

Capital Punishment

⇒ Intro:

- One of the most controversial issue in our society today is the “death penalty” or capital punishment which our laws impose for murder and a few other crimes.
 - Regardless of the laws, there are some who are adamantly opposed to capital punishment for any reason.
 - There is the occasional Christian who is opposed simply through the ignorance of the Word of God.
 - Then naturally, those with a criminal mind are opposed as are the liberals and secular humanists.
 - Neither of the latter two groups are the least bit concerned with what God and His Word have to say on the matter.
- Their basic problem is, always has been, always will be, that they worship the creation rather than the Creator!
 - **Romans 1:25 – “Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.”**
 - Also, they are not concerned with the poor victim, or the victim’s family, but are constantly screaming about the killer’s rights!
- What is amazing is that those who don’t even believe the Bible will still try and “use it” by quoting Scripture out of context to prove their point.
 - Their final authority is their own opinion flavored with a double dose of emotion.
 - Their wisdom is foolishness to God.
 - **I Cor. 1:20 – “...hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?”**
 - The true Bible believer however, will use the Word of God, Scripture for Scripture, to prove the truth on this or any other doctrinal matter.
 - So, what does the Bible teach on the subject of capital punishment?
 - Let’s apply those principals just mentioned and see what **God** has to say on the subject.
- We will approach this study from the stand point of three (3) separate dispensations to coincide with –
 - (1) The Old Testament times before the Jewish Law was given.
 - (2) The Old Testament after the Law.
 - (3) The New Testament times after the resurrection of Christ under the New Covenant.
- We will show you through the Word of God that the Bible teaches capital punishment from cover to cover!

⇒ I. OLD TESTAMENT TIMES BEFORE JEWISH LAW GIVEN

- In Genesis chapter 9 we find God’s first act of setting up human law and government.
 - **See Genesis 9:4-6.**
 - He instructed them not to eat blood in **verse 4**, and then in **verse 5** He let them know he would require the life of any beast or man who shed man’s blood.

- This was to be capital punishment executed by God Himself.
 - In **verse 6** He takes it a step further and announces that if a man kills another man, **then his life will be taken by man.**
 - It was not God's intention that this apply to individuals, but to man's government.
 - So capital punishment was originally set up as a rule and standard of government by God.
 - Man's life is precious to God as man was created in His own likeness and image.
 - The rule of not taking another man's life was one of the first rules He gave Noah and his family as they began to populate the earth once again after the flood had destroyed mankind, which in itself, was an act of capital punishment!
 - More rules were to come later in the form of the Ten Commandments and after that, the balance of the Jewish Law which also commanded capital punishment.
- ⇒ **II. OLD TESTAMENT TIMES AFTER THE LAW**
- In Exodus 20 God called Moses up to Mount Sinai and gave him the Ten Commandments.
 - These were not **suggestions** but **commandments** that God gave man to give him a start in setting up laws to govern himself by.
 - The sixth commandment given was **“thou shalt not kill.”**
 - This is the verse that all the capital punishment opponents bring up to the Christians who support the death penalty.
 - The problem is, these people are showing their ignorance of the Word of God, not realizing that the context of that commandment is murder!
 - How do we know this?
 - Well aside from the fact the Hebrew word is used in this case actually means “murder,” we have sufficient proof in plain English.
 - **See Exodus 21:12-17.**
 - **V.12 – “He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.”**
 - Obviously, if God meant the sixth commandment to include a capital punishment, He would not have then **commanded** a murderer be put to death only a few verses later under the same Jewish Law!
 - Moreover, He commanded the death penalty for stealing, kidnapping, or selling a man, an even for cursing his father or mother!
 - Why, if that law was in effect today our population would immediately be cut by about 60%!
 - So, there is **“a time to kill” (Ecc. 3:3)** according to God's Word.
 - Thank goodness we are no longer under the Old Testament Law!
 - Something else to consider is self defense.
 - If we applied “thou shalt not kill” as some would have us interpret it we could not even kill to save our own life or that of another.
 - You and your family would be at the mercy of the wicked who wants to do you harm.
 - And what about war?

- God Himself sent many men into war in the Old Testament times.
- In fact, the Bible says in **Exodus 15:3** – “**The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.**”

⇒ **III. NEW TESTAMENT TIMES**

- Today, under the New Testament Covenant, Jesus made the question of capital punishment abundantly clear.
 - First of all He replaced the word “kill” with the word murder so there would be no mistake about later instructions in the Bible.
 - Jesus said, “**(18) He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, (19) Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**”
 - So here, the stage is set for further instructions in the Word of God concerning this subject.
- The government has made laws for the good of all people.
 - In many cases, the “man made” laws such as capital punishment duplicate the law made previously by God.
 - We have already studied God’s law on the subject and now we find where our Lord has commanded us to obey the laws of man as well.
 - With capital punishment being the law of our country we are bound by both God and man’s law to support and execute that law.
 - **See Romans 13:1-6.**
 - **See I Peter 2:13-15.**
- Another point is that if the death penalty was wrong, then God would not do it Himself as he did in Acts 5 where He killed two people for lying.
 - Although, He would not expect us to make such a stringent law for lying, the basic principal of capital punishment remains the same.
 - God does it and expects us to carry it out also, within the scope of our man made laws and those He gave us.

⇒ **CONCLUSION**

- Now, we have seen from God’s Word that the death penalty is not **against** God, but is in fact ordained **of** God!
 - It is that way at present and will be until the final judgment of man, at which time God will execute capital punishment on every soul that is not saved!
 - **Rev. 20:15, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”**
- Now that we have studied and determined God’s position on capital punishment, we should as Christians, support the word of God and not be concerned with the opinions of men.
 - To murder a human being, God created in His own image is an act against God Himself and therefore, worthy of the “**death penalty.**”
 - Fortunately, one guilty of murder can still be saved before his is executed.
 - As the death penalty only applies to this life if the person is saved it could actually be the beginning rather than the end!