

Genesis 037

Is Capital Punishment Christian?

Genesis 9:6

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Let us take our Bibles, if we could this morning, and open them to Genesis 9:6. We are looking this morning at Genesis 9:6-7.

Before I give you this title, I have to warn you that this will probably be, for some of you, the most politically incorrect sermon you have ever heard in a church. As the pilot says, "We are about to encounter turbulence. So I hope you have your seat belts fastened. Here we go."

Here is the title: "Is Capital Punishment Christian?" "There goes Pastor Andy preaching politics again." No, I am preaching the Bible. The reason this subject comes up is because it comes up in our consistent verse-by-verse study through the Book of Genesis.

Genesis Structure

- I. Genesis 1-11 (four events)
 - A. Creation (1-2)
 - B. Fall (3-5)
 - C. Flood (6-9)
 1. Events before the Flood (Genesis 6)
 2. The Flood (Genesis 7)
 3. The abating of the waters (Genesis 8)
 4. Events following the Flood (Genesis 9)
 - D. National dispersion (10-11)

I want to remind you where we are in the Book of Genesis. The first part of the book (Genesis 1-11) is about the beginning of the human race, featuring four events: (A) Creation: how the world was before sin entered the picture. (B) The Fall: What went wrong? Yet, through the Fall, we learn in Genesis 3:15 that there is coming one to make things right. That man is Jesus Christ. His name is not given, but He is announced here at the very beginning of the Book of Genesis. (C) The third event, which is where we find ourselves—the Flood (Genesis 6-9).

We have looked at events before the Flood (Genesis 6); the Flood itself (Genesis 7); the receding of the Flood waters chapter (Genesis 8); and now we find ourselves in a section dealing with events following the Flood—post-Flood events. A big section of those post-Flood events involves something that we are reading about here, a covenant that God entered into with Noah.

The covenant began, you might remember, at the end of Genesis 8 where God starts to make promises after the Flood in an atmosphere of worship. Then we moved into Genesis 9:1-7.

In the Noahic Covenant is a provision that God gave to humanity. It was actually a gift, believe it or not, called the institution of Human Government. In a book of beginnings, you would expect some sort of explanation somewhere concerning where government started. Many people today are confused about government. They are angry at their government. They are too tolerant of what their government is doing because they really have not taken the time to look at the Creator's blueprint for government.

The section begins with some re-creation themes (Genesis 9:1-2); man becomes carnivorous (Genesis 9:3); God says to man after the Flood, "Stay away from the blood," (Genesis 9:4). What you see happening there in Genesis 9:5-6 is the beginning of something called human government.

God vested in human government the power of the sword, which is the maximum penalty that government can impose against someone who commits murder. You see that there in Genesis 9:6. What does it say here? It says:

*"Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man"*

Now, *"by man,"* is very important, because now God says, "I am not going to avenge justice directly, as I did through the Flood. I am going to set up an institution to avenge and impose justice, and that institution is going to be run by men." This is the beginning of human government.

*"Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God
He [God] made man" (Genesis 9:6).*

What would our world be like today without the institution of human government? It would be just like it was before the Flood, where you have vigilantism and everybody is trying to sort of avenge themselves, and violence breaks out all over the earth. Cain, the first murder in human history, was very afraid of this.

"Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is too great to bear! 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.'" 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" (Genesis 4:13-15).

There was a provision made for Cain because of vigilantism on the earth. That is what the world would be like without the institution of human government. We have a description of what that world was like because it says, pre-Flood:

"Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence" (Genesis 6:11).

As I have mentioned before, the word violence there is where we get the word "Hamans" from ("chamas" [חָמָס]). Interestingly enough, people could do whatever they wanted, maim whoever they wanted, kill whoever they wanted, and murder whoever they wanted, and there was no immediate justice that they had to face.

Man has a sin nature.

"...the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21).

The Flood did not fix this problem. It cleansed the outside but never fixed man's nature. That is why Genesis documents this. Messiah still needs to come through the line of Noah and Shem, ultimately through Abraham, who we have not even met yet, to fix man on the inside. But if people are not fixed on the inside, what are they left with? A sin nature, a violent nature.

The only thing that will keep that in check is fear—fear of being caught. To prevent this from happening (because if there is no fear, people do whatever they want and they end up murdering others that bear God's image), God created an institution called government to impose justice immediately, and to put the fear of punishment in the hearts of wicked people. This keeps violence under check in a fallen world, in the post-Flood world.

God did not like what He saw happening in that pre-Flood world because of the massive violence. God does not like to see innocent people murdered. The reason God does not want to see that is because those innocent people being murdered bear his image. When you strike down another human being in cold blood, you have just marred somebody or destroyed someone that bears God's very image. Violence itself is an attack against God, because the beings that have been attacked are made in His image.

