

## Capital Punishment

What does the Bible teach about governments practicing the death penalty?

## Introduction

- Strong emotions common to people both for and against capital punishment, practice of the death penalty
- Many countries today have rejected the death penalty
- Many denominations such as Roman Catholic Church oppose the death penalty

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## Introduction

- Does the Bible approve, condemn or remain indifferent about capital punishment?
- Whatever the Bible teaches about this and all things should guide Christians in what we believe
- Warning – do not allow the world to determine our thinking about capital punishment or anything else if the Bible has spoken on it

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## Capital Punishment

1. Capital punishment before the Law of Moses
2. Capital punishment under the Law of Moses
3. Capital punishment in the New Testament

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## Capital Punishment

4. Bible answers to arguments against capital punishment
5. God's attitude toward nations that do not practice capital punishment

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## No Record of Capital Punishment Before The Flood

Gen 4:14 "Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

Gen 4:15 So the LORD said to him, "Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.

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## No Record of Capital Punishment Before The Flood

Gen 4:23 Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me;

Gen 4:24 If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

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## No Record of Capital Punishment Before The Flood

Gen 6:11 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.

Gen 6:12 God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.

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## No Record of Capital Punishment Before The Flood

Gen 6:13 Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

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## After The Flood God Commands Capital Punishment

Gen 9:5 "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.

Gen 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

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## Capital Punishment Under The Law Of Moses

- God gave the Law of Moses both to govern Israel and guide them in all religious matters
- Notice God commanded the death penalty not only for murder but also for other crimes

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## Some Examples Where God Commanded The Death Penalty Under Law of Moses

Exo 21:12 "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

Exo 21:13 "But if he did not lie in wait *for him*, but God let *him* fall into his hand, then I will appoint you a place to which he may flee.

Exo 21:14 "If, however, a man acts presumptuously toward his neighbor, so as to kill him craftily, you are to take him *even* from My altar, that he may die.

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Some Examples Where God Commanded The Death Penalty Under Law of Moses

Exo 21:15 "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

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

Exo 21:17 "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Some Examples Where God Commanded The Death Penalty Under Law of Moses

Lev 20:13 'If *there is* a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.

Death Penalty Crimes Under The Law of Moses	
Premeditated murder	Exo 21:12-14
Parental abuse	Exo 21:15
Kidnapping	Exo 21:16
Cursing parents	Exo 21:17
Cause death of unborn child by striking mother	Exo 21:22-25

Death Penalty Crimes Under The Law of Moses	
Failure to stop killer animal from killing	Exo 21:28-29
Killing a thief in revenge	Exo 22:2-3
Sorcery	Exo 22:18
Bestiality	Exo 22:19
Adultery	Lev 20:10

Death Penalty Crimes Under The Law of Moses	
Incest	Lev 20:11-12
Homosexuality	Lev 20:13
Marrying both mother and daughter	Lev 20:14
Being medium or spiritist	Lev 20:27
Breaking the Sabbath	Exo 31:14-15

Death Penalty Crimes Under The Law of Moses	
False prophets and promoters of idolatry	Deu 13:1-11
Idolatry	Deu 17:2-7
Blasphemy	Lev 24:16
Children Rebellious to parents	Deu 21:20-21
Rape in some cases	Deu 22:23-29

## Death Penalty Crimes Under The Law of Moses

Falsely Accusing  
someone of a capital  
crime

Deu 19:16-21

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## Difference Between Murder and Accidental Killing, Manslaughter

Num 35:16 'But if he struck him down with an iron object, so that he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

Num 35:17 'If he struck him down with a stone in the hand, by which he will die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

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## Difference Between Murder and Accidental Killing, Manslaughter

Num 35:18 'Or if he struck him with a wooden object in the hand, by which he might die, and *as a result* he died, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

Num 35:19 'The blood avenger himself shall put the murderer to death; he shall put him to death when he meets him.

