

# Crime and Punishment



## Justice

### According to Christians:

- \* God is just and reward the good on judgement day
- \* Bible says that we should not cheat people
- \* Jesus said rich should share with poor
- \* Churches try to bring about justice as part of Jubilee 2000

### According to Muslims:

- \* Allah is just and will reward the good on Judgement day
- \* Part of the role of Khalifah's is to be fair
- \* Hadith shows Muhammad acting justly
- \* Shari'ah brings God's justice on earth.

### Different Theories of Punishment:

**Deterrence** – putting a harsh punishment in place to put people off committing crimes e.g. death penalty

**Reform** – punishments which involve ways to change the criminals behaviour e.g. education in prisons to help people get qualifications.

**Retribution** – punishments which make the criminal pay for what they have done – the worse the crime the worse the punishment.

**Protection** – removing criminals from society in order to protect the rest of society e.g. prisons/ other custodial sentences.

### Punishment

Some <b>Christians</b> support <b>reform</b> because:	Others support <b>retribution and deterrence</b> because:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus said we should not judge others</li> <li>• Jesus said we should settle problems without the courts</li> <li>• Jesus stopped a stoning saying that those without sin should throw the first stone.</li> <li>• Emphasis in New Testament is on forgiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Paul says we should use the authorities to uphold the law</li> <li>• Church leaders say society should deter criminals</li> <li>• Jesus threw money lenders out of the Temple.</li> </ul>

In this section you could also be asked about attitudes to forgiveness and judgements. For attitudes to forgiveness please see the notes on the Peace and Conflict section.

### Judgement in Christianity:

- \* God is just and will make his judgement on everyone.
- \* Different views on this judgement – some say it is a weigh up of how good/ bad you have been others say it is how good a Christian you have been and so you are judged on your religious belief.
- \* Jesus taught that it is not for humans to pass judgement on one another “ Do not judge and you will not be judged” – this is only for God to do.

### In **ISLAM** views on punishment are:

- Based on deterrence and reform
- Criminals should be punished
- Specific punishments are given in the Qur'an e.g. amputate hands for stealing
- It is also specified in Shari'ah law – which as law from Allah is just and merciful.
- Criminals will be punished after death too, when they are judged on the Last Day

- ❑ Harsh punishments should only be used as a last resort and people’s family circumstances are taken into account.
- ❑ As with Christians, attitudes to judgment change from judging your actions to judging how strong a believer you are.

**Capital Punishment**

**Christian beliefs:**

FOR	AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bible sets it as punishment allowed by God</li> <li>• Roman Catholics allow for it</li> <li>• Christian Church used it as punishment for heresy</li> <li>• Is a way of seeing justice is done</li> <li>• “an eye for an eye”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sanctity of Life argument</li> <li>• Jesus banned retribution</li> <li>• Believe that Jesus came to reform people</li> <li>• Jesus stopped an execution taking place.</li> </ul>

**Muslim beliefs:**

In Islam the death penalty can be used for 3 crimes – murder, adultery and apostasy (denying Islam and working against Islam). It is set down in the Qur’an and so it is argued that Allah allows it. Muhammad (pbuh) also agreed to its use.

However, some Muslims are against it due to the sanctity of life argument and beliefs about forgiveness. “Take not life – which God has made sacred” (Qur’an).

**PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE = Dietrich Bonhoeffer.**

He was arrested as his ideas were dangerous for the Nazis – it might lead to mass revolt against Nazism. In a radio broadcast he said of Hitler “ the leader who makes an idol of himself makes a mockery of God”. Following this he was banned from Berlin in 1935 so he went to London where he met with important Church leaders to discuss what was happening in Nazi Germany. He later returned to Germany to train priests – here he had influence over others who could go on to preach to their congregation against the Nazis.

He was arrested by Gestapo in 1937 for telling Christians that they should oppose the Nazis because Nazism was against Christian principles of equality. He tried pacifism but realised it would not work and so plotted to kill Hitler. This led to his execution in 1945 at Flossenburg concentration camp.