

THE EXECUTION OF ‘THE LAW’, AND “OUR INHERITANCE”

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INTRODUCTION.

In the Celtic/Anglo-Saxon family of countries, there is a Common Law history of belief in what is called "the due process of law" which means that there is an established course for judicial proceedings or other governmental activities, which are designed to safeguard the legal rights of the individual. The administration of justice is based on the code that a person cannot be deprived of life or liberty or property without appropriate legal procedures and safeguards.

These principles are established in the Bible where we find Israelite judges, priests and leaders being appointed for executing the Law. Two or three witnesses were required to give evidence before the judge. Those judged were both Israelites and strangers, as we read in Numbers 15:16, "*One law and one manner (one form of judicial action) shall be for you, and for the stranger (temporary resident) that sojourneth with you*". "Strangers" in this verse is *ger*, but there is no evidence that "strangers" as *zuwr* have no rights under the Law. We can see how the Gibeonites were required to keep the law, even if they were only there because Joshua had been duped.

Otherwise there is no suggestion of racial hatred, no not the slightest. It is idolatry that is not tolerated in either Israelite or non-Israelite. In fact, right through the New Testament, we find the same picture as that in the Old Testament. There is still separation between races in certain ways yes, but there is no advocating of racial hatred. There is no room for looking at a black man and saying "yuk", or saying he is one of the "mud people", solely because he is black.

Today, however, there are some who have zeal without knowledge, who consider that when God ordained that Israel should be separate from other races, that this separation meant having no contact or association with other races. But rightly, this separation was from doing what the heathen did, not just from having any contact. For instance, the heathen races were never allowed to worship with Israel at the tabernacle and racial intermarriage was, and is, not permitted. (This is apart from Israelite men marrying certain of what might be termed virginal-female 'close kin'. We will not attempt to delineate this term here).

Where we do find non-association is when God has passed judgement as He did against the seven nations that were occupying the Promised Land. Israel was commanded to wipe them out, but this only concerned those foreign nations in The Promised Land.

Even if it was not God's intent, Israel did have association with other races in the Old Testament. We find this was a fact even in the days of Abraham. We find a mixed multitude travelling in the wilderness under Moses. There were two parts to this congregation. There was the "*congregation of the Lord*" (*edah*), which was comprised of Israelites, together with the "*mixed multitude*". There was also, the "*congregation of the Lord*" (*cahal*), which was comprised of Israelites only. In the wilderness the two groups, within the one unit, were treated the same in regard to Law, but were treated differently in regard to tabernacle service, with only the as Israelites being able to attend the tabernacle. At this stage, Israel was the 'head', and the other races were the 'tail'. When we look at words like 'strangers', 'aliens', 'foreigners' and such we find an on-going association with other races which continues into the New Testament.

Paul talks about this association with foreigners in the New Testament, as follows:

1 Cor 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves (of yours) that wicked person.

The "world" here is the mixed up world in which we find ourselves. The story then is rather one of separation from God's people who are not doing the things listed in this verse. It is God that judges those 'without'. Israel judges its own people, where it becomes a matter of non-association of Israelites with Israelites, in the present time.

Going back to the "due process of law", do we find any advocating of direct action against any people outside of the judicial process, through the New Testament? There is no suggestion that an

individual should take singular direct action to execute the Law. Under the Law, the people (in the plural) did the stoning, but they did that only after legal judgement had been made.

ISRAEL IS NOW UNDER GOD'S JUDGEMENT.

This is where things are different from what they were when the Children of Israel were in the wilderness under a theocracy. Later, Israel had sought to have a king like all the other nations. This in turn had brought a change in the way justice was administered. There was no change in the Law Covenant. Originally God had made a Covenant with Israel but Israel failed to keep that Covenant. As a punishment God warned Israel:

Deut. 28:43 *The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.*

Note that strangers were already associating with Israel before God's judgement, but there was now a swap around with the strangers now taking control in every aspect of administration. Israel was warned that they would be scattered amongst other nations and that they would come to a sorry state. They would come to a place of enforced association with other races.

