

END-TIMES ISSUES



#102 Commandment #6 – Who has the right to kill?

AND BEYOND I

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

1

THE 6TH COMMANDMENT

You shall not murder.
Exodus 20:13 (BSB); also in Deuteronomy 5:17

- God explained the reason for this commandment, over 2000 years before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments.

"And surely **I will require the life** of any man or beast by whose hand your **lifeblood** is shed. **I will demand an accounting** from anyone who takes the life of his fellow man: Whoever sheds the **blood** of man, **by man his blood will be shed; for in His own image** God has made mankind."

Genesis 9:5-6 (BSB)

- At the same time, we find many examples in Scripture, where killing is *commanded* by God. **WHY??**
- To understand this issue, we need to go back to the beginning...

2

WHO IS GOD?

NOT us!
Most people treat God as though he were a *created being*, perhaps superior to us.

- He is the God who created *everything*.** This is the *first* thing God reveals in Scripture, and the *last* thing many people want to admit.

In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1 (BSB)

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For **in Him all things were created**, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. **All things were created through Him and for Him.**
He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
Colossians 1:15-17 (BSB)

3

Through creation... through Scripture.
God has revealed certain things about himself through creation. He has revealed much more about himself through *his* Word, the Bible – all that we need for life and godliness.

- This God who made us is *infinitely* greater than us.**

It is I who made the earth and created man upon it.
It was My hands that **stretched out the heavens**, and I **ordained all their host.**
Isaiah 45:12 (BSB)

Indeed, God is **great—beyond our knowledge**; the number of His years is **unsearchable.**
Job 36:26 (BSB)

There are *hundreds* of verses on these issues... We can only pick a few.

4

- Comparing God to us is like comparing a potter to the clay he works with.**
 - ✓ God created us out of the dust of the ground (Genesis 2:7), the same way a potter forms an object out of clay. God uses this very analogy to illustrate the difference between him and us... *and to show the folly of exalting us (and our opinions) over him.*

100% Dependent
We are dependent on *him*; he isn't dependent on *us*.

You have turned things upside down, as if the potter were regarded as clay. Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, "He did not make me?"
Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker ...
Does the clay ask the potter, "What are you making?"
Isaiah 29:16; 45:9 (BSB)

And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, **he himself gives everyone life and breath** and everything else.
Acts 17:25 (NIV)

5

- We cannot comprehend things the same way God does. Our understanding is limited.** He is *infinite*; we are *finite*.
 - ✓ God created us to have *accurate* (though limited) knowledge. Sin has complicated matters by introducing *error* into our thinking.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so **My ways** are **higher than your ways** and **My thoughts** than your thoughts."
Isaiah 55:9 (BSB)

... **his understanding no one can fathom.**
Isaiah 40:28b (NIV)

- ✓ **The wicked tend to deny this**, and often attack the legitimacy of what God does. They act as though *they* know better about how the world should be run. When God doesn't do things their way, they tend to criticize and condemn him.

They blaspheme in **matters they do not understand**, ...
2 Peter 2:12 (BSB)

6

- All that God does is consistent with his **holy** nature.

People often complain, but...

The Lord is **righteous** in all his ways and **faithful** in all he does.
Psalm 145:17 (NIV)

He is the Rock, his works are **perfect**, and all his ways are **just**.
A faithful God who does **no wrong**, **upright** and **just** is he.
Deuteronomy 32:4 (NIV)

- We have no right to complain, if he doesn't do things our way. When God does as he pleases; *people have no right stop him or question the rightness of what he does.*

WE are the ones who need questioned and restrained, not God!

He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth.
No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"
Daniel 4:35 (NIV)

- God will do things according to his **holy** purpose.

"I [God] say, 'My **purpose** will stand, and I will do all that I please.'"
Isaiah 46:10b (NIV)

- All he does will be consistent with his **holy** nature. Therefore:

- ✓ He **cannot** tolerate the evil that people commit.

Your eyes are **too pure** to look on evil; you **cannot tolerate wrongdoing**.
Habakkuk 1:13a (NIV)

- ✓ Yet he often **postpones** judgment, patiently enduring people's evil ... even while preparing their judgment. (According to 2 Peter 3:9, he gives them time to repent.)

But what if God ... has **endured with much patience** the objects of wrath prepared for destruction?
Romans 9:22 (NET)

- ✓ Judgment **will** come: The wicked will not last forever. They may practice evil *now*, but their proper end will come: "disaster."

The Lord works out everything to **its proper end**—even the wicked for a day of **disaster**.
Proverbs 16:4 (NIV)

- ✓ Either way, whether he judges **immediately**, or **postpones** it, God takes no pleasure in *anyone's* death.

