**Deserving of Death**

**Introduction:**

A new governor of Judea is appointed by the name of Festus. Certain high-ranking Jews inform him against Paul. He tells them to come back to Caesarea to accuse Paul in a formal setting. They lay several serious charges against Paul which they couldn’t prove. Paul’s reply includes a statement worthy of consideration. Read the first half of Acts 25:11. Paul here acknowledges the right of civil authorities [primarily the Roman government in this context] to exercise capital punishment. Certain crimes are worthy of death. This statement was made during our dispensation, the gospel age.

**Text:** Acts 25:11 “For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.” NKJV

**Body:**

1. **Capital Punishment in the Old Testament**
2. **Instituted by God Himself** (Genesis 9:5-6) “Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.” NKJV In the “Patriarchal Period,” recall that the Flood is an example of God executing capital punishment (Genesis 6)
3. **Made A Part of the Law of Moses** (Exodus 21:12, 14) “He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 14 But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.” NKJV Under the Law of Moses several acts were worthy of death.
4. Murder (Exodus 21:14) “But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.” NKJV
5. Being disobedient and rebellious to parents (Exodus 21:15, 17) “And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. 17 And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.” NKJV
6. Kidnapping and selling of people (Exodus 21:16) “He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.” NKJV
7. Causing premature birth with resulting loss of life of either mother or child (Exodus 21:22-23) “If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life.” NKJV
8. Not controlling your livestock (Exodus 21:28-29) “If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be acquitted. But if the ox tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death.” NKJV
9. Practicing witch craft (Exodus 22:18) “You shall not permit a sorceress to live.” NKJV (Leviticus 20:27) “A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them.” NKJV
10. Sexual acts with animals (Exodus 22:19) “Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.” NKJV
11. Worshipping other gods (Exodus 22:20) “He who sacrifices to any god, except to the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed.” NKJV
12. Adultery (Leviticus 20:10) “The man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death.” NKJV
13. Incest (Leviticus 20:11-12) “The man who lies with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood shall be upon them.” NKJV
14. Sodomy – homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13) “If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them.” NKJV
15. Blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16) “And whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the Lord, he shall be put to death.” NKJV
16. Teaching false doctrines (Deuteronomy 13:5-10) “But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the Lord your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst. If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” NKJV

Regarding teaching false doctrines: Imagine if that was still practiced today! During both the Patriarchal and Mosaical period, God told His people to practice capital punishment.

1. **Capital Punishment in the New Testament**
2. Paul, in Acts 25, clearly implies there are crimes or acts worthy of death. This happens many years after the Law of Moses was nailed to cross.
3. Romans 12:17-19 “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine. I will repay.’ Says the Lord.” NKJV

God clearly teaches here that we are not to practice vengeance. Why? Vengeance belongs to God. But is this just a New Testament teaching? NO. Read Deuteronomy 32:35. “Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.” NKJV God has promised to repay those who do evil. One way He does that is through civil government.

1. Romans 13:1-5 “Let every soul be subject in the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 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. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience sake.” NKJV This section immediately follows verses dealing with God repaying evil doers. Civil authorities are appointed by God. He has set up governments to protect society and keep order. Our text in Verse 4 says civil rulers are God’s ministers. They do not bear the sword in vain. Civil authority is an avenger for God. The sword in the 1st Century was a symbol for execution or capital punishment. The use here is to speak of governments’ power to take human life as a way to punish evil and maintain order. (Ecclesiastes 8:11) “Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.” NKJV The equivalent of the sword today would be the electric chair, lethal injection . . . So God through the apostle Paul teaches us that capital punishment is still to be used in our day.
2. **Objections to Capital Punishment**

Many object to capital punishment on the basis of Exodus 20:13. “Thou shalt not kill.” [“You shall not murder.” NKJV] We know He is not including all types of killing because Jehovah then commands His people to kill those who violate this command!!! (Exodus 21:12) “He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death.” NKJV

But what would the command “Thou shalt not kill” or “murder” include?

1. Intentional murder, premeditated, planned
2. Abortion Those guilty of abortion: Judges throughout America, lawmakers, government officials, doctors
3. Slowly killing yourself through bad habits or lifestyles: Drinking, drugs of any kind, homosexual behavior. . .

**Closing:**

While capital punishment is a deterrent to us here on earth, God’s Word warns of an eternal punishment. (Romans 2:5-9) “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.” NKJV

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Lesson 53 Acts 25:11