

Why Capital Punishment, but Not Abortion?

By Whit Sasser

Many feel that those who are anti-abortion and pro-capital punishment are grossly inconsistent. But is that true? An explanation is found in the matters of guilt or innocence and the "sword" of the government. First let us consider the matter of guilt or innocence. Does it make a difference whether a person is innocent or guilty, as to the justification of being put to death? The thief on the cross thought so (Luke 23:39-41). One of the seven things that are an abomination to God is the shedding of innocent blood (Proverbs 6:17).

of the sword in execution that is not vain. As the thief indicated, they were getting what they deserved because of their crime. Even the apostle Paul said, that death for a proven crime was acceptable in Acts 25:11. Romans 13:3-4 teaches that the civil government is executing wrath with a sword on evildoers as a minister of God. In other words, it is God's ordained place for them to punish, even capitally, the wrong-doer with a "sword" of vengeance. So, the slaughter of the innocents (abortion) is a thing God abhors, while the putting to death of criminals by the civil government, is not only permitted, it is one of their God-given purposes for existing.

Capital punishment is not forbidden by God in the commandment not to kill. It is similar to the issue of corporal punishment of children. Some see the spanking of a child as abusive and a violation of the instruction of God against striking another person. But, not so! The same Bible that says one, says the other and there is no contradiction. And so it is with capital punishment...the Bible law against killing another is the condemnation of either, 1) putting to death the innocent, or 2) taking the law into your own hands and slaying even a guilty person. Both of these are murder, whereas the civil power's use of execution as a means of punishing a crime, is not. ~

On the other hand, there is a use

NAVARRE MESSENGER

Volume 5 Issue 7

February 14, 2010

Last Will and Testament



A feature of common law has come down to us from as early as the Hebrew nation through the Grecian and Roman empires. A man may make a statement concerning the disposition of his estate after death, but such a statement is not of force until there has been the death of him who made it. While living he has the right to do as he wills with his estate, no matter what his statement may have said. This statement is called his last will and testament. Even though it is so called, he may make another, and if it can be shown that there is a later one the former is superseded. This is described as characteristic of what is commonly referred to as the New Testament.

him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. "(Hebrews 9:16-17).

"For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of

While he was upon the earth Je-

sus had the power to forgive sins. Since the New Testament had not been made effective by his death, he could make any conditions he chose, or could make forgiveness without conditions, without the necessity of abiding by the conditions of his will which would later be effective.

"Son, which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins..." (Matt. 9:2-6).

People fail to see this point which is made so clear in Hebrews. When we are striving to impress upon people the necessity of obeying the will of Christ in being baptized in order for God to for-

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Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM
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give their sins, they will respond that Jesus forgave this man without his having to be baptized and that he can forgive them in the same manner. They must be made to realize that the New Testament did not avail while he that made it was alive on earth, but that now it has been made effective by the death on the cross. While he was upon the earth he could command his disciples to "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matt. 10:5, 6).

But the New Testament, which has become effective by reason of his death, positively removes such exclusiveness: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." (Matt. 28:19). This feature is further emphasized by Peter:

"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him." (Acts 10:34,35).

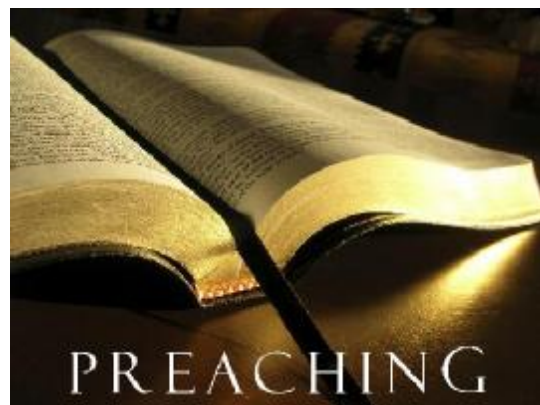
The man today can as easily exclude the Gentiles from the gospel as he can teach that a man can be forgiven on the same terms which the Lord used while he was on the earth. Men must learn that now the will of the Lord is in effect and that its conditions must be met in order to obtain the promises.