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## Difference Between Murder and Accidental Killing, Manslaughter

Num 35:20 'If he pushed him of hatred, or threw something at him lying in wait and *as a result* he died,

Num 35:21 or if he struck him down with his hand in enmity, and *as a result* he died, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, he is a murderer; the blood avenger shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

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## Difference Between Murder and Accidental Killing, Manslaughter

- The murder intentionally uses deadly object to kill
- He acts out of hatred for another
- He plans to kill ahead of time
- No murder occurs in a death where premeditated intentional use of deadly object and hatred are not present

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## Difference Between Murder and Accidental Killing, Manslaughter

Num 35:22 'But if he pushed him suddenly without enmity, or threw something at him without lying in wait,

Num 35:23 or with any deadly object of stone, and without seeing it dropped on him so that he died, while he was not his enemy nor seeking his injury,

Num 35:24 then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the blood avenger according to these ordinances.

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## Jesus Upholds Divine Authority For Capital Punishment

Joh 19:10 So Pilate \*said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?"

Joh 19:11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has *the* greater sin."

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## Capital Punishment In The New Testament

Rom 13:1 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Rom 13:2 Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

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## Capital Punishment In The New Testament

Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same;

Rom 13:4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. 28

## Capital Punishment In The New Testament

Rom 13:5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

Rom 13:6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for *rulers* are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing.

Rom 13:7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

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## Key Points of Romans 13:1-7

1. God establishes but does not approve of all governments
2. Christians are to submit to government
3. Governments charged with protecting good and punishing evil with capital punishment when appropriate
4. Bearing sword in vain refers to capital punishment
5. Christians must pay taxes

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## Apostle Paul Agrees Some Crimes Are Worthy of Death

Act 25:11 "If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is *true* of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar."

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## Objection 1 Capital Punishment Is Murder

KJV Exo 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.

NASB Exo 20:13 "You shall not murder.

Exo 21:12 "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.

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## Objection 1 Capital Punishment Is Murder

Exo 21:15 "He who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

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

Exo 21:17 "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Pro 6:16 There are six things which the LORD hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

Pro 6:17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood,

Pro 6:18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil,

Pro 6:19 A false witness *who* utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers.

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Num 35:30 "If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

Deu 17:6 "On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Deu 19:15 "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

Deu 19:16 "If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing,

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Deu 19:17 then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who will be *in office* in those days.

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Deu 19:18 "The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness *and* he has accused his brother falsely,

Deu 19:19 then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Num 35:10 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan,

Num 35:11 then you shall select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, that the manslayer who has killed any person unintentionally may flee there.

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## Objection 2 Innocent People May Be Executed

Num 35:12 'The cities shall be to you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer will not die until he stands before the congregation for trial.

Num 35:13 'The cities which you are to give shall be your six cities of refuge.

Num 35:14 'You shall give three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they are to be cities of refuge.

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## Objection 3 Capital Punishment Does Not Discourage Crime

Ecc 8:11 Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.

Gen 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

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## Objection 4 Those Awaiting Capital Punishment Not Able To Obey The Gospel

Act 25:11 "If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die; but if none of those things is *true* of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar."

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## God's Attitude Toward Nations That Do Not Practice Capital Punishment

- Before the Law of Moses, during the Law of Moses and under the New Covenant, God approves of the idea of capital punishment
- Nations that misuse capital punishment or do not use it as they should displease God
- As Christians, we must believe and teach God uses governments as His servants to avenge evil including using capital punishment

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## God's Attitude Toward Nations That Do Not Practice Capital Punishment

Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

Isa 5:21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!

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## God's Attitude Toward Nations That Do Not Practice Capital Punishment

Isa 5:22 Woe to those who are heroes in drinking wine And valiant men in mixing strong drink,

Isa 5:23 Who justify the wicked for a bribe, And take away the rights of the ones who are in the right!

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## God's Attitude Toward Nations That Do Not Practice Capital Punishment

Isa 59:7 Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, Devastation and destruction are in their highways.

Isa 59:8 They do not know the way of peace, And there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked, Whoever treads on them does not know peace.

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## God's Attitude Toward Nations That Do Not Practice Capital Punishment

Num 35:31 'Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.

Num 35:32 'You shall not take ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to live in the land before the death of the priest.

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## God's Attitude Toward Nations That Do Not Practice Capital Punishment

Num 35:33 'So you shall 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.

Num 35:34 'You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the LORD am dwelling in the midst of the sons of Israel.'"

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