

Murder and its Causes

Because of a quarrel in the Senate at Washington, D. C., John Randolph and Henry Clay refused to speak to each other for several weeks. It wasn't until they met on a narrow sidewalk on Pennsylvania Avenue that circumstances forced words out of them.

At first, neither one would step aside for the other until Randolph, looking his opponent straight in the eye, declared, "I never step aside for scoundrels!"

"I always do," Clay promptly replied as he stepped out into the muddy street and let Randolph have the sidewalk.¹

Thus the quarrel between the two men continued.

Quarrels are a source of bitterness and they frequently lead to reprisals among the participants. The cause of the quarrels can be substantial or trivial.

A writer named Walter Baxendale told a story of two brothers who went out during the night to take a walk, and one of them looked up to the sky and said, "I wish I had a pasture-field as large as the night heavens." And the other brother looked up into the sky, and said, "I wish I had as many oxen as there are stars in the sky."

"Well," said the first, "how would you feed so many oxen?"

Then the second one said, "I would turn them into your pasture."

¹ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 541). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

“What! You would do that whether I would allow it or not?”

“Yes, whether you would or not.”

And so there arose a quarrel; and when the quarrel ended one had slain the other.²

Quarreling is not the cause of murders but it occurs near the source. James wrote,

James 4:1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.³

- The source of quarrels and conflicts is the [desire for] **pleasures** that wage war within.⁴

It happened once that two families near Cairo shared the same water pump. When it needed repairs, the families quarreled over payment of the bill. One thing led to another until bullets began to fly. When

² Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 1108). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

³ New American Standard Bible: 1995 update. (1995). (Jas 4:1–3). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

⁴ ἡδονὴ, ἡς f: desire for physical pleasure, often sexual—‘desire, passion, desire for pleasure.’ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 291). New York: United Bible Societies.

the smoke cleared, there were nine dead from each family. The total repair bill for the pump was fifty-five cents.⁵

It was a trivial reason to cause the deaths of eighteen people. Three cents. That was the value placed on eighteen human lives by this incident.

People fight and quarrel because of the desires they have. They lust after and covet what other people have, wanting to obtain it in order to increase their own pleasure. As James wrote, they lust and do not have so they commit murder.

According to the King James Version of the Bible, the sixth commandment of the Law of Moses says, “Thou shalt not kill.” The New American Standard Version puts it more clearly: “You shall not murder.”⁶ (Exodus 20:13).

The *New Bible Commentary* says one should read the words this way, ‘Thou shalt do no murder’. It is a general safeguard of the sanctity of human life that is here first laid down. Later provision is made for excusable, accidental, or justifiable homicide. For example, war for the Israelites, whether attack or defense, was always by the direct command or permission of God.⁷

⁵ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 772). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

⁶ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains*: Hebrew (Old Testament) (electronic ed.). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc. Strong’s Hebrew #7523. **murder, kill**, i.e., take the life one another so as to cause a state of death. note: this action can refer to an accident, manslaughter, premeditation, or governmental execution.

⁷ Professor F. Davidson, MA, DD, Editor, *The New Bible Commentary*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids,

James wrote that “lust” leads to murder. The word for lust that he used means to strongly desire to have what belongs to someone else and/or to engage in an activity which is morally wrong—‘to covet, to lust, evil desires.’⁸

Envy and coveting.

There is the story of two men who were rivals, and who served the same king. As it happened, one of them was envious in the extreme; and the other was greatly covetous. The king, wanting to reward them for service while at the same time reveal their vices to them, sent for them, saying that whatever they wanted he would grant to them.

When they appeared before the king the sovereign said, “Whatever you desire I will be grant to you, but under this condition: whoever asks first will receive what he asks for, but the other will receive the same thing doubled.”

The covetous man wanted all that could be obtained so he refused to answer. The envious man would not ask first, so that the other might not receive more than he received. But the king pressed them for an answer and so the envious man asked that one of his eyes might be put out, so that his companion might lose both.

Thus, envy never leads to contentment, but only to misery.

pp 120-121. Cf. Ex. 20:13; 21:13; Num. 35:23; Ex. 22:2; and Deut. 5:17n.

⁸ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 290). New York: United Bible Societies. 25.20 ἐπιθυμέω; ἐπιθυμία, as f:

It was Spencer who said, “Envy is the reverse of love; and as that is the supreme source of pleasure, so envy is of pain. Envy has under its banner hatred, calumny, treachery, with the meagerness of famine, the venom of pestilence, and the rage of war.”⁹

Ahab and Naboth

King Ahab of ancient Israel had a neighbor whose name was Naboth. Naboth had a vineyard that Ahab wanted. The King offered to buy the vineyard, but Naboth refused. When King Ahab pouted because Naboth would not sell him the vineyard, Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, intervened. 1 Kings 21:1-4.

