

# HUMAN GOVERNMENT

## Week Two: Capital Punishment - The Origin of Human Government

- Since the Flood, humanity has lasted > 4350 years without God destroying the planet in judgment. This is primarily due to:
  - Shortened human lifespan (evil folks don't live as long)
  - The institution of human government
    - Stage 1: Genesis 9 (capital punishment)
    - Stage 2: Genesis 11 (dispersion of humanity)
    - Stage 3: Israel and the Law
  - Christ and the Church (salt & light to the world)
- Genesis 9 & capital punishment (the death penalty)
  - Human government was instituted (begun) by God, humanity's Designer & Creator. It is His idea, and therefore the idea of government belongs to Him, not to humanity
  - Human government began with capital punishment (the death penalty) being instituted for murderers
    - This teaches us:
      - That the living are responsible to seek justice for the murdered
      - The existence of this punishment will quell the urge to commit murder
    - Humanity not told how to govern (form of government), just that we must do so
    - What is required:
      - Homicide investigation
      - System of establishing fact (trial)
      - Person/persons to render a verdict (jurists)
      - Punishment upon guilt (executioners)
  - Capital punishment was meant to protect the Image of God (Genesis 9:6b) from the degradation that had occurred so rapidly before the Flood
    - Two important facets of the Divine Image:
      - **Life.** God is alive, and God is life. Humanity uniquely shares God's life (Gen 2:7), and that life may only be taken with God's permission
      - **Freedom.** God is free. Humanity is meant to be free, but cannot be wholly so due to the fallen sinful nature. Freedom may only be taken with God's permission
  - Capital punishment **limits** (governs) human conduct. We tend to think of governing as ruling or reigning over a group of citizens, but this is not the Biblical idea. To Biblically govern means to limit
    - This means that government is the enemy of freedom, for it limits freedom. Only our Designer & Creator, whose Image we bear, has the right & the wisdom to dictate what human freedoms should be limited
      - More government, less freedom
      - Less government, more freedom
    - God's first step of revelation in this arena was to limit the sinful nature from its worst expression (murder)
  - Original, Biblical roles of government?

- To protect human life from murder or death by animals (only 8 people at the time). This is the **how** of human government
- To protect the dignity of the Image of God in humanity. This is the **why** of human government
- To deliver the harshness of justice! Not a lot of compassion here