

Doctrine of Murder

The following observations cover the essential facts concerning the biblical teachings about murder.

A person who murders another must die because he has destroyed God's image in another man. Gen 9:6

Gen 9:6 "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Human government has the right to exact the death penalty.
Rom 13:1-4

Rom 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Rom 13:2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

Rom 13:3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

Rom 13:4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Premeditated murder must be distinguished from the unintentional slaying of a man ... The murderer must be provided no refuge. Exo 21:12-14

Exo 21:12 "Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death.

Exo 21:13 However, if he does not do it intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.

Exo 21:14 But if a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from my altar and put him to death.

The unintentional slayer of a man, however, may flee to one of the cities of refuge provided for him. Jos 20:1-9

Jos 20:1 Then the LORD said to Joshua:

Jos 20:2 "Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses,

Jos 20:3 so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood.

Jos 20:4 "When he flees to one of these cities, he is to stand in the entrance of the city gate and state his case before the elders of that city. Then they are to admit him into their city and give him a place to live with them.

Jos 20:5 If the avenger of blood pursues him, they must not surrender the one accused, because he killed his neighbor unintentionally and without malice aforethought.

Jos 20:6 He is to stay in that city until he has stood trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time. Then he may go back to his own home in the town from which he fled ...

Jos 20:9 Any of the Israelites or any alien living among them who killed someone accidentally could flee to these designated cities and not be killed by the avenger of blood prior to standing trial before the assembly.

The killing of an enemy in war does not constitute murder. The sixth commandment does not prohibit war. Exo 20:13

Exo 20:13 "You shall not murder.

A nation has the right to defend itself against aggressors. God commanded Israel to fight righteous wars. Exo 17:8-16 and 1Sa 7:3-13

Exo 17:8 The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim.

Exo 17:9 Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

Exo 17:10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill.

Exo 17:11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning.

Exo 17:12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up-- one on one side, one on the other-- so that his hands remained steady till sunset.

Exo 17:13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

Exo 17:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

Exo 17:15 Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner.

Exo 17:16 He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

1Sa 7:3 And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

1Sa 7:4 So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

1Sa 7:5 Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah and I will intercede with the LORD for you."

1Sa 7:6 When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel was leader of Israel at Mizpah.

1Sa 7:7 When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. And when the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines.

1Sa 7:8 They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines."

1Sa 7:9 Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

1Sa 7:10 While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.

1Sa 7:11 The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Car.

1Sa 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far has the LORD helped us."

1Sa 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israelite territory again. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines.

The Lord taught David how to fight. Psa 18:34-35 and 144:1-2

Psa 18:34 He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

Psa 18:35 You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great.

Psa 144:1 Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.

Psa 144:2 He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

The killing of a man in self-defense or if he is stealing property does not constitute murder. Exo 22:2 and 2Sa 2:19-23

Exo 22:2 If a thief be found breaking into your home, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.

2Sa 2:19 He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him.

2Sa 2:20 Abner looked behind him and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?" "It is," he answered.

2Sa 2:21 Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel would not stop chasing him.

2Sa 2:22 Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?"

2Sa 2:23 But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

A man is a murderer when his animal, known to be vicious, kills a person. However, the death penalty may be commuted by the payment of a fine. Exo 21:29-32

Exo 21:29 If, however, the bull has had the habit of goring and the owner has been warned but has not kept it penned up and it kills a man or woman, the bull must be stoned and the owner also must be put to death.

Exo 21:30 However, if payment is demanded of him, he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded.

Exo 21:31 This law also applies if the bull gores a son or daughter.

Exo 21:32 If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.

A murderer's guilt does not involve his children unless they knowingly and willingly participate in the same crime. Deu 24:16

Deu 24:16 Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin.

A nation can become guilty of corporate murder. The death of Jesus Christ at the hands of the Jewish leaders made the Jewish people of that generation murderers. Acts 2:23,36 and 7:52-53

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Acts 7:52 Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him--

Acts 7:53 you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."

Satan is the original murderer. Man's kinship with Satan makes every man who possesses a spirit of hatred an actual ... murderer. Mat 5:21-22 and Joh 8:44

Mat 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

Mat 5:22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca (empty head),' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool (stupid one)!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Joh 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.