Jezebel’s pride and careless disregard for Naboth’s right to life and property led her to devise a plot to destroy Naboth and seize the vineyard for her husband, the king. Her disdain for God’s law of property, and law against false witness, allowed her to use the instrument of government to murder Naboth. (He was stoned to death because Jezebel had caused false witnesses to bring a charge of cursing God and the king.) Add to these motives her apparent belief in unlimited royal privilege and governing authority and we can see how the envy of Ahab coupled with his wife’s machinations led to the murder of an innocent man. 1 Kings 21:5-15.

Abel

In South America there is a strange vine known as the matador. Beginning at the foot of a tree, it slowly

⁹ Elon Foster, *6000 Sermon Illustrations*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 230.

makes its way to the top. As it grows, it kills the tree, and when at last it reaches the top, it sends forth a flower to crown itself. Matador means “killer.”

Jealousy appears harmless when it is small, but if it is allowed to grow, its tendrils of malice and hatred soon clasp themselves around the heart and eventually kill the soul.¹⁰

Cain murdered Abel out of anger and jealousy.
Genesis 4:3-8.

1 John 3:10 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; 12 not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. **And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.**¹¹

William Smith wrote concerning Cain's murder of his brother Abel,

“In a fit of jealousy, roused by the rejection of his own sacrifice and the acceptance of Abel's, he committed the crime of murder.”¹²

¹⁰ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 1445). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

¹¹ New American Standard Bible: 1995 update. (1995). (1 Jn 3:10–12). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.

¹² William Smith, LLD, A Dictionary of the Bible, Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1979, p. 100.

The writer of Hebrews said,

Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.

Abel was a righteous man, but his brother, Cain, became jealous of him and murdered him.

Revenge

While Cain's motive was jealousy there is another motive that is among the most frequent reasons for murder. It is revenge.

The book of Genesis tells us about Lamech,

Genesis 4:23 Lamech said to his wives,

“Adah and Zillah,

Listen to my voice,

You wives of Lamech,

Give heed to my speech,

For I have killed a man for wounding me;

And a boy for striking me;

24 If Cain is avenged sevenfold,

Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

Lamech killed a man and a boy for **revenge**.

Some years ago the court sentenced a man to death for the crime of murder. The murderer's brother, to whom the State was deeply indebted for former services, appealed to the governor of the State for his brother's pardon. The governor granted the pardon, and the man

went to the prison to visit his brother bringing the pardon in his pocket. “What would you do,” he said to him, “if you received a pardon?”

“The first thing I would do,” he answered, “is to track down the judge who sentenced me, and murder him; and the next thing I would do is to track down the chief witness, and murder him.”

The murderer still harbored the lust for revenge.

If there is no repentance, there can be no pardon. So, the brother rose, and left the prison with the pardon still in his pocket.¹³

Simeon and Levi kill Hamor and Shechem

The Bible tells the story of how the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, exacted revenge for the defilement of their sister, Dinah.¹⁴ We read in Genesis,

Genesis 34:1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land. 2 When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force.

Hamor raped Dinah.

Further on the story continues,

Genesis 34:5 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in.

¹³ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 1133). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

¹⁴ Genesis 34:26-27.

Then Genesis tells the brothers' reaction to the news,

34:7 Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done.

Then in order to carry out their plan of revenge upon Shechem, Simeon and Levi deceived Hamor and Shechem into believing that the sons of Israel would join with the community of Hamor, but only under one condition: the Hivites would have to receive circumcision. The Hivites agreed. And so the plan of Simeon and Levi unfolded,

Genesis 34:25 Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male. 26 They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went forth.

In this story the lust of a prince led to rape, and the rape of a sister led to murder in revenge for an unseemly act.

A similar incident occurred in the case of Absalom who murdered Amnon because the latter violated Tamar, his sister.

2 Samuel 13:22 But Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

Absalom's motive was hatred. Expressions for 'hatred' frequently involve idiomatic phrases, for example, 'to kill in the heart' or 'to spit at someone in the heart.'¹⁵

Malice is the desire to cause injury or distress to another. T. Watson said that malice is the Devil's picture. Lust makes men brutish; malice makes them devilish. Malice is mental murder; you may kill a man and never touch him; i.e., "whoever hates his brother is a murderer."¹⁶

Paul wrote to the Romans,

Romans 12:17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 "but if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

¹⁵ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, pp. 762–763). New York: United Bible Societies. **hate:** **πιστεῖω**: to dislike strongly, with the implication of aversion and hostility—‘to hate, to detest.’ *οἱ δὲ πολῖται αὐτοῦ ἐμίσουν αὐτόν* ‘and his fellow countrymen hated him’ Lk 19:14.

