

END-TIMES ISSUES



#101 Commandment #6 – The basis for this command.

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

A N D B E Y O N D I

1

In the beginning God...

For 6½ days...

God said, "Let [something] happen..."
And it happened!

- ✓ Let there be light.
- ✓ Let there be an expanse (= sky).
- ✓ Let the water be gathered / dry land appear.
- ✓ Let the land produce vegetation.
- ✓ Let there be lights in the sky (sun, moon, stars...).
- ✓ Let the water teem with living creatures.
- ✓ Let the birds fly across the sky / increase in number on the earth.
- ✓ Let the land produce living creatures.

2

In the beginning God...

Later on Day 6 ...

God said, "Let us [do something]..."
And he did it!

- ✓ Let us make man (generic, "humans") in our image, and let them rule ... [This "ruling" function is the result of the "image" concept.]

Then God said, "Let Us make man **in Our image, after Our likeness**, to rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, and over all the earth itself and every creature that crawls upon it."

So God created man **in His own image; in the image of God** He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:26-27 (BSB)

3

Genesis 2:4+ gives us further details about the creation of the humans.

Then the LORD God **formed** man **from the dust of the ground** and **breathed the breath of life into his nostrils**, and **the man became a living being**.

Genesis 2:7 (BSB)

(After this, God formed the woman out of the man, Genesis 2:22+.)

In these passages, we learn about:

- The nature of humans; male/female and marriage (defined by God – Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4-6).
- Their relationship to God, to each other, and to the rest of creation.
- Other passages will teach us much more about these relationships, as well as how sin has complicated matters.

The world *hates* these concepts and attacks these chapters, because these are the *foundation* of the Scripture message. Destroy the foundation, and you've discredited the rest.

4

As humans, we have a connection to the rest of creation.

There are *similarities*, but there are also *differences*.

⇒ **LIKE INANIMATE CREATION:** Our *bodies* are formed from the dust of the earth.*

Then the LORD God **formed** man **from the dust of the ground** ...

Genesis 2:7a (BSB)

- However, the way humans were formed was different.
 - ✓ Humans were formed by the *direct activity* of God. The rest of creation came into existence by the *command* of God. We were "built" by God; they were *spoken* into existence.
- List of things that are a part of creation:
 - ❖ Everything except God.

* [This is also the reason that, now that sin has entered the world, our *bodies* die and "return to the dust" (Genesis 3:19).]

5

⇒ **LIKE ALL ORGANISMS:** We all have life processes – metabolism, growth, reproduction "after their kind," etc.

- ✓ The biblical concept of "kind" (in Genesis 1) represents something above the level of "species" – often between the modern concepts of "family" and "genus." Sometimes it may even have a broader meaning. There will be genetic variation; but things will *only* produce biologically *similar* things – all in the same category.
- ✓ Though that word is not used of *humans*, we can see (empirically) that we are all the same "kind." We are still "in God's image" – and God hasn't changed! We are also "in Adam's image."

- List of things that fall into this category (metabolism, growth, reproduction, etc.):
 - ❖ Plants – Genesis 1:11-12.
 - ❖ Creatures that live in the water – Genesis 1:20-21.
 - ❖ Creatures that live in the air – Genesis 1:20-21.
 - ❖ Creatures that live on the land – Genesis 1:24-25.
 - ❖ Humans – Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7.

6

⇒ **LIKE ALL LIVING CREATURES (ANIMALS):** We are "living beings."

... and the man became a living being.

Genesis 2:7c (BSB)

- ✓ Translations vary: living *creature*, living *soul*, living *being*. But it all refers to *the same thing*.
- ✓ The difference between humans and animals *isn't* that humans have a "soul" and animals don't. That idea was invented by Greek and Roman philosophers, not by God.
- **However, the way humans became living beings was different.**
 - ✓ It occurred as the result of a direct activity by God (not by his voice).
- **List of things that are living creatures/beings/souls:**
 - ❖ Creatures that live in the water – Genesis 1:20-21; Leviticus 11:10.
 - ❖ Creatures that live in the air – Genesis 2:19; 9:10.
 - ❖ Creatures that live on the land – Genesis 1:24; 2:19; 9:10.
 - ❖ Humans – Genesis 2:7.

7

⇒ **LIKE AIR-BREATHING CREATURES:** We have the "breath of life."

Then the LORD God ... **breathed the breath of life into his nostrils** ...

Genesis 2:7c (BSB)

- ✓ There are two words used to describe this life-force "breath." Here, the word focuses on *breathing*: God breathed *breath* into the man. Other passages use a similar word that can refer to *breath*, *wind*, *spirit* (or God's "Spirit"). Genesis 7:22 links together *both* words (though usually translated by the *one* word "breath").
- **However, the way humans received the breath of life was different.**
 - ✓ It occurred as the result of direct activity by God (not by his voice).
- **List of things that have breath of life:**
 - ❖ Creatures that live in the air –
 - ❖ Creatures that live on the land –
 - ❖ Humans – Genesis 2:7.

