***The Conduct of All Humanity
RO21-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 3:10-18 once more. We are looking at the proof of Scripture which the apostle Paul gives us.

Everyone accused of a crime is faced with consequent punishment. Everyone who is threatened with such a punishment has a right to know the specific indictments which are being brought against him on which that punishment is based. All of humanity, we have seen, has fallen short of the glory of God. It has fallen short of the eternal, absolute standards of a righteous God. Therefore, there has been pronounced, upon everybody born into the human race, eternal punishment in the lake of fire. It is right for all humanity, therefore, to know the basis upon which this judgment has been passed against them.

So, the apostle Paul in this particular part of his letter to the Romans is quoting some Old Testament passages of Scripture in which there are 14 indictments made against the human race. These are actually statements of conviction which have brought everyone under the wrath of God, and thus they are destined for the lake of fire. These points are the basis upon which the unbeliever will be judged at the great white throne judgment. Paul closes his proof, that every person born into the race is under the wrath of God, with these proof texts from Old Testament Scripture.

**The Evil Character of Mankind**

The first series he quoted in Romans 3:10-12, which we have already looked at. In these verses, he was setting forth the evil character of mankind. Mankind, just by nature, has an evil character. He brought six indictments to declare; to demonstrate; and, to illustrate the nature of the character of mankind. He quotes these from Psalm 14:1-3. These first six indictments were:

1. **There is no one with Absolute Righteousness.**

Everyone has only relative righteousness – goodness compared to that of other people.

1. **There is no one that Possesses Divine Viewpoint Understanding.**

Everybody thinks Satan's thoughts. Everybody is occupied with human viewpoint.

1. **There is no one who (in himself and of himself) Seeks after God.**

The natural attitude of mankind is to ignore God.

1. **Everyone has Abandoned the Way of God**

Everyone is, by nature, negative to doctrine.

1. **Everyone has Become Useless**

Actually, he has become spiritually rotten, and thus useless. He is not in the plan of God.

1. **No one Produces Divine Good Works**

All of us, out of our own sin nature, can produce only the evil of human good.

**The Evil Conduct of Mankind**

Now the apostle Paul proceeds, in verse 13, where we pick it up now, to quote a series of Old Testament passages that illustrate the evil conduct of humanity. He has illustrated the evil character in these first six indictments. Now he proceeds to describe the conduct which is consequent to such character.

1. **Their Throat is an Open Sepulcher**

So verse 13 says, "Their throat is an open sepulcher.” "There," of course, refers to the unbelievers that Paul has declared to be under the power of the old sin nature, and thus doomed. The word "throat" here is the Greek word "larugx." Obviously, you can see that this is where we get our English word "larynx." The Greek word here simply means "human speech." When it speaks about the throat (the "larugx"), it is referring to the use for which that larynx is made, and that is to produce speech.

So, he says, "Their speech is an open grave." The word "open" is "anoigo." This is actually a verb in the Greek text, but it is used as an adjective. It is describing the kind of throat they have, and he describes it as being comparable to an open grave. The word "anoigo" is in the perfect tense, which means that here is a condition that has existed from the past, and it continues on to the present. When a person is born into the human race, he has this condition about his speech because of the old sin nature, and it continues through his life. This is in the passive voice which indicates that this is something that happens to everybody. No one becomes this way. He is helplessly involved in having this kind of speech. It is participle, which indicates a spiritual principle being stated.

So, what this word "open" is equal to is an adjective to describe the word "sepulcher." The word "sepulcher" in the Greek is "taphos," and it simply means a tomb. So, we would translate this as: "Having been an open tomb." We would say, "Their throat is an open grave." So, in other words, the speech of unbelievers has the stench of a body which is decaying in the grave. That is the idea. God is saying that one thing you'll find out about people is that when they talk, their talk is vile. Their talk is of such an evil nature that, in the sight of God, it stinks. It's putrid. It's like a decaying body in a tomb. The natural unsaved man has a terrific case of spiritual halitosis when it comes to his speech.

Remember that while all these things were once true of us, and that all these things can be changed now that we are believers, it is also true that they can continue being the case with us, even though we are believers. It is not unusual to find Christians who have a bad case of spiritual halitosis when it comes to their speech and the kind of speech that they engage in.

