed, His name was called Jesus, the name called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days of their purification were completed according to the Law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present [Him] to the Lord (just as it stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every male opening a womb shall be called set apart to the Lord and to give a sacrifice according the spoken thing in the Law of the Lord, a pair of doves or two young pigeons.* (Luke 2:21–24 Ex. 13:2, 12 Lev. 5:11 12:8).
3. Paul associates Christ as the firstborn of many brothers with election. *For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified* (Rom. 8:29-30). Jesus was elected by God the Father in eternity past. We are elected in Him; we share His election.
4. Jesus is called the firstborn of all creation in Col. 1:15-16: *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through Him and for Him.*
5. He is also called the firstborn from the dead in Col. 1:18-20: *And He is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross. He has this same title in Rev. 1:5*
6. Heb. 1:5-6: *For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and He shall be to Me a son"? And again, when He brings the firstborn into the world, He says, "Let all God's angels worship Him."* (Psalm 2:7 2Sam. 7:14 Deut. 32:43 LXX?).
7. Jesus is also called the first and the last. Isa. 41:1 44:6 48:12 Rev. 1:17 2:8 22:13
8. We should glean two things from these references: Jesus is not actually born or created, but He is preeminent among all that which has been created. Secondly, His title Firstborn is also to tie Him to the Passover event, where the death of the firstborn, redemption, the blood of the Lamb and the passing over all those under His blood are all gathered together as a type, for which Jesus is the antitype.

This was taken from the [Doctrine of the Firstborn \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Vv. 15–17 read: Let's say that a man has two wives, one which he loves and one which he doesn't, and they both bear sons to him. Further, let's say that the wife that he does not love bears his firstborn. When it comes to the time of determining how his inheritance is to be distributed, he will not be able to treat the son of his loved wife as if he were the firstborn. He must give the double portion to the actual firstborn son, even if he is the son of the unloved wife, as he is the first of this man's strength and therefore he is due the rights and privileges of the firstborn. The sons had no say in the man's choice of wives, or to which couple they were to belong. The Bible upholds the right of the firstborn throughout, unless the firstborn himself relinquishes that right. The right of the firstborn, also known as the right of primogeniture, to a double portion has its parallel in surrounding cultures. The NIV Study Bible points out that we find this in the Nuzi (which predates the book of Deuteronomy), Larsa during the Old Babylonia period, Assyria in the Middle Assyria period. Israel as a nation was first among nations and received a double portion: *But you will be called priests of Y^ehowah. You will be spoken of as ministers of our*

³³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:15–17.

God. You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches, you will boast. Instead of your shame, a double portion; [instead of] humiliation, they will shout for joy over their portion. Therefore, they will possess a double portion in their land—everlasting joy will be theirs (Isa. 61:6–7).

With the double portion also comes great responsibility and often double discipline. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of Y^ehowah’s hand double for all her sins.” (Isa. 40:2).

There is a further implication here that the husband cannot simply cast aside his first wife (the unloved wife). It is not so stated, but if a double-portion must be given to the firstborn, as per the custom of that day; then it would logically follow that the husband cannot easily rid himself of the first wife.

The key here is, emotion is not allowed to be a determining factor in any of this. The husband must be subject to his responsibilities, no matter how he feels. The contrast is stated strongly (the loved wife versus the hated wife); yet the husband cannot just do whatever he feels like doing, even though he loves one wife and hates the other. In marriage, the man takes on responsibility, and that responsibility transcends emotions. There is much more going on here than, the husband now has a small army that he can order around (a wife, wives, and so many children). The man is taking on responsibility when he marries, and that needs to be his foremost consideration. How he feels about his wives is not an issue.

Let’s take this in points:

Understanding and Interpreting Deuteronomy 21:15–17

1. First the passage: Vv. 15–17 read: **Let’s say that a man has two wives, one which he loves and one which he doesn’t, and they both bear sons to him. Further, let’s say that the wife that he does not love bears his firstborn. When it comes to the time of determining how his inheritance is to be distributed, he will not be able to treat the son of his loved wife as if he were the firstborn. He must give the double portion to the actual firstborn son, even if he is the son of the unloved wife, as he is the first of this man’s strength and therefore he is due the rights and privileges of the firstborn.**
2. This passage is stated in very strong terms. In the original language, the husband *loves* one wife and *hates* the other wife. So, whether this is the case or not, we can assume here that the husband has very strong feelings about his wives.
3. In that era, there was the tradition of the double portion. There is the tradition that the firstborn assumes the place of the father. We have in practice that, sometimes the firstborn does not live up to his own responsibilities, and loses this leadership position (Reuben was the firstborn, but Judah, who is born 4th, became the ruling tribe over Israel). However, we are speaking in principles here; and it is the responsibility of the father to follow the protocol.
4. Therefore, the father is to give his firstborn a double portion. That is the tradition of that day; and this tradition looks forward to the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is referred to as the *firstborn* in several passages.
 - 1) Col. 1:15 **He [referring to Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.** (ESV). The New Living Translation may help us with understanding this verse, as Jesus was not *born* or *created*: **Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,...** Or the AUV–NT: **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn One [i.e., who takes preeminence] over all that is created.** The *firstborn* was one of the many ways the Old Testament looked forward to Jesus Christ; so the firstborn is given preeminence in a family by custom and law.
 - 2) Rom. 8:29–30 **For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined He also called, and those whom He called He also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified.** (ESV; capitalized) Jesus is the firstborn among many brothers. We are those brothers; we are in Christ and, as such, share His sonship; and are members of the family of God. Again, there is nothing here about Jesus actually being born or created; it is all about His position and then our position as in union with Him.

Understanding and Interpreting Deuteronomy 21:15–17

5. Since Jesus will be seen as the firstborn of God, this tradition of the blessing of the firstborn is preserved in the Law of Moses. This does not mean that you need to adjust your will and give more of your stuff to the firstborn (although, I personally would certainly not protest against such a thing).
6. Above all, responsibility and the traditions (as they have been made into law) are preserved.
7. One may also come to the conclusion that the husband may not simply cast his first wife aside. After all, if the father must give his firstborn his due (his double portion), then that would suggest that the husband cannot simply set his first wife aside.
8. Marriage, for the husband, is accepting responsibility, for his wife (in this case, *wives*) and his children. His responsibility toward his children are emphasized here.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

So you are wondering, what is the application, if any, of this today? This passage has great far-reaching application. The short application is that you do not short-change your own children because you prefer one wife over another (i.e., one mother over the other mother). Have you been married twice? Do you have children from the first marriage? Properly applying this verse means that you cannot short-change that child. He should receive your time and your support. It is an embarrassment to Jesus Christ if you are behind in your child-support payments. If that is you, don't tell a soul that you believe in Jesus Christ. It is better than they don't know. Ideally, you wait on God to bring you your right woman and you wait upon God to for this right woman before you get married, which is to occur before you have sex. Don't blame anyone else but yourself if you jumped the gun and married someone who was incredibly attractive at the time, who turned out to lack substance (or, perhaps you were the one lacking in substance). In any case, you don't get to begin over again as though nothing happened. If this person bore your children, then they require your support and guidance and you are not allowed by God to short-change them in favor of the children of wife #2. Let's say that you chose to have a whole slew of children in your wild years and then you grew up, perhaps got saved, or just spiritually got a grip. You cannot erase the past. Those children require your financial assistance and guidance whether or not you have any feelings for their mother.

Now lets go back to vv. 15–17 and what they actually say: *Let's say that a man has two wives, one which he loves and one which he doesn't, and they both bear sons to him. Further, let's say that the wife that he does not love bears his firstborn. When it comes to the time of determining how his inheritance is to be distributed, he will not be able to treat the son of his loved wife as if he were the firstborn. He must give the double portion to the actual firstborn son, even if he is the son of the unloved wife, as he is the first of this man's strength and therefore he is due the rights and privileges of the firstborn.*

A Modern-Day Application of Deuteronomy 21:15–17

1. You will note that a portion of this verse depends greatly upon the customs of that day.
2. In the time of Moses, divorce was strongly discouraged. A man was more likely to take on a mistress of another wife before divorcing the wife of his youth.
3. Therefore, at first it would appear that this has little or nothing to do with today's times. However, that would be wrong.
4. What do we have in American culture which is similar to ancient culture? We have divorce and often a resulting two families as opposed two one family with two wives and two sets of children.
5. There was a protocol in that age with raising children and with inheritance. This same protocol should exist today.
6. Being the firstborn, I really like the idea of the double-portion, but I don't think I am going to be able to bring that cultural norm back. Furthermore, as we have studied, it is as much related to looking forward to Jesus Christ as anything else.
7. However, what the father must do is give time and training to his sons, whether these are the sons of a

A Modern-Day Application of Deuteronomy 21:15–17

bitter divorce or not. As believers in Jesus Christ, and as is true of all men, our sons are the next generation and it is up to us to train them to be that next generation.

8. Therefore, as much as possible, you are to work with the sons from your divorced wife or from your ex-lover. There are a tremendous number of studies done on the children of single mothers and the stats aren't very pretty.

A part of our responsibility is to prepare the next generation for taking over.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

There is another application as well: the husband is not allowed to make decisions based upon how he feels. He must make decisions based upon his responsibilities.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The Execution of the Disobedient Teen

When first hearing Bob Thieme teach, where he spoke of the importance of authority orientation and the authorities which are over us, I admit that, now and again, I did not care for such teaching. However, as I progressed in life, and observed this from the standpoint of a teacher, where I could see learning take place in an environment of discipline and learning did not take place where there was no discipline, I began to see his point. However, here, it is clear that the Bible strongly proclaims authority orientation, and has done so from the earliest times. You cannot read this and then think that God likes your rebelliousness, your anti-authority stance, or your arrogant ideas about those who have authority over you.

This particular passage is particularly disliked by liberals and anti-Bible types. When someone wants to quote something from the Bible that they view as absurd, they will often include this passage. They do not like the emphasis upon authority.

Similarly, I was not a well-behaved, obedient child. I spent a great deal of my own personal young life flaunting authority. However, I will do my best to treat this passage objectively (obviously, I had some problems with objectivity when it came to the firstborn getting a double portion in days past).

When he is to a man a son of stubbornness and bitterness—his not listening in a voice of his father and in a voice of his mother—and they chastise him and he does not listen to them. And will bring in him out, his father and his mother, and they bring him unto elders of his city and unto a gate of his place.

Deuteronomy
21:18–19

When there is to a man a son of rebellion and resistance—he does not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother—and they have disciplined him, yet he [still] will not listen to them; then his father and mother will take a hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city, to the gate of his place.

Let's say that there is a teen or a young man who is rebellious and resistant to authority. He refuses to listen to the voice of his mother or father, and even though they discipline him, he will still not listen to them. Then his father and mother will bring him out to the elders of the city, to the city gate where trials take place.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	If a man hath a son depraved and rebellious, who will not obey the word of his father or of his mother, and who, when they reprove him, will not receive admonition from them; his father and mother shall take him, and bring him before the sages of the city at the door of the court of justice in <u>that</u> place,...
Latin Vulgate	If a man have a stubborn and unruly son, who will not hear the commandments of his father or mother, and being corrected, slights obedience: They shall take him and bring him to the ancients of the city, and to the gate of <u>judgment</u> ,...
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	When he is to a man a son of stubbornness and bitterness—his not listening in a voice of his father and in a voice of his mother—and they chastise him and he does not listen to them. And will bring in him out, his father and his mother, and they bring him unto elders of his city and unto a gate of his place.
Peshitta (Syriac)	If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastised him, will not hearken to them; Then his father and his mother shall lay hold on him, and bring him out to the eiders of the city, at the gate of his place;...
Septuagint (Greek)	And if any man has a disobedient and contentious son, who hearkens not to the voice of his father and the voice of his mother, and they should correct him, and he should not hearken to them; then shall his father and his mother take hold of him, and bring him forth to the elders of his city, and to the gate of <u>the</u> place;...
Significant differences:	The word <i>listen</i> can also be translated <i>hearken</i> , <i>obey</i> . The Hebrew ends with <i>the gate of his place</i> ; and this is slightly different in the Latin, Greek and in the targum.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Rebellious children Now if someone has a consistently stubborn and rebellious child, who refuses to listen to their father and mother—even when the parents discipline him, he won't listen to them— the father and mother will take the son before the elders of that city at its gates.
Contemporary English V.	A father and a mother may have a stubborn and rebellious son who refuses to obey them even after he has been punished. If a son is like that, his parents must drag him to the town gate, where the leaders of the town hold their meetings.
Easy English	The son who refuses to obey his parents Perhaps a man has a bad son who will not obey his parents. They try to teach him right things. But he refuses to listen to them. Then his parents must take him to the leaders of his town.
Easy-to-Read Version	"A man might have a son who is stubborn and refuses to obey. This son doesn't obey his father or mother. They punish the son, but he still refuses to listen to them. His father and mother must then take him to the leaders of the town at the town meeting place.
Good News Bible (TEV)	"Suppose someone has a son who is stubborn and rebellious, a son who will not obey his parents, even though they punish him. His parents are to take him before the leaders of the town where he lives and make him stand trial.
<i>The Message</i>	When a man has a stubborn son, a real rebel who won't do a thing his mother and father tell him, and even though they discipline him he still won't obey, his father and mother shall forcibly bring him before the leaders at the city gate...
New Century Version	Sons Who Refuse to Obey

If someone has a son who is stubborn, who turns against his father and mother and doesn't obey them or listen when they correct him, his parents must take him to the elders at the city gate.

New Life Bible

"If a man has a strong-willed son who goes against him and does not obey his father or mother and when they punish him he will not even listen to them, then his father and mother will take hold of him and bring him to the leaders of his city at the gate of his city.

New Living Translation

Dealing with a Rebellious Son

"Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or mother, even though they discipline him. In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders as they hold court at the town gate.

The Voice

If anyone has a stubborn and rebellious son who refuses to obey his father and mother, who won't even listen to them when they discipline him, his parents may bring him to the city gate *and formally accuse him in court, ...*

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible

'Now, if any man has a son who is disobedient, likes to argue, and refuses to obey his father and mother or listen when they correct him; they must take him before the elders at their city gate...

Beck's American Translation

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who refuses to obey his father and mother and will not listen when they correct him, his father and mother must take him and bring him to the elders of his town in the public square...

Christian Community Bible

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious child who does not pay attention to what his father or mother commands, and does not listen to them when they call him, his parents shall seize him and bring him before the leaders of the city, to the gate of judgment,...

New Advent (Knox) Bible

Is there a son so rebellious and unmanageable that he defies his parents' bidding, and will not brook restraint? Such a son they must bring by force to the city gate, where the elders are assembled,...

New American Bible

"If a man has a stubborn and unruly son who will not listen to his father or mother, and will not obey them even though they chastise him, his father and mother shall have him apprehended and brought out to the elders at the gate [The gate: in the city walls. This open space served as the forum for the administration of justice. Cf Deut 22:15; 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 2, 11; Isaiah 29:21; Amos 5:10, 12, 15.] of his home city, where they shall say to those city elders, 'This son of ours is a stubborn and unruly fellow who will not listen to us; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' V. 20 is included for context.

NIRV

A Stubborn Son

Suppose someone has a very stubborn son. He doesn't obey his father and mother. And he won't listen to them when they try to correct him. Then his parents will take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town.

New Jerusalem Bible

'If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not listen to the voice either of his father or of his mother and, even when they punish him, still will not pay attention to them, his father and mother must take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the gate of that place.

New Simplified Bible

»If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not listen or obey his father or his mother when they chastise him,
 »His father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown.

