

Grace Bible Church
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Tree of Life
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What does the Bible say about the death penalty or capital punishment?

One of the most misunderstood subjects concerning our LORD is for those of you who believe or have been taught that John the Baptist was alive in the womb of our LORD's mother, Mary's cousin Elizabeth.

LUK 1:41, And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Notice a few things concerning when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, and the baby leaped in her womb. It was **what** Elizabeth **heard** that caused the embryo or the fetus to leap in Elizabeth's womb, it was NOT what John the Baptist heard but it was a response that who was not even one day old as of yet that caused it to leap.

Secondly, it was because Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit that caused the response. Also, remember what Mary was told by the angel when our LORD was in her womb in **LUK 1:35, "therefore also that holy thing**

which shall be born of thee shall be called [not is called] shall be called the Son of GOD.”

We are also told in the Old Testament that you should give a “life for life” but if there is a miscarriage it is not considered to be a life; EXO 21:2-23.

This is a very important doctrine, as you will see, because it answers a lot of questions that believers have concerning who they are and what the LORD has called them to.

Now, throughout the Old Testament, there is a principle that the LORD established concerning a life for life which we call capital punishment.

Q. “What does the Bible say about the death penalty or capital punishment?”

A. The Old Testament law commanded the death penalty for various acts: murder (EXO 21:12), kidnaping (EXO 21:16), bestiality EXO 22:19, adultery; LEV 20:10), homosexuality (LEV 20:13), being a false prophet (DEU 13:5), prostitution and rape (DEU 22:24), and several other crimes.

However, GOD often showed mercy when the death penalty was due. David committed adultery and murder, yet GOD did not demand his life be taken (2SA 11:1-5,

14-17; 2Sa 12:13). GOD established capital punishment in the first Dispensation.

In GEN 9:6, “Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of GOD He made man.”

It’s interesting that every dispensation has capital punishment as a command. In fact, when the Pharisees brought a woman who was caught in the act of adultery to Jesus and asked HIM if she should be stoned, Jesus replied, **”If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” (JOH 8:7).**

There are times when the LORD intervenes and uses HIS sovereign will to handle capital punishment.

JOH 8:1-11, But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and {began} to teach them. And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. “Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on

the ground. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him {be the} first to throw a stone at her.” And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And when they heard it, they {began} to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst. And straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” And she said, “No one, LORD.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.”

This means that there were times that should not be used to indicate that Jesus rejected capital punishment in all instances. Jesus was simply exposing the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus into breaking the Old Testament law; they did not truly care about the woman being stoned (where was the man who was caught in adultery? You can tell this is a set-up just because the man isn't there.

Now, GOD is the One who instituted capital punishment and GOD is the One who chose to give mercy. The apostle Paul definitely recognized the power of the government to institute capital punishment where appropriate (ROM 13:1-7).

How should a Christian view the death penalty?

First, we must remember that GOD has instituted capital punishment in HIS Word; therefore, it would be presumptuous of us to think that we could institute a higher standard. GOD has the highest standard of any being; HE is perfect and therefore HE knows perfectly what the human race can handle and what it cannot.

The point is, It is unbiblical to claim that GOD opposes the death penalty in all instances. Christians should never rejoice when the death penalty is employed, but at the same time, Christians should not fight against the government's right to execute the perpetrators of the most evil of crimes; ROM 13:1-8.

Now, Let's establish the fact that there is mobility found in the female but it is the mobility extension of the mother.

In EXO 21:22-23, “And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life,”

Now, is this a contradiction?

No, this is what our LORD established for all generations. Notice a few things about this passage.

1. In EXO 21:22-23, two men are fighting with each other.
2. “A woman with child has a miscarriage because of the man hitting the other man.”
3. Yet, there is no further injury - referring to the miscarriage.
4. If the woman recovered and the baby was aborted then her husband, has the right to ask for life to be given for life.
5. Therefore, we can conclude that there was no life in the womb which is why a miscarriage is not considered a life.
6. He shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges decide.”

But, notice the miscarriage did not demand life for life and that is because there is no life in the woman that had a miscarriage.

EXO 21:23, “But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life,” because there is no life in the womb then a dead fetus and a miscarriage.

This is so important because it tells us when life begins for all of us. There are times when GOD might reveal mercy to one who was guilty and then stop the capital punishment as He did with David.

Now, when you have a subject like this which has a lot of different opinions, we should be sure that ours is the correct one.

We also have the fact that GOD was not the GOD of our LORD in the womb but only outside of the womb; **PSA 22:10, Upon Thee I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my GOD from my mother's womb.**

Notice that David says concerning His LORD in **PSA 22:10, Upon Thee [LORD] I was cast from birth; Thou hast been my GOD [not in my womb] but from His mother's womb.**

And notice that our LORD was cast from birth upon HIS GOD. Also notice that David said; “Thou hast been my GOD from my mother's womb not in my mother’s womb.”

We also need to listen to the words of our LORD and that is why **JOH 3:7** says, “**Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' -- NOT CONCEIVED AGAIN.**

The point is that when you were born physically alive, and therefore you have received the first imputation of human life to your soul began when you came forth from being in your mother's womb when life truly exists.

This is when your life truly began because there is life in the womb but it is **biological life** which is the extension of the woman's life , it is not a human life or humans soul until the fetus comes forth from the woman and then you have neshumah, the breath of life imputed to you as the first imputation.

I know this will be difficult for some of you to understand but I ask that you bear with me and let show you what the Bible has to say. This is extremely important because it will answer a lot of questions that some people have including why GOD is the one who chose your parents.

GOD chose both your father and your mother, in spite of your opinions and your questions, which I will seek to answer which is, “Why did GOD chose them to be my parents?”