



# TRUTH

“... thy word is truth” (John 17:17)

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## THE TRUTH ABOUT MURDER

Murder is not a joke. Humans may produce movies, games, and music which portray murder as something spectacular, even entertaining. They might depict murder as a humorous activity. Know this: God is not laughing when men do not value human life.

The Lord recognizes a distinction between *murder* and *accidental* killings. He made that clear in the instructions He gave Israel concerning cities of refuge. Jehovah told His people, “Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the testimony of witnesses” (Numbers 35:30). In that same context, God said the six cities of refuge were established for the Israelites so that “anyone who kills a person accidentally may flee there” (Numbers 35:15). By God’s own words, some killing of human life is counted as *murder*, but other killings are not murder because they are *accidental*.

What does “murder” mean? It is the deliberate killing of an innocent human by another human. Murder involves *humans*, not mosquitoes or mice. It is not simply harming, but putting to *death*. It is not an accidental act, but rather an *intentional* one. Paul acknowledged that some actions are “deserving of death” (Acts 25:11) – death in such instances is not “murder.” For “murder” to take place, it must be the killing of an *innocent* person.

God hates hands that shed innocent blood. The Bible says so (Proverbs 6:16,17). He always has hated murder and has given legislation against it throughout mankind’s history. After Cain killed Abel, the blood of Abel cried out to God (Genesis 4:10). God later instructed Noah and his family (meaning all survivors of the flood – all mankind) about murder, indicating it is wrong to shed a human’s blood because God made man in His image (Genesis 9:6).

When Jehovah made a covenant with the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai, part of His instruction to them was, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). Under the new covenant of the Christ, murder is condemned as a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19,21). Murderers are not granted entrance into God’s city or access to the tree of life (Revelation 22:14,15). Thus, (1) under God’s law prior to the law of Moses, then (2) under

the law of Moses, and also (3) under the law of Jesus, God has forbidden murder.

Like other matters, one knowing the truth about murder does not guarantee that he will refrain from it. *Knowing* what is right and *practicing* what is right are two different things. King Manasseh, a child of the living God who know God’s will, chose to be a ruthless murderer: “Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another . . .” (2 Kings 21:16).

Humans whose heart is filled with hatred and an unquenched desire to murder someone will find a way to make it happen. Their instrument of cruelty may be their own hands, a knife, a vehicle, a rope, a piece of iron, poison, a gun, or a sinking boat. Murder is produced by an evil heart. The Christ said, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders” (Mark 7:21).

When people think about historical instances of murder, they normally think about the killing of humans who are outside of the womb, that is, killing humans who already have been born. What about the slaying of innocent humans who still are inside the womb of their mother?

After Jesus was born, *outside* the womb He was called a “babe,” from the Greek word “brephos” (Luke 2:12). The Holy Spirit described John the Baptizer as a babe – same Greek word “brephos,” when he still was *inside* his mother’s womb (Luke 1:41). In God’s sight, the babe/brephos is a human, regardless of his location. To kill the innocent babe Jesus *outside* the womb would have been murder. To kill the innocent John *inside* the womb also would have been murder. In modern times, abortion is a common activity. Though it is a popular choice for many, abortion is murder. Why? Because it is the *intentional* killing on an *innocent* human being.

Murder is evil, but it is a forgivable offense. “That is not fair!” Let us not be hasty with our words. The apostle Peter told those who murdered God’s Son that they could have their sins remitted/forgiven if they would repent and be baptized (Acts 2:36-38). Believe it, friend, because the Bible says it.

-- Roger D. Campbell

## “THE LORD’S PASSOVER”

When you hear the word “Passover,” what comes to mind? Does that word make you think about the last plague which God sent on the nation of Egypt? It is with that tenth plague that “Passover” is connected.

When Jehovah came to Egypt to strike dead the firstborn of each family, the Israelites’ firstborn children were spared. Why? Because they obeyed God’s instruction to kill a lamb and sprinkle its blood around the doorpost of their house. When God saw that blood, He “passed over” to the next house (Exodus 12:13). Thus, the term “Passover.”

Concerning the Passover, there was the Passover *feast* (Exodus 12:14), the Passover *lamb* (Exodus 12:21), and the Passover *meal* (Luke 22:11,15). God’s message to Israel was, “*On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD’s Passover*” (Leviticus 23:5). God Himself established this feast, and He calls it “*the LORD’s Passover.*” What words should we associate with that special occasion?

**Deliverance** – In later years, when the kids of the Israelites asked about the significance of the Passover, their parents were supposed to tell them, “*It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households*” (Exodus 12:27). God had a promise to fulfil: give the land of Canaan to the Israelites. In order to do that, He first had to deliver them from Egypt.

Just as Lot and his family were spared from the destruction of Sodom due to Jehovah’s mercy and favor, so it was with the Israelites’ deliverance from Egypt: they owed their rescue to the Almighty. Under the new covenant, through the Christ we are delivered from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:12,13) and from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10).