This is precisely the position of Israel, which some 'Identity people', 'Kingdom Now', 'Aryan Nations', the 'Phinehas Priesthood' and some others think that they should try to reverse by direct action. To do this they would be going against God's judgement upon Israel. They do not realise that Israel is now a Kingdom, not a theocracy. They do not understand that God promised David that Israel would stay being a Kingdom as long as the sun and the moon shine in the sky. So,

- Behaving as if Israel were still a theocracy is wrong!
- Trying to execute the Law in the Phinehas-Priesthood style, as if Israel were a theocracy, is wrong!
- Taking direct action against other races in association with Israelites is therefore wrong; (it is wrong in particular since God instituted the association with other races as part of His judgement upon Israel!).
- Believing that there had been no change in the priesthood set up is also wrong!

About the matter of a change in the priesthood, for the moment we can tuck away in our minds a brief quote from Hebrews 7:12 which says, "*For the PRIESTHOOD BEING CHANGED, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*". We can come back to this subject later.

And at this point we will not attack interpretations of Numbers 25 about "the covenant of an everlasting priesthood to Phinehas", which some people think gives them the eternal right to take direct action to destroy other races associating with Israelites, even if those taking this action do not fulfil the requirement to be direct descendants of Phinehas. Numbers 25 has been well 'thrashed' by writers in both directions, and articles abound. Accordingly we will first look at this from a less-travelled viewpoint.

So continuing on about the theme of God's judgement upon Israel, in Deuteronomy chapter 32, in "the song of Moses", Israel was told how they would corrupt themselves after Moses' death, and how they would provoke God to anger. This brought God's wrath upon Israel. In this judgement, God brought Israel into a non-equal association with other races. It was into a "in the world, but not of the world" situation. Israel was to be as "*sheep in the midst of wolves*"-(Matt. 10:16), and "*without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life*"-(Phil.2:15). The Judean nation was a racial mixture. Note that foreigners were ruling over Israel, as they are today under World Government. That is, Israel had become the 'tail', and was no longer the 'head'.

Israel will stay under God's judgement and foreign domination until we have suffered enough to cry out to the LORD, humbling our proud selves and repenting. And, until we do, nothing will change and everything will continue to grow worse. Paul has told us that, "*all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*"-[2 Tim.3:12]. Should we then kick against the pricks by resorting to physical lawlessness?

THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL.

After pronouncing His judgement upon Israel, God said He would later come to give Israel another chance, a chance to repent, but in no way was this to immediately restore what was lost, to Israel.

Deut. 30:1- *And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither Jehovah thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto Jehovah thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul; that then Jehovah thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee,*

and will return and gather thee from all the peoples, whither Jehovah thy God hath scattered thee. If any of thine outcasts be in the uttermost parts of heaven, from thence will Jehovah thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee: and Jehovah thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

Oh yes, God sent a Kinsman-Redeemer to Israel. But did this immediately cause those of Israel who repented to return “*into the land which thy fathers possessed*”? Did it restore the theocracy? No, it did not and will not until Jesus takes the Throne of David. This has not yet happened, as Israel has to endure the appointed period of chastisement.

What is promised is presented as Israel having only an inheritance at this stage; there is much about the word “inheritance” in the New Testament. This promise of Deuteronomy, as above, will be fulfilled when God restores the Kingdom to Israel. Most of the prophets tell us about the re-gathering of the House of Israel and the House of Judah to ‘The Land’, and also they tell us something about the timing of that event. To ignore the timing is to be wrong. At present, most of Israel remains “lost” = (622 *apollumi*), which is about being lost to God’s favour, being set aside as a punishment for law/covenant transgression. Therefore Israel is still under punishment with foreigners and foreign systems dominating their lives. Not liking this is not going to change it. Pretending that this should not be the case, as some ‘Kingdom Now’, ‘Identity’ or ‘Phinehas Priesthood’ people do, is not going to change it either.