So, summary number seven declares this point: "Their throat is like an open grave." Their talk is dirty and foul, and all of humanity is under this cloud – that their talk is dirty and foul.

1. **They have used Deceit**

Indictment number eight says, "With their tongues, they have used deceit." The word "tongues" is the Greek word "glossa." In this case (in this passage), it simply means the organ of speech. It does mean actually your tongue. You can see we get our English word "glossary" from this Greek word "glossa," which means a list of words. In the Greek, it's with what we call the instrumental case, so the idea is "by means of the tongue." Here again, the character of humanity of being evil is demonstrated by an outward action which uses the tongue to produce it. What did they do with it?

Well, with that tongue they have used deceit. The Greek word for "used deceit" is the verb ""dolioo." "Dolioo" means "to tell lies." So, it is the practice of humanity to use the tongue to deceive – to say that which is not true. Please remember that sometimes it is possible to give the facts without telling the truth. So, do not hide behind that cute little ploy which also comes out of the old sin nature. I have heard many, many times people who gave me the facts. A disobedient student or a disobedient child is very prone to do this. He can actually give you the facts, but he can be telling you a lie. He can be deceiving you by the way he tells you the facts. So, he can say, "I've given you the actual true facts," but he gives them to us in such a way that they are so slanted; they are so presented; there is such an intonation in the voice; and, there is such a suggestion on the expression of the face, that he is conveying to you a falsehood while telling you the actual facts. This is characteristic of human speech – to be deceitful in this way; that is, to lie.

This is in the imperfect tense. Imperfect tense in Greek means that it has been done repeatedly in the past. It is a habit. It is a way of life. It is active voice which indicates that the person has a choice to whether he's going to tell lies or not (whether he's going to deceive or not), and he chooses to do so. Indicative indicates that we have a statement of fact.

So, they use this quality of human speech, which God has given to us, to con others so that we cannot trust their words. This violates the essence of God, for God is veracity. God is true, and we are not. By verbal manipulation, we seek to con people. You cannot trust the words of an unbeliever. He will lie to you many times. You cannot trust the word of Christians either. They will act in the same way.

So, the summary statement here is: "Their tongues are used to deceive" in one way or another. The cloud under which all humanity finds itself is that all are liars.

1. **The Poison of Asps is Under their Lips**

Indictment number nine says, "The poison of asps is under their lips. Let's take the first word "poison" which is the Greek word "ios." "Ios" is just that: it is poison. It is something that will destroy living tissue. It connotes something destructive. Words can be used to destroy something that is alive: the character of people; the lives of people; slandering people; and, conning people. And the kind of poison is very terrible. That is characteristic of the unbelievers. It is described as being the poison of asps. The Greek word is "aspis." This refers to the Egyptian cobra, one of the deadliest of all the cobras. This is a very deadly thing. So, God the Holy Spirit compares the speech of men (the speech of humanity), in its natural unregenerate state, to the most deadly kind of snake imaginable, the Egyptian cobra.

This speech is "under," and the word "under" is the Greek word "hupo." Here it connotes the idea of "subject to" – this poison subject to their lips. The word "lips" is "cheilos." "Cheilos" simply means the organ of speech (the mouth), when they refer to the lips.

So, the analogy here is to a snake's venom, which is in the sacs in his mouth, and the fangs are behind his lips. So, when he opens his mouth, you are facing the fangs, which will be the channel to conduct the poison out of the sacs which are in his mouth. And the old sin nature reveals that the unbeliever's mouth is full of this kind of verbal poison which he shoots out when he opens his mouth, as a snake shoots out when it opens its mouth.

No amount of culture, and no amount of education, can change this in an unbeliever. All that culture and education can do is to disguise the fact that the mouth of an unbeliever is like the mouth of a deadly cobra. And his speech is destructive. So, be aware of this danger when you deal with the unbeliever. His speech is deadly. It can hurt you. Take steps to defend yourself accordingly.

The summary statement number 9 is: "Their speech is like a cobra's venom." All of humanity lies under the dark cloud that all use their mouths to destroy their victims. If you become the victim, you will be destroyed. Their speech is like a cobra's venom. It’s deadly.