Consequently, we read in the New Testament (because people think this is just an Old Testament teaching), Romans 13:4:

"for it [government] 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..." (Romans 13:4).

What exactly do you do with a sword? You do not spank people with a sword; you kill people with a sword. Who deserves to be killed? The murderer, the manslayer, the person that has violently killed somebody. Better said, murdered somebody who bears God's image.

It is interesting. You get to the end of Romans 12 and it says this:

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPLAY,' says the Lord. 'BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (ROMANS 12:19-21).

Interesting. Romans 12: "Do not take vengeance on your own behalf, but leave room for the wrath of God." The last time I checked, Romans 12 is followed by which chapter? Romans 13. Is that not cutting edge stuff here at Sugar Land Bible Church? By the way, the chapter divisions that you see, the Holy Spirit did not put there. Sometimes the chapter division handicaps us because it bifurcates material one from the other, an unnatural separation.

Romans 12, "do not take vengeance," is supposed to flow right into Romans 13, where we get probably one of the most in-depth discussions of government and its function upon the earth, of bringing wrath by God's design on the wrongdoer. To accomplish this, God put into the hands of the state the ultimate power: the power of the sword.

You see the sword there in Romans 13:4. You see it in Genesis 9:6. The state has the power to execute murderers. Justice has to be done to prevent "chamas" (חַמָּס) or violence from spreading all over the earth. Innocent people that are made in God's image get killed and murdered around the clock. God does not want the world to roll back to that, so He set up this very important institution of human government.

The only reason we are talking about it is because that is where we are in the Book of Genesis. It is the covenant that he made with Noah. What we are going to be learning today is as follows: Is capital punishment, as I am describing it—the right of the state to take a life in the case of murder is capital punishment—Christian?

Most churches would not touch this topic with a ten-foot pole. The primary reason they will not is because they do not want to be controversial, because the issue of capital punishment, as far as I can remember, is one of the most divisive, polarizing issues that has ever faced our country. There are people that are adamantly for it, usually crime victims; and there are others that are adamantly against it. The issue is: What saith the Scripture?

What you will discover about the Bible if you let it, is that it will give you a worldview. The Bible is not just a book about how to get to heaven, as important as that subject is. If you let the Bible speak, it will speak on every area of life. Most churches and pastors to avoid controversy will not let the Bible speak on these topics; they are too polarizing. "Let us stick to the spiritual themes," as if the issue of human government is not spiritual. It must be spiritual because, as we are learning here, God created it.

We just finished with our congregational meeting, and we heard from our children's minister, we heard from our youth pastor about the things that are being taught to our youth, and they kept emphasizing Christian worldview. We are not a daycare service. When your children are in our children's ministry or in our youth program, they are being taught Christianity, the Bible, Christian worldview, and they are being taught how to let the Bible comment on every area it wants to comment on.

When the Bible comments on these things, it is just as inspired as it is when it talks about any other subject. If you let the Bible speak, it will tell you about politics, not from Republican or Democrat talking points, not from liberal or conservative talking points, but from the perspective of a holy God who created government to begin with.

It will educate you about literature. It will educate you about money, finances, industry, and work ethic. It will educate you about music. It will educate you about art. I need to add a category here. It will educate you about science. When God talks, He is authoritative no matter what subjects he is dealing with.

What we are learning here is essentially what many people would say it is off the table because it is political. No, it is not off the table because it is biblical. God said something about this. For us not to walk in a fog of confusion about everything going on all around us, we need to understand what God says—worldview.



Objections to Capital Punishment

- Sixth commandment?
- Sermon on the Mount?
- We are no longer under the Mosaic Law?
- Deterrence? (Deut 13:10-11; 19:20; Eccl 8:11)
- Executed innocent?
- Racist?
- 8th Amendment?
- Pro-life?



Capital punishment, the right of the state to execute somebody when that person is a murderer. What I have accumulated here are the eight objections that you hear over and over again to capital punishment. Capital punishment should be abolished. People say capital punishment should be banned. Certainly, a Christian should not be promoting capital punishment as an institution because of these eight reasons. Let us see if these reasons today, this morning as we speak, hold water.

Some of these are public policy issues, but many of them are biblical issues. There are a lot of people out there that will tell you that based on their understanding of the Bible, capital punishment should be abolished. Let us look at these.

Number one: How in the world can you, as a Christian pastor, argue for capital punishment, the right of the state to execute a convicted murderer when the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill"? Aren't you advocating killing?

A lot of Christians are reading today out of the King James Version (a very good translation, but it is not a perfect translation). They will read these words concerning the Sixth Commandment, and it says: *"Thou shalt not kill"* (Exodus 20:13). If God says in one of the Ten Commandments, commandment number six, "Thou shalt not kill," how in the world can you argue that the state should be in the business of killing?