Some people will argue that the Kingdom is not future in fulfilment, quoting Luke 17:20, “*He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you*”. Or they may quote, Matthew 21:43, “*The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof*”. When Jesus was breaking bread with the disciples He spoke of the later “fulfillment” of the Kingdom, saying in Luke 22:15, “*For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God*”. What is partial now will be “filled full” or “fulfilled” at a time yet to come. This filling full is described as our “inheritance”. So we will look at the word, “inheritance” and check this out.

“INHERITANCE”.

Yes, of course it is nonsense to say that God is not ruling now. God was still ruling when he placed Israel under judgement. Israel is not presently ruling with God, but God is still on His throne. But God has placed Israel under His judgement. Scripture tells us that Israel will one day rule with God, but at present, in the matter of the kingdom, the whole subject involves the two words in particular. These words are “**inheritance**” and “**reserved**”. These words must be considered to get the whole picture. Do we really have now any more than an “earnest” or a “down payment” of this inheritance?

2 Corinthians 1:22

*Who hath also sealed us, and given **the earnest** of the Spirit in our hearts.*

2 Corinthians 5:5

*Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us **the earnest** of the Spirit*

Ephesians 1:14

*Which is **the earnest** of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.*

It is when we ignore grammar and word-meanings, that we get concept problems in the matter of the Kingdom. We need to carefully look through these “**inheritance**” and “**reserved**” verses. Below is a small selection of verses where we have to note there is a definite future tense in Greek as well as English, in these verses.

Where is the inheritance reserved? Yes, it is in heaven (without the religious meaning).

1 Peter 1:4

“To an INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, RESERVED in heaven for you”.

The word “reserved” is in the perfect tense, showing it is a completed fact for all time.

When is it received? Yes, at the resurrection and at “His appearing”, or at what is commonly termed, “The Second Coming”.

2 Tim 4:1

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall (future tense) judge the quick and the dead AT HIS APPEARING AND HIS KINGDOM.

How long is the Kingdom? It is “everlasting”. Please see both the verses below also. Is it reserved for the future, or not?

1 Peter 1.3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, TO AN INHERITANCE incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away,

RESERVED IN HEAVEN FOR YOU, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

“Reserved” is again in the perfect tense.

How is the entry made into the Kingdom? Those redeemed by Jesus’ Blood have a personal responsibility to see that they continue to qualify to enter the Kingdom.

*2 Peter 1:10-11 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: **For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.***

This passage details, “giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”, and then speaks about doing this until “the day dawns”. These things hardly fit direct violent racial-hatred actions and the idea that that day has already dawned. It is Jesus who will come as Judge and make war.

Rev. 19:11, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war”.

Has this judgement taken place? Do we have the Kingdom in fullness now, or are we heirs of the Kingdom?

James 2:5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM which he HATH PROMISED to them that love him?

We see it is a promise yet to come. Have the other factors in the passage below happened yet, such as “*And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him*”? The words “is come” is about something coming into existence, so we have a timing confirmation.

Rev 12.10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, NOW IS COME salvation, and strength, AND THE KINGDOM of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

WHAT ABOUT THE INHERITANCE OF THE UNGODLY?

There is a different inheritance for the ungodly, but this also is “reserved” for the future.

2 Peter 3:7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word ARE KEPT IN STORE, RESERVED unto fire against the day of JUDGEMENT and perdition of ungodly men.

Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1 Cor 6:10 Know ye not that the unrighteous SHALL NOT INHERIT the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, SHALL INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Eph 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, HATH ANY INHERITANCE IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND OF GOD.

HOW MUCH OF OUR INHERITANCE DO WE HAVE AT PRESENT?

We are told we only have an “earnest”, or a “down payment”.

Eph 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, WHICH IS THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Yes, the redemption price has been fully paid. The word “until” tells us the promise will yet fully come to pass.

So when is the time when this all happens? It is at “His appearing”. Even at this stage in the New Testament, “His appearing and his Kingdom” were still future.