1. **Their Mouths are Full of Evil and Hatred**

Beginning at verse 14, the apostle Paul begins quoting from Psalm 10:7. This verse says, "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." "Whose," of course, refers to unbelievers. That's what we're talking about here. "Mouth" is the "stoma." Here it means the mouth in terms of being the organ of speech. The mouth "is full." The Greek word is "gemo." "Gemo" means not just full, but it means to be heavily laden with something. In the New Testament, this word is pretty regularly used to denote being heavily laden with evil. This is the word which was used by the Greeks often to describe a ship that set low in the water because it was so heavily laden with the cargo. So, God the Holy Spirit uses this Greek verb "gemo" which connotes this idea of just being loaded down heavily. It's not just a trace of it. It's not just a sometime thing. But it is satiated with this particular quality. And what is that?

First of all, it is: "cursing," which is the word "ara." That means to call evil down upon somebody. Have you ever said, "I wish you'd die?" Have you ever said, "Drop dead?" These are calling curses down upon a person.

The other thing that is characteristic of this mouth is bitterness, which is "pikria," which is a hateful mental attitude which is expressed outwardly. So, this indicates a short-tempered personality. This is somebody who is the kind that demands his rights. It is bitterness in the soul that is just waiting to do verbal injury to someone. It is a quality of bitterness. That's what the Bible warns us against – to be careful that a root of bitterness does not spring up within us so that we destroy ourselves with it. This is the thing that is characteristic of the unbeliever's mouth (his "stoma") – that it's heavily laden with calling down vengeance of one kind and another on a person, and expressing hatreds of one kind and another toward that person, using communication as a weapon of evil.

So, the summary number ten is that: "Their mouths are full of calling down evil and of hatred." All of humanity stands under the cloud that they all wish evil upon others, and they express their hatreds toward others verbally. Their mouths are full of foul language and hatreds.

**The Evil Use of Speech**

The evil use of speech that all of these passages have been describing may be summarized in a few points:

* 1. **The Tongue is a Source of Great Evil**

The Bible teaches us that the human tongue, under the old sin nature control, is a source of very great evil. We find this in Psalm 34:13; Psalm 52:2; and, James 3:6. The tongue is a source of great evil. Probably no other member of your body (no other physical organ of your body) is the direct instrument of greater evil than the tongue itself, and the capacity for human communication (the capacity for speech). That's why a book like James makes such a big emphasis upon getting ourselves to the point of spiritual maturity where we can control the tongue. That's why James says, "Your tongue is like a small match." It looks like a very modest, insignificant part of the body, but it is the one thing, like a small match, that you can take, and you can ignite a monumental conflagration, so that a whole forest can be burned down from one simple little stick match. That is no insignificant analogy that God the Holy Spirit led James to use to compare our tongues to a match which could start a fire and destroy a whole forest. The results of what we do with our tongue are greater than perhaps anything else that we can do with any other part of the body.

So, the human tongue under the sin nature control is a source of great evil.

* 1. **Evil Speech is Among the Sins that God Hates the Most**

Of the seven sins that God says that He hates the most, three of these involve the tongue. You may read of these in Proverbs 6:17 and Proverbs 6:19. Three out of seven are sins that are the result of the tongue that God despises above all else.

* 1. **Flattery**

One evil use of the tongue is flattery (Psalm 5:9). Flattery is something which is not true. It is insincere. It is telling you a lie in order to make you feel better. It is insincere; not true; and, a source of evil.

* 1. **God Protects Believers from Evil Tongues**

God protects the believer from being victimized by an evil tongue (Job 5:21). You may trust the Lord to deal with you in protecting you against the evil cobra-like tongue of some antagonist. We should look to the Lord for protection against the tongue. What you will be tempted to do is to turn around and to strike back with your tongue. What you'll be tempted to do is to turn around and become just as evil with your tongue as is the person who is striking against you. That is terrible. That is the very thing that we have to seek to avoid.

* 1. **Control of the Tongue is a Sign of Spiritual Maturity**

Control of the tongue is a sign of spiritual maturity. If you can control your tongue, James says that that indicates that you have really moved on up toward a mature spiritual structure within your soul.

