

DAILY DOCTRINE: Capital Punishment and Warfare
<http://www.fbcweb.org/Doctrines/Capital-Punishment.pdf>

1. There are two forms of capital punishment:
 - a. Animals that kill human beings must be destroyed.
 - b. Men or women who murder must be destroyed.
Genesis 9:5 "And 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.

2. God has delegated capital punishment to mankind/government. Ergo, man has the divine delegated authority to try cases, determine guilt, and punish the guilty.
Genesis 9:6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

3. There are two categories in which man has the right to take human life:
 - a. Capital punishment.
 - b. Warfare.

4. The command "not to kill" in the Hebrew means "not to murder." Government has the right to execute enemies within the State (execute criminals) and enemies outside of the State (i.e. warfare), cf. Rom. 13:1-7; Joshua 6:21; 8:24; Exod. 20:13. However, there is no authority for nation-building in the Word of God. The Israelites were never authorized by God to set up freedom in neighboring Canaanite regions—even if that would (in theory) provide more safety. Violation of this principle always results in many untended consequences (cf. Iraq and Iran). While it is justifiable to go to war where there is *imminent danger*, the goal is to destroy the enemy and return (to our own business instead of meddling in the affairs of other nations).



5. (Back to capital punishment) While there are certain “Christian” groups who teach that with the coming of Christ man is under grace so we should not judge others and should leave vengeance to God alone—hence, no capital punishment— the Bible is *explicit* that government is to be a minister of justice for God—*an avenger of God on criminals*:
Romans 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 upon the one who practices evil.
6. Two principles of subjection to natural law are found in Romans 13:5:
 - a. “Not only for wrath” refers to deterrence through fear of punishment.
 - b. “For conscience sake” refers to restrained by personal norms and standard of a man’s conscience.
7. The principle of natural law for an orderly society is biblical. A lawless society is a decadent society. Government is a necessary evil because of the evil propensities of man.
8. If a decadent society does not enforce capital punishment, crime will increase, prisons will fill up, and it will no longer be safe for you to walk in your neighborhood late at night, or even be safe for you and your family in your own home. Human good (failure to execute criminals) always ends up destroying society and the “innocent” law abiding citizens.

Doctrine matters!

Pastor Don