2 Tim 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead AT HIS APPEARING and his kingdom.

What happens as regards foreigners at this time? They become Israel’s servants. But this is not yet.

Isaiah 14:2-4 And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

This of course tells us again about being “in the land”, and that land is the land promised to Abraham. It takes place after the re-gathering of Israel to the inheritance land. “The King of Babylon” is figurative of our bondage to the Babylonian-type commercial system. We read in Romans 8:22, “*For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.*”

Note here the word “firstfruits”. The balance of the crop is yet to be harvested. So if we have the Kingdom in fullness now as some people want to insist, we would not be still patiently waiting for it, would we?

WHAT DO WE DO IN THE MEANTIME AS REGARDS THE EXECUTION OF THE LAW?

Because government is a divinely ordained institution, Christians have a responsibility to work within governmental structures to bring about change. Government is part of the order of creation and is a minister of God (Rom. 13:4). Christians are to obey governmental authorities (Rom. 13:1–4, 1 Peter 2:13-14), where this does not conflict with God’s Law. Christians are also to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13–16) in the midst of the political scene. They are to obey the commandment to love one another in a way that can be seen by other people. “Another” is another of the same sort, not another of a different sort as World Vision wants to take it. But treating other races differently is not to be taken as an excuse for racial hatred.

Although governments may be guilty of injustice, Christians should not stop working for justice. We do not give up on marriage as an institution simply because there are so many divorces, and we do not give up on Christian assembly just because of many internal problems. But there is one thing we are not taught to do; we are not to go about killing people just because of their race alone, no, not even if they are murderers such as abortionists, just because their actions are against God’s law. Yes, consider the phrase, “All have sinned”. Outside of the due process of law there would be wholesale slaughter, with sinners bumping off sinners right left and centre! Not one of us has the right to throw the first stone!

King David said, “*I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.*” There are those who would rather execute wrongdoers in our society outside of due process of law, than warn them, and tell them of God’s mercy through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One thing we are to do is to pray for the coming kingdom. Note that it is ‘coming’; it is not ‘Kingdom Now’. Let us see something Jesus teaches about the coming kingdom:

Matt.6:9 After this manner therefore pray (present imperative) ye: Our Father which art (fixed) in (aorist, passive, imperative) heaven, hallowed be thy name. THY KINGDOM COME. (aorist-active). Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

Another thing we must do is to proclaim the coming Kingdom. Both Jesus and John the Baptist came proclaiming the Kingdom. Included in this is the message of repentance.

Matt.3:1 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (=brought near-perfect tense-completed in the past). It will come!

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN (This is present indicative...statement of fact.... a promise). It will come!

Matt 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, SHALL (future) ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?

Luke 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give (aorist) you the kingdom. This is a certain promise that we will receive it.

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear (present tense). He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, AND TO RETURN.

This verse spells out the right doctrinal position. The Kingdom is yet to appear in fullness, even if Jesus was then present with them it was not in fullness.

Luke 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be (Aorist-subjunctive) FULFILLED IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Again, with Jesus present, the fulfilment of the Kingdom was yet to come.

Luke 22:18 For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, UNTIL THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHALL COME.

Yet again, Jesus was then present, but He speaks about the coming Kingdom.

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time RESTORE AGAIN THE KINGDOM TO ISRAEL? And he said unto them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Again, Jesus was there with them telling that the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel is yet to be fully established.

FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD;

There must be some changes before any of the above happens. After His resurrection Jesus said, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have”. Paul confirms this in the verse below:

1 Cor 15:49- And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, THAT FLESH AND BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Can we rightly claim this change has taken place yet?

What about those who teach otherwise? We do find heavy statements about God’s final judgement upon them. We find that there are others who would teach otherwise about these issues, and of their destiny.

1 Thess. 1: 6-9 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; WHEN HE SHALL COME to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.