* 1. **Don't use the Tongue to Attack other Believers**

Christians should not permit the old sin nature to use the tongue to attack other Christians (James 4:11, James 5:9). This does not mean that sometimes other Christians are out of line and we have to say so. This does not mean that when Christians are practicing what is evil, that we are not to say that that is the case. We obviously have several examples in the Scriptures where men like the apostle Paul did exactly that. They pointed out where Christians were doing evil. The apostle Paul did not hesitate to say: "Demas used to be a faithful member of the team, and was highly esteemed by us. Now Demas has fallen into spiritual insanity. He's been caught up in a love for the world, and he has deserted his treasures in heaven for a temporary treasure."

Paul did not hesitate to warn people about a man named Alexander the Coppersmith, who had done great injury to the leaders of the Christian church.

He didn't hesitate even to record that he had to confront the apostle Peter for legalisms that he should have known better than to be guilty of. So, Peter, because of the pressures put upon him by Jews, would not eat with gentiles.

The Bible is clear that when Christians are wrong, we do not ignore. We point out that it is wrong, but we don't exercise vengeance against them. That's up to the Lord. It's God's business to deal with those Christians. We make our statement, and then we commit them to the Lord, and the Lord deals in His own wisdom and judgment. So, we should not permit the sin nature within us to take our tongues to attack Christians in an improper way.

* 1. **Avoid Useless and Senseless Discussions about the Bible**

Christians should avoid using their tongues in useless and senseless discussions about the Bible with others. 2 Timothy 2:14-17 very specifically warns us not to carry on Bible discussions with people who are out of line with sound doctrine. You may make your declaration; they may make an inquiry; and, you may make your statement, but you have to know that there is a time when you no longer discuss the Bible with certain people.

If certain people are going to go into doctrinal error, or if they're going to go off into the goony lands, sometimes it's very hard even to know how to take up a discussion like that. How do you even take hold of something that somebody is saying? They get way out, and they come up with some great insight that's just weird and way out and way out, and you could get yourself involved with saying, "Now I have to think this through. I have to analyze this. I have to see if I can penetrate this and come up with an answer." No, you don't. Don't waste your time. Don't waste your capacity. You better decide whether the ticking of your watch, indicating the time of your life that is being used up in pursuing these goofy ideas about doctrine, is worth the investment of your life. Most of the time they are not. So, Christians should recognize that they should not use their tongues in a useless and senseless discussion about the Bible with others. This is an evil use of speech when you do it.

* 1. **Avoid those who Create Divisions under False Pretenses**

Christians should avoid those who use the tongue to create divisions in a local church under the excuse of championing sound doctrine. Romans 16:17-18 severely condemns that practice. When you find somebody who's using the tongue to create divisions over doctrine, then avoid them.

That does not mean that, within a local church: you have studied the Bible; you have considered the arguments on a certain point; and, you come up with a conclusion that this is true, and you have to keep quiet about it. It may even be a conclusion that's different than what is in the doctrinal statement of the church. There's nothing illegitimate for you to stand up and say, "It is my opinion that this and this and thus is so – and that's it. And you can still carry on. It doesn't matter to me whether you believe in limited atonement or unlimited atonement. It doesn't matter whether you believe that Jesus Christ died for the sins of all the world, even for those who rejected Him, as 2 Peter 2:1 says; or, whether you think He died only for those who are destined for heaven. After you have said it, you can say, "There are two 2 points of view. My personal inclination at this point in my life is this," and that's OK. You can go on, and the whole church may think differently than you, and that's OK. You might have a great insight so that eventually they catch up with your judgment; or, you might catch up and come to your senses.

That is not what we're talking about. Christians can have differences. But you should avoid people who are making divisions in the local church over the things that, in the long run, are not really significantly a problem. Just avoid them. The Word of God says that they are using their tongues in an evil way to make that division, and you should have no part with them.

* 1. **Preserving One's Speech from Evil Uses Ensures a Maximum Life Span**

A person can ensure a maximum lifespan by preserving his speech from evil uses (Psalm 34:12-13). The Bible indicates that God has a life span for you. The Bible also indicates that you can cut your life short. And one of the ways you can cut your life short is by an evil use of the tongue.

Paul has made it very clear here that this is a very great practice, and a very great characteristic of human conduct – to misuse the tongue. A lot of people, consequently, have shortened their lives by the sheer fact that they misuse their tongues.