Revised English Bible

When a man has a son who is rebellious and out of control, who does not obey his father and mother, or take heed when they punish him, then his father and mother are to lay hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the town at the town gate,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	When a man has a stubborn son, disobeying and not hearing the voice of his father and the voice of his mother and they corrected him, but he never heard into them: His father and his mother seize him, and proceed him to the elders of his city, and into the gate of the place.
Bible in Basic English	If a man has a son who is hard-hearted and uncontrolled, who gives no attention to the voice of his father and mother, and will not be ruled by them, though they give him punishment: Then let his father and mother take him to the responsible men of the town, to the public place;...
The Expanded Bible	Sons Who Refuse to Obey If someone has a son who is stubborn, who turns [rebels] against his father and mother and doesn't obey them or listen when they correct [discipline] him, his parents [mother and his father] must take [grab] him to the elders at the city gate [Ex. 21:15; Lev. 20:9].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	When a man has a disobedient and rebellious son, who will not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, but disobeys them and will not listen to them, his father and mother shall take him and conduct him to the Magistrates of the town, and to the open court, and say to the Magistrates of the city,... A portion of v. 20 is included for context.
HCSB	"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father or mother and doesn't listen to them even after they discipline him, his father and mother must take hold of him and bring him to the elders of his city, to the gate of his hometown.
NET Bible®	If a person has a stubborn, rebellious son who pays no attention to his father or mother, and they discipline him to no avail [Heb "and he does not listen to them."], his father and mother must seize him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his city.
NIV – UK	A Rebellious Son If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"If a man has a stubborn, rebellious son who will not obey what his father or mother says, and even after they discipline him he still refuses to pay attention to them; then his father and mother are to take hold of him and bring him out to the leaders of his town, at the gate of that place.
exeGesés companion Bible	<u>THE TORAH ON A REVOLTING AND REBELLIOUS SON</u> When a man has a revolting and rebellious son, who hearkens not to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother and that, when they discipline him, he hearkens not to them: then his father and his mother capture him and bring him to the elders of his city and to the portal of his place;...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	If a man has a wayward and defiant son, who does not heed his father or mother and does not obey them even after they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his town at the public place of his community.
Judaica Press Complete T.	If a man has a wayward and rebellious son, who does not obey his father or his mother, and they chasten him, and <i>he still</i> does not listen to them, his father and his

mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, and to the gate of his place.

Kaplan Translation

The Rebellious Son

When a man has a wayward, rebellious son [This rule applies only to a boy between the ages of 13 and 13¼ (Sanhedrin 68b; Yad, Mamrim 7:5)³⁴. It does not apply to a girl (Yad, Mamrim 7:11).], who does not obey his father and mother, they shall have him flogged [With 39 lashes (Yad, Mamrim 7:7). The boy is flogged only if he eats the 'meal of a rebellious son' (see note on Deuteronomy 21:20), which is forbidden by Leviticus 19:26 (Hagahoth Maimoniath ad loc.; Sanhedrin 63a).]. If he still does not listen to them, then his father and mother must grasp him [That is, both must agree to bring him (Bachya)] and bring him to the elders of his city, to that area's supreme court [(Targum). Literally, 'gate.' This is the local supreme court of 23 judges. There must be two witnesses to the 'meal of the rebellious son' besides the parents (Yad, Mamrim 7:7).].

Orthodox Jewish Bible

If an ish have a stubborn and rebellious ben, which will not obey the voice of his av, or the voice of his em, and that, when they have chastened him, will not give heed unto them; Then shall his av and his em lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the zekenim of his town, and unto the sha'ar (gate) of his place;...

The Scriptures 1998

"When a man has a wayward and rebellious son who is not listening to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have disciplined him, does not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or his mother and though they chasten him will not listen to them, Then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives,...

Concordant Literal Version

In case a son of a man should become stubborn and rebellious, and he is not hearkening to the voice of his father or to the voice of his mother, and they discipline him, but he does not hearken to them, then his father and his mother will grasp him and bring him forth to the elders of his city, at the gate of his place.

Darby updated Translation

If a man have an unmanageable and rebellious son, who hearkens not unto the voice of his father, nor unto the voice of his mother, and they have chastened him, but he hearkens not unto them; then will his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place;...

English Standard V. – UK

A Rebellious Son

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they discipline him, will not listen to them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gate of the place where he lives, and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' V. 20 is included for context.

New King James Version

The Rebellious Son

"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city.

Syndein/Thieme

{Incorrigible Son's Treatment}

³⁴ So that there is no misunderstanding, I include these various translations and their commentary, not because I think that they are correct, but I believe that they provide another viewpoint.

If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not 'hear, listen and obey' {shama'} unto them. Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place.

Webster's Bible Translation If a man shall have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and [who], when they have chastened him, will not hearken to them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out to the elders of his city, and to the gate of his place;

Young's Updated LT "When a man has a son apostatizing and rebellious—he is not hearkening to the voice of his father, and to the voice of his mother, and they have chastised him, and he does not hearken unto them—then laid hold on him have his father and his mother, and they have brought him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place.

The gist of this verse: When a son is out of control, and his parents cannot control him, then they will take a hold of him and take him to the gate of the city, which is where trials took place.

Deuteronomy 21:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
BDB gives this list of definitions: 1) <i>that, for, because, when, as though, as, because that, but, then, certainly, except, surely, since</i> ; 1a) <i>that</i> ; 1a1) <i>yea, indeed</i> ; 1b) <i>when (of time)</i> ; 1b1) <i>when, if, though (with a concessive force)</i> ; 1c) <i>because, since (causal connection)</i> ; 1d) <i>but (after negative)</i> ; 1e) <i>that if, for if, indeed if, for though, but if</i> ; 1f) <i>but rather, but</i> ; 1g) <i>except that</i> ; 1h) <i>only, nevertheless</i> ; 1i) <i>surely</i> ; 1j) <i>that is</i> ; 1k) <i>but if</i> ; 1l) <i>for though</i> ; 1m) <i>forasmuch as, for therefore</i> .			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
çârar (רָרַס) [pronounced <i>saw-RAHR</i>]	<i>stubborn, rebellious, willful, headstrong [and uncontrollable]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5637 BDB #710
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Deuteronomy 21:18a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mârâh (מָרָה) [pronounced <i>maw-RAWH</i>]	<i>bitter; disobedient, rebellious; resistant [to authority], in opposition to authority, rebellious, rebelling against, contentious</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #4784 BDB #598

Translation: [When there is to a man a son of rebellion and resistance...](#) This is a new topic and here we are dealing with the individual who is rebellious against his own parents. This is more than a small amount of rebelliousness; this is a young man who cannot be reigned in, no matter what the parents do to him.

Although such a son is very likely a personal embarrassment to his parents, it is very likely that everyone knows about this. His rebelliousness is very likely public knowledge, and there are probably many in that city who have personal complaints about this boy. So this problem is not something which is suddenly discovered; nor is this a trivial matter.

Acting stubborn is the Qal active participle of çârar (צָרַר) [pronounced *saw-RAHR*] is listed in BDB as meaning *stubborn, rebellious*. However, these are two words which perhaps go together, but they are not synonyms. Çârar is found used strictly as a verb only once in Hos. 4:16 where it is also found in the Qal participle. The KJV reads [Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer](#). I know your thinking; Israel is in for some serious discipline, as there is nothing worse in this world than a backsliding heifer. However, the NASB gives us a clearer picture: [Since Israel is stubborn like a stubborn heifer, can the Lord now pasture them like a lamb in a large field?](#) This is an animal which is going to do what it wants to do when it wants to do it. Lambs, although not the brightest animals in the world, can be controlled and guided by a good shepherd. Israel, out in the large field of the world, had become *willful, headstrong and uncontrollable*. It is also used in that sense in Prov. 7:11. When Israel, through the Levites, confessed their sins, they said, [“And they gave a stubborn shoulder and stiffened their neck, and would not listen.”](#) (Neh. 9:29b; see Zech. 7:11). Have one of your children walked away from you in a rage and you put your hand on his shoulder and he pulled it forward? That is being *willful and stubborn*. We cannot make a determination of the meaning of this word from its use in Psalm 66:7 68:6, 18 Isa. 1:23 Hos. 9:15. In Isa. 30:1a, although this is often translated, [“Woe to the rebellious children,” declares Y^ehowah, “Who execute a plan, but not mine...”](#) The sense here is not of being rebellious, per se, but *being headstrong, doing what they want to do, stubborn*. *Willful and headstrong* is the sense this word is used in Isa. 65:2. Therefore, a more accurate assessment of this word is *stubborn, willful, headstrong*. Strong's #5637 BDB #710.

The next descriptor is the Qal active participle of mârâh (מָרָה) [pronounced *maw-RAWH*], found over forty times (e.g., Num. 20:21 27:14 Psalm 5:10 Lam. 1:20) and it is more consistently rendered *rebel, rebellious*, with the exceptions in the KJV of Job 17:2 Psalm 78:17, 40, 53 106:7, 33, 43 Isa. 3:8 (where it is rendered *provoke, provoking*). The words are found together here, Deut. 21:20 Psalm 78:8 Jer. 5:23, indicating that they might be related, but they are probably not synonyms. Strong's #4784 BDB #598.

Deuteronomy 21:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êyn (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ân</i>]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #369 BDB #34

Deuteronomy 21:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHÇ]	<i>hearing, listening; one who listens [hears]; one paying attention; to listening [and agreeing]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
'âb (אב) [pronounced aw ^b v]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6963 BDB #876
'êm (אם) [pronounced aim]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

Translation:...—he does not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother—... Every family has a child who sometimes responds and sometimes does not to authority. However, this is something greater than a short period of time where the son disobeys. The Qal imperfect indicates, with the negative, that this takes place over a long period of time.

Furthermore, sometimes a child can be controlled by one parent, but not the other. That is not the case here. Neither parent is able to make this young man listen and obey.

Deuteronomy 21:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâçar (יָצַר) [pronounced yaw-SAHR]	<i>to correct [by blows or stripes], to chastise; to correct [with words] to admonish, to instruct</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3256 BDB #415

Deuteronomy 21:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>him</i> ; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to him</i> , <i>toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
wê (or vê) (וְ, וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
<p>The wâw conjunction is used as ❶ a simple copulative, used to connect words and sentences, in which case it is usually rendered <i>and</i>. ❷ It can be used to explain one noun or clarify one noun with another, in which case it is rendered <i>even</i> or <i>yea</i> (see Job 5:19 Dan. 4:10). ❸ The wâw conjunction can introduce two nouns, where the first is the genus and the second is the species; in which case, we would render it <i>and particularly, and specially, and namely, and specifically</i> (and it can be used the other way as well) (see 2Kings 23:2 Psalm 18:1 Isa. 1:1 2:1 Zech. 14:21). ❹ It can be prefixed to a verb also by way of explanation; it could be reasonably rendered as a relative pronoun (<i>who, which</i>) (see Gen. 49:25 Job 29:12 Isa. 13:14). ❺ It can be used to begin an apodosis (the <i>then</i> portion of an <i>if...then...</i> statement) (see Gen. 2:4, 5 40:9 48:7). ❻ It is used between words and sentences in order to compare them or to mark their resemblance (1Sam. 12:15 Job 5:7). ❼ When doubled, it can mean <i>both...and...</i> (Num. 9:14 Joshua 7:24 Psalm 76:7). ❽ It can be prefixed to adversative sentences or clauses and rendered <i>but, and yet, although, otherwise</i> (Gen. 2:17 15:2 17:20 Judges 16:15 Ruth 1:21 Job 15:5 6:14). ❾ And, what we were after, is the wâw conjunction can be used in disjunctive sentences; that is, it can be rendered <i>or</i> (which will help us to understand what Jephthah does) (Ex. 21:17 Lev. 5:3 Deut. 24:7). ❿ it can introduce an idea which exceeds or adds to what has proceeded, being translated <i>also, in addition to, at the same time, and even</i>. 11. Finally, the wâw conjunction can be used before causal sentences and rendered <i>because, for, that, in that</i> (Gen. 18:32 30:27 Psalm 5:12 60:13); before conclusions or inferences, and therefore rendered <i>so that, therefore, wherefore</i> (2Kings 4:41 Isa. 3:14 Ezek. 18:32 Zech. 2:10); and before final and consecutive sentences, which mark an end or an object: <i>in order that</i> (Gen. 42:34 Job 20:10 Isa. 13:2). To paraphrase Gesenius, <i>frequently, it is put after verbs and sentences standing absolutely, especially those which imply time or condition</i> and is reasonably rendered <i>then</i>.³⁵</p>			
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shâma' (שָׁמַעַ) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
'el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...and they have disciplined him, yet he [still] will not listen to them;... The parents have tried everything that they could to discipline this son, and he still refuses to listen to them. They tell him to do X and he goes out and immediately does not-X. He wants to do Y and his parents say no, so he goes out and does Y.

³⁵ H. W. F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 234. When I give a slightly different rendering to a word which I have, 99% of the time, been translating one way, I thought that I should include some documentation for a different usage.

God takes adolescent rebellion quite seriously. We receive our first training, discipline and a tremendous amount of love and sacrifice from our parents. **Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and do not forsake your mother's teaching—indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head, and ornaments about your neck** (Prov. 1:8–9). **Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that you may be prospered and that you may live long on the earth** (Eph. 3:1–3 Ex. 20:12). Furthermore, there is great discipline for the child who rejects this. **The eye that mocks a father and scorns a mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out and the buzzards will eat it** (Prov. 30:17). Recall from God's Law: **"And he who strikes his father or his mother will surely be executed. And he who curses his father or his mother will certainly be executed."** (Ex. 21:15, 17; see also Lev. 20:9).

Society cannot function with a generation of children who despise authority, as we have seen. Coming out of the sixties, I have seen many horrible results of my own rebellious, willful generation—one of the very simple results has been the huge homeless population, many of which came out of that generation. Many of these homeless people (certainly not all) have abused drugs and drinking and have so set their souls in rebellion against society that they are unable to function within the boundaries of society. Another result has been the great amount of crime which has centered itself around the illicit drug market. God has a prescription to deal with these children.

The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge mostly lists related verses to each portion of a verse. At some point, these need to be combined with additional Scripture for a thorough study.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge References for Parental Authority

The Stubborn Child: Prov. 28:24 30:11, 17 Isa. 1:2

Listening to one's parents: Deut. 27:16 Ex. 20:12 21:15, 17 Lev. 19:3 21:9 Prov. 15:5 20:20 Ezek. 22:7

Parents disciplining their children: Deut. 8:5 2Sam. 7:14 Prov. 13:24 19:18 22:15 23:13–14 29:17 Heb. 12:9–11

This is a wonderful collection of verses associated with Deut. 21:18.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Deuteronomy 21:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
tâphas (תָּפַס) [pronounced <i>taw-FAHS</i>]	<i>to lay a hold of, to arrest, to seize; to manipulate, to grasp, to wield, to handle skillfully</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #8610 BDB #1074
'âb (אָב)[pronounced <i>aw^bv</i>]	<i>father, both as the head of a household, clan or tribe; founder, civil leader, military leader</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1 BDB #3
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

Deuteronomy 21:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced aim]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

Translation: ...then his father and mother will take a hold of him... This taking a hold of the child (remember he is a teen or even early 20's) means that this is done by force. We will find this word used later in Deut. 22:28, and although it does not appear to mean *rape* in that context, it is a word for strong, male aggression.

Parents had to be aware of this law and the time period over which it could be exercise. The father had to be strong enough, with some assistance from the wife, to haul this kid before the powers that be. There is a point at which a teen can not longer be physically controlled. Heaven help the parents who allow their child to reach that age and be out of control.

Deuteronomy 21:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced yaw-TZAWH]	<i>to cause to go out, to lead out, to bring out, to carry out, to draw out, to take out; [of money:] to put forth, to lay out, to exact; to promulgate; to produce</i>	3 rd person plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>him; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
z ^e qênîym (זִקְנֵיִם) [pronounced zê-kay-NEEM]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; construct form	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
'îyr (עִיר) [pronounced géer]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: ...and bring him out to the elders of the city,... Whether this young man understands what is going on or about to happen would vary from case to case. If the young man is nearly uncontrollable, possibly the

parents have read this passage to him. He might not know anything from the Word of God, but he might know this.

You will note that this is something that both parents must agree upon. They must both seize this young man and take him to the elders of the city. The child has to be bad in order for both parents to agree to this and to haul him to court in order to be executed.

