

THE DEATH PENALTY

The death penalty is often viewed as a matter of personal opinion, but in reality it is a religious subject because God has revealed His will on this matter--

In Romans 13:1-4, Paul affirms that the government *does not bear the sword in vain* and is *God's minister, an avenger*. God intends for the government to maintain order and distinguish good from evil even when that requires the use of "the sword." God approves of the government killing certain evildoers.

On November 30, the Catholic's Pope Benedict, like his predecessor John Paul II, stated his hope for "a growing number of countries to eliminate the death penalty." The Catholic Pope wants to eliminate something that God has commanded. The apostle Paul approved of the death

penalty for offenses *worthy of death* (Acts 25:11). Clearly he was a Christian, not a Catholic.

The United Methodist Church plainly admits "We oppose capital punishment" (archives.umc.org).

Does your church teach that the death penalty is God's idea or does it reject God's teaching? God has not appointed His church to administer it, but we must teach *the whole counsel of God* and pray for leaders who fear the Lord, even when churches do not.

In This Issue:

- **The Death Penalty**
- **Questions Atheists Ask: Why Sickness?**
- **Christmas & Jesus' Birth: What's the Difference?**
- **Why Are There So Many Churches?**

Author & Editor: David Halbrook

QUESTIONS ATHEISTS ASK: WHY SICKNESS?

Sometimes atheists, who hear that the intricacies of the human body are evidence of God's existence, ask, "If God is the creator, why are there terrible diseases like cancer?"

Made by God from dust, man was not created as an indestructible machine. When God made man, He also made the Tree of Life (Gen. 3:7, 22). The need for the Tree of Life proves that God created man vulnerable to injury and illness. (Genesis 3 tells why we no longer have access to the Tree.)

Though God created man with weaknesses which could lead to death, He told us how to live and enjoy this temporary life (Eccl. 12:13). After allowing us to temporarily experience life with a body limited in certain ways, He planned to give us a body which will never decay or die. That body will be given on the resurrection and judgment day (Jn. 5:28-29; Eccl. 12:14). Sickness does not prevent you from knowing God. Do not use it as an excuse to avoid Him or truth (Rom. 1:20-21). We want to hear your comments and questions—contact us!

CHRISTMAS & JESUS' BIRTH: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Have you ever wondered why you can't read about "Christmas" in the Bible?

What is the difference between Christmas and Jesus' birth? Jesus' birth was planned by God (Galatians 4:4). Christmas was not. The event of Jesus' birth was recorded by writers guided by God. God guided no one to write about Christmas. Paul reminded the Roman Christians of Jesus' birth (Romans 1:3). He never taught them about Christmas. Christians and atheists alike can read about Jesus' birth in Scripture. Neither can read about Christmas in Scripture.

The "holy day" called Christmas is viewed as an annual festival of the church and here is the problem--who put the church in charge of creating annual holy days? Scripture equips the church for every good work but not for annual holy days-- just the first day of the week (2 Tim. 3:17; Mt. 28:1; Acts 20:7). Christmas' origin lies in human councils and decrees. If the Catholic Pope moved Christmas to August 25, some might ask "Who gave him that right?" The authority to change the day is the same as the authority to create the day: human councils. Open the Bible and learn of Jesus' birth and church--when you do, you will find no holy day called Christmas. For a more complete study of this subject, contact us or visit our website.

As I directed... so do you also... upon the first day of every week... (1 Cor. 16:1-2, New Am Standard)

You are invited to:
Sunday AM
Bible classes: 10:00AM
Sunday AM Worship:
10:45AM
Sunday PM Worship:
5:00 PM
Wednesday Bible
Classes & Worship:
7:00 PM

WHERE DID ALL THE CHURCHES COME FROM?

Have you wondered why there are many different kinds of churches and where they all came from?

In Scripture, all churches were the same "kind" of church, having the duty to teach and practice only what God revealed (1 Thess. 2:13). Paul taught the same message "everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17). The fact that today, the same message is not taught "everywhere in every church" proves that different messages now exist.

Paul knew this would happen and warned of new teachings and practices (read 1 Tim. 4:1-5). These changes ultimately produced new kinds of churches. Some of those churches no longer exist, some of them do.

On Wednesday evenings at 7PM, we are studying "Church History." This study began in the New Testament, when there was only one kind of church, and we saw what the church was originally taught to believe and practice. From there, we have surveyed the record of religious history, finding the origins and reasons for the existence of many modern churches. You are invited to join us and participate in this study. To see what we are studying this week, go to our website or contact us.

Questions from this month's articles:

1. The government is God's minister, an _____ to execute wrath on who?
2. Did God originally create the physical body with the ability to live forever, without any help?
3. How many holy days of the church can you read about in the Bible?
4. What new teachings did Paul warn of in 1 Timothy 4:1-5?

- * Mail your answers to church of Christ—Quail Valley 4104 East Harrison St, Batesville, AR 72501
- * OR, e-mail your answers to **TruthAndReason@suddenlink.net**
- * Do you have other Bible questions we can help you with? Write or call us (870 793-6700; 569-4491)
- * Visit our website **WWW.QVCOC.COM** for further study of these and other Bible subjects.