**Blood** – It was blood-deliverance for Israel. The lamb’s blood marked their houses (Exodus 12:21-23). Though the Israelites were not perfect people (at least some of them served idols in Egypt, Joshua 24:14), in God’s hand, so to speak, the blood of a lamb “got the job done.” In the same way, under the new covenant, the blood of God’s Lamb can take away/provide a covering for the sin of the world (John 1:29).

**Demonstration** – The Lord said, “*For I will pass through the land of Egypt . . . and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD*” (Exodus 12:12). The God of heaven showed that He was superior to the false gods of the Egyptians. He made it clear that none of their “gods” could “handle” Him. Not one of their “gods” was capable of protecting the people of Egypt from the Almighty!

In some of the earlier plagues, the Bible explicitly

says that the plagues did not affect the Israelites. Why not? God’s answer was, “. . . *that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel*” (Exodus 11:7). God’s plans could not be defeated, nor His promises nullified!

**Compliance** – After the Israelites received the Lord’s instructions about the Passover, how did they respond? “*Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did*” (Exodus 12:28).

Submitting to what God says to do is always the right course of action . . . in every circumstance! How did the Israelites show their faith in this case? By keeping the Lord’s Passover in the manner that He instructed them (Hebrews 11:28). Their sprinkling of lamb’s blood was not based on the latest scientific or medical research of the day. Nor was there any type of historical precedent for such action. Using blood to protect the life of a child sounds illogical; it makes no sense. Well, it made perfect sense to the Lord, and when Israel complied with His will, they were blessed for doing so. The same is true today: the Master said, “. . . *blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it*” (Luke 11:28).

**Memorial** – The Lord Himself used that word, saying to Israel, “*So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord . . .*” (Exodus 12:14). As we noted already, the Israelites were to share this explanation with their children: we do this because the Lord passed over our houses in Egypt, struck the Egyptians, and delivered us. We do this to remember that! (Exodus 12:26,27).

Of course, Christians have a wonderful memorial, too: the Lord’s Supper. And what is the purpose of the communion? Jesus said, “*Do this in remembrance of me*” (1 Corinthians 11:24). It was not enough for the Israelites to have an annual Passover feast: they needed to do it for the right reason, which was to remember what the Lord had done for them. In like manner, we break bread for a specific purpose: it is a memorial of what God’s Son did for us.

**Type/prophesy** – Each Passover lamb during the Old Testament era pointed to Calvary. For the Passover, God required an unblemished lamb (Exodus 12:5). That is how the Christ is described: a Lamb without spot and blemish (1 Peter 1:18,19). Again, the Israelites were not supposed to break any bones of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:46). And what do we see in John 19:32-36? Not one of Jesus’ bones was broken as He was hanging on the cross. We are blessed to have the Christ as “our Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7).

-- Roger D. Campbell

## MY HEART DROPS WHEN I HEAR THOSE WORDS

What all lost people have in common is the fact that their sin is keeping them separated from the God of heaven. Only the blood of Jesus can blot out their sins and reconcile them to God (Romans 5:8-10). They desperately need to hear and obey the gospel!

As we put forth an effort to teach the gospel to the lost, we encounter people who are in a wide variety of circumstances. It is extremely common today to come in contact with couples in which one or both of them have been married previously. She might share this information with us: "We have three kids: I have one child from my previous marriage, he has one child from a previous marriage, and this baby is ours." My heart drops when I hear those words. Why? Not because it is one hundred per cent certain that their relationship does not meet God's approval, but from experience I know the odds are fairly high that they are living in an adulterous union. When the gospel encounters adulterers, my observation is that in most cases, adulterers choose to remain adulterers.

The King of kings said, "*And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery*" (Matthew 19:9). In this statement, the words "sexual immorality" ("fornication" in the KJV) are from the Greek word "πορνεία/porneia," which means "illicit sexual intercourse" [Thayer, word 4202 via e-Sword]. Jesus is speaking about unlawful sexual relations between two humans, meaning sleeping together when they are not married to one another.

According to the Master, if a man divorces his wife and the reason for him doing so is *not* because she has committed fornication, then he turns around and marries a second woman, the relationship between the man and woman number two is "adultery." No judge, no parliament, and no religious teacher can overturn or negate what our Lord declared.

"But what about the case where one's spouse cheated on him/her when they were married? Would the non-cheater have the right to get a divorce and at some point enter another marriage?" A divorce not due to fornication followed by a subsequent marriage equals adultery. When the "not for fornication" is missing, in other words, yes, one's spouse *did* commit fornication, in such an instance it is not adultery to divorce that person and enter into another marriage.

What that means is, there *are* people who have been divorced and now are living with a new spouse, and they have every right to do so because their original spouse was unfaithful to them by sleeping with another human. So, yes, there are some divorced,

remarried people who are not living in adultery. They should feel no sense of shame, and if they happen to be loyal members of Jesus' church, their faithfulness is not any less than the faithfulness of others.

If one is going to become a follower of Jesus, repentance is required: "*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . .*" (Acts 3:19). The old man's lifestyle must be put off. One cannot remain in darkness and walk as a faithful child of light. Unlawful relationships must be abandoned.

One who is the co-owner of a shop which makes most of its money selling pornographic materials cannot continue as a seller of such rottenness if he wants to serve Jesus. He must abandon the relationship of being a co-owner of such an enterprise.