It is reasonable to suppose, in some or most cases, there is some force involved here.

Deuteronomy 21:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
sha'ar (שַׁעַר) [pronounced <i>SHAH-ghahr</i>]	<i>gate [control of city can be implied]; area inside front gate; entrance</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #8179 BDB #1044
mâqôwm (מִקְוֵם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

Translation: ...to the gate of his place. The gate of the city is where legal proceedings took place. So they bring their son to a trial. He may not have broken any laws of the city, but he is out of control at his own home, which means, he will be out of control in society. These parents would be nipping such rebellion in the bud.

The gate of the city was somewhat of a public forum, an official meeting place between the populace and the elders of the city. It was there that some disputes were settled. For instance, in Deut. 22:15, a girl's parents bring proof of her virginity to the elders at the gate. When a surviving brother would not sire children on behalf of his deceased brother, his sister-in-law was to take him to the gate before the elders of the city. According to Keil and Delitzsch, who quote two other sources, going to the gates of the city is a present-day custom for the Syrians and the Moors.³⁶ It soon came to pass that the gates of a city became synonymous with the governing bodies and the authorities of that city. Therefore, we will later read of the *gates* of hell in Matt. 16:18—this is a reference to the powers or authorities of hell, not to some entrance gate.

The son is still manageable enough that he can be controlled for a few minutes at a time by force. His parents have to physically lay hold on him. He is brought out to the elders not for a trial, as his guilt or innocence is not in fact being debated. This does not require a great many witnesses—just the two parents and the son brought before those in authority at the gates of the city. The elders do not thoroughly investigate this matter, as we have seen in, for instance, Deut. 13:14. These were just the proper steps which parents, at wit's end, had to take, to remove their son, the blight of their lives, from this world and from their lives. Here the elders do not act as judges, but they simply uphold the final act of parental authority in a case of the unmanageable young adult and carry out the death penalty which is prescribed in this passage.

³⁶ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. I, p. 943.

Nothing is said about the child putting up a defense. The simple fact that both parents haul him before the court is reason enough to believe that he is guilty.

Barnes: *The formal accusation of parents against a child was to be received without inquiry, as being its own proof. Thus the just authority of the parents is recognized and effectually upheld (compare Ex. 20:12 21:15, 17 Lev. 20:9).*³⁷

<p>And they have said unto the elders of his city, “Our son this—[he is] rebellious and disobedient—his not hearing in our voice. [He is] worthless and a drunkard.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Deuteronomy 21:20</p>	<p>They will say to the elders of his city, “This [is] our son. [He is] rebellious and disobedient. He does not listen to us [lit., his not hearing our voice]. [He is] worthless and a drunkard.”</p>
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The parents will then give testimony before the court. “This man is our son. He is rebellious and disobedient. He will not listen to us. Besides, he is worthless and a drunkard.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	...and say to the sages of the city, <u>We had transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord; therefore was born to us</u> this son, who is presumptuous and disorderly; he will not hear our word, but is a glutton and a drunkard.
Latin Vulgate	And shall say to them: This our son is rebellious and stubborn, he slights hearing our admonitions, he giveth himself to revelling, and to debauchery and banquetings.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And they have said unto the elders of his city, “Our son this—[he is] rebellious and disobedient—his not hearing in our voice. [He is] worthless and a drunkard.”
Peshitta (Syriac)	And they shall say to the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he does not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.
Septuagint (Greek)	...and they shall say to the men of their city, This our son is disobedient and contentious, he hearkens not to our voice, he is a reveler and a drunkard.

Significant differences: The targum, as is often the case, has a lot of additional text.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then they will inform the city's elders: "This son of ours is consistently stubborn and rebellious, refusing to listen to us. What's more, he's wild and a drunkard."
Contemporary English V.	The parents will tell the leaders, "This son of ours is stubborn and never obeys. He spends all his time drinking and partying."
Easy English	They must say to the leaders, "This is our son. He wants to do bad things and he will not obey us. He is a drunk and he wastes our money."
Easy-to-Read Version	They must say to the leaders of the town: 'Our son is stubborn and refuses to obey. He doesn't do anything we tell him to do. He eats and he drinks too much.'
Good News Bible (TEV)	They are to say to them, 'Our son is stubborn and rebellious and refuses to obey us; he wastes money and is a drunkard.'
<i>The Message</i>	...and say to the city fathers, "This son of ours is a stubborn rebel; he won't listen to a thing we say. He's a glutton and a drunk."
New Berkeley Version	...and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he refuses to listen to us; he is a spendthrift and a drunkard.'
New Century Version	They will say to the elders, "Our son is stubborn and turns against us. He will not obey us. He eats too much, and he is always drunk."

³⁷ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18–21.

New Life Bible	They will say to the leaders of his city, 'This son of ours is strong-willed and goes against us. He will not obey us. He eats and drinks too much.'
The Voice	...telling the city elders <i>what wicked things he has done</i> . For example, "This is our son. He's stubborn and rebellious! He won't obey us. He's a glutton and a drunk!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	...and tell them: <i>This is our disobedient son. He won't listen to us and he has become a drunk and a partier.</i>
Christian Community Bible	...and shall say to them: "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he does not pay any attention to us; he is spoiled and a drunkard."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	...and make complaint to them, This son of ours is rebellious and unmanageable; he pays no heed to our remonstrances, but must ever be carousing, ever at his wantonness and his cups.
New American Bible (R.E.)	<i>The Stubborn and Rebellious Son.</i> If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son [Dt 5:16; 27:16; Ex 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lv 20:9.] who will not listen to his father or mother, and will not listen to them even though they discipline him [Ps 78:8; Jer 5:23.], his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders at the gate [The gate: in the city walls. This open space served as the forum for the administration of justice. Cf. 22:15; 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 2, 11; Is 29:21; Am 5:10, 12, 15.] of his home city, where they shall say to the elders of the city, "This son of ours is a stubborn and rebellious fellow who will not listen to us; he is a glutton and a drunkard [Prv 23:20-21; 28:7; Mt 11:19; Lk 7:34.]." Vv. 18–19 are included for context.
NIRV	They will say to the elders, "This son of ours is very stubborn. He won't obey us. He wastes his money. He's always getting drunk."
New Jerusalem Bible	To the elders of his town, they will say, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious and will not listen to us; he is a wastrel and a drunkard."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	They say to the elders of his city, "This stubborn son disobeyed! The intoxicated glutton never hears our voice."
Bible in Basic English	And say to them, This son of ours is hard-hearted and uncontrolled, he will not give attention to us; he gives himself up to pleasure and strong drink.
The Expanded Bible	They will say to the elders, "Our son is stubborn and ·turns [rebels] against us. He will not obey us. He ·eats too much [is a glutton], and he is ·always drunk [a drunk]."
Ferar-Fenton Bible	...and say to the Magistrates of the city, " This son of ours is disobedient and rebellious. He will not listen to our voice. He is depraved and drunken."
NET Bible®	They must declare to the elders [The LXX and Smr read "to the men," probably to conform to this phrase in v. 21. However, since judicial cases were the responsibility of the elders in such instances (cf. Deut 19:12; 21:3, 6; 25:7-8) the reading of the MT is likely original and correct here.] of his city, "Our son is stubborn and rebellious and pays no attention to what we say - he is a glutton and drunkard."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	...and say to the leaders of his town, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he doesn't pay attention to us, lives wildly, gets drunk.'
exeGesés companion Bible	...and they say to the elders of his city, This our son is revolting and rebellious, he hearkens not to our voice; he is a glutton and a carouser.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) They shall say to the elders of his town, "This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton and a drunkard."

Judaica Press Complete T. And they shall say to the elders of his city, "This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not obey us; he is a glutton and a guzzler."

Kaplan Translation [The parents] must declare to the elders of his city, 'Our son here is wayward and rebellious. He does not listen to us, and is an [exceptional] [(Saadia). See Proverbs 23:20,21 (Midrash HaGadol).] glutton [This alludes to the 'meal of the rebellious son.' By tradition he must steal money from his father, and buy 50 dinars of meat, eating it rare outside his father's property and in bad company. This is the act that must be witnessed for the son to be put to death (Yad, Mamrim 7:2; Sanhedrin 70a).] and drunkard [He must also drink ½ log (5oz.) of wine with the meal (Ibid.). It is therefore forbidden for a boy of this age to eat such a meal at any time (Sefer HaMitzvoth, Negative 195).]'

Orthodox Jewish Bible And they shall say unto the zekenim of his town, This our ben is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a zolel (glutton) and a soveh (drunkard).

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Concordant Literal Version They will say to the elders of his city: This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He is not hearkening to our voice. He is a glutton and carouser.

Darby Translation ...and they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is unmanageable and rebellious, he hearkeneth not unto our voice; he is a profligate and a drunkard.

Emphasized Bible ...and shall say unto the elders of his city: This our son, is rebellious and insulting,—he will not hearken unto our voice,—a glutton and a tippler.

English Standard Version ...and they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.'

Young's Updated LT And have said unto the elders of his city, 'Our son—this one—is apostatizing and rebellious; he is not listening to our voice—a glutton and drunkard.'

The gist of this verse: The parents give testimony to the elders that their son is rebellious and a drunkard.

Deuteronomy 21:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
z ^e qênîym (זקנים) [pronounced <i>zê-kay-NEEM</i>]	<i>old men; elders; chiefs, respected ones</i>	masculine plural adjective; construct form	Strong's #2205 BDB #278
'îyr (עיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5892 BDB #746

Translation: *They will say to the elders of his city,...* The parents of the rebellious child must both give testimony; the verb is in the plural. When it comes to a situation like this, the parents must be in agreement.

Deuteronomy 21:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced <i>zeh</i>]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260
çârar (רָרַס) [pronounced <i>saw-RAHR</i>]	<i>stubborn, rebellious, willful, headstrong [and uncontrollable]</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5637 BDB #710
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mârâh (רָמַ) [pronounced <i>maw-RAWH</i>]	<i>bitter; disobedient, rebellious; resistant [to authority], in opposition to authority, rebellious, rebelling against, contentious</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #4784 BDB #598

Translation: *...This [is] our son. [He is] rebellious and disobedient.* They describe their son. The language is elliptical; these are not complete sentences, but a little here and a little bit there. This indicates great emotion.

The words used to describe him are often found together. He is called çârar (רָרַס) [pronounced *saw-RAHR*] and mârâh (רָמַ) [pronounced *maw-RAWH*]. The first word means *stubborn, rebellious, willful, headstrong [and uncontrollable]*. Strong's #5637 BDB #710. The second means *bitter; disobedient, rebellious; resistant [to authority], in opposition to authority, rebellious, rebelling against, contentious*. Strong's #4784 BDB #598.

There is a natural progression here. The son goes from being *headstrong, wilful, stubborn* to being outright rebellious. Then the father speaks to the son, and he does not listen. The mother speaks to the son, and he does not listen. They discipline him, and he still does not listen. Every child has a certain amount of willful rebelliousness in then; they have old sin natures which manifest themselves quite early in life. However, the parents' job is to orient that child toward authority and life—and quickly. *Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire the causing of his death* (Prov. 19:18).

Deuteronomy 21:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'êyn (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ân</i>]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #369 BDB #34

Deuteronomy 21:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHÇ]	hearing, listening; one who listens [hears]; one paying attention; to listening [and agreeing]	Qal active participle	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person plural suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

Translation: He does not listen to us [lit., his not hearing our voice]. A common complaint among parents, but this is apparently taken to a great extreme by this child. These parents are bringing their child before the elders of the city to have him executed. So this is quite extreme.

According to Gill, the testimony of the parents concerning their son is that he is *one of an obstinate disposition, will have his own will and way, is perverse and refractory; honours not, but despises his parents, and is disobedient to their commands, unruly and ungovernable.*³⁸

Deuteronomy 21:20d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
zâlal (זלל) [pronounced zaw-LAHL]	abject; worthless, insignificant; vile; a glutton	Qal active participle	Strong's #2151 BDB #272
<p>This is a person looking to satiate his own appetites above all else without regard for anyone else. It is a very specific brand of hedonism which is found in some people, particularly females, today. However, zâlal is used in apposition to <i>precious</i> in Jer. 15:19. The connection here, to my way of thinking, is that one who is completely interested in satiating his own appetites is essentially worthless to anyone else. When one's own motivation is one of self-pleasure, then, although he may be involved with other people, he does nothing but use those other people in the satisfying of his own appetite. Such a person can be personable, charming and sincere. I have known alcoholics with a particular personality—charming and sincere as can be, but their immediate pleasure is their only desire and their only motivation. The need of any other person is inconsequential. In this way, they are <i>worthless</i> to anyone else. In Lam. 1:11, this word is rendered <i>vile and abominable</i> (<i>The Amplified Bible</i>), <i>worthless</i> (<i>The Emphasized Bible</i>, RSV), <i>vile</i> (KJV, NASB), <i>despised</i> (NIV), and <i>lightly esteemed</i> (Young's)—<i>worthless</i> is the best rendering in that verse, as it is consistent with the rest of Scripture, the context of the verse and with the use of the word elsewhere.</p>			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çâbâ ^c (סבא) [pronounced saw-BAW]	a drinker, a drunkard, one who imbibes [heavily], a consumer of a lot [of wine]	Qal active participle	Strong's #5433 BDB #684

³⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:20.

Translation: [He is] worthless and a drunkard.” A difficult word in this verse is *zâlal* (רָזַל) [pronounced *zaw-LAHL*] found in the Qal participle in Deut. 21:20 Prov. 23:20, 21 28:7 Jer. 15:19 Lam. 1:11 and in the Niphal perfect in Isa. 64:1, 3.* *Glutton* seems to be the best rendering, as Prov. 23:20–21a read: **Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine [or] with gluttonous eaters of meat; for the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty.** This is a person looking to satiate his own appetites above all else without regard for anyone else. It is a very specific brand of hedonism which is found in some people, particularly females, today. However, *zâlal* is used in apposition to *precious* in Jer. 15:19. The connection here, to my way of thinking, is that one who is completely interested in satiating his own appetites is essentially worthless to anyone else. When one’s own motivation is one of self-pleasure, then, although he may be involved with other people, he does nothing but use those other people in the satisfying of his own appetite. Such a person can be personable, charming and sincere. I have known alcoholics with this personality—charming and sincere as can be, but their immediate pleasure is their only desire and their only motivation. The need of any other person is inconsequential. In this way, they are *worthless* to anyone else. In Lam. 1:11, this word is rendered *vile and abominable* (*The Amplified Bible*), *worthless* (*The Emphasized Bible*, RSV), *vile* (KJV, NASB), *despised* (NIV), and *lightly esteemed* (Young’s)—*worthless* is the best rendering in that verse, as it is consistent with the rest of Scripture, the context of the verse and with the use of the word elsewhere. Strong’s #2151 BDB #272.

Young people, in particular, are susceptible to alcohol and drugs, which stimulate the soul of the young person while simultaneously destroying that very soul. The Bible has several warnings against the child becoming a drunkard (Prov. 20:1 23:19–21, 29–35).

Vv. 18–20 **When there is to a man a son of rebellion and resistance—he does not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother—and they have disciplined him, yet he [still] will not listen to them; then his father and mother will take a hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city, to the gate of his place. They will say to the elders of his city, “This [is] our son. [He is] rebellious and disobedient. He does not listen to us [lit., his not hearing our voice]. [He is] worthless and a drunkard.”** Recent stats in the United States (I write this in 2013): *By the 8th grade, 29.5 percent of adolescents have consumed alcohol, 15.5 percent have smoked cigarettes, and 15 percent have used marijuana.*³⁹ *In 2012, 6.5 percent of 8th graders, 17.0 percent of 10th graders, and 22.9 percent of 12th graders used marijuana in the past month.*⁴⁰ These are huge percentages and indicate that we have a generation of young people who will bring great evil to the United States. In ancient Israel, such a child could be executed for such drug abuse. Today, this spreads and flourishes, creating a huge sub-population of drug abusers who will never mature and who will never know how to act as an adult as their body changes into an adult.

