



# Abortion & Capital Punishment

## The Historic and Biblical Relationships between the Death Penalty and Abortion

Virtually every nation that has prohibited the execution of murderers has also decriminalized the intentional killing of unborn children. Is this coincidental or is there a correlation? Scripture passages we will consider include Ezekiel 13:[19](#), Proverbs 17:[15](#), and Hebrews 10:[28-29](#).

On the PBS Republican presidential debate on Sept. 27, 2007 Alan Keyes said: “I support the death penalty; it has *a basis in universal justice*, and not just punishment, but *sends a message of respect for life*.” Ambassador Keyes expounded upon this before dozens of leaders at the [launch of American RTL](#) during a November 2007 pro-life summit at which a well-attended press conference was held announcing that Colorado's historic personhood Amendment 48 would appear on the state's November 2008 ballot. A draft version of this white paper was also presented giving a scriptural defense of execution and linking the abolition of the death penalty to the 'legalization' of abortion.

The death penalty was being struck down in the Soviet Union, in America, and elsewhere *in the years prior to the widespread legalization of abortion*. Thus opposition to the death penalty oftentimes preceded support for abortion. From an American perspective, here is some historical data for the U.S. and some of our closer allies:

| Allies                 | Execution outlawed for all crime | Execution outlawed for "ordinary" crime | Last Execution | Abortion Legalized | Notes  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------|--------------------|--|
| Canada                 | 1998                             | 1976                                    | <b>1962</b>    | <b>1988</b>        |  |
| Greece                 | 2004                             | 1993                                    | <b>1978</b>    | <b>1986</b>        |  |
| Great Britain          |                                  | 1965                                    | <b>1964</b>    | <b>1967</b>        |  |
| Israel                 |                                  | <b>1954</b>                             |                | <b>1977</b>        |  |
| Spain                  | 1995                             | 1978                                    | <b>1975</b>    | <b>1985</b>        |  |
| Sweden                 | 1972                             | 1921                                    | <b>1910</b>    | <b>1938</b>        |  |
| USA                    | <b>1972</b>                      |   |                | <b>1973</b>        | Sup Court commuted all 629 US death sentences, and suspended all executions (reinstated in '76)                  |
| Enemy:<br>Soviet Union | <b>1917</b>                      |   |                | <b>1920</b>        | The Russians repeatedly abolish and reenact the death penalty; outlawed abortion in 1936, reinstated it in 1955. |

The 2007 pro-life summit presentation on the death penalty was a development of an *ad hoc* Bible study that Amb. Keyes presented at a Colorado RTL dinner in Denver in April of that year. God authorized and commanded the death penalty to uphold and reinforce each man being made in God's image (Gen. 9:[6](#)). Thus governmental opposition to the death penalty could have and apparently has had a direct influence on the disrespect for human life that leads to abortion.

Thus says the LORD God... “Will you profane Me... killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live...?” –Ezekiel 13:18-19