For I take no pleasure in **anyone's** death, declares the Lord GOD. So repent and live!
Ezekiel 18:32 (BSB)

Those who are willing to repent may have their physical death postponed (as Israel was offered, in the context of Ezekiel 18). *But death involves more than just the body.* God takes no pleasure in *spiritual* death, either. The offer of extended *physical* life (offered to Israel in this passage) will not necessarily apply to us. But the *ultimate consequences* of repentance *will* apply: the beginning of *spiritual* life **now**, and the promise of a new *physical* life **in the future**.


What is our condition?

100% Dependent
Though we are 100% dependent on *him*, we have chosen to rebel and to claim *independence*.

- About this rebellion: It's against the one who *made us*, and who *rules over us*. It's against the *King of kings* – and that makes it *treason*. When we exalt ourselves *above* God it's the same as wanting to *be* God.
- We have become enslaved by sin. Though we act as though we are "free" (i.e., free from God's "restrictions"), we are now slaves to sin.

Jesus replied, "Truly, truly, I tell you, **everyone who sins is a slave to sin.**"
John 8:34 (BSB)

... wickedness **will not release those who practice it.**
Ecclesiastes 8:8b (BSB)



- How serious is this enslavement by sin? It has impacted our very natures.

... we were **by nature** deserving of wrath.
Ephesians 2:3b (NIV)

Jesus came to **release** us from this slavery. We must be willing to repent and trust him, and change our allegiance to him (Romans 6).

- Since we have all rebelled against him, we have all **earned** the consequence of death. *We each have chosen to follow the example of our ancestor, Adam.*

Therefore, just as **sin entered the world through one man**, and **death** **through sin**, so also death was passed on to all men, because **all sinned**.
... for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God, ...
For the **wages of sin is death**, ...
Romans 5:12; 3:23; 6:23a (BSB)

- The consequence: As rebels against our creator, **we must die**.

- ✓ Our ancestors were promised it would happen, if they sinned.

"You may eat freely from every tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, **you will surely die.**"
Genesis 2:16b-17 (BSB)

- ✓ Today, we all **know** that we **deserve** death, if we choose to sin... and we still choose to do it – and even encourage others to do it.

Although **they know** God's righteous decree that those who do such things are **worthy of death**, they not only continue to do these things, but also approve of those who practice them.
Romans 1:32 (BSB)

But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, **you are storing up wrath against yourself** for the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.
Romans 2:5 (BSB)

- Even so, we tend to make excuses - just like Israel did: making excuses and acting innocent. (Our sin *corrupts* our thinking, and ceases to look as bad as it really is.)

"Why has the LORD pronounced all this great disaster against us?
What is our guilt? What is the sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?"
Jeremiah 16:10b (BSB)

Note how they *talk* as though they were *faithful* to God!

- As in Noah's day: The people focused on "everyday life," but God saw the evilness of their hearts.

People were **eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage**, up to the day Noah entered the ark.
Luke 17:27a (BSB)

Then the LORD saw that the **wickedness** of man was great upon the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was **altogether evil all the time**.
Genesis 6:5 (BSB)

- In spite of our excuses, we've still **earned** the sentence of death, and we will die physically. Every one of us will die (except for those who are alive when Jesus returns – 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Our sin is against God. It's his prerogative, as our judge, to decide when he will execute this sentence of death.

- ✓ He may use natural causes or random events to do it.
- ✓ He may instruct humans to do it for him (as in civil government).
- ✓ But he does not permit us to make the decision for him! He does not give us authority to take the matter into our own hands.

✓ **WHEN will we die? It is God's prerogative to decide.**

- ✦ If he wanted, he could destroy us **all in an instant**. (This is what we deserve.)

If it were his intention and he **withdrew his spirit and breath**, all humanity would **perish** together and mankind would **return to the dust**.
Job 34:14-15 (NIV)

- ✦ Obviously, God has chosen to delay death for most people – which is why most of us will grow old before we die. But he has no obligation to wait.

You turn people back to dust, saying, "**Return to dust**, you mortals."
Psalm 90:3 (NIV)

... each person is **destined to die** once and **after that comes judgment** ...
Hebrews 9:27b (NLT)

Salvation does not prevent one's death and judgment. But it gives us a hope for eternity and a new (resurrected) body.

- ✦ When it's time, we cannot stop it.

Just as no one has power over the wind to restrain it, so **no one has power over the day of his death**.
Ecclesiastes 8:8a (NET)

- ✦ NOTE: If you're reading this, God is giving you an opportunity to repent (if you haven't already done so).

What can we conclude?

The foundation for truth.
The *only* way to escape the ways of the world is to submit to what God has said in Scripture.

- God has claimed the right and the authority to give life and to take it away.