¹⁶ Elon Foster, *6000 Sermon Illustrations*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 434.

Moses and the Egyptian who was beating an Israelite.

In Exodus the 2nd Chapter is the story of how Moses went out to see the condition of the Israelites in Egyptian slavery. The Bible says,

Exodus 2:11 Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

Stephen in his defense to the religious authorities in Jerusalem said of the incident involving Moses and the Egyptian,

Acts 7:23 “But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. 24 “And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian. 25 “And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. 26 “On the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, ‘Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?’ 27 “But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, ‘who made you a ruler and judge over us? 28 ‘you do not mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday, do you?’ 29 “At this remark, Moses

fled and became an alien in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

Even though he meant well Moses made the mistake that the Apostle Paul admonished Christians to avoid.

Romans 12:19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

Abner

Joab murdered Abner in revenge for his younger brother, Asahel’s, death. Abner had killed Asahel with the butt of a spear. Add to Joab’s desire for revenge his jealousy of the aspirations Abner had in David’s kingdom, because Joab jealously guarded the position of second in command of David’s army. Abner had occupied the same position in Saul’s army. Because of the desire for revenge and the jealousy and hatred Joab harbored for Abner he murdered him and destroyed what was an overture of peace. (2 Samuel Chapters 2 and 3.)

Uriah the Hittite

King David lusted for the wife of Uriah the Hittite in violation of the Tenth Commandment—“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”¹⁷

The woman’s name was Bathsheba. Because of his lust David committed adultery with Bathsheba.

¹⁷ Exodus 20:17.

Afterward, to conceal his sin he murdered Uriah with the Sword of Ammon; that is, he used the instrument of war to accomplish Uriah's death. The Bible says,

2 Samuel 11:14 Now in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

15 He had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die."

Not only did David use the instrument of war to murder Uriah, but he sent the letter of execution by the victim's own hand. David's motive in the murder was lust—he coveted the wife of another man; he also harbored fear of discovery so that he employed deceit to conceal his sin.

Murder by rape

There are times when human kindness struggles against the baser instincts. It is difficult to believe that men can stoop to the most brazen and callous disregard for God's laws in the treatment of their fellow brothers and sisters. Instances of these letdowns are recorded in the Bible and one in particular evokes the greatest of displeasure and censure. The New Bible Commentary describes the incident as follows,

There are two scenes in Judges Chapter 19 involving hospitality. The first, in Bethlehem (1–10), is normal enough, but the second, in Gibeah (11–28), is perverted and grotesque, with unmistakable similarities to the description of life in Sodom in Gn. 19:1–13.

In the book of Judges we read about the travels of a Levite and how he came on his journey to the

city of Gibeah and looked for a place to stay for the night. A citizen of the town offered him shelter. The Bible says,

Judges 19:20 The old man said, “Peace to you. Only let me take care of all your needs; however, do not spend the night in the open square.” 21 So he took him into his house and gave the donkeys fodder, and they washed their feet and ate and drank. 22 While they were celebrating, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows, surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, “Bring out the man who came into your house that we may have relations with him.” 23 Then the man, the owner of the house, went out to them and said to them, “No, my fellows, please do not act so wickedly; since this man has come into my house, do not commit this act of folly. 24 “Here is my virgin daughter and his concubine. Please let me bring them out that you may ravish them and do to them whatever you wish. But do not commit such an act of folly against this man.” 25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man seized his concubine and brought her out to them; and they raped her and abused her all night until morning, then let her go at the approach of dawn. 26 As the day began to dawn, the woman came and fell down at the doorway of the man’s house where her master was, until full daylight.

This is particularly ironical because the travelers had deliberately avoided pagan towns in order to seek hospitality with their fellow-Israelites (12–14). The rowdies (worthless fellows) in the streets of

Gibeah were clearly morally bankrupt, but so too was the old man who opened his house to the travelers. It was this apparently model host whose perverted sense of duty led him to conceive the idea of casting two innocent women to the dogs (23–24). Here is moral bankruptcy indeed. When God's people do whatever is right in their own eyes they are no better than Sodomites.