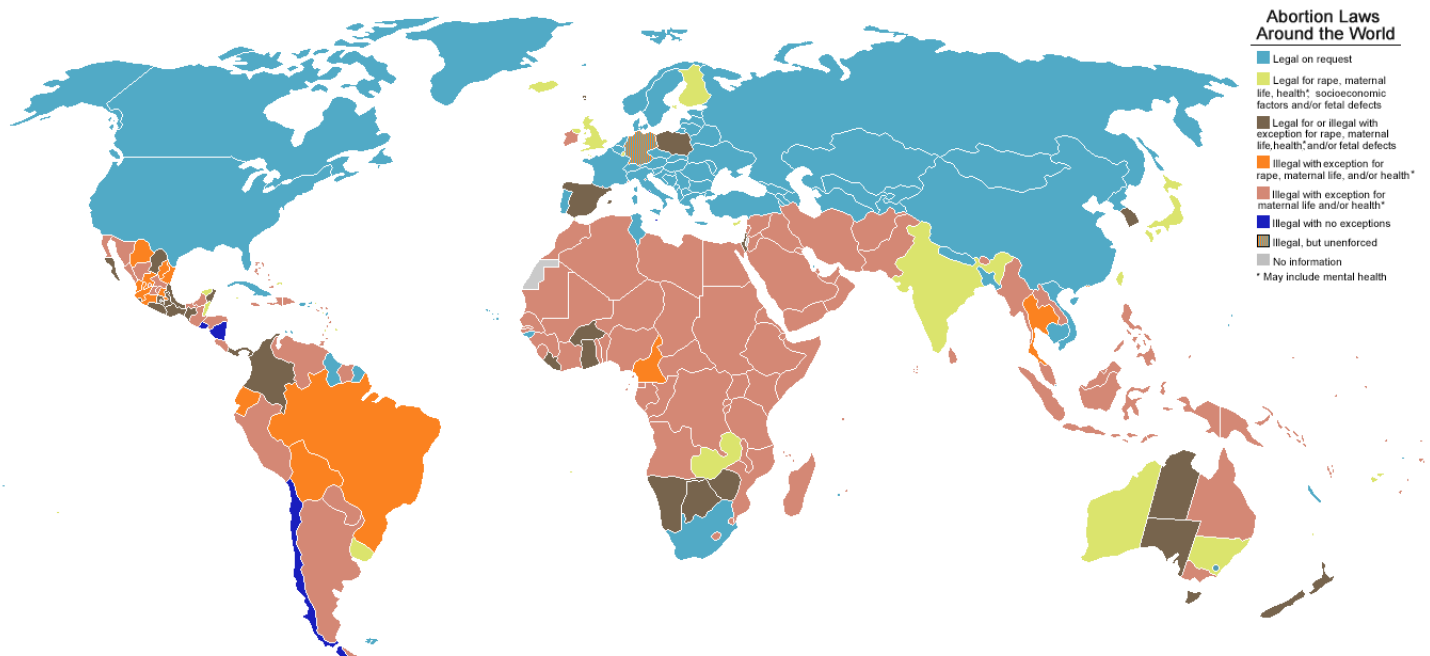
He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD. - Proverbs 17:15

## Abortion & Death Penalty Worldwide Maps

The 1900s saw worldwide trends toward abolishing the death penalty and legalizing abortion. What is the correlation between these two primary sanctity of life issues? Punishing the guilty and protecting the innocent are the most fundamental matters of justice, intractably related. If government betrays one, it undermines the other.