* 1. **The Use of Speech for Deceit is Satan's Normal Expression**

Finally, the use of speech for deceit is Satan's normal expression (John 8:44). Satan uses his tongue regularly to deceive. He gives you thoughts and he gives you ideas regularly to deceive. Satan uses that technique that I referred to earlier. Satan very often presents the facts. Satan very often presents a great deal of sound, true doctrine, and then gives it a twist someplace along the line, so that you have received a wrong impression. You think that you are on the truth, and you think that you are receiving the truth, only to discover that at some critical point Satan has led astray. So, beware of the fact that Satan, even when he is quoting Scripture, is doing it with the intent purpose of deceiving.

1. **Their Feet are Swift to Shed Blood**

Now, in Romans 3:15-17, the apostle Paul continues with quotations from Isaiah 59:7-8. Indictment number 11, in Romans 3:15, says, "Their feet are swift to shed blood." This comes from Isaiah 59:7. "Their," of course, refers again to the unbelievers that we've been discussing. Feet here is the Greek word "pous." Here it connotes a person in motion. The idea is how you use your body as you go about from place to place. The idea of feet here is the idea of locomotion. The Greek word for "They are swift" is "oxus." The idea here means "readily resort to it." They don't mind doing it. Here's something that they are quite ready to do without any hesitancy. What is that? "To shed ("ekcheo"). "Ekcheo" means "to pour out." They are ready to pour out, and the next word tells us what it is: it's "blood:" "They're ready to pour out blood." It is in the aorist tense – that any point, when their inner hatred boils up to the point where it's ready to have an outward expression, they'll take another person's life. It is active. They shed this by their choice. Infinitive shows that their purpose is homicide. Infinitive indicates purpose. Remember that. One of the uses of that particular mood is to declare purpose.

So, infinitive means that their purpose is murder-one – to spill blood ("hima"). Here it connotes murder. What we are referring to here is willful, premeditated, first-degree homicide. The old sin nature that lies within the unbeliever is capable of producing murder. The normal mental attitude of the unbeliever is hatred. Jesus told us that that is murder. The first stage of murder is always an inner mental attitude of hatred. Then you go to the next step – the overt murder. You may be out to rob somebody and you take a gun for the purpose of keeping that person from resisting your will. Your intended purpose of robbing that person is an expression of mental attitude hatred. It is hatred for that individual (not love) that leads you to take from him that which belongs to him. If in the process, he resists you, and you shoot him and you kill him, that is willful, premeditated murder, just as if you had sat down, and you had looked at somebody, and you decided in your mind, "I'm going to kill that person." and you laid out a plan by which you would destroy that life. It is no different when you take a gun in hand to rob somebody. You intend to stop them from resisting your will; and, if necessary, to kill them. That is premeditated murder.

The summary statement here is: "They readily commit willful murder." All of humanity is under the cloud that everyone is ready to commit murder through hatred (that's the first kind of murder); or, through the actual taking of life.

**Murder**

Let's summarize again. Here is a major characteristic of the human race. This is a major factor for which God has brought His wrath down upon them. So, this is a very significant point. Let's summarize some of the features about murder.

* 1. **Satan is the Original Murderer**

The original murderer is Satan. He was the one who led Cain to kill Abel (John 8:44). So, murder begins with the leading of Satan. The old sin nature is under the control of Satan. One of the things he leads the old sin nature to perform readily is the murder of hatred and the murder of taking physical life.

* 1. **Satan Motivates Murder**

Satan is the primary motivation behind murder (1 John 3:12). The person who is pushing a human being toward murder is the devil.

* 1. **Jealousy and Hatred Motivate Murder**

Mental attitude sins of jealousy and hatred were the motivation for the first murder (Genesis 4:5). Cain slashed the throat of his brother Abel with that knife because of the fact that he hated his brother. And he hated his brother because his brother was positive toward doctrine, and Cain was negative toward doctrine. This was murder over the Bible.

* 1. **Murder is Forbidden by God**

Murder is forbidden by God (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17, Matthew 5:21). Of course, you understand that this is not the same as killing a person. The Bible, in these passages, does not forbid killing. It does not forbid the taking of human life. As a matter of fact, the Bible very specifically spells out that in the case of willful, first-degree murder, the payment is that person's life. And constituted civil authority is to execute the person who has been guilty of first-degree murder.