The issue here is that people do not really know what Exodus 20:13 is actually saying. It never says, "Thou shalt not kill." What it says, reading out of the NASB, is: "Thou shalt not murder." There is a word that is used there in Hebrew ("ratsach" [רצח]). What that word means, and what "murder" means is "premeditation," where you plan someone's death.

It is like what David did to Uriah the Hittite. David plotted his execution. It also refers to murder or a homicide with malice aforethought. It is not talking about an accidental death. It is not talking about a self-defense issue. It talks about murdering somebody or killing someone when malice or evil intent is involved.

It also conveys wanton negligence where, for example, you take a large box at the top of the Empire State Building and you just throw it off and someone gets killed in the process. Legally that is wanton negligence because you must have known someone was going to be down there to get hit by this giant box. That is what that word communicates.

If you think the Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill," you have a wrong understanding of the Bible. The Bible never says, "Thou shalt not kill." What it says is, "Thou shalt not murder." All homicides are murders, but not all murders are homicides.

There is such a thing, biblically, as a justified killing. For example, if you were to break into my house at night, and you put me and my family in imminent danger, and I kill the perpetrator in self defense, then guess what? I am not a murderer. That is a homicide,

but not a murder. The Bible never takes off the table killing. What it takes off the table is murder. Self-defense—killing in self-defense is not a murder, or else we would not have in the Scripture the concept of just war.

For example, when the Allies and the United States went and liberated what was happening there in Nazi Germany and Nazis lost their lives, that was not murder. There was no wanton negligence there. That was just war. That was killing, but it was not murder.

If you do not have that distinction in your mind, you will never be able to make any sense of the Bible because God told Joshua, in a one-time event, to go into Canaan and to eradicate the Canaanites. If you think that all killing is murder, and all murder is killing, and if you conflate the two, you will think God was a murderer when He gave that command.

How about when God brought the Flood? Did we not just read about the Flood where God, through judgment, destroyed the whole world? Is that murder? No, it is killing, but not murder. What the Bible takes off the table is an unjustifiable homicide, a homicide done with premeditation, malice of forethought, wanton negligence. That is what is prohibited in the Sixth Commandment.

When Genesis 9:6 says, *"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man,"* that statement there is not murder, but it is killing. It is a justifiable homicide. I told you this was going to be a very politically incorrect sermon, and I have not even gotten to the meat yet.

Number two, the second objection to capital punishment is the Sermon on the Mount. All of the liberal pastors and liberal theologians, when this subject comes up, will start quoting the Sermon on the Mount. After all, does not the Sermon on the Mount say to turn the other cheek and things of that nature?

Matthew 5:38-44 says:

"You have heard that it was said, "AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH." But I [Jesus] say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on the right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you. do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy." But I say, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:38-44).

What kind of pastor are you advocating capital punishment when Jesus clearly said to love your enemies? The truth of the matter is that the Sermon on the Mount is

wonderful. Praise the Lord for the Sermon on the Mount. But here is the deal. The Sermon on the Mount governs interpersonal relationships, relationships that people have with each other, typically within the confines of the believing community.

What is our relationship to our fellow Christian? What is our relationship like to our unsaved friends, neighbors, and coworkers? That is where you go to the Sermon on the Mount for information dealing with that. It has nothing, it has zero to do with the relationship between government and people. When people start to quote the Sermon on the Mount, they are dealing with a twisting of the Bible and applying it to the issue of capital punishment when the Sermon on the Mount is not even dealing with that subject. It is not dealing with government and man, it is dealing with interpersonal issues.

You have to go to the right passages and the right Scriptures to deal with the right problems that come up. If you do not do that, and if we do not do that, we are really not rightly dividing the Word of God. If the Sermon on the Mount basically covered the issue of government, then a government could never have a defense, it could never have a military. Sadly, they are arguing that right now to defund the police, using the Sermon on the Mount, and yet they are twisting into a pretzel. The Sermon on the Mount.

The third objection that you get on this issue of capital punishment is, "Pastor, look, you are bringing up all this stuff from the Mosaic Law, the Old Testament, and we are not under the Law of Moses today. You are building your case for capital punishment from the Old Testament. You must be using the Old Testament law. You are bringing the Mosaic Law, which has been abolished into the New Testament, and you are developing a philosophy of government from it. What is the matter with you, Pastor? Haven't you read Romans 6:14, which says, *"...for you are not under law but under grace"*? Why are you arguing for capital punishment from the Law of Moses?"

The quick answer to that is that this is not the Law of Moses in Genesis 9. This is a covenant that God gave to Noah long before Mount Sinai and the Law of Moses. People today have these awareness buttons—child abuse awareness, world hunger awareness. I want an awareness button. Can we come up with an awareness button?

