

Capital Punishment

by Wayne Goff

In an article published by the **Pew Research Center**, the fact is stated that most states have the death penalty on their books, but few use it regularly. That is a shame because such lax behavior only emboldens the criminal and shows the weakness of the state!

With this in mind, look at what the Bible says on the subject of capital punishment.

First, God instituted the death penalty for murder back in Genesis 9:6 — *“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.”* God honored man by making him in His own image. The inherent worth of all human beings resides in that fact. Those who murder are mocking God and violating His will for a peaceful world.

Secondly, Solomon points out that lax punishment encourages more disobedience. *“Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil”* (Eccl. 8:11). So in essence, failing to use capital punishment is tantamount to the endorsement of further crimes, especially murder! How can we trust our government when they do not carry out the God-given, voter-mandated punishment for murder? They are bending to the desires of the more liberal-minded minority instead of what protects the lives of most citizens.

Thirdly, some mistakenly advertise **“Thou Shalt Not Kill”** to discourage the state from carrying out its Divinely-ordained purpose. The sixth commandment of the Decalogue commands man not to unlawfully take the life of another human being. But the same God Who gave that commandment also ordained that government should be the first to execute Divine vengeance on the murderer (Gen. 9:6; Romans 12:19; 13:1-4). The apostle Paul wrote specifically, *“For he [government, AWG] is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil”* (Rom. 13:4). God ordained civil government for the purpose of “governing” mankind. The government bears the “sword” to discourage the practice of evil! The sword was not used lightly; it represents the death penalty.

Furthermore, Jesus’ interpretation of the Sixth Commandment is *“Thou shalt do no murder”* (Matt. 19:18). When the government executes its God-given duty to avenge the blood of the innocent, it is **not** committing murder! It is practicing Divine vengeance.

The evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the judicious use of capital punishment as a deterrent to crime. Sadly, our country has become so morally weak and pitiful that it cannot protect its own citizens by executing the criminal! Some liberal-minded people have even argued that capital punishment does not deter crime! God and Solomon beg to differ, Ecclesiastes 8:11. And common sense would tell you that allowing the murderer to get away with “life without parole” while he enjoys all the luxuries that prison can afford in America, all at the taxpayers expense, does not deter his crime!

Many states in the Northeast and West Coast do not even have capital punishment on their books. They argue that such punishment is **inhumane**, but again they are not considering the *inhumanity* of the murderer himself! He took a human life without authority, and became the judge, jury and executioner of an innocent victim. Does that not make you sick to your stomach? God patiently allows this nation to disobey His will, knowing that self-destruction lies within sin itself. How long until our country wakes up to righteousness?

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