The most effective misapplication made by people today in this matter is the use of the thief on the cross as proof that they do not have to be baptized to be forgiven of their sins. When the Lord said to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:42) Jesus had not yet died, making the

New Testament effective. He could forgive this man's sins just as he did with the palsied man to which reference has already been made.

We are not saved under the same conditions as the palsied man or as the thief on the cross. He could do as he chose with his powers while he was alive on the earth. But now that his will is become effective by his death, it avails and we will have to be content with and abide by its terms and conditions. It is by this "will we have been sanctified" (Heb. 10:10), and not by the ordinances of the Old Testament, nor by the words of Jesus to the palsied and the thief, nor by his temporary commission to the Israelites only. So much misunderstanding comes from so much failure to handle aright the word of truth. ~

by Robert C. Welch



Gospel Meeting in Pensacola

There is a new preacher in town in Pensacola, Bryan Nash, who now works with the congregation at Myrtle Grove church of Christ. He will be presenting a short Gospel Meeting series at the Northside church of Christ.

Dates and subjects:

Thursday, February 18—"Soil the Sash" (Jeremiah 13)
 Friday, February 19—"Break the Bottle" (Jeremiah 19)
 Saturday, February 20—"Good Figs, Bad Figs" (Jeremiah 24)

The Northside building is at 4001 North 9th Avenue in Pensacola just north of Fairfield.

Curses!!!

By Steve Klein

Today we have experts and scholars on every subject imaginable - from global warming to cotton farming. Timothy Jay is expert on cursing. He's made quite a study of it, written two books about it, and talks about it often to his students at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts where he is a professor of psychology. Mr. Jay recently reported that swearing among adolescents and pre-teens in America is on the rise. He estimates that the average adolescent uses roughly 80 to 90 swear words a day.

Mr. Jay further observed that cursing is a behavior that is often learned in the home. "It starts as soon as they learn how to talk," he says. "At a young age, they're attentive to emotions. When you're swearing to be funny or when you're angry, that just draws them right to it." In a Gallup Youth Survey published in 2001, 46 percent of teens surveyed admitted to using profanity at least several times a week or daily, while 28 percent said they heard their parents cursing on a regular basis.

The experts also say that casual cuss words are often used as "fillers" when the speaker is having trouble expressing his or her self. P.M. Forni, author of *Choosing Civility: The 25 Rules of Considerate Conduct* observed that indeed "The profanities are the

fillers. They take the place of a more sophisticated way of speaking." My daddy used to say that when a man cussed he was just showing his own ignorance.

What is the cure for this cursing epidemic? The Bible suggests a number of remedies. If you are having trouble in this area, or know someone who is, why not try or recommend the following?

1. Keep your mouth shut. If you can't express yourself without saying a curse word, then just don't express yourself. "A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back." (Proverbs 29:11). "Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 21:23).

2. When you talk, talk less. The more words you speak, the more likely you are to say something you shouldn't -- using a curse word as "filler." "In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise" (Proverbs 10:19).

3. Think about how you want others to perceive you. It is a fact that the use of profanity makes a person seem less intelligent and more worldly. "Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace; when he shuts his lips, he is considered perceptive" (Proverbs 17:28).

4. Think about the example you are setting for others. People learn the use of language by

hearing others use it. Whether we're talking about the words that a child learns from parents, or the words children learn from each other at school, we pattern our speech after the examples set by others. This implies that each of us also serves as a pattern for the speech of others. Paul told Titus to show himself to be "a pattern of good works" using "sound speech that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:8).

5. Stay away from people and situations that make you angry and tempt you to lose control. "Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man do not go, lest you learn his ways and set a snare for your soul" (Proverbs 22:24-25).

6. Follow the example of Christ. Jesus didn't curse. Not because He didn't have opportunity to curse or because people never provoked Him. He had plenty of opportunity and provocation. But He "committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return" (1 Peter 2:22-23). In this, He left an example for us.

Can the plague of profanity in our culture be reversed? Perhaps. For that to happen, each individual Christian must determine to set the example! "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29). ~