Vv. 18–20 **When there is to a man a son of rebellion and resistance—he does not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother—and they have disciplined him, yet he [still] will not listen to them; then his father and mother will take a hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city, to the gate of his place. They will say to the elders of his city, “This [is] our son. [He is] rebellious and disobedient. He does not listen to us [lit., his not hearing our voice]. [He is] worthless and a drunkard.”** The testimony of the parents is short. Their son is stubborn, willful and rebellious, he does not listen to his parents. He is worthless and, as a son, is drinking to the point of drunkenness on the regular basis, interested only in self-gratification. Note that things had to get to quite a point for the parents to bring the child in. This often occur with poor or absent parents but it could occur with great parents. At some point in time, there are choices the child is making for which he is responsible. When we begin to develop a knowledge of right and wrong, perhaps in our early teens or earlier, then we begin to become responsible for the choices that we make.

Note that these parents do not have to bring in additional proof or witnesses. This is not a trial. Their word and the fact that they are willing to bring their son in is testimony enough. For any parent, the idea of bringing one of their children to the judicial system for the purpose of execution is almost beyond comprehension. This is obviously an extreme case where the child is completely out of control and has succeeded at making the life of

³⁹ From <http://www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/11-shocking-facts-about-teens-and-drug-use> accessed September 15, 2013.

⁴⁰ From <http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/high-school-youth-trends> accessed September 15, 2013.

his parents worse than miserable. Most parents would not have the ability to do this. In fact, we have seen in court case after court case where the family will stand behind their son, a young man who is a violent and reprehensible criminal deserving of death.

As noted earlier, when a young teen is a problematic child, the people in his neighborhood know about him. This does not come as a shock to these judges.

When teens develop great rebelliousness against their parents, this spreads. As a former teacher, I can testify that, if there was one problem kid in my classroom, I could usually handle him, and the other students would even shun him to some degree. However, if there were 3 or 4 or 5 kids who were disrespectful, then there would be very little teaching that could take place. It does not take a great many undisciplined children to destroy their generation.

I recall a talk show which I saw sometime back with uncontrollable children (they were eleven or twelve or thirteen) and their parents (actually, there was no father; in every case it was just a mother). The child physically withstood his mother and apparently called her every obscene name that he could think of when standing in opposition to his mom. The moderator, who has no children, knew it all, and just knew that you should not physically whip this child. The expert child therapist on the show could tell what they needed was therapy. She finds out that they were in therapy. Well, then, they needed separate therapy. They had both had joint and separate counseling. Then they needed counseling for longer periods of time. "You can't undo thirteen years of bad habits in four counseling sessions," she arrogantly explained. Both the mother and the child had spent the last five years in therapy. Then obviously, it was the wrong therapist. The moderator backed her up 100% all the way. The child needed a father, someone who was physically his superior, to knock the stuffing out of him for his impertinence, and if that did not do the trick, then the mother needed the Mosaic Law.

The original problem was the mother (or the father) married out of sexual lust; or they overindulged their child and suddenly found that, at age five, they had a monster on their hands. A child must know discipline, control and respect by the time he is five or six. If not, for a particularly hard-headed child, there is hell to pay for the next twenty or more years. On the other hand, this mother could have done everything right.

Today when I write (this is the year of our Lord 2013), the problem with the upcoming generation is that huge numbers of them have been brought up with a mother only, and they have not gotten the swift and sure discipline of a father who, when he sees some foolishness, will not tolerate it. In present-day society, the father has been replaced with Uncle Sam, who provides money, but very little by way of guidance (perhaps a note from the school telling the mother, "**Your kid is too fat**"), but with **swats**⁴¹ being taken out of the public schools, there is nearly nothing to control a headstrong 13 year-old boy. This lack of discipline will destroy this new generation of kids.

Some children are incorrigible; and God had an answer for those kind of children. Recall, even a child who cussed out his mother was to be executed. God has no tolerance for children out of control with no authority orientation. It is best for them to face a certain death early in life and make their peace with God before they have become too hardened. And, this quick intervention reduces the crime rate considerably. This was a child who was already involved in criminal activity. If that is his life at age thirteen, it will only escalate. The amount of money that society will pour out on the child will be phenomenal. God knew how to deal with such a child. Prov. 30:17 reads: **The eye that mocks its father and despises to obey its mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, the sons of the eagle shall eat it.** (Green's Literal translation) Therefore, there is a clear presentation of authority orientation applied to young boys throughout their youth.

Vv. 18–20 read: **When there is to a man a son of rebellion and resistance—he does not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother—and they have disciplined him, yet he [still] will not listen to them; then his father and mother will take a hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city, to the gate of his place. They will say to the elders of his city, "This [is] our son. [He is] rebellious and disobedient. He does not listen to us [lit., his not**

⁴¹ Even though corporal punishment is still legal in many public schools, it is almost never used. I taught in some schools near Houston, and it had been phased out of most school districts by the year 2000. At the same time, we have witnessed both an increase in costs and a decrease in student performance, as well as an increased police presence in the schools.

hearing our voice]. [He is] worthless and a drunkard.” The young man is motivated only by his own appetites. He wants something and he takes it; he has no self-control, only going after that which gives him pleasure. This makes him worthless to others.

Again, there is no age assigned to this young man (the idea that he is between age 13 and 13¼ is preposterous). However, he has gotten to a point where he recognizes only his own desires, which can include gluttony and drunkenness. Today, drug addiction and homosexual acts would be added to this list of charges against the boy. He does only what brings him pleasure, and damn the consequences.

Although it is certainly possible that the parents were not the best of parents; that is not an issue. Moses does not allow for such extenuating circumstances. If the parents cannot control their son, and it is to a point where he is out of control, then he is brought to the court of that city to be evaluated. However, I use that term loosely, as it appears that only the testimony of the parents is necessary here.

Given all that the parents have done, the child is not just brought before the court for a tongue-lashing, but he will be executed. There are teeth in this law.

And has stoned him all men of his city in the stones and he has died. And you have purged the evil from your midst and all Israel they will hear and they will fear.

Deuteronomy
21:21

Then the men of his city will stone him with stones until [lit., and] he has died. [By this] you have purged this [lit., the] evil from your midst and all of Israel will hear and they will fear.

Then the men of the city will execute him by stoning. By his death, you will have purged this evil from your midst, as all Israel will hear this and fear this happening to them.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos	<u>And it shall be that if he brought to fear and receive instruction, and beg that his life may be spared, you shall let him live; but if he refuse and continue rebellious, then all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die; and so shall you put away the evil doer from among you, and all Israel will hear, and be afraid.</u>
Latin Vulgate	The people of the city shall stone him: and he shall die, that you may take away the evil out of the midst of you, and all Israel hearing it may be afraid.
Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And has stoned him all men of his city in the stones and he has died. And you have purged the evil from your midst and all Israel they will hear and they will fear.
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shall you put evil away fore among you; and all Israel. I shall hear, and fear.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the men of his city shall stone him with stones, and he shall die; and you shall remove the evil one from yourselves, and the rest shall hear and fear.

Significant differences: Additional text in the targum.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then all the people of that town will stone him until he dies. Remove [Or burn] such evil from your community! All Israel will hear about this and be afraid.
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Contemporary English V.	The men of the town will stone that son to death, because they must get rid of the evil he brought into the community. Everyone in Israel will be afraid when they hear how he was punished.
Easy English	Then all the men in his town must throw stones at him until he is dead. You must remove these bad things from among you. Then all *Israel's people will hear about it and they will be afraid.
Easy-to-Read Version	Then the men in the town must kill the son with stones. By doing this you will remove this evil from yourselves. All the people of Israel will hear about this and be afraid.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Then the men of the city are to stone him to death, and so you will get rid of this evil. Everyone in Israel will hear what has happened and be afraid.
<i>The Message</i>	Then all the men of the town are to throw rocks at him until he's dead. You will have purged the evil pollution from among you. All Israel will hear what's happened and be in awe.
New Century Version	Then all the men in his town must throw stones at him until he dies. Get rid of the evil among you, because then all the people of Israel will hear about this and be afraid.
New Life Bible	Then all the men of his city will kill him with stones. You must get rid of the sin from among you. All Israel will hear about it and be afraid.
The Voice	Then all the people of the city will stone him to death. You must expel the wicked from your own community [1 Corinthians 5:13]. Everyone else in Israel will hear about it and fear <i>the consequences of such rebellion</i> .

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then the men of the city must stone him to death with rocks; for, you must remove those who are evil from among yourselves, so that the rest will hear about it and fear.
Christian Community Bible	Then all the men of this town shall stone him to death. In this way shall you banish evil from your midst, and all Israel upon knowing this shall fear.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Thereupon the citizens shall stone him to death, so that you may be rid of this plague, and every Israelite that hears of it may be afraid to do the like.
New American Bible	Then all his fellow citizens shall stone him to death. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel, on hearing of it, shall fear.
New American Bible (R.E.)	Then all his fellow citizens shall stone him to death. Thus shall you purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear and be afraid. Dt 13:6, 11-12; 22:21, 24; Lev. 20:2; 24:14-16.
NIRV	Then all of the people in his town will put him to death by throwing stones at him. Get rid of that evil person. All of the people of Israel will hear about it. And they will be afraid to disobey their parents.
New Jerusalem Bible	All his fellow-citizens must then stone him to death. You must banish this evil from among you. All Israel, hearing of this, will be afraid.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	All the men of his city stone him with stones, to die. Ignite the evil from your center, and all Israel will hear and fear.
Bible in Basic English	Then he is to be stoned to death by all the men of the town: so you are to put away the evil from among you; and all Israel, hearing of it, will be full of fear.
The Expanded Bible	Then all the men in his town must ·throw stones at [stone] him until he dies. ·Get rid of [Banish; Purge] the evil among you, because then all the people of Israel will hear about this and be afraid.
Ferar-Fenton Bible	Then all the people of his town shall stone him with stones, and kill, -and that evil will be burnt out from your breast, - and Israel will hear and fear.

NET Bible® Then all the men of his city must stone him to death. In this way you will purge out [The Hebrew term הִתְרַעַב (bi'artah), here and elsewhere in such contexts (cf. Deut 13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:9), suggests God's anger which consumes like fire (thus רָעַב, ba'ar, "to burn"). See H. Ringgren, TDOT 2:203-4.] wickedness from among you, and all Israel [Some LXX traditions read מִיִּקְאֲשָׁנָה (hannish'arim, "those who remain") for the MT's לְאֶרֶץ (yisra'el, "Israel"), understandable in light of Deut 19:20. However, the more difficult reading found in the MT is more likely original.] will hear about it and be afraid.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death; in this way you will put an end to such wickedness among you, and all Isra'el will hear about it and be afraid.
exeGesés companion Bible	And all the men of his city stone him with stones and he dies: thus you burn evil from among you. - and all Yisra El hears and awes.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Thereupon the men of his town shall stone him to death. Thus you will sweep out evil from your midst: all Israel will hear and be afraid.
Judaica Press Complete T.	And all the men of his city shall pelt him to death with stones, and he shall die. So shall you clear out the evil from among you, and all Israel will listen and fear.
Kaplan Translation	All the men of his city shall then pelt him to death with stones, so that you will rid yourself of the evil in your midst. When all Israel hears about it, they will fear.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And all the men of his town shall stone him with avanim (stones), that he die; so shalt thou put harah away from among you; and all Yisroel shall hear and fear.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall cleanse out the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear and [reverently] fear.
Concordant Literal Version	Then all the men of his city will pelt him with stones so that he dies. Thus you will eradicate the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear.
English Standard Version	Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall purge the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.
The Geneva Bible	And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear. A death which was also appointed for blasphemers and idolaters: so that to disobey the parents is most horrible.
Green's Literal Translation	And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, and he shall die. So you shall put away the evil from among you, that all Israel shall hear, and fear.
New RSV	Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death. So you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel will hear, and be afraid.
Young's Updated LT	And all the men of his city have stoned him with stones, and he has died, and you have put away the evil out of your midst, and all Israel will hear and fear.

The gist of this verse: This rebellious son will be executed and his death will indicate that his evil has been purged from Israel. Others in Israel will hear about this and fear.

Deuteronomy 21:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
çâqal (סָקַל) [pronounced <i>saw-KAHL</i>]	<i>to throw stones, to stone, to overwhelm with stones; possibly to heap stones on the dead [as a disgrace]</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal perfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5619 BDB #709
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾânâshîym (אֲנָשִׁים) [pronounced <i>uh-NAW-sheem</i>]; also spelled ʾîyshîym (אִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>ee-SHEEM</i>]	<i>men; inhabitants, citizens; companions; soldiers, followers</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #376 BDB #35
ʾîyr (עִיר) [pronounced <i>geer</i>]	<i>encampment, city, town</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5892 BDB #746
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʾeben (אֶבֶן) [pronounced <i>EH^B-ven</i>]	<i>a stone [large or small] [in its natural state, as a building material]; stone ore; used of tablets, marble, cut stone; used of a tool or weapon; a precious stone, gem; rock; a weight of the balance</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #68 BDB #6

Translation: *Then the men of his city will stone him with stones...* There is a death sentence associated with this. Now, bear in mind, the parents had to be so beside themselves and so upset with this child to bring him before the court. We do not have any instances of this occurring in Israel, but I am certain that many a parent read this passage to a child who was beginning to show some rebelliousness.

Calvin: *[This] law delivers over to death all who contumaciously rebel against the discipline of their parents.*⁴²

Although Calvin seems to think⁴³ that, because this is a trial forum, that the young man can offer a defense, there is no indication of that in this passage. The reason that they all go before a judge is not to get the guilty verdict, but so that their child is stoned to death. This is something that the court is able to order, and elders there would perform the execution.

⁴² John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18.

⁴³ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18. He writes: *The very mention of a trial, therefore, implies that the son was heard in his defense, so as to clear himself of the crime...for it would have been more than absurd that the son should be condemned without being heard.*

From the Pulpit Commentary: *Moses...now lays down the extent and limits of parental authority over the son. He does not give the father the absolute power of life and death in reference to the child, as some ancient codes did, but, without abolishing that power altogether, he places such checks upon it that while, on the one hand, if a bad son became so outrageous that his life was putting others in peril through its poisonous influence, he would have before him the option of capital punishment; yet, on the other hand, this penalty could only be inflicted with...the consent of both parents...and the parents were expected to be able to say that they had exhausted every known means of reclaiming him before they brought him to that tribunal. It is evident that the law is enacted with the intention of being so deterrent that it may never need to be put into execution.*⁴⁴

Poole remarks: *The Jews say this law was never put in practice, and therefore it might be made for terror and prevention, and to render the authority of parents more sacred and powerful.*⁴⁵ The Pulpit Commentary also comments: *there is no known instance in Jewish history of its having been carried out.*⁴⁶ No doubt, many a parent read this passage to their children and many Jewish children were likely to be required to memorize it.

Even the Jews backed off on this law somewhat. Gill writes: *...when they [the parents] have chastened him, will not hearken to them; when they have reproved him by words, and corrected him with blows; the Jews understand this of scourging or beating by the order of the sanhedrim, after admonition given; it is said (x), "they admonish him before three (a court of judicature consisting of three judges), and they beat him; but it seems rather to respect private corrections of their own by words and stripes, which having no effect, they were to proceed as follows."*⁴⁷ So they had added an intermediate step of the kid being hauled into court and being beaten but not killed.

There are a great many people who read this and scoff—particularly liberals and anti-Bible types who want no one to ever be executed except human fetuses—thinking this to be some great abuse of some sort. However, Roman society gave the father alone this same power over his own children at any age.⁴⁸ So it is difficult to scoff at a law of God if it is perfectly in line with the traditions of that time.

Deuteronomy 21:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוּת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to die; to perish, to be destroyed; to be put to death; to die prematurely [by neglect of wise moral conduct]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...until [lit., and] he has died. This was not just to be painful; this boy was to be executed. They were to stone him until he died.

⁴⁴ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:18–21 (heavily edited).

⁴⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:19.