2 Peter 2;1- But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

Do we include the Phinehas Priesthood and like-minded people amongst these? The ‘way of truth’ is being evil spoken of today because of actions like:

- Picketing or burning down abortion clinics.
- Plotting to blow up the FBI’s Central Fingerprint Registry.
- Bombing a synagogue.
- Shootings at a Jewish day-care centre in Los Angeles.
- Shooting a mixed-race couple as they jogged along a street.
- Killing an anti-Christian radio announcer.
- Calling black and brown people “yuk” and “mud people”.

People cannot relate Phinehas Priesthood actions to “walking as Jesus walked”. Jesus was brought, “as a Lamb to the slaughter” and Jesus said in John 18:36:

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

People cannot relate Phinehas Priesthood actions to what Paul said when he said, “Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ”. One would think they have never read the verses below:

Titus 3:1 Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.

Rom. 13:1- Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 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. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

Is there any picture in the Bible showing that, in order for Jesus Christ to return to Earth, the globe must be washed clean of satanic forces by direct action-- meaning Jews, blacks, homosexuals and a whole laundry list of other enemies?

Instead we find a different picture, where Paul tells us:

2 Cor. 10:3- For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

In no way does being meek mean that strongholds of ungodly behaviour in society should not be spoken against. Jesus may have driven the moneychangers out of the temple, but he did not kill them. But nowhere did He teach any kind of physical violence, revolt or war against the government of the day. Neither did the other New Testament writers. That time is yet to come!

BACK TO THE PHINEHAS COVENANT.

Phinehas was not acting on his own initiative; he was following the orders of Moses who, “said unto the judges of Israel –Slay ye every one his man that were joined unto Baalpeor”-(Num.25:5). Phinehas was not then the priest, his father Eleazer was; this is a point that the Phinehas Priesthood ignores. Phinehas could have been one of the judges appointed by Moses to slay the fornicators, but we are not told..

We must remember that Phinehas was operating under a theocracy, not a Kingdom. After this time there were changes in the priesthood. We can see how kings of Israel appointed priests from different lines; there was a change from Eleazers line to Eli's line. Where we read of Phinehas in Numbers 25:12-13, “Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood”, this refers to the restoration of Eleazer's line through Phinehas. as a line that was to continue until the was a change in the Law. This fulfilled the promise God made to Phinehas.

Some argue that “everlasting” (*olam*) means “age lasting”, that is, until the end of the Mosaic age, whereas possibly what is ongoing is not Phinehas's priesthood, but his righteousness-(See Psalm 106:30-31).

Others argue that if Ezekiel's temple is future and not a picture, or an ideal, which should have been, then there is more to come for the line of Phinehas. Ezra the scribe was a descendant of Phinehas as was Zadok the priest who served loyally during the time of David. But, Abiathar the priest, a descendant of Eli and Ithamar, was displaced. When the final temple is built, it is Levitical priests descended from Zadok who alone serve at the altar, (Ezekiel 40-48), the rest of the Levites being assigned to lesser tasks because of their history of compromise with God's standards of holiness. In this way this would also fulfil the promise God made to Phinehas.

When the line of the priesthood shifted from the line from Eleazer to the descendants of Ithamar from who came the priest Eli. Eli's sons were evil, even as priests and what they did was inexcusable. We read of them in 1 Samuel 2:12, "*Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD*". We see a penalty is imposed on Eli and his sons.

1 Sam. 2:30 "Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed".

What God then goes on to say is about a new priesthood and a new High Priest: In God's mind there was to come a restoration time when there would be a change in the priestly order.

1 Samuel 2:35 And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

("Mine anointed" here refers to "the House of the faithful priest", an interpretation determined by grammar). The above verse fulfils the prophecies about the removal of the Aaronic priesthood, and replacing this with a Great High Priest after the order of Melchizedek. We are told who this is.

Heb. 6:20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Heb. 3:1-4 Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

This House of the Faithful Priest becomes a Royal Priesthood:

1 Peter 2:9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

These are those of the Children of Israel (*teknon*) who become Sons (*huios*) of the resurrection.

