

Text: Dt 24.1-22

THEOLOGICAL OUTLINE OF DEUTERONOMY¹

1. **Consider:** a review of God’s faithfulness (1.6–4.40)
2. **Covenant:** an exposition of the law (5–26)

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3. **Commence:** preparations for renewing the covenant (27.1–28.68)
4. **Commit:** an exhortation to obedience (29.2–30.20)

Divorce and Many Miscellanies

Deuteronomy 24

In Dt 24, we have one somewhat extended section, laws about divorce and marriage. (1-5)

The rest of the chapter is a collection of miscellaneous laws. First, let’s understand what each law addresses:

(1-4) Law of **divorce** and **remarriage**

“This ordinance would have discouraged hasty divorce, as well as strengthening second marriages, in Israel. It encouraged husbands to respect their wives, rather than treating them as a piece of property that could be bought and sold at will.”²

“The legislation here neither commands nor condones divorce in general but only regulates its practice for ancient Israel.”³

(5) Law of **military** exemption

¹ Adapted from an outline in Lawrence O Richards, *The Bible Readers Companion*, electronic ed. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1991), 117.

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Dt 24.1.

³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, v. 4 (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 316.

(6) Law of the handmill

“Neither the whole mill nor the upper millstone was to be asked for as a pledge, by which the mill would be rendered useless, since the handmill was indispensable for preparing the daily food for the house; so that whoever took them away injured life itself, by withdrawing what was indispensable to the preservation of life.”⁴

(7) Law of kidnapping

(8-9) Reminder of the law of **leprosy**

(10-13) Law of taking a man’s **pledge**

(14-15) Law of paying a man’s **wages**

(16) Law of personal **responsibility** for crimes

(17-18) Law of justice for the weak

(19-23) Laws of the **gleaner**

It is difficult to find one unifying theme for all these “miscellanies.” However, we can identify some general principles that such laws instill:

1. Integrity of the family unit
2. Respect for others (especially the poor and weak)

How do these laws relate to the Great Commandments? (First, Love God with your whole hear; Second, Love your neighbour)

⁴ Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch*, trans. James Martin, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.), 419.