

## Wisdom of the Bible ~ Punishment is Death ~ Scripture Verses

In the Old Testament what are the sins for which the punishment is death?

1. Exodus 19:12-13 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Exodus 21:12, Leviticus 24:17 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Exodus 21:14 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Exodus 21:15 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Exodus 21:16 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Exodus 21:17, Leviticus 21:9 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Exodus 21:28-29 \_\_\_\_\_
8. Exodus 22:18 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 20:15 \_\_\_\_\_
10. Exodus 22:20 \_\_\_\_\_
11. Exodus 31:14-15, 35:2, Numbers 15:32-35 \_\_\_\_\_
12. Leviticus 10:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_
13. Leviticus 16:2, Numbers 18:3 \_\_\_\_\_
14. Leviticus 20:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_
15. Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22 \_\_\_\_\_
16. Leviticus 20:11-12, 14 \_\_\_\_\_
17. Leviticus 20:13 \_\_\_\_\_
18. Leviticus 24:16 \_\_\_\_\_
19. Numbers 4:15 \_\_\_\_\_
20. Numbers 4:20 \_\_\_\_\_
21. Numbers 18:7 \_\_\_\_\_
22. Deuteronomy 13:5-9 \_\_\_\_\_
23. Deuteronomy 17:2-5 \_\_\_\_\_
24. Deuteronomy 18:20 \_\_\_\_\_
25. Deuteronomy 21:18-21 \_\_\_\_\_
26. Deuteronomy 22:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_
27. Joshua 1:17-18 \_\_\_\_\_

## Wisdom of the Bible ~ Punishment is Death ~ Discussion Questions

1. Sins for which the punishment was death in the OT can be divided into seven broad categories:

- A) Unauthorized touch or approach to holy objects (1, 13, 19, 20, 21)
- B) Unauthorized religious rituals, witchcraft (8, 10, 12, 14)
- C) Curse the Lord, worship a false God, lead others astray (18, 22, 23, 24)
- D) Harm, kidnap or dishonor another person (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 25)
- E) Improper sexual relations (9, 15, 16, 17, 26)
- F) Work on the Sabbath (11)
- G) Rebel against God's chosen leader (27)

Which ones seem more applicable to Biblical times? Which ones are still totally applicable today?

2. God obviously felt very strongly about these sins in OT days. Do you think he feels any less strongly about them today?

3. Have you ever committed any of these sins? How many? More than once? Did it ever occur to you that if you lived 2,000 years ago, you would have been stoned to death or executed for your transgression?

4. Are all sins equal in God's sight or are some worse than others? (James 2:10, Matthew 5:21-28, 12:34, Romans 6:23) In severity? In penalty? In forgivability?

5. Okay, murdering a person is clearly bad. But leading someone astray (#22); how is that as bad as murder?

6. Many people say that our attitudes toward sex are clearly more enlightened today than in Biblical times. Gay marriage is okay, right? And studies show that 25% to 50% of all men have an extramarital affair (commit adultery). Big deal?

7. What exactly does blasphemy (#18) mean? Is exclaiming "Oh my God!" blasphemy? How about "Goddamnit!" Or is it cursing God? Or is it swearing falsely by God's name?

8. New Testament scripture seems to have backed off punishing sins by death. Why is this?

9. Ananias and his wife Sapphira were struck dead by God for lying about their contribution to the church (Acts 5:1-11). Although not a general prohibition, this is a warning that God cannot be mocked and will not tolerate hypocrisy and deceit. Any thoughts?

## **Punishment is Death ~ Additional Questions for Groups of 3 or 4**

1. Punishment by death for Sin #3 seems extreme, doesn't it. Just plotting or scheming to kill someone but not doing it?
2. Again, striking your father or mother is bad (Sin #4) but apparently vilifying them (dishonor or treat with contempt, Sin #6) is just as bad. The root of the word as used here means "light" or "worthless." What if one of your parents doesn't deserve your respect or honor? What if one really is worthless? Or deserted you when you were young?
3. Exodus 21:29 in which an owner is liable for a death caused by a habitually violent animal (Sin #7) is largely the basis for the doctrine of criminal negligence today. This is defined as being careless, inattentive, neglectful, willfully blind, or reckless, which results in harm. (The distinction between recklessness and criminal negligence lies in the presence or absence of foresight as to the harmful consequences.) Do you think inattention, carelessness, or neglect should ever carry the death penalty?
4. How about an "unauthorized ritual before the Lord" (Sin #12)? Have you ever seen anything done in a church, Bible study, or on a missions trip of which God would not approve?
5. The Rabbis and Jewish scholars that wrote the Talmud were so uncomfortable with the law about killing a rebellious son (Sin #25, Deut 21:18-21) that they virtually disallowed it. The Talmud reads, "The wayward and rebellious son never existed and never will exist. Then why is it written? To say, inquire, and receive the reward [i.e., for strictly didactic (teaching) purposes]." —*Sanhedrin 71A*  
Death is harsh punishment for what is a common sin today. Is it unwarranted? Is God being too harsh? Do you see why Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites?
6. If you had God's power to simply kill someone by saying the words, "good bye," which would cause death (and not be traceable to you), are there people or situations with which you would use this power? When? With who?
7. Would you be willing to kill (murder) an innocent person if it would save the lives of a million other people? How about saving 1,000 lives? 100 lives?
8. If you could choose the manner of your own death, what would it be? Would you prefer to die a hero's death, die a martyr to a cause, die in a natural catastrophe, or die peacefully? Why is it so tempting to have death catch us in our sleep?