We need a Noahic Covenant/Mosaic Covenant distinction awareness button. When you come out of Sugar Land Bible Church, you have this button on that says, "I know the difference between the Noahic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant does not even exist yet when God gave these instructions to Noah, it would not exist until Mount Sinai, centuries and centuries later.

What exactly is the difference between the Noahic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant? A world of difference. Here is a chart that will help you know—Noahic Covenant in red; Mosaic Covenant in blue. You will notice that they have different names. You will notice that they have different agents. The Noahic Covenant was mediated through Noah. The Mosaic Covenant was mediated through Moses.

Noahic vs. Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants			
Name	NOAHIC	ABRAHAMIC	MOSAIC
Human agent	Noah	Abraham	Moses
Scripture	Gen. 8–9	Gen. 12–17	Exod. 19–40
Covenant (<i>Berith</i>)	Gen. 9:9	Gen. 15:18	Exod. 19:5
Party	World, humanity	Israel, Hebrews	Israel, Hebrews
Israel	Pre-Israel	Post-Israel	Post-Israel
Conditional or unconditional	Unconditional	Unconditional	Conditional
Promises	No more flood judgment, enduring earth, capital punishment	Ownership of land, seed, and blessing	Enjoyment or possession of land, seed, and blessing
Sign	Rainbow	Circumcision	Sabbath
Purpose	Restrain & preserve	Redemptive	Redemptive
Directly binding today?	Yes	No	No

They are identified in different areas of the Scripture. You do not run into the Mosaic Covenant until the Book of Exodus. The same language of covenant is used to describe both, but the Noahic Covenant is a covenant between God and the whole world. It was not just to Noah, although Noah was the agent, but it was actually a covenant to all of Planet Earth. Not so the Mosaic Covenant, which was only given to the nation of Israel. The Noahic Covenant is pre-Israel. We do not even know yet that there is going to be an Israel. The Mosaic Covenant, of course, is post-Israel.

Some other distinctions. (If you do not get your mind wrapped around all of these right at once, do not worry. We will be referring to this chart many, many times in our study through the Book of Genesis.) The Noahic Covenant is unconditional. The Mosaic Covenant is conditional. The Noahic Covenant says no more worldwide floods; the earth will endure, and government exists to execute murderers. What does the Mosaic Covenant say? Enjoyment or possession of the land for Israel through obedience.

What is the sign of the Noahic Covenant? You see it all the time, right? What is it? It is the rainbow. What is the sign of the Mosaic Covenant? The Sabbath? What is the purpose of the Noahic Covenant? It is to restrain evil and preserve. What is the purpose

of the Mosaic Covenant? It is to redeem. It is redemptive. It is salvation oriented. Is the Noahic Covenant binding today? Yes it is. Is the Mosaic Covenant binding today? No it is not.

What are the big differences? The Noahic Covenant was given to the whole planet. It is still in effect today. In fact, if you are here in your Bible, which you should be in Genesis 9, look at Genesis 9:12, concerning the covenant:

"God said, 'This is the sign which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations'" (Genesis 9:12).

Is that God's purpose in the later Mosaic Covenant? No. It says in Psalm 147:19-20:

*"He declares His words to Jacob,
His statutes and His ordinance to Israel.
He has not dealt thus with any nation;
And as for His ordinances, they have not known them.
Praise the Lord!" (Psalm 147:19-20).*

The Mosaic Covenant is with Israel. The Noahic Covenant is with the world. The Mosaic Covenant is not binding today. The New Covenant is. The Mosaic Covenant is designed to redeem. The Noahic Covenant is designed to preserve fallen humanity in a God-hating world. It is designed to prevent murderers from following through with their murderous impulses.

When people say that you cannot argue for capital punishment today because you are using the Old Testament and we are not under the Law of Moses anymore, they are not understanding that there is a distinction between the Noahic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant, two completely different things. They are mixing apples and oranges.

One of the great objections to capital punishment is, does this really deter crime? Now, what do we mean by the deterrence of crime? It is the idea that a potential murderer is so intimidated by the punishment that he decides not to commit the murder. Deterrence: If you do not want to do the time, do not do the crime. There are a lot of people out there that unless that punishment exists, will follow through with their sinful impulses and murder fellow image bearers in the process.