When the Bible speaks about forbidding murder, it is talking about you taking it upon yourself to decide to take a person's life – to snuff out a person's life. Murder is forbidden by God. God gives life. God takes life. No one else has that right. Only God can give life through birth (through conception). Only God has the right to determine when your life is at an end. You do not have the right to interpose and make yourself God. You do not have the right to interpose and take the matter into your own hand, even in the matter of suicide. It is, as Job says, "The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." It is up to God to decide when we are born. It is up to God to decide when we are to die, and how we are to go out. We may shorten that span by the misuse of the tongue, as we have seen, but it is with the Lord as to when our life is to be terminated.

Now, when you kill a person under the authority of the state, such as with capital punishment, you are not playing God. God has already declared to you that this is what he wants us to do. It is God who made the decision concerning capital punishment – not human beings. It wasn't Noah who got off the ark and said, "Now, from now on, we're going to set up a system of law and courts and juries, and we are going to reserve the right to these legal authorities to apply the maximum penalty of taking a person's life if he destroys another life." Noah didn't come up with that. Noah heard God's instructions, and Noah acted accordingly upon it. And the institution of human government was established, with this as the highest right of punishment.

* 1. **The Penalty for Murder is Capital Punishment**

So, we come to the next point, which says that capital punishment is the divine penalty for murder (Numbers 35:30-31, Genesis 9:6). We have gone recently in our country through quite a discussion on this business of capital punishment. In recent days, you've been hearing a great deal about it, because of the case of Gary Gilmore in Utah, who deliberately shot the brains out of two people that he was in the process of robbing, and which were not even resisting him.

All of the bleeding hearts and all of the spiritually disoriented and spiritually darkened personalities of our liberal establishment have been foaming at the mouth, and doing everything they could, to prevent the execution of Gilmore by the state of Utah. But in recent years, even spiritually uninformed and spiritually disoriented Americans are beginning to put two and two together, and they are beginning to realize that capital punishment was instituted by divine order for a very specific reason.

They don't understand Satan. They don't even believe in the devil. But the consequences are the same. Satan was the murderer from the beginning. Satan is the motivator for murder, and he is out there doing his job and doing his work constantly. So, the slaughter of lives has been mounting since capital punishment has been set aside. Now people, without understanding spiritual things, are beginning to arrive at the conclusion that a very great mistake has been made in this country by dismissing capital punishment.

I don't care how dumb you are. If you take a nice car, and you insist on putting water in the oil pan instead of oil, eventually you're going to learn that that doesn't work, just because it wasn't constructed that way. You could have learned it from the manual, or you can learn it by experience. Our country is learning by experience about capital punishment what it could have learned from the manual (the Bible) by the God who made us, and who understands that Satan is a murderer who would destroy every one of us if he could. It is only because God's hand is standing there that this roaring lion cannot devour you, unless you're ready to give him the chance.

A survey in "The National Observer" was made in recent weeks, and it was published this past week. The question was: "Are you in favor of capital punishment?" The question was: "Should it be abolished; or, should it be fully restored? Those who said it should be abolished were 15.6%. Those who said it should be fully restored were 84.4%. This even caught the paper by surprise – that the overwhelming majority of opinions which were expressed in this national survey on the part of Americans is almost 85% for the restoring of capital punishment in full operation in this country.

I thought you might be interested in some of the comments: "Among those who sent letters along with their ballots, the reason cited most often for restoration was belief in the death penalty's deterrent effect on crime. Many noted that even if the death penalty failed to work generally as a deterrent, at least it would mean (as Katherine Newman of Cedarburg, Wisconsin puts it): 'A killer who is executed will never kill anyone else.'"

Now, that is great wisdom on the part of this lady, because this is exactly the point. The leftist liberal groups, who have been against capital punishment, and who have been championing the abolishment of capital punishment, use the argument that it does not deter crime. Well, there are studies, including one recently published by a university professor in criminology out of New York that was quite a bombshell, because his survey clearly and conclusively proved that capital punishment does act as a deterrent. It does cause a person to hold back in taking another life.

However, when we get back to the Scripture, the Bible never suggests that capital punishment is for the deterrent purpose. That is a human viewpoint idea. The only deterrent that the Bible would suggest by its penalty, which is applied to homicide, is the deterrent to the person who is guilty, as this lady indicated. The only deterrent is to the person who has taken another life. He will never kill again if he's executed. Whatever we may say about Mr. Gary Gilmore, one thing you may say for certain is that he will never kill again. One thing we cannot say about him is what a lawyer said about him. A member of the American Civil Liberties Union has declared that now Gary Gilmore, after the all-night effort of the ACLU was frustrated, that Gary Gilmore now has gone to peace. That I'm not sure we can say about him. But I know that you can say that it has deterred him from killing another person again in that kind of willful way.