⁴⁶ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, courtesy of e-sword, Deut. 21:18–21.

⁴⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18. He is quoting Misn. Sandedrin, c. 8. sect. 4.

⁴⁸ Calvin notes a variety of sources for this in John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentary on the Bible*; 2nd beta version from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18.

Now obviously, some children become uncontrollable because their parents were over-indulgent. You may think to yourself that this is not fair. The child pays the price. Wrong! The parent who is this over-indulgent would not take his child to be stoned. This is the parent who says, when his son is caught with the smoking revolver in his hand while standing over the corpse that his son was just holding the gun for a friend. Schools see this all of the time when a child is caught with a lit cigarette or a lit joint in their hand. *They were just holding it for a friend* and the parent believes and supports their child. This ruins the child. The obvious solution to this problem, as certainly, 1 out of 100 kids were actually holding it for a friend, is that you give the kid the punishment due, no matter what, unless the *friend* comes forward. As Thieme used to say, you cannot make policy around less than 1%.

Clarke wisely noted: *This law, severe as it may seem, must have acted as a powerful preventive of crime. If such a law were in force now, and duly executed, how many deaths of disobedient and profligate children would there be in all corners of the land!*⁴⁹

In the case given, we have a parent who has tried everything, and, even though there is no such thing as a perfect parent, this parent has tried what they knew to get the child under control. They could not. It is drastic action, but such a child is in the fast tract for a life as a criminal. This will be his end anyway. God is just eliminating the middle man (the victim) of his crimes.

There is certainly a flip side to this. We have the natural result of being an overindulgent parent—that parent will have to put up with their children for the rest of their lives. Their children will move back into their house years later, and make their lives miserable in the process. Their children will be involved in criminal activity and dishonorable behavior, bringing shame upon the family, and pain and suffering to innocent people.

And there is another side to this as well. “You will also say to the sons of Israel, ‘Any man from the sons of Israel or from the aliens temporarily living in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, he will certainly be executed; the people of the land will stone him with stones.’ ” (Lev. 20:2).

One of the repeated themes in God’s Word is the negative impact of the degenerates who are in close association with God’s people. Throughout the Book of the Law, Israel is mandated by God to remove certain types of people from the land (in this case, it is the uncontrollable teenager). In the book of 1Corinthians, it is the incestuous couple (1Cor. 5:13). True separation for believers is from other believers—not from unbelievers.

Finally, my friend, we are that stubborn and rebellious son. *All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way. But Y^howah has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him* (Isa. 53:6). Under the Law, our heavenly Father demands our execution. We are the errant sons of a loving Father.

However, as McGee was often wont to say, *friends, aren’t you glad that we are not under Law today? Instead of judgment, there is mercy for us.*⁵⁰ When the crowd listened to our Lord tell the parable of the prodigal son, several in the crowd expected when the son returned home that he would be executed. Instead, he was received with the open arms of his father. *Friends, aren’t you glad that we are not under Law today?*

Now for the 1%: this does not mean that under grace that it is okay to be the overindulgent parent. You ruin your children when you do not discipline them and when you do not consistently hold them to high standards. A parent has the duty to properly raise their child. When you do not properly train your child, you will cause him pain and suffering for the rest of his life unless he learns discipline from either some branch of the military or from Bible doctrine.

⁴⁹ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18–21.

⁵⁰ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 133.

Deuteronomy 21:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bā'ar (רָעַב) [pronounced <i>baw-GAHR</i>]	<i>to burn; to completely consume; to de-pasture; to take away, to [utterly] remove, to purge; to devour, to devastate</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1197 BDB #128
ra' (עָר) [pronounced <i>rahg</i>]	<i>evil, bad, wicked; evil in appearance, deformed; misery, distress, injury; that which is displeasing [disagreeable, unhappy, unfortunate, sad]</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7451 BDB #948
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
qereb (בְּרֵב) [pronounced <i>KEH-re^bv</i>]	<i>midst, among, from among [a group of people]; an [actual, physical] inward part; the inner person with respect to thinking and emotion; as a faculty of thinking or emotion; heart, mind, inner being; entrails [of sacrificial animals]</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7130 BDB #899

Translation: [By this] you have purged this [lit., the] evil from your midst... Rebelliousness in teenagers is evil, and by killing this young man, the evil he would do is purged from the people of that city.

We find this phrase ([By this] you have purged this [lit., the] evil from your midst) in several places in the Bible.

Purging Evil from Israel's Midst

Offense/Scripture	Commentary
Executing the false prophet. Deut. 13:1–5	This is a prophet who encourages Israel to follow after another God.
Executing anyone who tries to get Israel to follow another god. Deut. 13:6–11	This is primarily spoken of a close relative or friend.
A false witness is to get the same punishment as the person he is testifying against. Deut. 19:15–21	This can include the death penalty. Perjury cannot be tolerated.
Execution of the rebellious teen. Deut. 21:18–21	Both parents had to bring the young man forward to be executed.

Purging Evil from Israel's Midst

Offense/Scripture	Commentary
A woman is executed for misrepresenting herself as a virgin at marriage. Deut. 22:13–21	This does not mean that it was against the Mosaic Law to not be a virgin at marriage. Quite obviously, Ruth in the book of Ruth was not a virgin when she married Boaz.
Execution for adultery. Deut. 22:22	Both the man and the woman involved in the incident are executed.
Execution for pre-adultery. Deut. 22:23–24	This is where a women who is promised to be married has relations with a man who is not her husband.

You will notice that purging such evil out of Jewish society was often related to marriage and family.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Deuteronomy 21:21d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	<i>God prevails; contender; soldier of God; transliterated Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975
shâma ^c (שָׁמַע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yârê ^s (יָרַע) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAY</i>]	<i>to fear, to be afraid; to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 rd person plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431

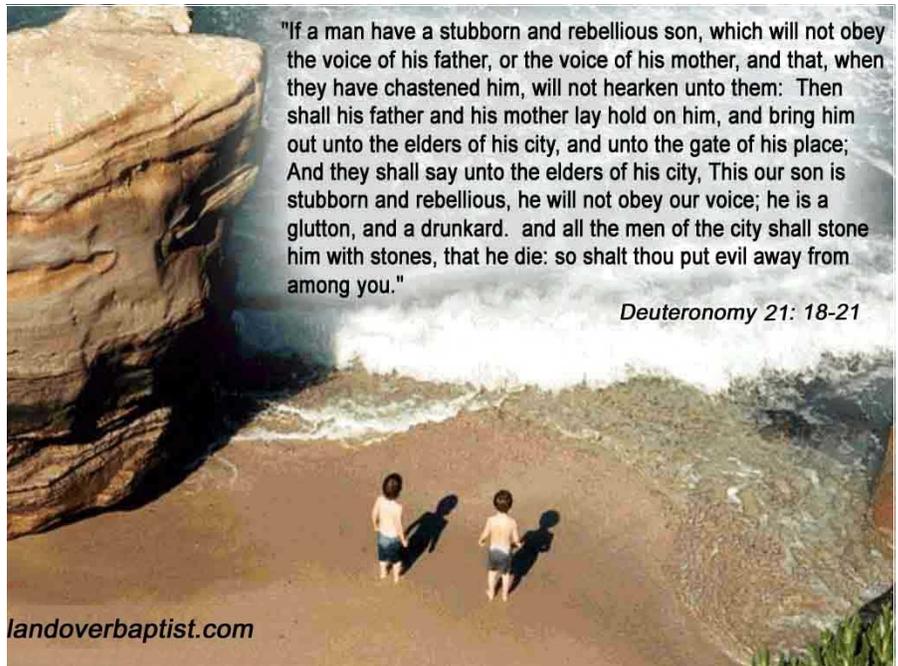
Translation: ...and all of Israel will hear and they will fear. If such an execution ever took place, this would be known throughout all of Israel and the people of Israel would be in great fear because of it. Primarily the people who would be afraid would be the young, rebellious sons.

This passage reads: Let's say that there is a teen or a young man who is rebellious and resistant to authority. He refuses to listen to the voice of his mother or father, and even though they discipline him, he will still not listen to them. Then his father and mother will bring him out to the elders of the city, to the city gate where trials take place.

The parents will then give testimony before the court. "This man is our son. He is rebellious and disobedient. He will not listen to us. Besides, he is worthless and a drunkard." Then the men of the city will execute him by stoning. By his death, you will have purged this evil from your midst, as all Israel will hear this and fear this happening to them. Liberals despise this passage; it angers them. They will connect it to all kinds of graphics and post it in the fb or send it in an email to everyone they know.

The **Deuteronomy 21:18–21 graphic** here, from [Wallpaper4God](#), is an interesting graphic, which shows two very young boys on a beach.

This graphic is actually quite tame, compared to one which I saw of a severely battered baby next to the text.



Deuteronomy 21:18–21 graphic #2 is from the [Fundamentalist Funhouse](#). Interestingly enough, the exact same people who object to this passage in the Bible, are generally fans of abortion, and believe that women ought to be able to abort up until an hour or so before giving birth.⁵¹ In fact, they could have used abortion photos with this passage which would have been just as gruesome, but perhaps the irony would be too much for them. Even those who set some arbitrary point in time (after the first trimester, for instance), rarely have much of a reason for setting that time apart from they can seem human features of the child, so they are more grossed out by killing it when it is clearly a child.



This passage reads: Let's say that there is a teen or a young man who is rebellious and resistant to authority. He refuses to listen to the voice of his mother or father, and even though they discipline him, he will still not listen to them. Then his father and mother will bring him out to the elders of the city, to the city gate where trials take place. The parents will then give testimony before the court. "This man is our son. He is rebellious and disobedient. He will not listen to us. Besides, he is worthless and a drunkard." Then the men of the city will execute him by stoning. By his death, you will have purged this evil from your midst, as all Israel will hear this and fear this happening to them.

Stoning the Rebellious Teen

1. This example given by Moses was a law which could be literally enforced. That is, parents could take their child to court and have him executed.
2. This does not mean that this happened a lot in Israel's history. We have no such recorded cases in Scripture.
3. Such a law was certainly a tool which parents could use to get their hard-headed teens to listen to them.
4. We have tried a lot of programs which have little by way of teeth in them, like *scared straight*. This is the original *scared straight*.
5. The big difference is, this law had teeth in it. If the parents could not control their child and they were at

⁵¹ I exaggerate here for effect.

Stoning the Rebellious Teen

wit's end, this was always an option.

6. However, note, it had to be the mother and the father to bring their child in. That would indicate that this child was so far out of control that they could not deal with him.
7. This requirement of both parents probably made the actual exercise of this law quite rare. The father would want to give it one more try, or the mother could not bring herself to this point.
8. My point is, this is not something which happened every weekend in the average village. If it happened even 10 times in a generation, I would be surprised.
9. However, what is emphasized here over everything else is authority orientation; and the importance of recognizing the authority in the home.

I do not write this as if I was the perfect child. I can guarantee you that I have had problems with authority for most of my life, and much of it is my own fault. However, I must teach what is here; I cannot twist it to excuse my own lousy behavior in the past.

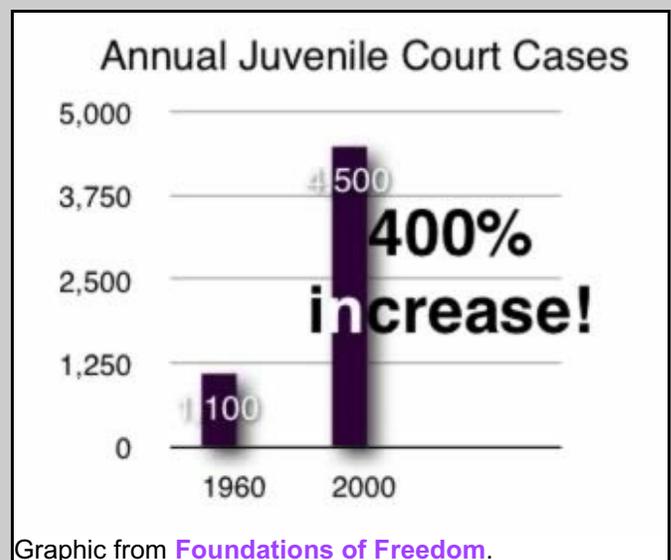
Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

It is certainly reasonable to ask, *what relevance does this have to today?*

Applying the Principle of the Disobedient Son to Today

1. It is highly unlikely that many children are going to be executed simply because mom and dad bring him to court. In fact, in today's society, the parents might be prosecuted.
2. Quite obviously, the city court is the place of last resort, and rightfully so. That is one of the points being made here in this section of Deuteronomy.
3. Recently I have observed schools giving out tickets for talking in a classroom, making a disturbance in class, etc. This is quite sad; not because the teacher cannot control the children, but because there are almost no other options available to a teacher.
4. When I taught (at least in the first few years), punishment had to be quick, severe and certain. And it could not take up a lot of class time. That is, you cannot spend 5 min. with each discipline problem in the middle of class; and a teacher could not put up with 5 or more discipline problems in the same class.
5. In those early days, I could give a kid a demerit for a minor problem; and send him out of class for a medium problem (depending on how much of a disturbance he was). If a kid was sent to a principal, there was, for many years, a certain punishment to be given to that child.
6. After awhile, the state legislature stepped in the begin fixing the schools, which means, making the schools much worse, and they continued to do this until discipline was completely gone in our public schools. The **Increase in Juvenile Crime graphic** above is not clearly associated with a particular city on the website that I took it from, but the idea is generally true—lack of discipline automatically increases juvenile crime.
7. This was certainly not just a legislative problem; lousy parents contributed to the problem of unruly children.
8. A child needs some clear steps of discipline which get him from his home or classroom to the country



Applying the Principle of the Disobedient Son to Today

- courthouse. This steps of discipline should be certain and severe. Ideally, only the very worst kid goes to court (regardless of what the judge decides).
9. However, a school, teacher and principal must be free to discipline; and if the freedom is removed, then classroom control is removed, meaning that all learning ends (which is where most of our schools are right now).
 10. This passage in Deuteronomy offers up the absolute worst place for a young person to be—being hauled before a court by his own parents. Today, this would be done by a policemen and a district attorney. Then, there was the actual possibility of execution; today, a few years in a juvenile detention center is the worst result; but a young person, depending on the heinousness of his crime, can be tried as an adult (but with limited punishment).
 11. In Jewish society, this all depended upon the parents making such a judgment call—and who better to make this call than the parents. In today's society, they go to court based upon the laws of the land and the district attorney.
 12. However, to get to that point, along the way, there should have been steps of wrongdoing followed by discipline—ideally first by the parents and, in our society, then by the school if it is an offense at school. In the latter case, a child should also be punished again by the parents for any school offense (the parent should not be at the school defending his child).

We live in a society today where there are a number of young people who would kill an innocent person for very little provocation. In Jewish society, this was pretty much unknown, because they had a law like this on the books. It may not have been enforced very often, but it was always there for the parents to teach to their children. We may think that this is a barbaric law, but we have raised a barbaric generation of children because we are unwilling, as a society, to discipline them when they need it.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

There is a great deal of confusion when it comes to the actual application of these laws found in the books Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Do we, as Christians, begin to clamor and build a movement which would allow parents to have their children executed today?

What do we learn from executing the disobedient teen today?

1. The fundamental building block for society is the home and the authority established in the home.
2. The home is where all children learn authority orientation. If they do not get authority orientation from their homes, then they will become monsters in society.
3. Anything which goes against the fundamental family is ultimately destructive to society, whether it be living supports given to single women with children or homosexual unions, etc. The family is fundamental to all of society.
4. But a child must learn discipline in the realm of the family first, or they are unable to adapt to society as a whole.
5. The family is organizational humility, where it is designed where the parents are in charge and the children learn from the parents.
6. Enforced humility is what begins in the home, where values and concepts of right and wrong are taught.
7. Ideally speaking, when the adult child leaves the home, he is able to have genuine humility, which means he is responsible for his own actions.
8. As previously discussed, there are no known applications of this law set down by Moses. If two parents ever agreed on bringing their child before a court, we are unaware of it.
9. However, since there was a moderation in this law, where a child might be beat if brought before the court, that suggests that this code had some affect on Jewish society, whether it was ever enforced or not.
10. When it comes to the disobedience of a child, there has to be an ultimate punishment at some point.