Let us again look at one function of the Royal Priesthood; it is in the same chapter!

1 Peter 2:13-15 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

Earlier on, Hebrews 7:12 was mentioned which says, "*For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law*". Those who claim that the Phinehas Priesthood today are judges or priests, and as such are still operative, are wrong! As regards Phinehas, not a single one of them can prove they are part of "*his seed after him*" either!

THE DEATH PENALTY.

Should Christians support the death penalty? The answer to that question is controversial. Many Christians feel that the Bible has spoken on the issue, but others believe that the New Testament ethic of love in some way nullifies the judgements of the Old Testament law. Throughout the Old Testament we find many cases in which God commands the use of capital punishment. We see this first with the acts of God Himself. God was involved, either directly or indirectly, in the taking of life as a punishment for the nation of Israel, or for those who threatened or harmed Israel.

One example is the flood of Noah in Genesis 6-8. God destroyed all human and animal life except that which was on the ark. Another example is Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18-19), where God destroyed the two cities because of the heinous sin of the inhabitants. In the time of Moses, God took the lives of the Egyptians' first-born sons (Exod. 11) and destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Exod. 14). There were also punishments such as the punishment at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 13-14) or the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16) against the Israelites wandering in the wilderness. The Old Testament is replete with references and examples of God taking life. In a sense, God used capital punishment to deal with Israel's sins and the sins of the nations surrounding Israel. But note, it was God that executed these judgements.

The Old Testament also teaches that God instituted capital punishment placing this in Israel's legal code. In fact, the principle of capital punishment even precedes the Old Testament law code. According to

Genesis 9:6, capital punishment is based upon a belief in the sanctity of life. It says, "*Whoever sheds man's blood by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God, He made man.*"

The Mosaic Law set forth numerous offences that were punishable by death. The first was murder. In Exodus 21, God commanded capital punishment for murderers. Premeditated murder (or what the Old Testament described as "lying in wait") was punishable by death. A second offence punishable by death was involvement in the occult (Exod. 22; Lev. 20; Deut 18-19). This included sorcery, divination, acting as a medium, and sacrificing to false gods. Capital punishment was to be used against perpetrators of sexual sins such as rape, incest, homosexual practice, or for breaking the Sabbath.

Capital punishment is warranted due to the sanctity of life. Even before we turn to the New Testament, we find this universally binding principle that precedes the Old Testament law code.

NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES.

Some Christians believe that capital punishment does not apply to the New Testament and church age. First we must acknowledge that God gave the principle of capital punishment even before the institution of the Old Testament law code. Capital punishment was instituted by God because all humans are created in the image of God. The principle is not rooted in the Old Testament theocracy, but rather in the creation order. It is a much broader biblical principle that carries into the New Testament.

Even so, some Christians argue that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seems to be arguing against capital punishment. But is He? In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is not arguing against the principle of a life for a life. Rather He is speaking to the issue of our personal desire for vengeance. He is not denying the power and responsibility of the government. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is speaking to individual Christians. He is telling Christians that they should not try to replace the power of the government. Jesus does not deny the power and authority of government, but rather He calls individual Christians to love their personal enemies and turn the other cheek.

Some have said that Jesus set aside capital punishment in John 8 when He did not call for the woman caught in adultery to be stoned. But remember the context. The Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus between the Roman law and the Mosaic law. If He said that they should stone her, He would break the Roman law. If He refused to allow them to stone her, He would break the Mosaic law (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Jesus' answer avoided the conflict: He said that he who was without sin should cast the first stone. Since He did teach that a stone be thrown (John 8:7), this then is not an abolition of the death penalty.