(In the N.T. – Revelation 11:11: The "breath of life" enters God's "two witnesses," who had been killed; and they come back to life.)

8

Humans are inherently different from animals.

- Though we have connections to animals and the rest of creation, we have a connection to God that *no other aspect of creation has*.

Then God said, "Let Us make man **in Our image, after Our likeness**, to rule over [all creation]."

So God created man **in His own image; in the image of God** He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:26-27 (BSB)

- **What this means:** We are *not uncreated* deity; but we are *like* God: We are his *image* in creation. We are his *representatives* on earth.
 - ✓ There is much implied by this concept. This passage mentions "ruling" over creation (which is to be done in a way that reflects how God would rule over it – "like God"). Other passages mention other concepts (including moral issues) related to being "like God."
- **List of things created in the image/likeness of God:**
 - ❖ Humans – Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9.

9

The difference between humans and the rest of creation.

	Inanimate Objects	Plants	Sea Creatures	Birds & Land Animals	People
A Created Entity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Has Life Processes	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
A Living Being	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Has Breath of Life	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Image of God	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Spoken into Existence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Personally Made by God	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓

10

THE EFFECTS OF SIN...

The image/likeness of God...

It's still there ... but marred.

- **THEN:** How God created humans (also mentioned in Genesis 5:1-2):

Then God said, "Let Us make man **in Our image, after Our likeness**, ...

Genesis 1:26a (BSB)

- **NOW:** After sin has entered the world (same words used):

[Adam] had a son **in his own likeness, after his own image**; ...

Genesis 5:3b (BSB)
- The "image of God" is now marred, disfigured, corrupted by sin, unable to express itself the way it once did... *but it's still there*.
- It is only through Jesus Christ that complete restoration is possible.

11

THE EFFECTS OF SIN...

The *physical* dimension of life.

Now characterized by death and decay.

- All creation suffers because of the sin that humans committed. It also anticipates the future day when things will be restored – Romans 8:19-22.
- All living creatures are subject to death and decay. But even here, though much is in common between humans and creatures, there is a difference.
- We humans are already *spiritually* dead, and our bodies will someday "catch-up" with our spiritual condition, and will *also* die.
- Animals are *never* described this way, because this issue is related to the *special* relationship that humans have with God.

12

• Is there any hope for us?

- ✓ We already *spiritually died*, and our *bodies* are *dying*. For those who have turned to Christ for salvation, we are already *spiritually alive*, and will someday receive resurrected, *living bodies*.
- The effects of sin and salvation
 - ✓ Sin did not *remove* this image/likeness; but it marred it. We are now in *Adam's* image – Genesis 5:3.
 - ✓ Jesus is the image of God – 2 Corinthians 4:4; the radiance of God's glory and exact representation of his nature – Hebrews 1:3. Yet he chose to identify with *us*, by being made in the likeness of sinners – Romans 8:3; Philippians 2:7 (though without sin, Hebrews 4:15).
 - ✓ God's goal in salvation is for us to become conformed to the image of Christ – Romans 8:29; made new in his likeness – 1 Corinthians 15:49; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 3:2.
 - ✓ This restoration to the image of Christ is also compared to becoming a *new creation* – 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:10.

13

DEATH, for air-breathing creatures:

VISIBLY: It's the same process for *all* of them.

- For both humans and air-breathing (land/air) animals: they stop being *living beings/creatures* when the *breath of life* leaves their bodies.
- (These things do not apply to sea creatures, who do not have the "breath of life." They obviously die; but it does not involve the process, as described here.)

INVISIBLY: This process is different for humans.

- Animals die differently, because they were created differently. They are described as being formed when God spoke the command. (In the case of land animals, God commanded the land to form them.)
- In contrast, God did not *command* humans into existence. Rather, he personally formed the man's body out of dirt, and personally breathed the breath of life into his body. At death, the human's "breath" (or "spirit") returns to God, who gave it. →
- ✓ Somewhere in this process, we also received the "image of God" aspect of being "human," which animals don't have.

14

- Our *physical bodies* will someday return to the dust.

"By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your bread,
until you return to the ground—
because out of it were you taken.
**For dust you are,
and to dust you shall return.**"

Genesis 3:19 (BSB)

(Except for those
who are living
when Jesus
returns,
2 Thessalonians
4:13-17.)

- This death occurs when the *breath of life* leaves us.

When **his spirit [= breath] departs, he returns to the ground;**
on that very day his plans perish.

Psalms 146:4 (BSB)

... and the **dust returns to the ground** it came from,
and **the spirit [= breath] returns to God** who gave it.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 (NIV)

- When this has happened, we can no longer be called *living beings*.

15

Where is this "life" located?

- The *breath of life* concept appears to be associated with (but not equivalent to) breathing – perhaps linked to the head/nostrials.

Then the LORD God ... **breathed the breath of life into his nostrils,** ...

Genesis 2:7 (BSB)

- ✓ During the flood of Noah...

Everything on dry land that had **the breath of life in its nostrils** died.

