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Daily Devotional - Monday, March 17, 2025 - Violence and Justice

MARCH 17TH 2025 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Recently, my wife learned that one of her high school classmates was murdered by the classmate's husband. Even though she had not seen her classmate for years, the news was jarring. In our world, violence and disregard for human life is rampant. But it has been that way since the day Cain killed his brother. History is filled with a trail of blood (Genesis 4).

That is not the way it was meant to be. God places a high value on human life. Because humans embody the image of God, murder is an attack on God Himself. For the crime of murder, God instituted capital punishment (Gen. 9:6). Since there was no police force in Israel if a crime was committed, it was the job of the kinsman-redeemer—called here an “avenger of blood” (v. 6)—to investigate the crime and hold the guilty person accountable.

But what if a killing was accidental and the kinsman-redeemer was bent on revenge? (vv. 4–5). In this situation, God provided cities of refuge (vv. 2, 9).

The elders of the cities would add a layer of protection to ensure justice. They could investigate to discern if the person committed intentional murder or unintentional manslaughter.

Passages like these remind us of two key truths. First, God places high value on human life. We are to treat others with dignity and respect and work to protect all life, especially those most vulnerable—the unborn, those suffering from mental or physical impairments, or the elderly. Second, God is deeply concerned for justice. The Law recognizes both the reality of human sin and the fact that a longing for justice can be warped into a thirst for revenge.

These realities should make us long for the return of the Lord Jesus and the coming of His kingdom when there will be no more “death or mourning or crying or pain” (Rev. 21:4).

What two key truths can we take away from these readings about the punishment for murder?

Lord, today’s Scripture encourages us that, in view of all the sin and violence in ancient Israel, You established protection and justice. Thank You for watching over us and our world, too, and keeping us safe.

He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

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