What do we learn from executing the disobedient teen today?

11. Hopefully it is obvious that, if you have a lousy child, you don't get to kill him. Our laws do not allow for that.
12. Unfortunately, lousy children infect other children. When a child is not sufficiently guided by his own parents, then he faces the possibility that another child will lead him astray.
13. The state must uphold the authority of the parents. In a degenerate society, the state will look to undercut parental authority in every way possible, which is what is happening in our society.
 - 1) Politicians have, on many occasions, spoken to young people and have said, "You know much more than your parents do." (Or words to that effect)
 - 2) Schools have been involved in hauling underage children off to have an abortion without parents knowing.
 - 3) Some schools have been working vigorously to get their student on ADHD drugs. Since they are not controlling them with corporal punishment, they are resorting to drugs to calm children down.
 - 4) In fact, liberals often use schools to undercut the training of the parents. This is one of the reasons for the push for free preschool, because they are having trouble controlling the thinking of children if they spend 5 years at home with the parents.
14. It is the lack of discipline that destroys the life of the teen. It is this lack of authority orientation which destroys the life of an adult.

I mentioned my teaching experience and appeared to heap all of the blame on the legislature for destroying the education system in Texas. This is only half right. The parents of these little heathen also helped to destroy it. When I first began teaching, and there was a parent-teacher-student-counselor-administrator conference, the whole idea would be to find a way for that kid to be successful in the classroom, and, in every case, they required more effort and time from the student involved. He would be staying after school for more help, he was to show his homework to his parents every night, etc. Most of the time, simply doing the work required fixed the problem. However, what happened was, parents, near the end of my career, were no longer interested in their children doing well in my class. I was the villain, the hard teacher, and the student had to be moved to an easier class in order to achieve. There were always easier teachers than me, and the parents and the children then agreed that, a teacher should not be challenging or pushing their child; that child should be able to get same credit elsewhere for doing less. The problem was either the child was controlling the parent or the parent was simply giving into the child.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Authority orientation is an essential for life. This law and the concepts behind it are not simply so the parents can have complete and thorough power over their own children. It is through this training of the child that he becomes a worthwhile adult and a worthwhile child of God as well. It is our natural desire to rebel. We have sin natures. It is the parents who ingrain humility in our souls. This should not simply be done for the whims of the parent, but this is the responsibility of the parent before God.

For those who think this is too harsh, both Greek and Roman fathers could kill their own children, if they so desired to. However, Prov. 19:18 reads: *While there is hope for him, chastise your child, but do not get so angry as to kill him.* (NJB⁵²)

For the 1%: we are not under the Mosaic Law, so you do not have the right to execute your own child, no matter how far out of line they have gotten. However, if they are breaking the law, you can turn them in to the police. In fact, you ought to.

⁵² This is a difficult translation, completely botched in the KJV. The actual meaning may be slightly different than is found in the NJB above.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

So far in this chapter, we have come across several laws which liberals do not like.

Three Things which Liberals Find to be Particularly Odious in Deuteronomy 21

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>Deut. 21:10–14 Taking a wife from the enemies taken in battle.</p>	<p>There are many things which liberals object to in this passage. They do not like the idea that Israel has gone to war; they do not like that Israel has taken their enemies away as prisoners of war, and therefore as slaves; and they do not like that some soldier comes along and chooses a wife from this crowd of prisoners.</p> <p>War is a part of life and is on-going in this world. Right at this moment, there are probably 50 wars going on, which is true of any year in human history.</p> <p>Secondly, this is how things were done in the ancient world—when one country conquered another, there were benefits enjoyed as a result of that victory. The conquered country would pay tribute to the victorious country; the victorious country would come in and take what they wanted; or the people would be exported as slaves.</p> <p>Finally, although the woman’s volition does not appear to be a part of the text, I can guarantee you that the woman did have a say in this matter. Some women, in fact, would prefer to be wives of their captors as over against being slaves.</p>
<p>Deut. 21:15–17 A man having two wives.</p>	<p>Actually, most liberals could care less about how many wives or mistresses a man has. They just see this in the Bible and are upset because Christians speak of a relationship between just one man and one woman, so they point to this and other passages and cry out, “See? See!” Moses here was not recommending that men have more than one wife; he was simply dealing with a situation which would come up in that culture. God could have outlawed polygamy or adultery, and He chose to outlaw the latter for that period of time. God did this knowing the corruption of men’s hearts. In our current society, we have chosen to outlaw polygamy, but not adultery.</p> <p>However, it is clear throughout the Bible that one man paired with one woman is God’s plan for civilization.</p>
<p>Deut. 21:18–21 The stoning of the disobedient teen.</p>	<p>Liberals do not like a child being harmed in any way, no matter what he has done; unless he hasn’t been born yet, and then any woman for any reason can abort that fetus. Some liberals have even suggested that women wear tee-shirts proudly proclaiming that they have aborted a child (this did not catch on).</p> <p>Liberals also dislike the idea of state supporting parental authority. Many would prefer it be the exact opposite.</p> <p>However, the primary safeguard to this law is, both parents must bring the child in. Secondly, we do not have an actual recorded instance of this occurring.</p>

Quite frankly, it took me a long time to come around to the thinking of R. B. Thieme, Jr., where he taught that the Bible was filled with conservative doctrine and viewpoint.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Defiling the Land with a Hanging Corpse

And because [there] is in a man a sin of judgment of death, and he is executed, and you have hung him upon a tree, will not pass the night his corpse upon the tree. For burying, you will bury him in the day the that, for a cursing of Elohim a hanging [one]. And you will not defile the ground which Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you, an inheritance.

Deuteronomy
21:22–23

When [you have determined that there] is an offense judged [worthy of] death in a man, and he is executed, and you have hung him on a tree, his body will not remain all night [hanging] on the tree. You will certainly bury him in that day, for cursed [by] Elohim [is] the hanging [man]. You will not defile the land which Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you [as an] inheritance.

If a man has been judged worthy of death, and he is hung on a tree, you will not leave his body hanging on that tree all night long. You will certainly bury him in the day that he died, because God curses all that hangs from a tree. You will not defile the land that Jehovah your God has given you as an inheritance.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Targum of Onkelos

When a man hath become guilty of the judgment of death, and is condemned to be stoned, and they afterwards hang him on a beam, [JERUSALEM. And you hang him on a beam,] his dead body shall not remain upon the beam, but he shall be certainly buried on the same day; for it is execrable before God to hang a man, but that his guilt gave occasion for it; and because he was made in the image of God, you shall bury him at the going down of the sun, lest wild beasts abuse him, and lest you overspread your land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess, with the dead bodies of criminals.

Latin Vulgate

When a man has committed a crime for which he is to be punished with death, and being condemned to die is hanged on a gibbet: His body will not remain upon the tree, but will be buried the same day: for he is accursed of God that hangs on a tree: and you will not defile your land, which the Lord your God will give you in possession.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And because [there] is in a man a sin of judgment of death, and he is executed, and you have hung him upon a tree, will not pass the night his corpse upon the tree. For burying, you will bury him in the day the that, for a cursing of Elohim a hanging [one]. And you will not defile the ground which Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you, an inheritance.

Peshitta (Syriac)

And if any man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is crucified on a tree, and thus put to death; His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall bury him the same day (for he who shall revile God shall be crucified), and you shall not defile your land, which the LORD your God gives you for an inheritance.

Septuagint (Greek)

And if there be sin in anyone, and the judgment of death be upon him, and he be put to death, and you hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall by all means bury it in that day; for everyone that is hanged on a tree is cursed of God; and you shall by no means defile the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.

Significant differences:

The Latin leaves out *all night* as does the targum. *Accursed by God is he who hangs from a tree* has an odd translation into the Syriac and by the targum. The targum adds a lot of extra text, as usual.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	<p>Hanging Now if someone is guilty of a capital crime, and they are executed, and you then hang them on a tree, you must not leave the body hanging on the tree but must bury it the same day because God's curse is on those who are hanged [LXX, Vulg, Tg Neofiti God's curse is on those who are hanged; Syr, Tg Onqelos those who curse God are to be hanged; Heb uncertain]. Furthermore, you must not pollute the ground that the Lord your God is giving to you as an inheritance.</p>
Contemporary English V.	<p>If a criminal is put to death, and you hang the dead body on a tree, you must not let it hang there overnight. Bury it the same day, because the dead body of a criminal will bring God's curse on the land. The LORD your God is giving this land to you, so don't make it unclean by leaving the bodies of executed criminals on display.</p>
Easy English	<p>You may have killed a man who has done something very bad. If you have then hung his dead body on a tree, you must not leave it there during the night. Be careful to bury it on the same day. This is because God is very angry with anyone who is hanging on a tree. You must not let bad things destroy your own good country. This is the country that God is giving to you.</p>
Easy-to-Read Version	<p>"A person might be guilty of a sin that must be punished by death. After he is killed, people might hang his body on a tree. You must not let that body stay on the tree all night. You must be sure to bury this man on the same day. Why? Because the person that hangs on a tree is cursed by God. You must not ruin the land that the Lord your God is giving you.</p>
Good News Bible (TEV)	<p>"If someone has been put to death for a crime and the body is hung on a post, it is not to remain there overnight. It must be buried the same day, because a dead body hanging on a post brings God's curse on the land. Bury the body, so that you will not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you.</p>
<i>The Message</i>	<p>When a man has committed a capital crime, been given the death sentence, executed and hung from a tree, don't leave his dead body hanging overnight from the tree. Give him a decent burial that same day so that you don't desecrate your GOD-given land--a hanged man is an insult to God.</p>
New Berkeley Version	<p>"When a man, who has committed a crime deserving of death, is executed and you hang him on a tree, his body must not be permitted to remain on the tree over night; you must bury him the same day; for one hanged is under the curse of God, and you must not defile the land which the LORD your God gives you as your heritage. The usual method of execution was stoning, in order that each citizen might share in the responsibility. Hanging was performed after hid death; it represented an added curse of God. This is an injunction to be a good neighbor; we are our brothers' keepers.</p>
New Century Version	<p>Other Laws If someone is guilty of a sin worthy of death, he must be put to death and his body displayed on a tree. But don't leave his body hanging on the tree overnight; be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone whose body is displayed on a tree is cursed by God. You must not ruin the land the Lord your God is giving you as your own.</p>
New Living Translation	<p>Various Regulations "If someone has committed a crime worthy of death and is executed and hung on a tree [Or impaled on a pole; similarly in 21:23.], the body must not remain hanging from the tree overnight. You must bury the body that same day, for anyone who is hung [Greek version reads for everyone who is hung on a tree. Compare Gal 3:13.] is cursed in the sight of God. In this way, you will prevent the defilement of the land the Lord your God is giving you as your special possession.</p>

The Voice If someone does something so wicked that it's punishable by death, and if you execute that person and then hang the body on a pole, 23 don't leave the body up there overnight. Bury it that same day because everyone who hangs is cursed by God [Galatians 3:13]. Otherwise you will defile the ground the Eternal your God is giving you to live on.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible And if someone sins and is sentenced to death, and you choose to execute him by hanging him on a tree; don't allow his body to remain on the tree overnight. You must bury it on that same day; because, through the **ages**, anyone who is hanged on a tree is cursed before God, and you must not [allow his body to] dirty the land that Jehovah your God is giving you as your inheritance.'

Christian Community Bible If a man, guilty of any crime that deserves death, has been put to death by hanging him on a tree, his body must not remain hanging there through the night. But you shall bury him on the same day because the hanged man is a curse of God. So you shall not defile the land which Yahweh, your God, gives you as an inheritance. Joshua 8:29; 10:26; Gal 3:13; Acts 5:30; Mt 27:58

God's Word™ When a convicted person is put to death, never leave his dead body hung on a pole overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone whose body is hung on a pole is cursed by God. The land that the LORD your God is giving you must never become unclean.

New Advent (Knox) Bible When a man is guilty of a capital crime, and his sentence is to hang on a gallows, his body must not be left to hang there on the gibbet, it must be buried the same day. God's curse lies on the man who hangs on a gibbet, and the land which the Lord thy God gives thee for thy own must not suffer pollution.

New American Bible "If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and his corpse hung on a tree [Hung on a tree: some understand, "impaled on a stake." In any case the hanging or impaling was not the means used to execute the criminal; he was first put to death by the ordinary means, stoning, and his corpse was then exposed on high as a salutary warning for others. Cf Joshua 8:29; 10:26; 1 Sam 31:10; 2 Sam 21:9], it shall not remain on the tree overnight. You shall bury it the same day; otherwise, since God's curse rests on him who hangs on a tree [God's curse rests on him who hangs on a tree: St. Paul quotes these words in Gal 3:13, where he applies them to the crucified Savior, who "redeemed us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us."], you will defile the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.

New American Bible (R.E.) *Corpse of a Criminal.*
If a man guilty of a capital offense is put to death and you hang him on a tree [You hang him on a tree: some understand, "impaled on a stake." In any case the hanging or impaling was not the means used to execute the criminal; he was first put to death by the ordinary means, stoning, and his corpse was then exposed on high as a warning for others. Cf. Jos 8:29; 10:26; 1 Sm 31:10; 2 Sm 21:9.], his corpse shall not remain on the tree overnight. You must bury it the same day; anyone who is hanged is a curse of God [Gal 3:13 applies these words to the crucifixion of Jesus, who "redeemed us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us."]. You shall not defile the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you as a heritage.

NIRV **Several Other Laws**

Suppose a man is put to death for a crime that is worthy of death. And a pole is stuck through his body and set up where people can see it. Then you must not leave the body on the pole all night. Make sure you bury it that same day. Everyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not make the land "unclean." The Lord your God is giving it to you as your own.

