

Trends

Just under 54% of Americans say they support the death penalty and 39% say they are opposed...according to ...a poll released 6/11/18. The poll reflects a five-point increase in support for capital punishment...from the record-low 49% in 2016...and the 2nd lowest level of death-penalty support...since the U.S. Supreme Court allowed executions to resume in 1976. Support for the death penalty remained lowest, and opposition highest, among Democrats (35% in favor, 59% opposed)...The highest levels of support...were reported among Republicans (77% in favor, 17% opposed)...white evangelical Protestants (73% in favor, 19% opposed), and men (61% in favor, 34% opposed), women (50/50).

- via Pew Research

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

Sentence Sermons

"I believe that more people would be alive today if there were a death penalty."

—Nancy Reagan

News & Notes

Please pray for Mike Thomas and his family (Plainfield) and Kathy Lee's family (Michigan). Both recently lost loved ones.

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?!

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Words of Life

Westside
church of Christ

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68



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Eli's Family Lack of Discipline

Frank Himmel

The Bible depicts Eli as a godly man. He judged Israel forty years (1 Sam. 4:18), the next to last ruler of that era. Eli was a priest as well as a judge, serving in the tabernacle at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:9). His last years were spent as a mentor to young Samuel, who grew to be one of the all-time great characters of Bible history. Eli's death reflected his character, too: news that the ark of the covenant had been captured by the Philistines made him fall off his seat, and he broke his neck and died (1 Sam. 4:18).

Eli's sons were another story. They "were worthless men; they did not know the LORD" (2 Sam. 2:12). They acted as though the priesthood existed for their benefit. Instead of limiting themselves to the prescribed priestly portion of a sacrifice, the breast and right thigh (Lev. 7:28-34), they took whatever their fork would hold. And they had no qualms about taking the LORD's portion, the fat (Lev. 3:3-5). They used the priesthood to make themselves fat!

Hophni and Phinehas were as brazen as any priests in history. They threatened anyone who challenged them. They even went so far as to commit fornication with the women who served at the tabernacle (1 Sam. 2:22).

Old Eli rebuked his rebellious sons (1 Sam. 2:22-25). He warned them that they were not only sinning themselves, they were leading others to sin, too. But his rebuke fell on deaf ears. God revealed to Samuel that the day would come when He would cut off Eli's house from priestly service. He explained, "I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves, and he did not rebuke them" (1 Sam. 3:13).

How could God say Eli did not rebuke his sons when the text records his rebuke? The answer is obvious: Eli did not do enough. The word rendered rebuke literally means to be dim. We might say that Eli did not sufficiently take "a dim view" of what his sons were doing. Yes, he reprimanded them, but when they did not repent he left them in office (Most translations use the term restrain). Actually, what Hophni and Phinehas did deserved death. God accused Eli of honoring them above Him (2:29).

Personal devotion to God and a good example are musts if we are to bring up our children in the way of the Lord. But more is needed. Persistent misbehavior calls for corrective discipline. Hopefully, a rebuke or mild punishment will suffice. When it does not, God clearly expects us to do whatever is necessary. May He bless us with wisdom and courage.

SWORD TIPS #1716 (JUNE 6, 2019)

"For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil." (Romans 13:4, NKJV)

Today marks the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Allied invasion of Europe on the beaches of Normandy, France. Their goal was to liberate a continent captured in the grip of Nazism. Their success continues to be felt to this present hour. As we honor the sacrifices of that day and the freedom it signaled for millions of souls, we ought to remember it is God who ordains civil authorities. The governments of men are intended by Him to execute justice, and to apply punishment (wrath) to evildoers. Therefore, we are to submit to governing authorities out of our respect for God (Rom. 13:1-3). They are God's servants for us to administer what is good. But, what happens when governments before evil and oppressive? Since God rules the nations, He raises them up and He brings them down when their rulers and their citizens refuse righteousness (Prov. 14:34; Dan. 4:28-35). We must keep on doing good and not take personal vengeance against evil. Instead, we are to give place to the wrath of God: *"for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord"* (Rom. 12:17-19). He did. And, He continues to do so. Let the righteous be patient, and *"overcome evil with good"* (Rom. 12:20-21).

The Truth about Capital Punishment

Don Martin

The subject of capital punishment or the death penalty is often an emotionally charged subject. Much of the religious opposition to the death penalty is based on the argument that capital punishment is not pleasing to God and is itself murder. The burden of this material is to establish the truth of the Bible on this controversial subject.

The nature of God. It is contended by the opposers of the right of civil government to take the life of one convicted of capital offence that God is love. God does love man, all men (Jn. 3:16). In fact, not only does God love man, but God himself is love (1 Jn. 4:8). However, does love preclude God from being strict and just? Man seems to forget or deny the harmonious duality of the nature of God: *"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God..."* (Rom. 11:22). The writer of Hebrews is motivating those to whom he wrote (by implication, Christians today) to not forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25). He warns of the *"fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"* (those who disobey God, vs. 27). He then cites

those who despised Moses' Law, *"died without mercy under two or three witnesses"* (vs. 28). Arguing from the lesser to the greater, he then shows how those who disobey Christ shall have *"sorer punishment"* (vs. 29). He concludes by enunciating, *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (vs. 31). The God of the New Testament is the same God of the Hebrew Scriptures who himself on many occasions exercised capital punishment (Numb. 25:1-9, 1 Cor. 10:8).

The origin of capital punishment. To hear many today talk about how horrible and inhumane the death penalty is you would think it surely originated with some barbaric, savage people or tyrant. *"Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,"* God says, *"for in the image of God made he man"* (Gen. 9:6). God is the author of capital punishment. Any man who commits murder (*"sheddeth man's blood"*), man is authorized to take his life. The New Testament makes it plain regarding civil government's right to take the life of the offender (Rom. 13:1 ff., more later).

Capital punishment viewed under the three dispensations. There are three dispensations generally recognized in the Bible: Patriarchal (Gen. 3 - Ex. 20), Mosaic (Ex. 20 - Acts 2), and the age of the Gospel (Acts 2 - judgment). We have already seen that God instituted the death penalty under or during the Patriarchal Age (Gen. 9:6). Notice why the murderer's life is to be taken: *"...for in the image of God made he man."* Hence, the reason for the introduction of the death penalty was not dispensational.

The Mosaic Age is explicit in its teaching regarding the death penalty. Commandment number six (of the Ten Commandments) was, *"Thou shalt not kill"* (Ex. 20:13). The *"kill"* is murder (see *New King James Version*). The punishment for murder was, *"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death"* (Ex. 21:12). There were about eight capital offences under the Mosaic system which demanded the death penalty (see Ex. 21:15, 16, 17, 22:18, 19, 20). Of course, the Mosaic system was a theocracy, a combination of the spiritual and state.

The death penalty is also taught in the final age, the New Testament. Paul plainly teaches the right of civil government to exist and to demand subjection (Rom. 13:1-7, see Acts 5:29 as to exceptions). Regarding the executioner for the state he wrote, *"For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain..."* (vs. 4). The sword is emblematic of capital punishment. Paul himself was freely willing to subject himself to the death penalty, were he guilty of capital offence (Acts 25:11).

In conclusion, this material does not address due process of law, what evidence should be recognized, and what should today constitute capital offences. However, the Bible incontrovertibly teaches the death penalty. *"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily,"* the Bible says, *"therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"* (Eccl. 8:11). Alas, we are seeing the truth stated in Ecclesiastes 8:11 illustrated on every hand today.