The Levite himself, however, is the most perverted of all. After having thrust out his concubine to the mob he retired to bed and apparently gave no further thought to her until he found her dead or unconscious on the doorstep in the morning. Then, with almost unbelievable callousness, he told her to get up because he was ready to go (27–28). This was the man who will summon all Israel to war in the next episode. In retrospect we can understand very well why his concubine found it impossible to live with him.¹⁸

Motives involved here were lust, cruelty, devalued life, outrage permitted by cowardice, and calloused disregard for a woman's life.

¹⁸ Webb, B. G. (1994). Judges. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 283). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Murder of the innocents – Herod.

Someone asked Thales Milesius, one of the wise men of ancient Greece, “...what was the most difficult thing in life?” He answered, “For a tyrant to live to old age.”¹⁹

Herod the Great demonstrated a disposition of mind that showed he understood this danger to his kingdom and so he acted accordingly. He tried to kill the Messiah while Jesus was a babe.

To accomplish his purpose he inquired first where the Messiah was to be born, ostensibly so that he might worship Him, but the magi tricked him, and the parents were warned in a dream to flee from Herod and go down to Egypt for safety.

Matthew wrote in his gospel,

Matthew 2:16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.

Herod’s motives in this mass murder were anger and fear. He feared a rival for sovereign power, and jealously guarded his position.

Pharaoh and the murder of the infants

In Exodus the 1st Chapter the Bible tells how the Pharaoh of Egypt feared the increasing numbers of Israelites in his domain. He thought they had become so

¹⁹ Elon Foster, *6000 Sermon Illustrations*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1996, p. 464.

numerous that they were a threat to Egyptians. He also thought that their greater numbers would allow them to escape slavery. Pharaoh, therefore, gave orders to the midwives to kill the infant males of Israel (Exodus 1:16).

This motive was similar to that of Herod.

Herod Agrippa's misuse of sovereign power.

Herod Agrippa I was the grandson of Herod the Great. The Roman Emperor Caligula made him king over the tetrarchy of Philip and Lysanias, afterward the dominions of Antipas were added, and finally Judea and Samaria. Agrippa was a strict observer of the Law of Moses, and he sought the favor of the Jewish rulers in Jerusalem. To please the Jewish authorities Agrippa brought persecution against the Christians in his domain. The New Testament book of Acts says,

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church in order to mistreat them. 2 And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

Agrippa's motive was apparently an attempt to gain political favor. He had a desire to retain or enhance political power by granting a favor to another power. Add to this his scorn or disdain for a vulnerable or a weaker person.²⁰

Murder of John the Baptist

Herod Antipas had John the Baptist put to death in response to his promise to the daughter of Herodias. John

²⁰ William Smith, LLD, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, p.p. 244,245.

had denounced Herod for his adulterous marriage to Herodias the wife of his brother Philip.

We last heard of John in prison (4:12; 11:2) and Matthew now explains what has happened. Not only was marriage to a [half] *brother's wife* against Jewish law (Lv. 18:16), but Herod and *Herodias* had both divorced their former partners in order to marry. It was not only a politically imprudent marriage but religiously scandalous, and John's outspoken condemnation would have been damaging to Herod's reputation among his Jewish subjects. John was therefore not only an embarrassment to Herod but also (as Josephus' history confirms) a threat to his political security.²¹

The motives involved in the murder of John the Baptist included: the malice and hatred of Herodias for John; Herod's oath before witnesses reveal Herod's pride; then there was his lust for the daughter of Herodias brought out by her dance that led the king into a dilemma of choice between John and his oath. (Salome was Herodias' daughter by her first husband, Herod Philip, Matt. 14:6).

Murder of Jesus

The rulers in Jerusalem feared the coming of Jesus as the Messiah because of the changes His coming would bring. Matthew wrote,

²¹ France, R. T. (1994). Matthew. In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., pp. 922–923). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press.

Matthew 26:3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest, named Caiaphas; 4 and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill Him. 5 But they were saying, “Not during the festival, otherwise a riot might occur among the people.”

John wrote in his gospel,

John 11:47 Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. 48 “If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all, 50 nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.” 51 Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. 53 So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

Pilate understood the motive of the enemies of Jesus,

Matthew 27:18 For he knew that because of envy they had handed Him over.

In the murder of Jesus the motive of the chief priests and Pharisees was envy²², covetousness, jealousy, fear of the Romans, and the fear of losing influence among the people. As John wrote, "...if we let him go on like this all men will believe in Him." The authorities feared losing their position of authority as the gospel says, "...the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." (Matthew 27:18 John 11:47-48.)²³

Thus it was then and is still now that men will murder others when the object of their hatred, envy and malice becomes an obstacle to the achievement of their base desires.