Because God's plan for marriage is for a male to be married to a female (Matthew 19:4-6), same-gender sexual relations are not acceptable to Him. When a homosexual learns the gospel, if he wants to be saved from his sins, he must abandon his homosexual activity. Repentance requires such.

In the same manner, just as one must get out of an unlawful business relationship, and just as one would need to give up his practice of homosexuality, one who is in an adulterous relationship, if he wants to please the Lord, needs to abandon that relationship. An idolater cannot remain an idolater and please God. The same is true of adulterers. Neither idolaters nor adulterers will inherit the kingdom of God. The Bible says so (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). I do not have the right to alter God's truth or to tell idolaters and adulterers that it is okay if they continue in those activities.

To make certain changes in life, it takes courage. It took courage for Saul of Tarsus to admit he was wrong, humble himself, and obey the gospel. But, he did. It could not have been easy for those who worshipped idols to give them up and turn to the true and living God. But, they did (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

It could not have been easy for Jeremiah to live a life of celibacy, but Jehovah commanded him, "*You shall not take a wife*" (Jeremiah 16:1,2). Since God will not allow a person to be tempted beyond what he is able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13), then it was possible for Jeremiah to live without having sex. If it was possible for Jeremiah, it is possible today as well.

Our hearts break for all the innocent people, including adults and kids, whose lives are affected by divorce. There are people living today who have learned Jesus' truth about marriage and adultery and chosen to submit to His will. May there be multitudes of others who come forth to imitate their bravery.

-- Roger D. Campbell

## 1 Timothy 1:16 – PAUL – A PATTERN FOR BELIEVERS

In Paul's first letter to his true son in the faith, Timothy, he told him, *"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life."*

In what sense is Paul a pattern for those who believe on Jesus? In other Bible passages, we learn that it is good for Christians to imitate Paul's conduct as he imitates the Christ (Philippians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 11:1). In the context of the first chapter of the book of 1 Timothy, however, Paul stands out as a pattern of a different sort. What kind of pattern is that? Let us see what we can learn from 1 Timothy.

Paul's **past** – In speaking about the kind of person he was before he became a Christian, Paul wrote, *"Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief"* (1 Timothy 1:13). So, in his former days Saul of Tarsus was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent ("insolent" means arrogant, rude, or disrespectful; [www.yourdictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com)).

Paul's **need** – He needed something that no human could supply. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and for one who made it his mission to destroy the Christ's church (Galatians 1:23), there is no way that Saul deserved the forgiveness of sins. Yet, that is just what he received. How was that even possible?

Staying in the context of 1 Timothy 1:16, go back and look at verse thirteen again: *"... but I obtained mercy..."* [all underlining is mine, rdc].

Paul said, *"And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant..."* (1:14).

Furthermore, *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"* (1:15).

Again, Paul declared that Jesus had shown him *"all longsuffering"* (1:16).

The Lord of heaven and earth provided for Paul what no human could supply – mercy (1:13), grace (1:14), a Savior (1:15), and longsuffering (1:16). It was because of the Lord and His goodness that Paul could be saved, and Paul gave credit to Whom credit was due: *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen"* (1:17).

Paul's **reception of God's gift** – Everlasting

life is a gift from God (Romans 6:23). According to 1 Timothy 1:16, everlasting life is for those who believe on the Christ. Paul was such a believer, so forgiveness was granted to him.

In general terms, salvation/eternal life is granted to those who "believe." The message of 1 Timothy 1:16 and John 3:16 makes that clear. The Bible also says that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation *"to all who obey Him"* (Hebrews 5:9). Thus, the believer who is saved is one who is obedient to God's Son. Jesus also stated that a person who keeps His word shall never see death, meaning he will enjoy eternal life (John 8:51). Once more, what must the conclusion be? That eternal life is granted to those who submit to the Christ.

The Bible affirms that eternal life is in God's Son (1 John 5:11). In Bible language, salvation is in the Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). So is redemption (Ephesians 1:7), no condemnation (Romans 8:1), and all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).

When Paul learned about Jesus of Nazareth being the Savior of the world and Provider of mercy and grace, what did he do to get into the spiritual realm know as "in Christ?" He was baptized into Him (Romans 6:3,4).

Paul as **a pattern** – What does his case show? Not that ignorant people are "safe" in their sin and not accountable to God. Sin committed in ignorance is still sin that requires forgiveness (Acts 3:15-19).

No, Paul's case shows that everlasting life is granted to people who come to the Lord on His terms, *regardless of their background*. Paul's example demonstrates that God is longsuffering toward all (2 Peter 3:9), and His mercy and grace are *available* to save and *able* to save even those who initially reject the gospel of the Lord.

Can a blasphemer be forgiven? Paul was. Can a persecutor of God's people be forgiven? Paul was. Can one whose heart is filled with envy and hatred be forgiven? Paul was (Titus 3:3).

If *that* kind of fellow, the kind Paul had been, can receive God's grace, mercy, and gift of everlasting life, every person in the whole world should say, "I guess there is hope for me after all!"

-- Roger D. Campbell

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