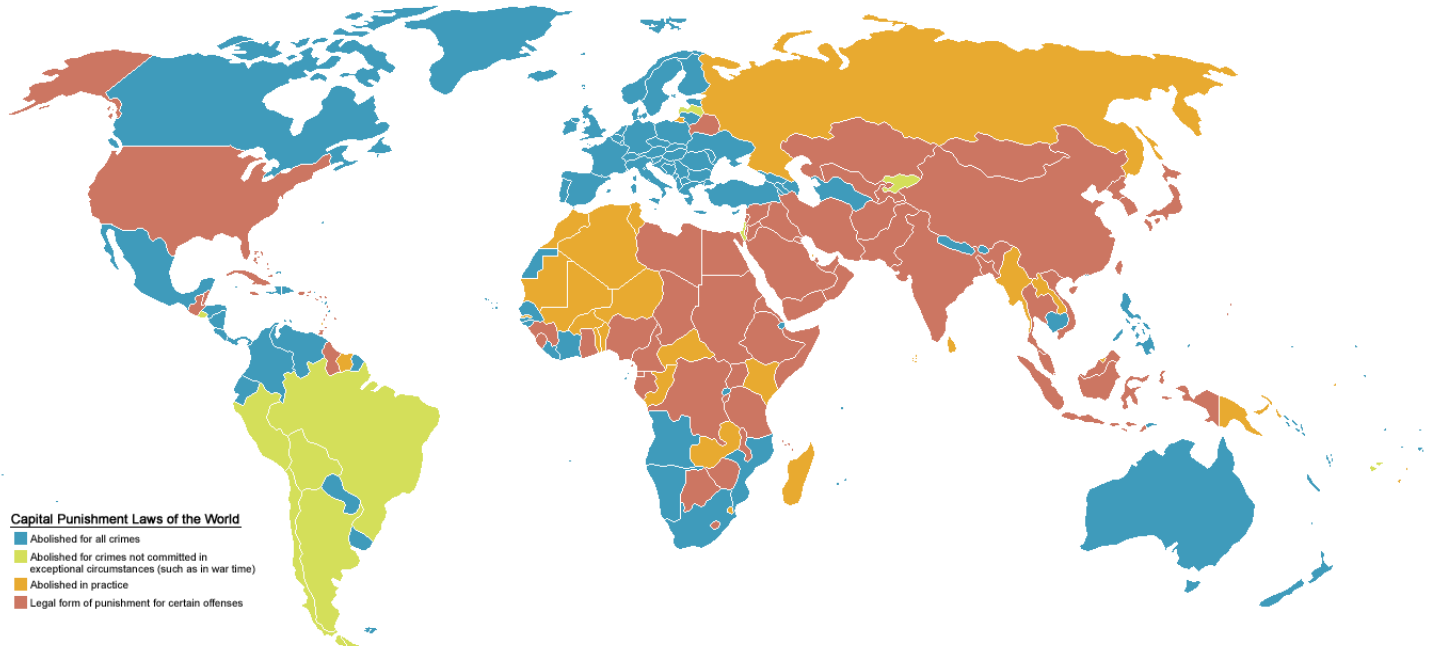
Opposition to the death penalty oftentimes preceded support for abortion. Culturally speaking, this has occurred not only among our allies (see above chart), but also with the Soviet Union. The Soviets outlawed the death penalty just after their 1917 revolution and legalized abortion in 1920. By then, they had partially re-enacted execution for certain crimes, beginning a trend of repeatedly abolishing, and re-enacting the death penalty, and in 1936 they abolished abortion (undoubtedly, as with the national socialists, to increase population growth), only to reinstate it in 1955 (as did the Nazis provisionally during WWII).

These 2007 Wikipedia maps show separately the worldwide status of abortion and death penalty laws. Across most of the northern hemisphere abortion is legal upon request.



Across the southern hemisphere, roughly speaking, abortion is mostly illegal with exceptions for rape and life. Notable exceptions are countries with especially heavy European influence such as South Africa (with its Dutch Afrikaners), and countries like India and Australia with exceptions for health that openly include economic factors, which easily result in *de facto* abortion on demand. The Middle East and northern Africa are the largest regions with the most countries with widespread restrictions, and the few countries that completely outlaw abortion lie in the southern hemisphere.

The northern hemisphere, in law or practice, has mostly abolished the death penalty. Of the exceptions, America has the strongest national anti-abortion movement.



The southern hemisphere has retained more widespread acceptance of the death penalty. And again, nations and regions heavily influenced by Europe such as Australia and western and southern Africa have stopped using or abolished the death penalty. The Middle East and northwest Africa are among the largest regions with the most countries that use the death penalty.

Map References: Wikipedia [Abortion Laws Map](#) and [Capital Punishment by Nation](#).

Surprisingly, "pro-choice" advocates often claim they have found a contradiction among pro-lifers who advocate the death penalty, asking, "If you are pro-life, why do you support the death penalty?" The surprise is that the answer does not suggest itself to them in advance. God commands governments to punish the guilty and protect the innocent. And as illustrated by Amb. Keyes, who is Catholic, in that PBS Republican Presidential Debate, there is widespread agreement in America between fundamentalist Protestant churches and rank and file American Roman Catholics who both oppose abortion and support the death penalty.