New Jerusalem Bible	'If a man guilty of a capital offence is to be put to death, and you hang him from a tree, his body must not remain on the tree overnight; you must bury him the same day, since anyone hanged is a curse of God, and you must not bring pollution on the soil which Yahweh your God is giving you as your heritage.'
Revised English Bible	When someone is convicted of a capital offence and is put to death, and you hang him on a gibbet, his body must not remain there overnight, it must be buried on the same day. Anyone hanged is accursed in the sight of God, and the land which the LORD your God is giving you as your holding must not be polluted.
Today's NIV	Various Laws If anyone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Ancient Roots Translinear	When the verdict of a man's sin is death, he dies by hanging over a tree. The carcass never lodges all night over the tree, but bury him that day. (For God curses the hanged.) Never defile your property which Yahweh your God gives you for an inheritance.
Bible in Basic English	If a man does a crime for which the punishment is death, and he is put to death by hanging him on a tree; Do not let his body be on the tree all night, but put it to rest in the earth the same day; for the man who undergoes hanging is cursed by God; so do not make unclean the land which the Lord your God is giving you for your heritage.
The Expanded Bible	Other Laws If someone is guilty of a sin worthy of death, he must be put to death and his body ·displayed [hung] on a tree. But don't leave his body hanging on the tree overnight; be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone whose body is displayed on a tree is cursed by God [Matt. 27:57-58; Gal. 3:13]. You must not ruin the land the Lord your God is giving you as your ·own [inheritance].
Ferar-Fenton Bible	When a person has committed a crime condemnable to death, you shall kill him and hang him upon a tree. You shall not however leave him upon the tree, but bury him the same day, for GOD abhors the hung, consequently you shall not defile your country that your EVER-LIVING GOD has given you to possess.
NET Bible®	<i>Disposition of a Criminal's Remains</i> If a person commits a sin punishable by death and is executed, and you hang the corpse [Heb "him."] on a tree, his body must not remain all night on the tree; instead you must make certain you bury [The Hebrew text uses the infinitive absolute for emphasis, which the translation indicates by "make certain."] him that same day, for the one who is left exposed [Heb "hung," but this could convey the wrong image in English (hanging with a rope as a means of execution). Cf. NCV "anyone whose body is displayed on a tree."] on a tree is cursed by God [The idea behind the phrase cursed by God seems to be not that the person was impaled because he was cursed but that to leave him exposed there was to invite the curse of God upon the whole land. Why this would be so is not clear, though the rabbinic idea that even a criminal is created in the image of God may give some clue (thus J. H. Tigay, Deuteronomy [JPSTC], 198). Paul cites this text (see Gal 3:13) to make the point that Christ, suspended from a cross, thereby took upon himself the curse associated with such a display of divine wrath and judgment (T. George, Galatians [NAC], 238-39).]. You must not defile your land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.
NIV, ©2011	Various Laws

If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	"If someone has committed a capital crime and is put to death, then hung on a tree, his body is not to remain all night on the tree, but you must bury him the same day, because a person who has been hanged has been cursed by God -so that you will not defile your land, which ADONAI your God is giving you to inherit.
exeGesés companion Bible	<u>THE TORAH ON EXECUTION</u> And if there is a sin in a man - a judgment of death and you deathify him and you hang him on a tree; stay not his carcass on the tree overnight, but in entombing, entomb him that day; for he who is hanged has an abasement of Elohim; that your soil be not defiled, which Yah Veh your Elohim gives you - an inheritance.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	If a man is guilty of a capital offense and is put to death, and you impale him on a stake, you must not let his corpse remain on the stake overnight, but must bury him the same day. For an impaled body is an affront to God: you shall not defile the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.
Judaica Press Complete T.	If a man commits a sin for which he is sentenced to death, and he is put to death, you shall <i>then</i> hang him on a pole. But you shall not leave his body on the pole overnight. Rather, you shall bury him on that same day, for a hanging <i>human corpse</i> is a blasphemy of God, and you shall not defile your land, which the Lord, your God, is giving you as an inheritance.
Kaplan Translation	<i>Hanging and Burial</i> When a man [But not a woman (Sifri). Hanging is imposed only in the case of a blasphemer (Leviticus 24:16) and an idolator (Yad, Sanhedrin 15:6). Some say that it is true of all who incur the penalty of stoning (Rashi). Both opinions are found in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 45b).] is legally sentenced to death and executed, you must then hang him [After he is put to death, he is hung up by his hands. He is hung up just before sunset and immediately taken down again (Yad, Sanhedrin 15:7).] on a gallows. However, you may not allow his body to remain on the gallows [(Targum; Saadia). Cf. Esther 5:14 (Chizzkuni). The gallows consisted of a pole sunk into the ground, with a beam projecting from its side (Sanhedrin 47a,b).] overnight, but you must bury it on the same day [If this is true of a criminal, it is all the more true of an innocent person. Immediate burial is therefore the Jewish norm (Sanhedrin 46b; Yerushalmi, Nazir 7:1).]. Since a person who has been hanged is a curse to God [(literally). Or, 'an extraordinarily great curse' (Adereth Eliahu; HaKethav VeHaKabbalah).], you must not [let it] defile the land that God your Lord is giving you as a heritage.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And if an ish have committed a chet (sin) mishpat mavet (worthy of death), and he is put to death, and thou hang him on an etz; His nevelah shall not remain all night upon the etz, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; for he that is talui (hanged) is under Kilelat Elohim (curse of G-d); that thy adamah be not defiled, which Hashem Eloheicha giveth thee for a nachalah [see 2Sam. 18:14; John 19:31; Gal. 3:13].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Amplified Bible	And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death and [afterward] you hang him on a tree, His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God. Thus you shall not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance.
Concordant Literal Version	In case there should be in a man a sin incurring a judgment of death so that he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his carcass shall not lodge on the tree all night, for you shall entomb, yea entomb him on that day, for one being hung is under a malediction of Elohim, and you shall not defile your ground that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you as an allotment.
English Standard V. – UK	A Man Hanged on a Tree Is Cursed "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.
Green's Literal Translation	And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree; but burying you shall bury him the same day. For he that <i>is</i> hanged <i>is</i> a reproach to God. And you shall not defile your land which Jehovah your God is giving to you as an inheritance.
New King James Version	Miscellaneous Laws "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.
New RSV	When someone is convicted of a crime punishable by death and is executed, and you hang him on a tree, 23his corpse must not remain all night upon the tree; you shall bury him that same day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse. You must not defile the land that the Lord your God is giving you for possession.
Third Millennium Bible	"And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he is to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day (for he that is hanged is accursed of God), that thy land be not defiled which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.
Young's Updated LT	"And when there is in a man a sin—a cause of death, and he has been put to death, and you have hanged him on a tree, his corpse does not remain on the tree, for you will certainly bury him in that day—for a thing lightly esteemed of God is the hanged one—and you will not defile your ground which Jehovah your God is giving to you—an inheritance."

The gist of this verse: When a man is hanged for a crime, he will be cut down and buried that same day.

Deuteronomy 21:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Together, the wâw conjunction and the kîy conjunction literally mean *and for, and that*; however, together, they can be taken to mean *when, that, for, because, how*.

Deuteronomy 21:22a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural)	Strong's #376 BDB #35
chêṭṣ ^e (חַטָּא) [pronounced <i>kheyṭ</i>]	<i>sin, offense, fault; penalty for sin, guilt for sin; calamity</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #2399 BDB #307
mîsh ^e pâṭ (מִשְׁפָּט) [pronounced <i>mish^e-PAWT</i>]	<i>judgement, justice, a verdict rendered by a judge, a judicial decision, a judicial sentence, a verdict, a judgement of the court</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4941 BDB #1048

Gesenius organizes the meanings as follows:

(1) *a judgement*; including:

(a) *the act of judging*; (b) *the place of judgment*; (c) *a forensic cause, the setting forth of a cause, to appeal a judgment*; (d) *the sentence of a judge*; (e) *the fault or crime one is judged for*;

(2) *a right, that which is just, lawful according to law*; which set of meanings would include:

(a) *a law, a statute; a body of laws*; (b) *that which is lawfully due a person, a privilege, a legal privilege, the right of redemption, the right of primogeniture*; (c) *a manner, a custom*; (d) *a fashion, a kind, a plan*.

We could possibly add the meanings for the plural: *laws, responsibilities, privileges*. From the standpoint of the one under judgment, *mîshepâṭ* could mean *appeal*.

mâveth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>MAW-veth</i>]	<i>death, death [as opposed to life], death by violence, a state of death, a place of death</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4194 BDB #560
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Translation: [When \[you have determined that there\] is an offense judged \[worthy of\] death in a man,...](#) Now Moses gives a general principle related to any person who is executed and then hung up as an example to others. He begins with a man who has been convicted of an offense worthy of death.

Deuteronomy 21:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>to be executed, to be killed, to be assassinated</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hophal perfect; pausal form	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

Translation: ...and he is executed,... In this verse we have the rarest of the seven major stems, the Hophal of *mûwth* (מוּת) [pronounced *mooth*], the simple word for *die*. In the Hophal, this means *execute*. Strong's #4191 BDB #559 There were several methods of execution practiced by the Israelites. As we have seen used most often, we have stoning (Ex. 17:4 Deut. 13:10 21:21); burning (Lev. 20:14 21:9); and the sword (Ex. 32:27 Num. 25:7–8).

The tradition of the rabbis has it that the most common execution was by strangulation, to be used when another method is not authorized in Scripture. However, there is no support for this Biblically. Strangulation, as a method of execution, is found in the Mishnah, which is a warped and legalistic commentary on God's Word.

Deuteronomy 21:22c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
tâlâh (תָּלַח) [pronounced <i>taw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to hang [up], to suspend; to put to death by hanging; to hang on a stake, to crucify</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8518 BDB #1067
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>him; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to him, toward him</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah/</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
'êts (עֵץ) [pronounced <i>gayts</i>]	<i>tree, wood; wooden post, [wooden] stake, gallows; [collectively for] a forest of trees</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6086 BDB #781

Translation: ...and you have hung him on a tree,... The verb *tâlâh* (תָּלַח) [pronounced *taw-LAWH*] simply means *hang*. We have seen this verb used already in Gen. 40:19, 22 41:13 and we find a similar verb in Deut. 28:66. However, in the Torah, this is found only in this passage, here in the Qal perfect and in v. 23 in the Qal passive participle. Although this word is found two dozen times throughout Scripture (e.g., Joshua 8:29 10:26 2Sam. 4:12 21:12 Psalm 137:2 SOS 4:4), nowhere in the Law of Moses are the Israelites ever told to hang anyone for any offense or to hang someone up after being executed for some offense. Strong's #8518 BDB #1067.

God the Holy Spirit recognized that God the Son in His human body would die upon the cross as a man hanged—therefore, this law was instituted. **The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and they might be taken away** (John 19:31).⁵³

The hanging of a person from a tree, cross, stake or gallows was done after the execution, as a warning and an example. The Pharaoh's chief baker was hanged after being put to death by the sword (Gen. 40:19) and Joshua will hang five kings after executing them in Joshua 10:26. We do have examples of hanging as a method of death by the Persians (Esther 2:23 7:9–10 9:14) and the Romans (the crucifixion of our Lord).

⁵³ An interesting note that they did not require the bodies to be removed because of the Law, of which they were ignorant, but this had something to do with their man-made Sabbath Day regulations.

The NIV Study Bible reads *this phrase doubtless intends, "impaled on a pole"*.⁵⁴ The word for tree is the ordinary word for tree, which could also mean *wood*. However, there is no *doubtless* about it. The use of the word *hang* does not indicate that *impale* is the correct understanding of this word. We do have a phrase which indicates being impaled on a piece of wood in Ezra 6:11; however, both the words for *hang* and *impale* are completely different; and the words for *tree* and *beam* are completely different. Without greater internal evidence, I would not be inclined to read any more into this verse other than **and you have hanged him on a tree**.

This man is executed. This does not appear that he is executed by hanging, but that he is executed first, and then his dead body is hung up as an example (another example of this is found in 2Sam. 4:12).

Matthew Henry: *The hanging of [a criminal]...till...dead was not used at all among the Jews, as with us; [however]...it was usual, by order of the judges, to hang up the dead bodies upon a post for some time, as a spectacle to the world, to express the ignominy of the crime, and to strike the greater terror upon others, that they might not only hear and fear, but see and fear.*⁵⁵

In fact, it is here where there is the overlap with the previous section, when the young disobedient teen is brought to court and executed for his disobedience. He would also be an example to other teens.

Deuteronomy 21:23a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
lûwn (לוּן) [pronounced <i>loon</i>]	<i>to lodge, to pass the night, to spend the night, to lodge for the night, to abide</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3885 BDB #533
n ^e bêlâh (הַלְבָּא) [pronounced <i>n^{eb}-vay-LAW</i>]	<i>corpse, carcass; body</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5038 BDB #615
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
'êts (עֵץ) [pronounced <i>gayts</i>]	<i>tree, wood; wooden post, [wooden] stake, gallows; [collectively for] a forest of trees</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6086 BDB #781

Translation: ...his body will not remain all night [hanging] on the tree. Even though there are some crimes for which we want the strongest possible message sent to the population, Moses allows for the man to be hung so that others might see him and be warned. However, the (former) criminal is not to be left up there through the night.

⁵⁴ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995; p. 266.

⁵⁵ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Deut. 21:18–23.

Deuteronomy 21:23b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-BAHR</i>]	<i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #6912 BDB #868
<p>The infinitive absolute has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add <i>ing</i> to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.⁵⁶</p>			
qâbar (קָבַר) [pronounced <i>kaw-BAHR</i>]	<i>to bury, to heap up a mound</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6912 BDB #868
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

Translation: *You will certainly bury him in that day...* The doubling of the verb here increases its intensity or it strengthens the action of the verb. There are no exceptions here; the body of the criminal would be definitely buried on the day in which he was hanged. The doubling of the verb here indicates that there are no exceptions to this rule.

Deuteronomy 21:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
q ^e lâlâh (קִלְלָהּ) [pronounced <i>k^e-law-LAWH</i>]	<i>cursing; vilification, execration, imprecation</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #7045 BDB #887
Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

⁵⁶ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

Deuteronomy 21:23c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
tâlâh (תָּלָה) [pronounced taw-LAWH]	hanging [up], suspended	Qal passive participle	Strong's #8518 BDB #1067

Translation: ...for cursed [by] Elohim [is] the hanging [man]. Any body hanging from a tree is cursed by God. This may be simply understood as, this man committed a criminal act, he is executed and then hung up as an example, and his hanging from a tree indicates cursing from God.

When the body of an executed person was hung overnight over the land, it defiled the land which God gave to the sons of Israel. So he [Joshua] hanged the king of Ai on a tree until evening; and at sunset, Joshua gave command; and at sunset Joshua gave command and they took his body down from the tree and threw it at the entrance of the city gate, and raised over it a great heap of stones which are there to this day (Joshua 8:29; see also Joshua 10:26–27). Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it stands written, “Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree.” (Gal. 3:13).

J. Vernon McGee: *Moses did not realize, and certainly the children of Israel did not realize, the full significance of this law. In Galatians 3:13, Paul picks up this statement in the law and applies it to Christ. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.” In the time when our Lord Jesus lived on earth, He was delivered into the hands of the Romans for execution. Because Rome was in control of the land, the death penalty could only be executed by Rome. Our Lord was crucified on a Roman cross, sometimes called a tree. Now Paul picks that up and say that when Christ was hanging there on the tree, He was taking our sins and was accursed of God in that condition. Because of what He had done? No. He became a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the Law. He redeemed us from the curse of sin. He redeemed us from the penalty of sin, and He has bought our pardon. Why? Because He was made a curse for us.*⁵⁷

Recall that there are two authors of Scripture: Moses (the one who is speaking these words to the children of Israel) and God the Holy Spirit. Now and again, what God the Holy Spirit says has a different emphasis or a different purpose from what Moses intends. Moses does not know about the cross; Moses does not know that Messiah will hang on the cross; but God the Holy Spirit does know. So we have a passage like this, which is later picked up by Paul, recognizing that this can be rightfully applied to Jesus. Christ redeemed [= purchased] us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us [on the cross, Jesus is accursed by God]; for it has been written, “Cursed is everyone having been hung on a tree;” (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23) What Moses spoke of here was an actual tree, which was used for a hanging. What Paul spoke of here is a wooden cross (probably more like a “T”), manufactured specifically for the crucifixion of the enemies of Rome. Both are wood, and that is the essentially characteristic of both passages. *Being cursed* is also essential to both passages. The criminal hanging from the wood is cursed, as he is a criminal who has died for his crimes. Jesus is cursed hanging from the Roman cross, being cursed for our sins. So Jesus, hanging upon the wood, was cursed, as that is a place of cursing according to Deuteronomy; and He was cursed by taking upon Him our sins.

There are 2 authors for any passage of Scripture: the human author and the Divine Author, God the Holy Spirit. For this reason, it is not a great leap to reason that, there are times when the human author has one thing in mind when he writes, but God the Holy Spirit has something entirely different in mind.

The Dual Authorship of the Holy Scriptures

1. The Bible is clearly a book written by man. These authors often affixed their names to what they wrote:

⁵⁷ J. Vernon McGee, *Deuteronomy*, p. 134.