Genesis 7:22 (NIV)

- The *living creature* concept appears to be associated with (but not equivalent to) the blood – probably referring to the whole circulation system. The "living" concept is expressed in the phrase "the *life* is in the blood," as well as in terms of one's "*lifeblood*."

- ✓ In the Old Testament, this word "creature" is often translated as "soul" (though there is no difference in meaning). But in the New Testament, the word "soul" is one of the words that means "life." (Because of this, the word "soul" can be quite confusing.)

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"Life" in the blood – its significance.

This connection has great significance in Scripture.

For the **life** of a **creature** is in the **blood** ...
Leviticus 17:11a (NIV); see also v. 14.

... because the **blood** is the **life** ...
Deuteronomy 12:23b (BSB)

Here,
"a creature"
can also be
translated as
"the flesh."

THEREFORE:

1. We are not to consume blood. A person is permitted to eat *meat*, but is not to consume the blood – because of its connection to the life of the animal. (Instructions were given for draining the blood.)

Everything that lives and moves will be food for you; just
as I gave you the green plants, I now give you all things.
But **you must not eat meat with its lifeblood still in it.**

Genesis 9:3-4 (BSB)

Only be sure not to eat the blood, because **the blood is
the life**, and **you must not eat the life with the meat.**

Deuteronomy 12:23 (BSB)

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2. This connection makes our salvation possible.

- ✓ We deserve to die, because of our sin and rebellion against God. Yet God provides a *substitute* to die – to shed **blood** – in our place.
- ✓ In the Old Testament, this involved an animal's blood (death) in place of ours. This was only temporary (until Jesus could pay the full price with *his own* blood); and it had value only for those who trusted God and were willing to obey him.

For the **life** of the flesh is in the **blood**, and I have given it to
you to make **atonement** for your **souls** upon the altar; for it
is the **blood** that makes **atonement** for the **soul**.

Leviticus 17:11 (BSB)

- ✓ The New Testament has much to say about this concept and how Jesus fulfills what the Old Testament could only symbolize.

... you were **redeemed** ... with the precious **blood** of
Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot.

1 Peter 1:18b, 19 (BSB)

18

3. This connection is linked to a prohibition against killing human life.

- ✓ The Sixth Commandment ("Do not kill/murder") is directly linked to this concept. "Killing" is described as "the shedding of blood" because the individual's life leaves as the blood leaves the body.

Obviously, ① there are "bloodless" ways that a person can be killed; and ② a partial loss of blood does *not* mean a partial loss of life. But this "bloodshed" concept is used to represent all the various forms of the *wrong* taking of life.

• Why does the Sixth Commandment apply only to humans?

- ✓ The issue involves *more* than the connection between blood and life. The reason *why* it is acceptable to kill animals, *but not humans*, is because people were made in the image of God. They are different from animals.
- ✓ [next page] The prohibition (and punishment) applies to *any creature* that might take a human's life – which includes *animals*.



19

"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)

- ✓ This command is part of the covenant given to Noah, more than 2000 years before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The moral obligation *did not change*.
- ✓ This prohibition is not merely an arbitrary decision to treat humans and animals as different. Since the time of their creation, the *nature* of human life has *always* been different from the animals (though there may be *physical* similarities). This is the reason that the taking of human life (whether by another human or by an animal) is prohibited.

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WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO US?

- We live in a day in which the wicked deny the difference between humans and animals. They often treat humans as though they were mere animals... or even worse.
- To reach this conclusion, they have to *deliberately ignore* (suppress) the truth about creation and its significance to this issue. They also deny that death was introduced (because of *sin*) *after* creation was finished, and that the Flood judgment also occurred (because of *sin*). And they use *these* denials as the basis for denying that Jesus will return, and will judge them for *their sin* and rebellion. *

(SEE THE PASSAGE QUOTED ON THE NEXT PAGE.)

- * In all generations, there have been people who chose to deny Scripture in these matters. But the intensity and overwhelming nature of this opposition has increased exponentially in the past century or so.

21

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

But **they deliberately forget** that long ago by God's word **the heavens came into being and the earth was formed** out of water and by water [= creation]. By these waters also **the world of that time was deluged and destroyed** [= the Flood].

By the same word the present heavens and earth are **reserved for fire**, being kept for **the day of judgment and destruction** of the ungodly.

2 Peter 3:3-7 (NIV)

- If you are doing this, God offers you an opportunity to repent. *But that opportunity will not last forever.*

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise [to return], as some understand slowness. Instead **he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)

22

WHAT SHOULD OUR MISSION BE (this week)?

- These initial comments about the Sixth Commandment will not answer all the questions we probably have.
- At this time, our mission is to recognize the relationships that exist between people and everything else... and to respond appropriately.

1. **Recognize the fundamental difference between people and creation.** We live in a world that denies it, and often gives animals more "rights" than *people* are given.
2. **Recognize the difference between people and God, the Creator.** We have the responsibility to live as his "image-bearers." Sin complicates matters, but the responsibility remains.
3. **Our goal should be to treat people and creation the way that God would, if he were doing it.** Basically, we need to glorify God in all that we do, as said in 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17, 23; etc.

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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