In other places in the New Testament we see the principle of capital punishment being reinforced. Romans 13:1-7, for example, teaches that God ordains human government and that the civil magistrate is a minister of God. We are to obey government for we are taught that government does not bear the sword in vain. The fact that the Apostle Paul used the image of the sword further supports the idea that capital punishment was to be used by government in the New Testament age as well. Rather than abolish the idea of the death penalty, Paul uses the emblem of the Roman sword to reinforce the idea of capital punishment. The New Testament did not abolish the death penalty; it reinforced the principle of capital punishment. "*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds*". Although forgiven, the malefactor still had to die.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND DETERRENCE

Is capital punishment a deterrent to crime? At the outset, we should acknowledge that the answer to this question should not change our perspective on this issue. Although it is an important question, it should not be the basis for our belief. A Christian's belief in capital punishment should be based upon what the Bible teaches not on a pragmatic assessment of whether or not capital punishment deters crime. There are references such as Deut. 13:11, "*And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you*" which show there are deterrents, but more often "fear" is about removing evil Israelites from the midst of Israel.

Regardless, we still have to have follow biblical injunctions and put convicted murderers to death. Note that it is said, "convicted" murderers, showing that the judicial process is still in position.

The poet Hyman Barshay put it this way:

"The death penalty is a warning, just like a lighthouse throwing its beams out to sea. We hear about shipwrecks, but we do not hear about the ships the lighthouse guides safely on their way. We do not have proof of the number of ships it saves, but we do not tear the lighthouse down".

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Some discrimination takes place, not only on the basis of race, but also on the basis of wealth. Wealthy defendants can hire a battery of legal experts to defend themselves, while poor defendants must rely on a court-appointed public lawyer. But are certain groups entitled to claim the right to murder Jews and Blacks on a racial basis, solely on the basis of race alone? Certainly not through Scripture.

One objection to capital punishment is that the government is itself committing murder. Put in theological terms, doesn't the death penalty violate the sixth commandment, which teaches, "*Thou shalt not kill!*" First, we must understand the context of this verse. The verb used in Exodus 20:13 is best translated "to murder." It is used 49 times in the Old Testament, and it is always used to describe premeditated murder. It is never used of animals, God, angels, or enemies in battle. So the commandment is not teaching that all killing is wrong; it is teaching that murder is wrong.

Second, the penalty for breaking the commandment was death (Ex.21:12; Num. 35:16-21). We can conclude therefore that when the government took the life of a murderer, the government was not itself guilty of murder. Opponents of capital punishment who accuse the government of committing murder by implementing the death penalty, fail to see the irony of using Exodus 20 to define murder but ignoring Exodus 21, which specifically teaches that government is to punish the murderer by killing him.

A second objection to capital punishment questions the validity of applying the Old Testament law code to today's society. After all, wasn't the Mosaic Law only for the Old Testament theocracy? There are a number of ways to answer this objection.

First, we must question the premise. There is and should be a relationship between Old Testament laws and modern laws. We may no longer be subject to Old Testament ceremonial law, but that does not invalidate God's moral principles set down in the Old Testament. Murder is still wrong. Thus, since murder is wrong, the penalty for murder must still be implemented.

Second, even if we accept the premise that the Old Testament law code was specifically and uniquely for the Old Testament theocracy, this still does not abolish the death penalty. Genesis 9:6 precedes the Old Testament theocracy, and its principle is tied to the creation order. Capital punishment is to be implemented because of the sanctity of human life. We are created in God's image. When a murder occurs, the murderer must be put to death. This is a universally binding principle not confined merely to the Old Testament theocracy.

Third, it is not just the Old Testament that teaches capital punishment. Romans 13:1-7 specifically teaches that human government is ordained by God and that we are to obey government because government does not bear the sword in vain. Human governments are given the responsibility to punish wrongdoers, and this includes murderers who are to be given the death penalty.

Finally, capital punishment is never specifically removed or replaced in the Bible. While some would argue that the New Testament ethic replaces the Old Testament ethic, there is no instance in which a replacement ethic is introduced. As we have already seen, Jesus and the disciples never disturb the Old Testament standard of capital punishment. The Apostle Paul teaches that we are to live by grace with one another, but also teaches that we are to obey human government that bears the sword. Capital punishment is taught in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, but it is not executed in the Phinehas Priesthood style!