Please do not be confused. Don't be snowed by that kind of remark by somebody that it doesn't deter people. There are very good surveys that indicate that it does deter, but that's beside the point. The reason the Bible laid this point out as God's order for murder-one is justice. It is as President Carter quoted Micah in his inaugural address – that what God was calling upon Israel to do as a nation was to produce justice – to see that justice ruled in the land. And that's the reason for this capital punishment rule. It is for justice. It is not to deter crime.

So, another quotation here is: "Many of those favoring abolition of capital punishment disputed the contention that execution of criminals deters crime. Others expressed concern that innocent persons might be executed, or argued that a disproportionate number of those receiving the death penalty are poor or from minority groups. "The late Hugo Black, famed Supreme Court Justice, once observed that the amount of justice one gets in America is directly proportional to the defense counsel one can afford to buy, writes Kenneth Esachs of St. Paul, Minnesota." Here again is the other argument of the ACLU, for example – that poor people are the only ones that are executed. Minority people are the only ones that are executed, because they cannot defend themselves with adequate legal counsel.

Well, that has nothing to do with capital punishment. If that is true, then the problem is to get adequate legal counsel and defense. They are entitled to that. That's where the problem lies – not with the penalty that God has established, as if human beings do better than God, how to control Satan in this age of the angelic conflict, like when Satan is out to destroy all human beings so that there can't be a millennium, and so that the program of God will be frustrated, because there would be no living mortal human beings to go into that millennium.

Another comment said, "'The thought of taking someone's life goes against everything within my being, but we have to do something,' says Virginia Wilson of Litchfield, Kentucky."

"'Maybe I say to myself, 'If capital punishment is reinstated, it will help to deter an act that will result in needless waste of a person's life,'' says, Erika Crawford of Philadelphia."

"Maybe it will stop a person and make him think, because he in turn could lose his life for what he is about to do."

"Maybe this is a murky reason and a contradiction, but I have to think that if capital punishment would deter or slow down what is happening in this country regarding serious crime, we need it;" and, so on, throughout the article.

Again and again, there is this attitude expressed by those who responded – that capital punishment is indeed the thing that deters murder. And this, of course, fits in perfectly with what the Word of God has said.

Here's how the article closes. "Several of those opposing capital punishment contended that executions, in effect, made the state a murderer – no better than the criminal executed." I think you can answer that. There is the argument that if you execute, then you're a murderer, too. That is a misconception of the Ten Commandments, which uses the only Hebrew word that we have for murder (murder-one). It says very specifically and clearly that: "Thou shalt not murder." God the Holy Spirit was careful to use a word that could not be misunderstood in Hebrew, and it does not say, "Thou shalt not kill."

So, here is a person with spiritual disorientation, who doesn't know what he's talking about. Continuing: "'Is savagery a cure savagery,' asks Betty Cochrane of Aurora, Illinois."

"Says the Reverend R. Haynes Moffet of Emanuel United church of Christ in Bomanstown, Pennsylvania, 'Capital punishment is an attempt to play God. When we do that, we are no better than the criminal who we judge owes his life."

What can people know when their preachers are so deluded themselves as represented by this quotation of this minister? Playing God? He doesn't know enough about the Word of God to know that it is God who is playing God when it comes to capital punishment. It is God who has made the declaration on this issue – not we who have invented it for ourselves.

* 1. **Murder is one of the Seven Sins God Hates the Most**

Murder is one of the seven sins God hates the most (Proverbs 6:17).

* 1. **Hatred is Mental Murder**

Hatred is mental for murder, and proceeds over murder. (Matthew 5:21-22, 1 John 3:15).

* 1. **A Christian can Commit Murder and Still go to Heaven**

A Christian can commit murder and still go to heaven. And that includes suicide (1 Peter 4:15, John 10:28-29, 2 Samuel 12:21-23). Suicide violates the principle of when your life is to terminate, which lies only with God.

We'll stop here at this point, and we'll finish the indictment next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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