



Q: Is the death penalty wrong?

A: Our God, who is Love, doesn't want anyone to die in their sin. Yet since the beginning of time, man has chosen to follow his own way instead of the way of life in God. Because of man's tendency toward evil, God established a fair system of justice for our protection very early in time—a system that included a sentence of death for some crimes and immoral behaviors.

Ezekiel 33 reflects this:

“As surely as I live, says the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?” (verse 11).

“For again I say, when righteous people turn away from their righteous behavior and turn to evil, they will die. But if wicked people turn from their wickedness and do what is just and right, they will live” (verses 18-19).

We believe that the concept of God-ordained governments with power to execute judgment on those who do wrong is still upheld in the New Testament. (See Exodus 21, 22, 31, 35; Leviticus 20, 24; Numbers 1, 3, 15, 18, 35; Deuteronomy 13, 17, 19, 21, 22, 24; Joshua 1, 7, 20; Judges 6, 20, 21; 2 Kings 14; 2 Chronicles 15; Ezekiel 33; John 19:10-11 and Romans 13.)

That said, the very first thing we notice as we evaluate the death penalty in light of God's Word is that God would rather that men repent than be put to death (Psalm 107:8-21;

Ezekiel 33:7-20; John 8:4-12; Romans 6:20-23, 11:25-36; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, 7:10; 1 Timothy 2:1-6; 2 Timothy 2:19-26; 2 Peter 3:9.)

The second thing we notice is that God never intended the death penalty to be executed rashly by those simply looking for revenge, but rather that all the evidence be examined by a council in a fair trial (Numbers 35:12; Deuteronomy 19:9-13).

Thirdly, we must recognize that God forbids that anyone be put to death on circumstantial evidence (Numbers 35:12, 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:2-7, 19:9-13, 16-21).

Finally, we must see that God forbids that children be punished for the crimes of their parents (Deuteronomy 24:16, 2 Kings 14:6).

Scripturally, we have seen provisions for the death penalty when it is carried out by a government that follows the guidelines of God's Word. God has placed a large responsibility on government (Romans 13:1-10), and He has also placed an equally large responsibility on us, the Body of Christ, to act as ministers of reconciliation toward those in need of salvation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). We may not have the opportunity to judge whether or not a particular man or woman should be freed from a death sentence, but we do have the opportunity to share the gospel.

Refer KCM web site : <http://www.kcm.org/read/questions/the-death-penalty-wrong>