I like what Arnold Fruchtenbaum says in his Genesis commentary. Notice this:

"It is God Who mandates capital punishment...God has already exercised this prerogative of divine retribution with the Flood. However, there is also now to be human retribution, in [Genesis] 9:6: 'Whosoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' Man now has the authority to put another man to death. Capital punishment requires legal execution, and

this enactment sets the stage for human government. Under the Noahic Covenant, the mandatory death penalty was only for the crime of premeditated murder. Later, the Mosaic Covenant will add other crimes requiring the death penalty, but as far as the Noahic Covenant goes, it is mandatory only for premeditated murder. The purpose is not to deter crime, but to punish the evildoer. Much of the argument today about the use of capital punishment concerns whether it does or does not deter crime. Biblically speaking, that is irrelevant and not the issue. The issue for the Bible is punishing the evildoer, not reforming him or her. Genesis 9:6 concludes by giving the reason why there will be both divine and human retribution for the shedding of human blood: For in the image of God made he man. Therefore, although after the Fall it is a marred image, the image of God is still there."¹

Does this really deter crime? Arnold Fruchtenbaum's point is: Who cares? It is an irrelevant discussion because the sociologist and the academics and the politicians will all get in their equal corners and they will fight that one out. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says, "So what?"

The institution of human government, particularly with capital punishment, exists to impose justice because someone has just murdered in cold blood an image bearer. There needs to be immediate and instantaneous justice for that. If that does not happen, then the world will be quickly filled with violence. It is interesting that when God gave the mandate for capital punishment in the Noahic Covenant, He did not get into a long discussion about deterrence.

That is my first response to this idea. Does this really deter crime? That is not even the issue. The issue is that justice must be imposed. God created an institution in the Noahic Covenant for the purpose of imposing justice.

I do not know how many of you know this, but my father was a judge. He was in California, a Superior Court judge, and then later he was elevated to the Court of Appeals in the state of California. You would not believe some of the dinner time conversations that we had.

"Hey, Dad. How did it go at work today?" He told me this story when I was a teenager, and I think my eyes were like saucers when he told me this. He said, "A convicted murderer came into my court today, and they started to give me this plea about why this person should be released early, because after all, it is very humanitarian for that person to celebrate Christmas with their relatives."

I said to my dad, "What did you do?" My dad said, "I advised them to go put Christmas lights in the coffin of the victim so maybe he could celebrate Christmas also." I thought

¹ Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Genesis*, 186.

that was quite a day at the office. In hindsight, that is pretty good logic when you think about it.

All of these people that want to abolish capital punishment because they have moved into this compassion mindset are moving in the direction of misplaced compassion. Biblically, God puts the compassion in the blood of an image bearer that has been slain. That is where God's compassion exists. We get that very confused. Boy, are we confused about this in our society. Even Christians are confused about this.

I do not know if you remember the Texas case involving Karla Faye Tucker.

Oh, this would probably go back a good 20 years. She was a convicted murderer. In jail she got saved—she was born again; she trusted Jesus, which is wonderful. At the time I was sitting under a pastor who basically said, "You know what? She should be released from her jail cell because she is a Christian." I said to myself, "I do not agree with that at all." Why would I disagree with that? Because Psalm 103:12 says:

*"As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).*

That applies—it is the doctrine, by the way of expiation, the permanent removal of sin—to the sins that we have committed against God. They have nothing to do with the temporal consequences that we face even as forgiven people.

Let me give you an example. I have cruised in here at 80 miles an hour. I am not proud of that, but I have been pulled over by police officers. "Did you know you are going 80 miles an hour in a 40-mile-an-hour zone?" Here is what I wanted to do: I wanted to pull out my Bible and say, "Officer, here in Romans 8:1, it says, 'There is now no condemnation for those that are in Christ Jesus.'" Obviously that is ridiculous. I am a forgiven person, but I still bear the consequences for my own bad actions while I am here on the earth.

Karla Faye Tucker should have paid for her crime just like anybody else pays for their crime. It is wonderful that she died and went to heaven, but that is not some sort of excuse to open the jail cells. If you have a Christian or a person before they are saved. They drink their whole life. They smoke like a chimney, and drink like a well, and cuss like a sailor. Suddenly they get saved and they are forgiven and they are going to heaven, but does God say, "You get a new liver now. With all of the damage you have done to your body, you get a new body"?

No, today you do not. You will get one, one day. There is absolutely nothing in the Bible that says if you are a Christian, somehow you are exempt from the law of sowing and reaping. Yet that sermon was preached to release Karla Faye Tucker—misplaced compassion.

Having said all that, I believe that capital punishment does deter crime. Why would I say that? Because if a convicted murderer is dead, they cannot kill anybody else. When I was in law school, they would say, "Just lock him up." Really? What do you do with the Texas 7 that escaped and killed again? What do you do with a criminal who has nothing left to lose? When they are locked up forever, they kill an officer, a guard, or a cellmate.

In fact, I was listening very carefully to one of our former attorney generals in California, Dan Lungren. He was someone at that time that I really wanted to become the governor of the state of California. He did not make it. We are too busy electing other people, which I probably should not comment on right now.

Lungren was talking on a cable station about how they had a criminal in California who was convicted. What was he doing in his cell? He was plotting his next murder, and he was somehow connected to the outside world. I do not know how all of this works, but he was plotting his next murder as a convicted murderer. The fact of the matter is, people when they commit murder are likely going to do it again. What prevents them from doing it again, from murdering yet another image bearer is the fact that they are dead themselves. In that sense, capital punishment does deter crime.

Have you read the Book of Deuteronomy lately on the concept of deterrence? Deuteronomy 13:10-11—this is the Mosaic Law—but it says:

"So you shall stone him to death because he has sought to seduce you from the Lord your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such a wicked thing among you" (Deuteronomy 13:10-11).

It looks to me like deterrence does work if you believe what the Bible says. You will notice that when punishment is imposed, it has to be swift. If it is not swift, then the deterrent factor disappears. You will notice the Solomonic wisdom found in Ecclesiastes 8:11. It says:

"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" (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

The reason why there is even an argument today about why capital punishment does not deter crime is because your average criminal, in between the crime and execution, has 11 years on death row. Did you know that? They have access to about 11 appeals. We are not living in a situation today where you have rapid justice the way the Bible calls for. You have a situation of delayed justice. That is why the deterrent effect disappears.

What about this argument here? This takes me to number five: You are going to kill an innocent person, the executed innocent argument. You are going to rush someone

through the judicial system and they are going to die. You are going to figure out later that you put an innocent man or woman to death. Many people oppose the institution of capital punishment on those grounds.

Let me explain something here, if I could just for a minute. That is an emotional argument. What is happening in our culture is that people are being seduced at the emotional level, and once the emotions kick in, they are no longer objectively analyzing the data. Is it true that our justice system is so flawed, as many people contend, that we are just rushing people to death around the clock, and consequently, we are finding out that later they are innocent? Does such a thing even exist? A wonderful book I will recommend to you is by Greg Jackson. It is called "Conservative Comebacks to Liberal Lies." There are wonderful statistics in this book, and he writes:

"there has never been a single case in the United States in which an innocent person has been executed. One of the primary reasons that the innocent are protected from execution in our country is because we have an abundance of legal safeguards...Moreover, DNA now further protects the innocent from being mistakenly convicted."²

If you are watching a commentator or a so-called documentary and they are seducing you at the emotional level, and they are giving you the impression that all of these people are being rushed to their death through capital punishment and they are later found to be innocent, then you are dealing with someone that is making things up.

It is true that you can have someone on death row that is later found to be innocent. That has happened many times, but is there actually an example that you can point to of an executed innocent? You are hard pressed to find that. Yet your average person is sort of swept in with the rhetoric and the emotionalism. When we are emotional, we are not thinking critically and logically. This is how many people win political arguments.

How about this one? Here is a big one today: You cannot have capital punishment because capital punishment is racist. You say, "What is this all about?" This is something called Critical Race Theory or CRT.

"Pastor, I do not know anything about CRT. I do not know anything about Critical Race Theory." Let me tell you something. You better learn about it. You better figure it out fast, because this is what your children and your grandchildren are being taught around the clock.

The mindset is that America, at her core, is systemically racist. The institutions of America are systemically racist, and if they are systemically racist, they have to be torn

² Jackson, *Conservative Comebacks to Liberal Lies: Issue by Issue Responses to the Most Common Claims of the Left from A to Z*, 149.

down. If you want to abolish anything—free market, capital punishment, you name it, anything that the country is built on—you just call it racist.

They do not say that there are pockets of racism in America, which there are. They do not say that individuals can be racist, which they can be. In that case, we need to ferret that out and deal with that. That is a terrible thing. What they are saying is that the country at its foundation, at its root level, is racist.

You do not have to look further for this type of teaching from the pulpit than to remember a "pastor" (I put that title in quotes) Jeremiah Wright, who I call Jeremiah Wrong. Jeremiah Wright, of course, was the Christian mentor of Barack Obama, who became a two-term president in the United States of America. This is Critical Race Theory on steroids coming from Jeremiah Wright.

In fact, you can go into the videos and see him for 9/11 blaming not the Muslims who committed those horrific acts, but it is America that brought that on herself, because we are racist at our core—Critical Race Theory. So let us tear down the United States. If people start to think that somehow capital punishment is racist then we need to tear that down too, and not have it anymore.

Look at this quote here. This is almost hot off the press. This is UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield speaking to the United Nations. This is what the article says:

"[Biden's] UN Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the Human Rights Council that 'the original sin of slavery weaved white supremacy into our founding documents,'—"3

Do you see what just happened there? She is not saying that there are some individual racists in the country that have to be dealt with. What she is saying is that the core of America is racist from its birth certificate, America's founding documents. Critical Race Theory. The only reason you do not recognize the fact that America is systemically racist is because you are living on the right side of the power equation. You are actually a racist and you do not even realize it. So we need to put you through a bunch of training and things of that nature to get you to realize that you are racist. Critical Race Theory.

As God is my witness, newsroom after newsroom, politician after politician, university after university, school after school, and watch this now, seminary after seminary, church after church, pastor after pastor as I speak, are bowing the knee figuratively and literally to Critical Race Theory. What is all of this about? It is to get people in a culture

³ BIDEN UN AMBASSADOR SAYS 'WHITE SUPREMACY' IS 'WEAVED' INTO US FOUNDING DOCUMENTS—EMILY JACOBS, APRIL 15, 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/04/15/biden-un-ambassador-sayswhite-supremacy-weaved-into-us-founding/>

to start hating each other's guts. That is what it is about. Marxism. Get the classes at war with each other so they can bring in the Marxist utopia.

The problem is, in the United States, it is hard. That is a hard sell, class struggle, because in the United States, you can start off at the bottom and end up at the top, and you can start off at the top and end up at the bottom. America is unique amongst the nations of the world. Arguing for class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, classical Marxism does not sell in America.

Do you know what sells in America? Race tension. That sells. Because America in her past has had racial issues and by the grace of God, has worked legislatively to restore those issues. But the tension is still there. If you can get the races at war with each other and hating each other, then the people will call out for a Marxist utopia.

Notice what this article says. Who is she giving this talk to?

"Of the 47 member states on the council [in the UN], notable examples include China, Cuba, Libya, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan and Venezuela."⁴

Aren't those some of the worst human rights violators on the planet? You do not have to go before people like that and bow down and somehow say that America is institutionally racist. What she ought to be doing is preaching American values to those groups. Critical Race Theory.

The issue of race is also used to tear down everything in the culture, including the institution of capital punishment. But is capital punishment really racist? Again, before getting your emotions involved, look at the facts. Greg Jackson writes these words:

"the majority of those executed since 1976 [through capital punishment] have been white, even though black criminals commit a majority of murders. If the death penalty is 'racist,' it is racist against whites, not blacks, since blacks commit the largest number of murders."⁵

That is funny. I do not hear that on CNN. It is an issue of stopping with the emotion, stop being played by people, and let us objectively look at the data. This race argument is a big argument that people are using to tear down the institution of capital punishment.

How about this one? The Eighth Amendment. I recognize a lot of you in your devotional life have not been reading the Eighth Amendment. What does the Eighth Amendment say? It says that there shall be no "cruel and unusual" punishments. For many years in

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jackson, *Conservative Comebacks to Liberal Lies: Issue by Issue Responses to the Most Common Claims of the Left from A to Z*, 152.

the United States, roughly from 1972 to 1976, capital punishment was illegal. It was unconstitutional because the Supreme Court said capital punishment violates the Eighth Amendment. It is "cruel and unusual punishment."

How interesting that they skipped right over the Fifth Amendment. Doesn't the Fifth Amendment come before the Eighth Amendment? What does the Fifth Amendment say that you shall not be deprived of life? Let me read that again. You shall not "be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law." In other words, if due process is afforded and someone is given full access to the judicial system, then their life can be taken. It is right there in the Constitution.

There is absolutely nothing to this argument that somehow capital punishment violates the Eighth Amendment. Greg Jackson writes this. He says:

"The death penalty was also on the statute books of every single state when the Constitution was adopted. The Founding Fathers [who gave us, by the way, the Bill of Rights, including the Fifth Amendment and the Eighth Amendment] who adopted the Bill of Rights banning 'cruel and unusual punishment' did not have a problem implementing the death penalty."⁶

What is the Eighth Amendment about then? It is not there to get rid of capital punishment. It is there to get rid of, as it says, "cruel and unusual punishment." Let the punishment fit the crime. We are not a Muslim country where if a young child steals a loaf of bread, as they do in Islamic countries, we cut off his hand or cut off his arm; or to travel throughout Europe, as I have done, and go into the museums and look at the grotesque, disgusting ways that people were put to death by their own governments.

What the Eighth Amendment says is that we are not going to have stuff like that. We are not going to have stuff like quartering, where you tie different person's body parts to different horses and then tell those horses to scatter so they are torn asunder in agony. We are not going to have a situation where we are burning people to death. That is what the Eighth Amendment is trying to stop. It is not trying to stop the institution or implementation of capital punishment.

I told you guys this was going to be a politically incorrect sermon, did I not? Hang with me. We are almost done.

Eighth argument: How can you be pro-life and argue for capital punishment? Aren't you guys the ones that are always speaking up for the unborn because you are pro-life? Well that is true. I speak up for the unborn because Jesus did. Jesus in Luke 19:44

⁶ Ibid., 151.

made a reference to "your children within you." What is happening in the womb of a mother is a life according to the Bible. If it is a life, it is deserving of legal protection.