The [pro-life industry](#) has failed by spending a billion dollars and wasted a third of a century advocating laws that are merely variations of *Roe v. Wade* itself, that regulate the killing of innocent children and therefore end with, "[and then you can kill the baby](#)." A strong stand in support of punishing the guilty and protecting the innocent could help connect with the vast majority of Americans who support the death penalty. Such a policy also makes *American Right to Life* emphatically *American*. Thus says the LORD God... "Will you profane Me... killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live...?" (Ezekiel 13:19).

For years, googling the words God Death Penalty (or, God and the death penalty, etc.) resulted in a first-page ranking for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's 2002 article. However, an article by an American RTL founding member has been ranked number one out of two million pages. Here are the New Testament scriptures it quotes:

## New Testament Support for Capital Punishment

“For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar.” - Apostle Paul, Acts 25:11

“Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God commanded, saying... ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say...” -Jesus Christ, Mat. 15:3-4 & Mark 7:8-11

...rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. For [the governing authority] is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. -Paul, Rom. 13:3-4

And if anyone wants to harm them... he must be killed... -Apostle John, Rev. 11:5  
...he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. - John, Rev. 13:10

Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies (present tense) without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot. Hebrews 10: 28-29 [death penalty = deterrent for eternal damnation]

“[we] are under the same condemnation, indeed justly , for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong” –repentant criminal being crucified –Luke 23:40-41

## Old Testament Support for Capital Punishment

Be afraid of the sword for yourselves; for wrath brings the punishment of the sword, that you may know there is a judgment. Job 19:29

The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance... So that men will say, “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; Surely He is God who judges in the earth.” Ps. 58:10-11

Gen. 9:6 “Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.”  
`...take no ransom for the life of a murderer... but he shall surely be put to death...’ Num. 35:31-33

“Will you profane Me among My people... killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live...?” Ezek. 13:19

**A Change in the Law:** Christians should not advocate the death penalty for violation of the symbolic ordinances contained in the Mosaic Law. Why not? For after the ministry of Jesus Christ, the great high priest, God changed the law. How do we know this? The New Testament teaches: “For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law” (Hebrews 7:12). But Christians should advocate the death penalty, which the New Testament still commands (Heb. 10:28), for capital crimes like murder and kidnapping (1 Tim. 1:8-10). But after Christ’s death, and the revelation of the New Testament, not Israel nor any government should execute those who violate the no-longer-applicable symbolic ordinances (Lev. 24:16; Mat. 15:4; etc.) which have been repealed, so-to-speak (Heb. 7:12), by God Himself, for they were commands which existed to reinforce Israel’s priestly role of pointing to and preparing the way for the coming Messiah and the Body of Christ.

**Pregnancy and the Death Penalty:** As published by Human Life Alliance, in his [Preborn Children, the Law, and Personhood](#), attorney Gregory Roden demonstrates that in addition to the U.S. Supreme Court recognizing the the unborn child's inheritance rights in 1884 and 1972 cases, America's legal tradition has always recognized the fetus' right to life whenever the topic arose regarding the execution of a convicted pregnant woman. For example this "plea of pregnancy" was recognized in 1778 in Massachusetts' *Commonwealth v. Bathsheba Spooner*. And in 1891 in *Union Pacific R. Co. v. Botsford*, consistent with Scripture, the U.S. Supreme Court positively observed that in common law, a convicted woman would be examined for pregnancy, "in order to guard against the taking of the life of an unborn child for the crime of the mother." This is right. For as demonstrated in [AmericanRTL.org/Bible](#), God's Word is filled with teachings showing the personhood of the unborn child. And though generally speaking, as King Solomon wrote, punishment should be executed swiftly (Eccl. 8:[11](#)), the Bible condemns killing a child for the crimes of a parent (see Ezek. 18:[20](#)). As for example Deuteronomy 24:[16](#) states, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin." These [same principles](#), both in Scripture and in America's legal history, also condemn the rape and incest "[exceptions](#)" practice of killing an unborn child because her father is a criminal.

Thus American Right To Life advocates the death penalty for everyone convicted of a capital crime.

*American RTL: Punish the Guilty, Protect the Innocent!*

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