

God and Capital Punishment

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Introduction

Before I start, let me encourage you to purchase and read Henry Morris's book entitled ***The Long War Against God***.

Almost all of Europe has now rejected "Capital Punishment" and many in the USA also oppose it as "cruel and inhumane" punishment. Since Europe is now almost totally secularized, with God removed from every institution, the European ideology doesn't surprise us. Some nations, recently England, threaten to withhold extradition to the U.S. of known terrorist killers because they think they might be legally and Biblically executed for murdering hundreds of men, women, children, and babies. This is just additional evidence that "secularism" has a firm hold upon the minds of formerly sound thinking federal governments and that, as we allow such morally corrupt organizations as the ACLU (aided and abetted by cooperating liberal federal judges) and its ilk to continue in the USA, we are always moving closer to the same "godless" condition in the United States.

Most of us have seen this happening here in the good old U.S.A., but there is no public outrage against it. How can we say that we have a government instituted by our founding fathers when our representatives in congress (both Democratic and Republican) readily pass a bill making the barbaric "partial birth abortion" illegal, have that same bill signed into law by our President (which is the way our government is supposed to function) and then have some morally corrupt federal judge in San Francisco, the sin capital of the nation, simply declare "on her own" that law to be unconstitutional on the flimsy basis of "burdening a woman," and thus paralyze its implementation nation-wide? This is hardly a government *of the people, by the people, and for the people* . . . not **for** just one single individual acting in behalf of Satan's NOW organization. Again, **why no public outrage, why no marches against such anarchical rulings by a single judge?** This is ***judicial usurpation*** and just one more example of our nation's capitulation to "secular humanism" and its rejection of the *moral standards of God Himself*.

However, when I think of such idiocies in American society in their actions against God, I am reminded that God's plans can never be thwarted and that God has such secularistic actions and nations in mind when He speaks in **Psa. 2**, **Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 'Let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us. He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then**

He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure: Yet I have set my King on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, You are my Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' Now therefore, be wise O kings; be instructed you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and you perish in the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him."

Years ago, one of our great preachers, Dr. R. G. Lee, preached one sermon many hundred of times, at the request of his many audiences around the nation. It was entitled, "Payday Someday." His theme in that sermon was that men and women, both in and outside the church, think that they will never have to give an account to God for the kind of lives that they live. Yet there is coming a day when all men WILL HAVE TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT TO GOD . . . believers will give an account to Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10) for how they have practiced their Christian lives (the issue will not be one's destiny, but it will be a matter of rewards) . . . unbelievers, however, will give an account to Almighty God at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:21) and their destiny is the Lake of Fire. These two future judgments do not mean that God does not bring judgments upon people and nations within time and history before those future judgments. He obviously does.

Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, two famous preacher of today, with whom I am often in theological disagreement, were pilloried in the press because they saw in 9/11 the hand of God in judgment. They, of course, were right, but few churchmen stood with them. The same can be said of overwhelming floods, terrifying and destructive tornadoes, wild hurricances, and other natural disasters. It is not that in 9/11 God was particularly angry with and specifically punishing the people in those twin towers or the people who suffer through flood disasters or tornadoes or hurricanes. He is speaking in very clear tones to men and women everywhere, who will never read His Word [where the details are], that God is still on the throne and that He governs in the affairs of men even through the allowance of the evil acts of men. But it is still true that where will be a "Payday Someday."

So, it is no surprise that when the modern man, the secular man, considers "capital punishment," he finds it repugnant and inhumane. Modern man does not have the mind of Christ, nor does he seek it. So, this evening, let's take a look at what the Bible, God's inerrant Word in the original autographs, says about "capital punishment."

EXPOSITION

First, it was inaugurated by God because of the reasons He gives us. We find the account given plainly in **Genesis 9:6**, following the universal Flood of Noah's day. God, in instituting "human government" here, says:

"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God He made man."

While it is evident that deterrence is present in this command of God, deterrence is not His primary purpose. As the text plainly says, capital punishment was inaugurated by God because when someone murders an innocent human being, they are murdering *one who has been made in the image of God*. Man is not an animal. He is not an evolved monkey or ape. He is the crown of God's creation. He is a rational, moral, and spiritual being. He was created in the *image and likeness* of God.¹ While the Bible makes it plain that this "likeness" of God does not include a *physical* element, it does mean that man is like God in that man is a rational and moral being with a responsible will. Man is like God also in the sense that man has a "social" aspect to his nature. Man loves and seeks companionship.

There are many in the USA who hate America and they hate even more fiercely the *conservative evangelical churches* in America and other countries. To them, we are the *religious right* and we have to be stamped out. That is one of the highest priorities of the ACLU, the army of the "secular humanists" in this nation.

Some are trying to enlist religious groups (such as the Roman Catholic Church) by appealing to the pronouncements of influential leaders, like the Pope, who takes a stand against capital punishment, *contra God*. Some attempt to turn the church against the church by saying that the legal practice of capital punishment is opposed by the **sixth commandment**, "Thou shalt not kill" (**Ex. 20:13**, KJV). But the Hebrew word translated as "kill" in **Ex. 20:13** is a bad translation as any O.T. scholar will acknowledge. The word means "to murder," and so the 6th commandment more accurately reads, "You shall not murder." There is no contradiction between God's Word in **Gen. 9:6** and **Ex. 20:13**.

Second, God reveals in the New Testament that He has not changed His mind concerning His requirement of capital punishment by human government. At least 2,000 years after Moses wrote **Genesis 9:6**, the Apostle Paul wrote, under the superintendence of the Holy

¹ Much study by theologians has demonstrated that there is no substantial difference between "image" and "likeness" as recorded in Gen. 1:26. Therefore, we will not attempt a differentiation. See Henry C. Theissen's *Lectures in Systematic Theology* as revised by Vernon D. Doerksen (Eerdmans, 1979, p. 154).

Spirit, Romans 13:3, 4: "For rulers [human government in context] are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same. For he [human government] is God's minister for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he [human gov't] is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil" (NKJV).

Satan, that great deceiver, has deceived the minds of men, whether religious or not, to think in opposition to the mind of God. God describes them in Psalm 2, which was cited above. It must be kept in mind also that with God's requirement of capital punishment, God's Word always assumes the ideal . . . that governments will be just in their enforcement of law and order, and that such punishments would never be carried out unless incontrovertible evidence was available and presented to our courts of law. On occasion that ideal is not realized, but that does not mean that, because of rare occurrences of unjust judicial decisions, men are to abandon the revelation of the moral governor of the universe, the almighty God of the Bible, who is consistent throughout the sacred Scriptures.

This opposition to the mind and will of God is not just found in the non-believing ("unsaved") masses in the world . . . it is often found among those who profess to know Him and confess to be Christians. Perhaps the latter are the major cause of the spread of such anti-God thinking since many who lead churches are themselves "children of darkness." They foolishly and naively think that being "soft" on deadly criminals is somehow a reflection of the mercy of God. They have been swallowed up by the deception of Satan. These same wicked actions are often seen in society's dealing with the practice of homosexuality, the practice of abortion, sexual immorality w. reference to marriage, the election of leaders who are unqualified morally to serve, the lack of basic honesty and honor, and a host of other societal problems that are destroying our nation and society.

All who name the Name ought to constantly seek to know Him better in and through deepening their understanding of the sacred Scriptures. . . and then to obey God rather than men. We need to remember that "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God" (Psa. 9:7, NKJV). God says it and that settles it!!!