



THOU SHALL NOT KILL

CAPITAL
PUNISHMENT & THE
WAR QUESTION



Hebrew *harag* “to kill, slay” 158 times in Old Testament

- Murder (Ge 4:8)
- Execution (2 Sa 4:10)
- Animals killing humans (2 Ki 17:25)
- Humans killing animals (Is 22:13)
- Killing in war (Je 18:21)
- God killing plants (Ps 78:47)
- Ruler destroying his land (Is 14:20)

Hebrew *ratsach* “to murder, slay” 40 times in Old Testament

- Refers to a human killing a human
- Premeditated murder (Ju 20:4)
- Accidental manslaughter (Nu 35:11)
- Execution (De 19:6)
- “Thou shall not kill.” (Ex 20:13)
- NEVER used of killing in war
- Eqv. To Greek *phoneuo* (Mt 5:21)

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT COMMANDED BY JEHOVAH GOD

- Execution of murderers is commanded (Nu 35:30)
- The accused has the right to trial (Nu 35:12)
- More than 1 witness is needed to establish guilt (Nu 35:30)
- Alternate punishments for murder are not acceptable (Nu 35:31)
- Executed murderers are not to be pitied (De 19:13)

ACCIDENTAL MANSLAUGHTER

- Not punishable by execution (De 19:4-6)
- Not a premeditated sin involving hate (De 19:10)

UNDERSTANDING EXODUS 20:13

- Refers to murder
- Does not include capital punishment
- Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy parts of same LAW
- God does not contradict himself (1 Co 14:33)
- Numbers 35 and Deuteronomy 19 make the meaning of Exodus 20:13 crystal clear

NOT ALL KILLING (*HARAG*) IS SIN

- God commanded Israelites to kill (Ex 32:27).
- God does not command people to sin (Ja 1:13).
- God killed (Ex 22:24).
- God does not sin (1 Jn 1:5).

KILLING ALLOWED BY GOD

- Hunting (Ge 9:1-4)
- Capital Punishment (Ge 9:5-6; Ro 13:1-4)
- Warfare

WARFARE

- Warfare used as an example of faith (He 11:34)
- Spiritual struggle compared to warfare (2 Co 10:4; 1 Ti 1:18)
- Soldiers deserve wages for going to war (1 Co 9:7-9)
- Soldiers to please those by whom they are enlisted (2 Ti 2:4)
- Soldiers to be content with their wages and not abuse their power (Lu 3:14)
- Cornelius not required to quit being a centurion to be saved (Ac 10:48)
- Killing is always murder if motivated by HATE (De 19:11)

CONSEQUENCES OF INCORRECTLY EQUATING *RATSACH* WITH *HARAG*

- God would be a murderer.
- God would be a hypocrite.
- God would be an author of confusion.
- Killing plants or animals would be sinful.
- Killing in war would be sinful.
- Capital punishment would be sinful.
- If one of the above is true, ALL are true.

CONCLUSION

- This is not a matter of indifference.
- This is a matter of doctrine.
- It is NOT impossible for Christians to understand the “war question” alike.
- Governments are responsible for capital punishment of murderers.
- God’s word clearly condemns murder, clearly sanctions killing in battle, and clearly DEMANDS capital punishment.