The Dual Authorship of the Holy Scriptures

Prov. 1:1 2Tim. 1:1–2 Rev. 1:1–2

- 1) There are times when we are fairly certain of the authorship of this or that person, e.g., Luke for the book of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles or Moses for the books of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. However, in those books, we do not find a phrase like, “I, Luke, wrote this history of Jesus Christ.”
- 2) There are some books whose authorship is unknown, like the book of Hebrews or the book of Ruth. However, we have accepted these books as canonical.
 - (1) As an aside, I suspect that the book of Hebrews was written by a gentile, and therefore, his name was not affixed to the book; and that the bulk of Ruth was written by Ruth (apart from the genealogy at the end) and her name was not given because, men had a difficult time with female authorship.
2. The other author of Holy Writ is the Holy Spirit. **The prophets did not think these things up on their own, but they were guided by the Spirit of God** (2Peter 1:21; Contemporary English Version). **It was never man's impulse, after all, that gave us prophecy; men gave it utterance, but they were men whom God had sanctified, carried away, as they spoke, by the Holy Spirit** (2Peter 1:21; Knox NT). **No prophecy ever originated from humans. Instead, it was given by the Holy Spirit as humans spoke under God's direction** (2Peter 1:21; God's Word).
 - 1) See the **Short Doctrine of Inspiration** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).
 - 2) See the **Study of Inspiration** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).
 - 3) The **Doctrine of Inspiration** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)).
3. When an author writes something, he often has a purpose for writing. This may not be some high and lofty purpose—it may be for money or for propaganda—but he has a reason for writing what he does.
 - 1) In Gen. 22, where Abraham nearly offers up his son Isaac as a human sacrifice to God, this incident is recorded either by Abraham or by Isaac, and they were simply presenting the historical event of Abraham's obedience to God in offering up his uniquely-born son to God.
 - 2) However, God the Holy Spirit writes this passage with the intention of teaching the gospel and providing a shadow image of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.
4. Therefore, when we study Scripture—particularly the Old Testament—we must be mindful that, the human author is often saying one thing, whereas the Divine Author is teaching us something else.
5. As a result, human authors, like David, could write Psalm 22, about a very difficult and painful period in his life, and yet not realize that, this foreshadowed His Savior on the cross.
6. Related to this is the idea that, David here can demand God's forgiveness and a complete washing away of his sins, yet not fully understand the basis for God's ability to forgive him.
7. These are doctrines which are built up and progressively revealed throughout the Bible. Again, **progressive revelation builds truth upon truth; each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not supercede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but is founded upon that which is past and upon that which is foundational.**
8. This is one reason that dual authorship is so important. Abraham and David, in Gen. 22 and in Psalm 22, respectively, did not fully realize what it was that they were teaching. They were recording events in their own lives. God the Holy Spirit, Who knows the end from the beginning, understood the big picture, and uses these passages to reveal to us our Lord on the cross.
9. Therefore, not every believer in the Old Testament understood soteriology in its entirety. What they did not know or understand, God the Holy Spirit was still able to reveal.
10. In fact, this information is revealed so well in Gen. 22, Psalm 22 and Isa. 53, that few theologians look at these passages critically and realize that the authors of these passages did not understand fully and completely what they were saying—they understood one aspect of their writing (for instance, Abraham fully understood the historical circumstances which took place in Gen. 22 and he recorded them accurately)—but they did not realize, necessarily, that they were writing about the Savior Who would die for their sins.
11. God the Holy Spirit understands the historical incidents and the spiritual information of all of these

The Dual Authorship of the Holy Scriptures

passages.

12. Therefore, we, as Church Age believers, can read from these 3 chapters and have a greater understanding of what these chapters mean because we are guided by the Divine Author, God the Holy Spirit (and, ideally speaking, we are guided by a pastor who has studied and is able to properly teach these passages).
13. Progressive revelation is quite persuasive in this way: those who lay the foundation for these doctrines which we learn did not fully understand those doctrines. The examples I gave—the writers of Gen. 22, Psalm 22 and Isa. 53 did not fully understand all that they were writing. They did not have a complete Christology in their thinking as they wrote those words. Yet, what they wrote was so completely and thoroughly integrated with Christology that, we have a greater understanding of what occurred while Jesus was on the cross from these 3 chapters than we have in the New Testament. Now, how is it that someone living 700 years before the cross, writes about the cross? How is it that someone living 1000 years before the cross writes about the cross? How is it that someone living 2000 years before our Lord, writes about the cross? How is this even possible? God the Holy Spirit, Who inspired and guided these writers. What is even more amazing is, how do these men write about the cross of our Lord and they themselves do not fully understand it?
14. Let me give you an analogy. How is it possible for one crew of workers to come in and lay a foundation for a house and then for a completely different set of workers—who do not know the first set of workers—to come in, a few days later, and build a house upon that foundation? They have to all be working from the same set of plans. If they have the exact same set of plans, then this is easy. Any crew can do it. They don't ever have to meet or know one another. One crew of 5 can be followed by another crew of 10, so that there is no overlap, no common foreman, and yet, the house which is built perfectly matches the foundation. That is what we have in the Bible. The unifying factor in building a house is, of course, the house plans. The various contractors must have a copy of the house plans and they work based upon those plans. In the writing of the Bible, the unifying factor is God the Father, who planned this all out, and God the Holy Spirit who guided the writers of Scripture. **According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building upon it. Let each one take care how he builds upon it (1Cor. 3:10).**
15. Let me continue with this analogy. Those workmen who lay the foundation for the house do not need to know what the house actually looks like. Their concern is the foundation and seeing to it that whatever wiring and plumbing that is needed is laid in the foundation. If you have an island kitchen then, very likely, you have electricity built into that island kitchen, which wiring comes up through the foundation. This had to be placed there by those who laid the foundation.
16. A foundation crew might lay a dozen foundations over a week's time. They would be unable to determine, without looking at the rest of the plans, just how the final product will look. They don't know if the style of the house will be Victorian or Old English or Contemporary. 12 months later, they might drive down the street where they laid out a foundation, and not even be able to pick out the house that they laid the foundation for.
17. So this is with David, who wrote this Psalm 51. He knows that he can demand that God thoroughly cleanse him. He knows that God is abundant in mercy and graciousness. However, David does not fully understand why God is able to do this. David can reasonably understand the essence of God, that He is righteous, just, eternal, gracious, truth and love. However, exactly how all of these attributes interrelate and interact with respect to the sins that David has committed—David doesn't know all of that.
18. At salvation, you had a lot of ideas about God, most of which were probably wrong. However, in time, you learned Who God is and why He is able to forgive you. You are able to see what the finished house looks like. David just laid the foundation. He knew some of the basic information about God, but he did not know enough to put it altogether.
19. The unifying factor in all of this is God the Holy Spirit, Who is just as much an Author of this psalm as is David. The Holy Spirit has these plans from God the Father, so the Holy Spirit is able to properly guide those who laid the foundation for our faith. **Therefore, you [gentiles] are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure,**

The Dual Authorship of the Holy Scriptures

being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit (Eph. 2:19–22).

The more you understand the intricacies of progressive revelation and dual authorship, the greater will be your appreciation for the Word of God.

See the entire Doctrine of **The Dual Authorship of Scripture** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

You will certainly bury him in that day, for cursed [by] Elohim [is] the hanging [man]. So, in this passage, Moses is thinking that it would be barbaric to just leave a body hanging on a tree for days; and God the Holy Spirit takes these same words and is thinking about Jesus on the cross.

Deuteronomy 21:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לא or לוּל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
tâmê' (טמא) [pronounced <i>taw-MAY</i>]	<i>to declare or to pronounce unclean; to defile (sexually, religiously, ceremonially); to profane (God's name)</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #2930 BDB #379
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ādâmâh (אֲדָמָה) [pronounced <i>uh-daw-MAWH</i>]	<i>ground, soil, dirt, earth, tillable earth, land, surface of the earth</i>	feminine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #127 BDB #9
'āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #430 BDB #43
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>is giving, granting, is placing, putting, setting; is making</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

Deuteronomy 21:23d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
nachălâh (נַחֲלָה) [pronounced nah-khuh-LAW]	<i>inheritance, possession, property, heritage</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #5159 BDB #635

Translation: You will not defile the land which Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you [as an] inheritance. God has given the people this land, and to leave a body hanging on a tree overnight would defile the land.

This verse would indicate, along with several others, that there is nothing wrong with a public execution. In fact, the several Scriptural references concerning the deterrent affect of the death penalty would indicate that a public execution is what is preferred. However, this is not to go into a morbid continual display of a rotting corpse.

The Israelites have been instructed several times not to defile their land (Lev. 18:25, 28 Num. 35:34). Barnes postulates that it was not the hanging per se which defiled the land, but the person who was hung who defiled the land, as whatever crime he committed must have been particularly heinous to invoke a hanging after the execution.

Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines	
Forward	Doctrines Covered and Alluded to	Chapters of the Bible Alluded To
Psalms Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Other Chapters of the Bible Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter	Definition of Terms
Introduction	Text	Addendum
www.kukis.org		Exegetical Studies in Deuteronomy

Addendum

When I study a chapter of the Bible, one of the questions which I nearly always have is, *why is this chapter in the Word of God?*

Why Deuteronomy 21 is in the Word of God

- 1.
- 2.

Like all chapters of Scripture, this chapter is filled with information and application. What follows are some of the more important lessons.

What We Learn from Deuteronomy 21

1. We learn how Moses was eminently qualified to write an addendum to Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.
2. All sin and crime must be dealt with. God will not ignore any sin which man has committed.
3. These sermons of Moses serve to protect the women of enemy nations in time of war. Men could not simply take women of the enemy and rape them or use them for their own pleasure.
4. God, through Moses, takes into account, the natural attraction which can take place between a man and a woman from enemy camps during the time of war. Moses codified this in his teaching, so that these women could not be abused.
5. Moses, in this chapter, twice protects the woman—the woman who might be seen by an Israeli soldier as being incredibly attractive; and the woman who is married, with a son, but who is a wife that has fallen out of favor with the husband.
6. One of the most important things to a society is authority orientation in the young, and this is first learned at home. This is so important that Moses here recommends execution for the child who does not develop authority orientation at home.
7. There are several instances where the human author has one thing in mind, but the Divine Author, God the Holy Spirit, has something else in mind.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Deuteronomy 21

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

Ceremony to expiate an unsolved murder

When a slain man is found on the ground (which [land] Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you to inherit it), lying in an unpopulated area and it is not known who killed him, then your elders and your judges will come out and they will measure to the cities which [are] near to [lit., *round about*] the slain man.

If a man is found slain on the ground, in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, and that man is lying dead in an unpopulated area, and it is not known who killed him, then your elders and judges will come out and measure to the cities which are near to the dead man.

And it has been, the nearest city to the slain man—the elders of that city will take a heifer of the herd, [one] which has not been made to work [and one] which has not been drawn by a yoke. The elders of that town will lead the heifer down into an ever flowing torrent, which (valley) has not been tilled and which (valley) has not been sown. There they will break the neck of the heifer in the torrent valley.

Once the nearest city to the slain man has been determined, the elders from that city will take a heifer which has not been yoked or made to work. The elders of that town will lead this heifer down into well-watered valley which has not been plowed or sown. There, in that valley, they will break the neck of the heifer.

The priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward, for Y^ehowah your Elohim has chosen in them to serve Him and to bless in the name of Y^ehowah. Furthermore, by their mouth is every dispute and every injury [settled].

Also in this case, the priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward, for Jehovah your God chose them to serve Him and to give their blessings in His name. Furthermore, they will determine the outcome of every dispute and every injury.

A Complete Translation of Deuteronomy 21

A Reasonably Literal Translation

A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase

Then the elders of that city nearest to the slain man will wash their hands over the heifer [with] the broken neck in the valley. They will then testify, saying, “Our hands did not shed this blood and our eyes did not see [what happened]. Forgive [lit., *cover over*] Your people Israel, whom You have purchased, O Y^ehowah, and You will not place innocent blood in the midst of Your people, Israel.”

Then the elders of that city which is nearest to the slain man, they will wash their hands in the valley over the heifer with the broken neck. They will then testify, saying, “We did not murder this man nor did we see what happened. Forgive Your people Israel, O Jehovah, those whom You have purchased, and do not place guilt in the midst of Your innocent people, Israel.”

Therefore, the bloodguilt has been pardoned for them. By this [lit., *and*], you will purge the innocent blood from your midst, for you will do the right [thing] in the sight of Y^ehowah.

Therefore, they have been pardoned for this murder. By doing this, you will purge the innocent blood from your midst, for you will do what is right before Jehovah.

Taking a bride from prisoners of war

When you go to war against your enemies and Y^ehowah your Elohim gives them into your hands and you have taken them captive. You [may] see among the captives a beautiful woman with a striking figure, and you have a desire for her and you [want to] take [her] for yourself to wife.

When you go to war against your enemies and Jehovah your God gives them into your hands, and you have then taken your enemy into captivity. It may be that a woman with a beautiful figure among these prisoners captures your attention and you have a great desire to take her as your wife.

Then you will bring her into the midst of your home and she will shave her head, fashion her nails, and remove her captivity clothing from upon her. She will remain in your home and she will weep for [both] her father and her mother for a full month.

You will bring this woman into your home and she will shave her head, cut back her nails, and remove the captivity clothing that she was wearing. She will remain in your home for a full month while she mourns for her mother and father.

Afterwards, you will go in unto her and you have [therefore] married her and she has become your wife.

After this, you will go in unto her and have, by this, married her and she has become your wife.

But if it is [that] you have not taken pleasure in her, then you will send her away wherever she wishes [lit., *according to her soul*]. You will definitely not sell her on account of silver—you will not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.

If, on the other hand, you do not delight in her, then you will send her away as she wishes. You will, under no circumstances, sell her as a slave for money—you may not treat her as a slave because you have humbled her.

Husbands improperly showing preference to their sons

When [there] are two wives for a man—the one loved and the other unloved [lit., *hated*]—and the loved [wife] and the unloved [wife] have [both] given birth to sons for him; and the firstborn son is [from] the unloved [wife].

Let’s say that a man has two wives, one which he loves and one which he doesn’t, and they both bear sons to him. Further, let’s say that the wife that he does not love bears his firstborn.

A Complete Translation of Deuteronomy 21

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
<p>And it is in the day of the inheritance to his sons of what is theirs, [that] he [the father] will not be able to give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the loved [wife] in preference to the son of the unloved [wife]—the [actual] firstborn. For to the firstborn, the son of the unloved [wife], he will [hereby] know to give to him a double portion [lit., <i>a command of two</i>] in all he has acquired, for he is the first of his strength—[so] to him [is] the custom of the rights [and privileges] of the firstborn.</p>	<p>When it comes to the time of determining how his inheritance is to be distributed, he will not be able to treat the son of his loved wife as if he were the firstborn. He must give the double portion to the actual firstborn son, even if he is the son of the unloved wife, as he is the first of this man's strength and therefore he is due the rights and privileges of the firstborn.</p>
Dealing with an uncontrollable teen	
<p>When there is to a man a son of rebellion and resistance—he does not listen to the voice of his father or the voice of his mother—and they have disciplined him, yet he [still] will not listen to them; then his father and mother will take a hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city, to the gate of his place.</p>	<p>Let's say that there is a teen or a young man who is rebellious and resistant to authority. He refuses to listen to the voice of his mother or father, and even though they discipline him, he will still not listen to them. Then his father and mother will bring him out to the elders of the city, to the city gate where trials take place.</p>
<p>They will say to the elders of his city, "This [is] our son. [He is] rebellious and disobedient. He does not listen to us [lit., <i>his not hearing our voice</i>]. [He is] worthless and a drunkard."</p>	<p>The parents will then give testimony before the court. "This man is our son. He is rebellious and disobedient. He will not listen to us. Besides, he is worthless and a drunkard."</p>
<p>Then the men of his city will stone him with stones until [lit., <i>and</i>] he has died. [By this] you have purged this [lit., <i>the</i>] evil from your midst and all of Israel will hear and they will fear.</p>	<p>Then the men of the city will execute him by stoning. By his death, you will have purged this evil from your midst, as all Israel will hear this and fear this happening to them.</p>
Limitations on using a dead body as an example	
<p>When [you have determined that there] is an offense judged [worthy of] death in a man, and he is executed, and you have hung him on a tree, his body will not remain all night [hanging] on the tree. You will certainly bury him in that day, for cursed [by] Elohim [is] the hanging [man].</p>	<p>If a man has been judged worthy of death, and he is hung on a tree, you will not leave his body hanging on that tree all night long. You will certainly bury him in the day that he died, because God curses all that hangs from a tree.</p>
<p>You will not defile the land which Y^ehowah your Elohim is giving to you [as an] inheritance.</p>	<p>You will not defile the land that Jehovah your God has given you as an inheritance.</p>

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The following Psalms would be appropriately studied at this time:

