

General Topics :: The Death Penalty?

**The Death Penalty? - posted by todd, on: 2003/11/9 12:59**

I was listening to some informal debating on this topic the other night and realized that it's not as simple as I thought (at least I don't think).

What are your opinions? Is it ever justified? What should the justice system do with convicted mass murderers, rapists, etc.?

Sure, as Christians our response is loving and forgiving, but what should be the temporal judicial punishment? Is murder different than execution by the state? Murder being motivated by hate or some other selfish motive, and execution being motivated by a need for civil order, safety, peace, and justice.

**Re: The Death Penalty? - posted by openairboy, on: 2003/11/10 0:15**

First, there needs to be a distinction between murder and killing. When the state executes someone they are not murdering, but killing. Murder includes malice, but justice doesn't.

Second, the state bears the sword, which is a sign of judgment, to punish evil doers. The state is not a means of grace, but judgment. Read Romans 12-13 for a picture of this. The end of Romans 12 admonishes to leave room for God's wrath, then he explains that the state is God's vehicle for wrath and not us as individuals.

Third, yes, it is justified in instances that warrant the death penalty (rape, murder, homosexuality, bestiality, disobedient children, etc. I realize these would need to be qualified for many, but I'm simply throwing out a few Biblical examples.), but this needs to be established by two or more witnesses. This would include a system that carries great charges against perjury.

FWIW

**Re: The Death Penalty? - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/11/18 22:59**

In the Old Testament, we see that often times, punishment for some sins was death. The community would stone the adulterer or what-have-you, and it was okayed by God.

God has placed these government officials in their positions, whether they acknowledge Him or not. Christ pardoned with His words the adulteress when she was brought before Him, and it is true that my white lie is just as great a sin as the next man's rape and murder.

I believe that the American courts should be a bit more cautious in who they send to Death Row, since many have been sent innocently. But what amazes me is how God uses this to His glory...how many people have you heard of "finding God" while in jail, especially those on Death Row? I've often wonder how many of those who have gone under the injection needle will I see in Heaven, having been called by God only after being placed behind bars, agonizing over when they would finally die.

By being condemned to death, many begin to actually think about it. The parallel between literally dying for sinning against the people and spiritually dying for sinning against our God often is a sudden clarity to many.

God can take the worst and make it into the best.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/19 10:48**

Quote:  
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Hi C7S

I have often wondered if this was not part of God's special kindness to the condemned man. For most death comes by surprise but for these, with this most heinous of sins upon their soul, God brings death by appointment.

Psalms 90:12 So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

If the 'numbering of our days' can be used to teach our hearts 'wisdom', then it would be a special mercy to impose 'day numbering' upon the murderer.

Just a thought.

**Re: - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/11/19 17:32**

That is definitely an astute insight. That verse applies so perfectly. There is a stark reality that comes from knowing when your day will be.

I've often heard, "If someone could tell you the exact date and time of your death, would you want to know?" Often times, the answer is, "No." To have to face such a thing terrifies so many.

But as a result of their actions, these are forced to face their dying day, and strange as it sounds, perhaps it is "God's special kindness to the condemned man."

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/11/20 0:19**

Thanks everyone. I really like where this thread went. I think I am of the same opinion. Here's something that's related.

Why do the courts ever give life sentences? Why don't they just give the death penalty? Is a life sentence supposed to be a greater or lesser charge?

When the death penalty is given, why is there sometimes a long waiting period between the sentence and the execution of it?

Perhaps in hopes that in time more truth might be revealed and this would lessen the chances of an innocent death? How many people have ever been on death row and then been released due to new evidence?