C. E. Macartney wrote,

Leonardo da Vinci was one of the outstanding intellects of all history, for he was great as a draftsman, an engineer, and a thinker. Just before he commenced work on his "Last Supper" he had a violent quarrel with a fellow painter. So enraged and bitter was Leonardo that he determined to paint the face of his enemy, the other artist, into the face of Judas, and thus take his revenge and vent his spleen by passing the man down in infamy and scorn to succeeding generations. The face of Judas was therefore one of the first that he finished, and

²² Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 759). New York: United Bible Societies. φθόνος, ου μ: a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person—'envy, jealousy.' τινὲς μὲν καὶ διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν ... τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν 'some people ... preach Christ ... because of envy and rivalry' Php 1:15. Expressions for 'envy' or 'jealousy' are often idiomatic, for example, 'the heart burns' or 'the stomach is hot'

²³ Ibid., William Smith, LLD, p.581.

everyone could easily recognize it as the face of the painter with whom he had quarreled.

But when he came to paint the face of Christ, he could make no progress. Something seemed to be baffling him, holding him back, frustrating his best efforts. At length he came to the conclusion that the thing which was checking and frustrating him was the fact that he had painted his enemy into the face of Judas. He therefore painted out the face of Judas and commenced anew on the face of Jesus, and this time with the success which the ages have acclaimed.

The lesson to be learned from this story: you cannot at one and the same time be painting the features of Christ into your own life, and painting another face with the colors of enmity and hatred²⁴

If we harbor hatred, enmity and bitter jealousy then these will have their unpleasant results. There is no good in any of these motivations.

There is the story of Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri whose experience provides useful instruction.

One of the major disasters in the history of the United States Navy occurred on February 26, 1844. The *Princeton*, the most powerful warship of that day, commanded by Captain Stockton, was taking members of Congress and government officials down the Potomac.

The president of the United States, and the secretaries of state and navy were on board. For the entertainment of the guests, they fired the *Princeton's* great gun called the Peacemaker. At the second discharge

²⁴ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (pp. 457–458). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

the gun burst, killing the secretary of state, the secretary of the navy, and a number of others.

Just before they fired the gun, Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri was standing near it. Immediately before they fired the cannon a friend laid a hand on his shoulder. Benton turned away to speak with him, when, much to his annoyance, the secretary of the navy, Gilmore, elbowed his way into his place. At that moment they fired the gun and Gilmore was killed.

That singular providence made a great impression upon Benton. He was a man of bitter feuds and quarrels, and recently had had a fierce quarrel with Daniel Webster. But after his escape from death on the *Princeton*, Benton sought reconciliation with Webster. He said to him,

“It seemed to me, Mr. Webster, as if that touch on my shoulder was the hand of the Almighty stretched down there, drawing me away from what otherwise would have been instantaneous death. That one circumstance has changed the whole current of my thought and life. I feel that I am a different man; and I want, in the first place, to be at peace with all those with whom I have been so sharply at variance.” —C. E. Macartney²⁵

In the Law of Moses, the Sixth of the Ten Commandments says, “Thou shalt not kill.” The New American Standard Version puts it more clearly: “You shall not murder.” Man was created to serve as God’s representative to govern the earth. Since man is God’s

²⁵ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (pp. 511–512). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

image-bearer, murder merits the strongest retribution (Gen. 9:6).²⁶

All human beings are made in God's image and therefore all human life is sacred and to be treated with special respect. At the same time, the Law of Moses sanctions the taking of human life as a penalty for certain serious crimes committed against persons or God. The New Testament implicitly affirms the right of governmental authorities to impose the death penalty. The Bible's prescription of the death penalty in certain circumstances is aimed at preventing greater evils from occurring, and thus preserves the principle of the sacredness of human life. Murder, the unauthorized taking of human life, is clearly what the Sixth of the Ten Commandments prohibits.²⁷

²⁶ Cabal, T. (2007). Are the Days of Genesis to Be Interpreted Literally? In C. O. Brand, E. R. Clendenen, P. Copan, & J. P. Moreland (Eds.), *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 5). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

²⁷ Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 118). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers. (Gn 1:26–27) (Gn 9:6; Ex 21:12–17; 31:14–15; 35:2; Lv 20:2, 9–16, 27; 24:16–17, 21; 27:29; Nm 35:33; Dt 13:5–9; 21:21; 22:21). (Romans 13:4).