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## *Universal Laws: Murder*

In a discussion of God's universal laws that were given to the family of man, murder and the consequence for it stands as one of the most profound and controversial in light of current attitudes. Most of us know the story of the first murder very well. Abel obeyed God and offered a proper sacrifice (**Gen 4.4, Heb 11.4**) while his brother Cain offered that which was not acceptable to the Lord. When asked about this the Lord told Cain that he too could be accepted if he did well (**Gen 4.7**). Instead of changing his own way of thinking, Cain destroyed his brother. The consequence for this was that he was to be separated from men becoming a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth (**Gen 4.11-12**). Cain, fearing that this was too harsh a punishment expressed concern that someone might find and kill him for what he had done. God stated, ***"Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him."*** (**Gen 4.15**). This reveals much about the mentality of Cain. His fear of meeting the same fate he dealt to his brother. His unwillingness to live with the harsh consequences for his actions. His concern for his own wellbeing over anything else. A typical criminal profile. The world at this time was very different from the one that we live in. Man had access to God and spoke with him directly. This was to continue later but in an apparently changed manner. As the evil of the world increased it was marked by violence (**Gen 6.5-7**) to the extent that God regretted creating man and decided to bring destruction by means of the flood. After the cleansing of the world, God spoke with Noah and his family, restating former commands, or laws, and providing new detail on others. One of these was the prohibition against murder. Note the nature of the command. ***"And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."*** (**Gen 9.5-6**). Notice the taking of life by human or animal

is prohibited. An aspect of this that is not taken into consideration today is that the life of a human murderer is required because of the significance of man in the creation. David writes, ***"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas."*** (**Psm 8.4-8**). Notice that the argument that this is a deterrent for future murders is not expressed here. God plainly declares the sanctity of human life and the fact that no one has the right to end a life, by any means, without consequence. That involves all human life as even the unborn in the scriptures are referred to in human terms (**Job 3.16**). This consequence is of course of no significance without the means to enforce it. Paul, speaking of the need to respect secular power, states, ***"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: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."*** (**Rom 13.4**). The secular powers are the instrument in the physical world through which God expects the order of society to be maintained. In the history of the world, when societies become affluent and depart from strong moral principles, fornication, divorce, murder and other crimes rise to the point that a culture ceases to exist. You can look to history to prove that. God's plan was one for stability and preservation and capital punishment is part of that.

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