I bring **prosperity** and create **disaster**.
I, the LORD, do all these things.
Isaiah 45:7b (NIV)

I put to **death** and I bring to **life**,
I have **wounded** and I will **heal**,
and no one can deliver out of my hand.
Deuteronomy 32:39 (NIV)

- ✓ Jesus' death on the cross is the ultimate example of this. *He didn't deserve it... but did it for us* (Acts 2:22-24; 3:13-15, 18; 4:27-28).

- ✓ God's followers have also recognized this fact. They recognize his right to do so, and they praise him.

"The LORD **gave**, and the LORD has **taken away**.
Blessed be the name of the LORD."
Job 1:21b (BSB)

Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all my days were written in Your book
and **ordained for me**
before one of them came to be.
How precious to me are Your thoughts, O God, ...
Psalm 139:16-17a (BSB)

The LORD **brings death** and **gives life**;
He **brings down to Sheol*** and **raises up**.
1 Samuel 2:6 (BSB)

My times are **in Your hands**; ...
Psalm 31:15a (BSB)

* (Sheol: The place of the dead.)

- God has the right to execute this judgment against us whenever and however he wants. He may use...
 - ✓ Natural events and circumstances, accidental situations.
 - ✓ Sickness, famine, war.
 - ✓ Capital punishment for certain sins (a function of civil government).
- In some specific situations, entire nations had become so morally corrupt, that they needed to be destroyed. (Otherwise, their influence would be like a cancer to future societies.)
 - ✓ Sodom and Gomorrah is one example, where God personally destroyed them. (Some may call it a miracle; but it could also have been done by means of a providential combination of extreme natural causes, all working together at once.)
 - ✓ The Canaanites are another example, where God told Israel to fight them... but God would use the forces of nature to destroy more of them than Israel would destroy.

- In all this, God *forbids* people from choosing to "play God," and deciding for themselves who should be killed.

✓ This is the reason for the Sixth Commandment.

You shall not murder.

Exodus 20:13 (BSB);
also in Deuteronomy 5:17

- He has said that anyone who does this is to forfeit his own life; and he tells us why.

"Whoever sheds the **blood** of man,
by man his blood will be shed;
for in **His own image**
God has made mankind."
Genesis 9:6 (BSB)

People often argue whether or not capital punishment is a deterrent. But this is actually a *secondary* issue.

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★ WHAT DOES GOD REQUIRE OF US? ★

- We've seen in the past that each command is a *principle* that represents a *category* of obligations. Being told what we are not to do points indirectly to what we are to do.
 - Here, the "do not" represents everything that involves tearing down someone – the ultimate "tearing-down" being murder.
- The "positive" side of this command would be everything that **builds up others**. (Perhaps we could say that the ultimate example would be to give one's life for the good of others, like Jesus did.)
- EXAMPLE:** *Hatred* is in the category of murder (1 John 3:15) – the "do not" of the Sixth Commandment. Here, Jesus points to an example of the "positive" aspect of this command. It's not just an undefined "love," but a specific action: We are to pray for them.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and **hate your enemy**.' But I tell you, **love your enemies** and **pray** for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:43-45a (NIV)

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- MORE EXAMPLES:** The responses God *prohibits* are *evil*. The responses he *requires* (and which we are to pursue) result in *good* – specific ways to love:

'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 22:39b (NIV)

Do not be overcome by evil,
but **overcome evil with good**.

Romans 12:21 (BSB)

"But to you who are listening I say: **Love** your enemies, **do good** to those who hate you, **bless** those who curse you, **pray** for those who mistreat you."

Luke 6:27-28 (NIV)

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with **blessing**, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.

1 Peter 3:9 (BSB)

Blessed are the **peacemakers**,
for they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

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BASIC ISSUES

- We must die.** Even if we are saved, our sins have earned us the sentence of *physical* death. (*Spiritual* death already occurred; and our only hope for the future is to repent, trust God and follow him – and we will receive from him *new* life.)
- It will happen.** The physical judgment *must* come, and God is the only one who has the *authority* to decide when that time will be. Though we don't deserve it, God usually delays that time, and the average person lives several decades before it happens.
- It's not for us to decide.** We humans are prohibited from making that decision ourselves. This would be called "murder"; and if we choose to do it, we are sinning against God (who prohibits that action by humans), and who says that murderers forfeit our own lives.
- We must do the opposite.** We are to have the *opposite* type of conduct: Instead of *destroying* people, we are to *build them up*.

22

OUR MISSION

- As we learn more about the Sixth Commandment ("Do not murder."), we will see that the prohibition involves more than just the physical killing of someone. Many of these prohibitions could be described as "tearing down" each other.
- In contrast, the "positive" obligations implied by this command involve a wide range of ways that we can "build up" each other.

- This week**, as we read/study/learn from God's Word, we can look for ways we can build each other up (= promote life), and ways we can *avoid* tearing each other down (= promoting death).

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Credits

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