

## Doctrine of Capital Punishment

### 1. Under the Mosaic Law the death penalty was administered for at least twenty-one reasons.

- Premeditated murder                      Genesis 9:5,6;  
Numbers 35:16-21, 30, 33; Deuteronomy 17:6
- Adultery                                      Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:24
- Incest                                        Leviticus 20:11, 12,14
- Bestiality                                    Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 20:15,16
- Sodomy (Homosexuality)                Leviticus 18:22; 20:13
- Certain forms of promiscuity            Deuteronomy 22:21-24
- Rape of a betrothed virgin              Deuteronomy 22:25
- Perjury                                      Zechariah 5:4
- Kidnapping                                Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7
- Upon a priest's daughter who  
committed fornication                    Leviticus 21:9
- Witchcraft                                 Exodus 22:18
- Offering human sacrifices              Leviticus 20:2-5
- Striking a parent                        Exodus 21:15,17
- Disobedience to parents                Deuteronomy 21:18-21
- Stealing                                     Zechariah 5:3,4
- Blasphemy                                Leviticus 24:11-14, 16, 23
- Violation of the Sabbath                Exodus 35:2; Numbers 15:32-36
- Falsely prophesying                    Deuteronomy 13:1-10
- Sacrificing to false gods                Exodus 22:20
- Refusing to abide by legal decisions Deuteronomy 17:12
- Treason                                     1 Kings 2:25; Est. 2:23

### 2. The modes of execution varied.

- Burning                                    Genesis 38:24; Leviticus 20:14; 21:9;  
Jeremiah 29:22;  
Ezekiel 23:25; Daniel 3:19-23
- Stoning                                    Leviticus 20:2, 27; 24:14;  
Numbers 14:10; 15:33-36;  
Deuteronomy 13:10; 17:5; 22:21, 24; Joshua 7:25;  
1 Kings 21:10; Ezekiel 16:40
- Hanging                                    Genesis 40:22; Deuteronomy 21:22,23; Joshua 8:29

### 3. Minor offenses were punishable in less severe ways.

- Scouring                                    Leviticus 19:20; Deuteronomy 22:18; 25:2,3;  
Proverbs 17:10; 19:29; 20:30
- Imprisonment                            Genesis 39:20,40
- Confinement within a given area      1 Kings 2:26,36-38

4. The administration of ultimate divine and social justice was to be done by the witnesses (Deuteronomy 13:9; 17:7) or by the congregation. (Numbers 15:35, 36; Deuteronomy 13:9).
5. Capital punishment could not be inflicted except on the testimony of two or more witnesses (Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15).
6. The principle under-girding the administration of punishment is that individuals are accountable and will be dealt with according to their deeds (Job 34:11; Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 12:14; 24:12; Isaiah 59:18; Jeremiah 17:10; Ezekiel 7:3, 27; 16:59; 39:24; Zechariah 1:6).
7. Sometimes the administration of a just form of punishment is delayed or reserved for a future time (Psalm 50:21; 55:19; Proverbs 1:24; Ecclesiastes 8:11-13; Habakkuk 1:2).
8. The primary purpose of punishment is to secure righteous obedience and to administer a just penalty in payment for personal transgressions (Genesis 2:17; Exodus 20:3; Leviticus 26:14-39; Deuteronomy 13:10,11; 21:21; Proverbs 19:25; 21:11; 26:3).
9. There will be no escape from divine justice (Job 11:20; Proverbs 1:24-31; 11:21; 16:5; 29:1; Jeremiah 11:11; 15:1; 25:28, 29; Amos 2:14; Zeph. 1:18).
10. The worse form of divine punishment is eternal in nature. (Isaiah 34:8-10; Daniel 12:2 ; Matthew 3:12; 10:28; 18:8; 25:41; 3:29; Luke 3:17; John 5:29; Hebrews 6:2; 10:28-31; Revelation 14:10,11; 19:3; 20:10).