If you are a believer in the Bible, then your political position on the abortion issue has already been made for you, not by your pastor, not by your political party, or the commentator that you follow the most, but by God. I am pro-life because God is pro-life, and God says that what is happening within the womb of a mother is a life.

Now I understand when I talk this way that it is dangerous because there are many people within the sound of my voice that have been involved in abortions. I always quote Psalm 103:12, which we alluded to earlier:

*"As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).*

As far as your relationship to God is concerned, if you have been involved with an abortion, then you are exonerated. Temporal consequences are still there, but in terms of your relationship to the Lord, it has been dealt with under grace. To show you the grace of God, I will remind you of the fact that some of the choicest servants of God had murder in their background, and yet God used them Moses, David, and Paul, to name a few. Yes, we are strong here on the pro-life issue, but we are also strong on the grace of God.


That begs the question: How can you be pro-life and be pro-death at the same time? How can you be against abortion but you are in favor of capital punishment? Why don't you be consistent? Maybe this chart will help.

ABORTION OR CAPITAL PUNISHMENT?		
	ABORTION	CAPITAL PUNISHMENT
Birth?	Unborn	Born
Crime?	No crime	Committed a crime
Trial?	Not tried by a jury of peers	Tried by a jury of peers
Guilt?	Innocent	Guilty

You cannot compare an abortion to someone who is a convicted murderer and is justifiably executed by the state. Why is that? Because the abortion has just taken place against someone unborn. They have not committed any crime but the person executed by the state because they are a murderer has already been born. Abortion in terms of a crime is committed against someone who has committed no crime, but the person who is executed by the state for murder has committed a crime, murder.


The person who kills an innocent unborn child, that child, because they have not done anything and have been in their mother's womb, has never been tried for any crime by a jury of their peers, but the person executed by the state has been tried by a jury of their peers. They have had full access to the judicial system. Abortion is an attack on an innocent life; capital punishment is the eradication of a life that has already been determined to be guilty in the United States beyond a reasonable doubt, typically by a unanimous jury of their peers. The person probably has had 11 appeals in 11 years to work this out, and yet the time comes for the switch to be pulled.

There is so much confusion about this, and I think there would be a lot less of it if we started to be honest with God's Word as we move through God's Word and not duck the controversial issues and let the Bible speak.



Objections to Capital Punishment

- Sixth commandment?
- Sermon on the Mount?
- We are no longer under the Mosaic Law?
- Deterrence? (Deut 13:10-11; 19:20; Eccl 8:11)
- Executed innocent?
- Racist?
- 8th Amendment?
- Pro-life?



By way of review here, objections to capital punishment: violation of the Sixth Commandment. Nope. The Sixth Commandment is "Thou shalt not murder," not "Thou shalt not kill." Sermon on the Mount violation. Nope. The Sermon on the Mount deals with interpersonal relationships, not government versus man relationships. Doesn't capital punishment violate the Mosaic Law? No, because it is not part of the Mosaic Law; it is part of the Noahic Covenant, which precedes the Mosaic Law.

We cannot have capital punishment because we have not proved deterrence. So what? Whether you prove it or not, it is there to impose justice. Won't capital punishment result in the execution of people that are innocent? Show me the case where that has happened. Isn't capital punishment racist? Then why have more whites than blacks been executed through capital punishment?

Doesn't capital punishment violate the Eighth Amendment? That is an interpretation of it if you want to ignore the Fifth Amendment. What is the matter with you? Don't you know

you are supposed to be pro-life? I am pro-life in the area of abortion, but I am pro-justice in the area of capital punishment.

When we talk about executed innocent, is that not what Jesus Christ was? He actually was an executed innocent. Jesus went through that to die in our place. God the Father providentially allowed that to happen so Jesus could die in our place. Because Jesus has died in my place, I do not have to face the ultimate capital punishment, which is judgment from God, because Jesus took my wrath in His place as my substitute.

If you are here today and you have never trusted in Christ for salvation, our exhortation to you is to fulfill the only condition which is necessary for a lost sinner to be justified before God, and that is to trust or to believe in Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God has been dispatched into the world to convict men and women of their need to do this.

If a person has never done this, then they are headed into a form of capital punishment in the ultimate sense, the wrath of God and an eternity separated from God. Yet your fate can be reversed in a second by trusting in what Jesus did for you. It is a gift, and yet a gift is to no avail until it is received. The way to receive a gift from God is to trust or to believe in the One He has sent, the man, Jesus Christ.

It is not something you have to walk an aisle to do, join a church to do, give money to do, or fill out a card. It is a matter of privacy between you and the Lord, where the Spirit convicts you of what has happened in your place, and you respond in your heart of hearts by trusting what Jesus did. It is a matter not between me and you; it is a matter between you and God, who is both your Creator and your Redeemer. We would invite people to do that even now, as I am speaking.