

## **Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 72-“Are You a Murderer”**

**Sunday AM-June 28, 2026**

This study guide examines a lesson based on Matthew 5:21–26, exploring the deeper biblical meaning of murder. While society often views murder only as a physical act, this lesson analyzes how the teachings of Jesus Christ challenge us to look at the heart, including anger and how we treat others. The text also discusses the history of murder in the Bible, the role of God’s image in humanity, and the need for a righteousness that goes beyond outward rules.

### Understanding the Message: Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions based on the provided text. Each answer should be 2–3 sentences long.

1. What specific statistics does the lesson provide regarding the frequency of murder in the United States?
2. According to Genesis 9:6, why did God institute capital punishment for those who take a human life?
3. How does the text define the concept of "divine allowance" in the context of taking a life?
4. What distinction does the lesson make between "the first sin" and "the first human crime" in the Bible?
5. According to the teaching, what is the actual cause of crimes like murder and theft instead of social programs or stress?
6. How did the scribes and Pharisees use the commandment "You shall not murder" to justify their own righteousness?
7. In Matthew 5:22, what three things does Jesus Christ equate with being in danger of judgment or fire?
8. According to the lesson, what must a person do if they remember a conflict with a brother while at the altar?
9. How does the text describe the origin of murder according to John 8:44 and the condition of the human mind in Romans 1:28?
10. What are the three specific ways that the teaching of Jesus Christ on murder is intended to affect the listener?

## Answer Key

1. The lesson states that 14,000 murders occurred in America last year, averaging about 38 people per day. Additionally, it mentions that at least 65 million babies have been murdered through abortion since it was legalized in the United States.
2. God instituted capital punishment because He created man in His own image. Therefore, taking the life of another human being is seen as an assault on the image of God.
3. Divine allowance refers to specific times in God's plan where He authorized the taking of life, such as when He commanded His chosen people to judge other nations. In these specific instances, the act is considered an exercise of His will rather than the sin of murder.
4. While murder was not the first sin, it is identified as the first human crime in the Bible. This occurred in Genesis 4:8 when Cain lured his brother Abel into a field and murdered him.
5. The lesson argues that murder is not caused by social deficiency or stressful situations. Instead, these crimes come from a degenerate human heart and a debased mind that has rejected God.
6. The scribes and Pharisees believed they were righteous simply because they did not commit the physical act of murder. They used their outward obedience to this one law to convince themselves that they were right before God.
7. Jesus Christ warns that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause, whoever says "Raca" to his brother, and whoever says "You fool" is in danger of judgment. These internal feelings and insults are treated with the same seriousness as the act of murder.
8. If a person remembers their brother has something against them, they are told to leave their gift at the altar and go their way. They must first be reconciled to their brother before they can come back and offer their gift to God.
9. The Bible teaches that murder is authored by the devil, who is a murderer from the beginning. Furthermore, Romans 1:28 describes man as having a debased mind filled with unrighteousness and murder because he rejects God.
10. The teaching is meant to shatter a person's comfort by affecting three specific areas. These are the individual's view of themselves, their view of God, and their view of others.

## Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the definition of murder held by the Pharisees with the definition provided by Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount.
2. The text mentions that "righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." Explain what this means in the context of daily Christian living.
3. Discuss the biblical argument provided in the text for capital punishment. How does the "image of God" play a central role in this perspective?
4. Analyze the role of reconciliation in worship as described in the passage. Why does Jesus Christ command followers to fix their human relationships before offering gifts to God?
5. Explain the statement that "social deficiency" is not the cause of crime. According to the lesson, what is the only way to truly stop the cycle of violence in a society?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Abomination:** Something that is exceptionally loathsome, hateful, or wicked in the sight of God.
- **Capital Punishment:** The legally authorized killing of someone as punishment for a crime, which the text states was instituted by God in Genesis 9:6.
- **Debased Mind:** A mind that is corrupt, depraved, or has lost its moral compass due to the rejection of God.
- **Decalogue:** Another name for the Ten Commandments, specifically referring to the laws given in Exodus 20.
- **Degenerate:** Having declined from a former state of moral character; having a nature that is corrupted by sin.
- **Divine Allowance:** A theological concept where God permits or commands certain actions (like killing in war or judgment) that would otherwise be forbidden.
- **Latin Vulgate:** A 4th-century Latin translation of the Bible.
- **Premeditation:** The action of planning or plotting a crime, such as murder, before it is committed.
- **Samaritan Pentateuch:** A version of the first five books of the Bible used by the Samaritans.

- **Septuagint:** The earliest Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- **Social Deficiency:** The idea that crimes are caused by a lack of social programs or poor environmental conditions rather than individual morality.
- **Unregenerated:** Refers to a human nature that has not been spiritually reborn or transformed by the power of God.

#### Greek Terms and Pronunciation

The following terms used in the study guide or source context are derived from Greek:

- **Raca (or Raka)**<sup>1</sup>: (Phonetic: *ray-kah*) — A term of contempt or derision derived from a word meaning "empty" or "empty-headed." Jesus Christ used this to show that verbal insults are a form of heart-murder.
- **Septuagint**<sup>2</sup>: (Phonetic: *sep-too-uh-jint*) — Derived from the Greek word for "seventy," this is the name of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:22 (NKJV): "And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council." <sup>2</sup> Mentioned in the lesson as a historical translation used to verify the words Cain spoke to Abel.