



"The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)

REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

OCTOBER 2009

What's Happening?

[Hugh Ross October Visit](#)

Hugh Ross will visit the Seattle area Oct. 18-21. Here are the events that are scheduled:

- Sun., Oct. 18, 6 PM, "Why the Universe is the Way It Is"—Harbor Covenant Church, 5601 Gustafson Dr. NW, Gig Harbor
- Mon., Oct. 19, 7 PM, "Can God and Science be Reconciled?"—His Place Church, 1480 S. Burlington Blvd., Burlington
- Tues., Oct. 20, 7 PM, "Can God & Science be Reconciled," Christ's Church, 941 S. Dash Point Rd., Federal Way
- Wed., Oct. 21, 7 PM, "Why the Universe is the Way It Is"—Mars Hill Church, Downtown Seattle Campus, 2333 Western Ave., Seattle

For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org.

[We Do Presentations](#)

The Seattle chapter does presentations on wide range of topics. If your church or group is looking for speakers, contact us.

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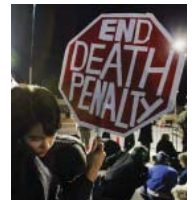
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What Does the Sixth Commandment Mean?

JOHN A. BATTLE

Whenever a war is on the horizon, people opposed to it invoke the sixth commandment, usually in the words of the King James Version, "Thou shalt not kill." We see this commandment printed on picket signs and posters when a guilty murderer is scheduled to be executed. Invariably the news reporters will interview a church leader who claims that taking the life of a criminal is evil; it puts us on his level. Life is sacred, they say, and we have no right to take it, even in criminal justice. Pacifist groups, such as the Quakers, have for centuries endured scorn and abuse because they refused to fight in support of their country.

As Christians we must ask ourselves, do we or does the government have the right to take human life? We find our moral guidance in Scripture. We are to value human life. The Lord hates "hands that shed innocent blood."¹ God holds us all responsible to respect and protect the lives of others. "From each man I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man."²



A central pillar in the biblical teaching is the sixth commandment. We need to see exactly what this commandment means, as it is used in the Bible.

MEANING OF THE WORDS FOR "KILL"

First we should notice the exact words written in the original Hebrew and Greek of the Bible, translated as "kill" in the sixth commandment. There are many Hebrew and Greek words translated "kill," each with its own emphasis.³ The Old Testament records the sixth commandment twice, and the New Testament five times.⁴ In each case only a single word is used. In the Hebrew Old Testament it is *ratsach*, and in the Greek New Testament it is *phoneuo*. Forms of *ratsach* are used more than forty times in the Old Testament, and forms of *phoneuo* are used more than twenty times in the New Testament; so their meanings can be well established.

In the Bible these two terms have a very limited range of meaning. First, these words are never used to describe the killing of animals or plants. Several words are used to describe the killing of plants or animals in hunting, in warfare, for food, or

for sacrifice—but the words in the commandment never are found in those contexts. The sixth commandment has nothing to do with killing animals or plants. It deals with the killing of human beings only.

Second, these terms never have God as their subject. The Bible tells how God struck many people with death. He killed individuals;⁵ he commanded the Israelites to annihilate whole populations of people in Canaan;⁶ and he himself wiped out nearly all the human race in the great flood.⁷ Yet, with all this killing at his hands, the Bible never uses this word to describe what God has done. Of course, God cannot be guilty of breaking his own commands; they are given to us as his creatures. God's law comes from him to us; he is under no law; there is no higher authority than God himself. Because of the sin of Adam we all are subject to God's condemnation of death.⁸ God has determined that we all will die (unless we are alive when Christ returns); he has also determined how and when each of us will die. We have no right to determine the rules by which we live and by which we let others live. We are obligated to obey God's law as revealed in his Word. Not all killing is morally evil; God's isn't.

Third, the words used in the sixth commandment never are used in the Bible to describe killing in warfare or the killing of a guilty criminal. The Scriptures record many wars, with large-scale killing, yet these terms are never found in those passages. Similarly, there are many commands to execute justice, including capital punishment, and many examples are recorded; yet, again, these words are not used to describe this type of killing. The words of the sixth commandment do not forbid either just warfare or impartial justice.

Since all these types of killing are not included in the terms used in the sixth commandment, the question arises, "Then exactly what does this commandment forbid?" First, careful examination of every usage of these two words in the Bible shows killing by a private individual, not the government as such; in the few instances when the crime is committed by a king or other official, it is done for private gain or advantage, not to benefit the state. Second, biblical usage reveals that the commandment is speaking about the killing of human beings for one of four reasons: (1) hatred, (2) greed, (3) carelessness, and (4) revenge. Killing for the first two reasons, hatred or greed, is considered murder, a great crime meriting death. Killing for the third reason, carelessness, is also a crime, but is not as serious, and results in the equivalent of imprisonment. Killing for the fourth reason, revenge, is actually approved under certain conditions. However, if the avenger were to kill someone without observing the regulations in the law, then that was considered an act of murder also. The Scripture shows that killing for revenge now has become an important responsibility of the state. These four types of killing are what the sixth commandment envisions. Each of these will be examined below.

Since the Hebrew and Greek words used in the sixth commandment have this particular meaning, it is better to translate the sixth commandment in a more exact way. This will avoid confusion. It traditionally has been translated into English as "You shall (or thou shalt) not kill." But many modern versions translate it "You shall not murder."⁹ This latter translation seems better, as it clarifies the force of the Hebrew and Greek words.

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In the NEWS...

[Extinction & Speciation Models](#)

In this article, Hugh Ross discusses how studies can help determine if evolutionary mechanisms are capable of generating new species at a rate adequate to compensate for extinctions. His conclusion? Supernatural intervention is needed. Go to: <http://www.reasons.org/ExtinctionRisksandSpeciationModels>.

[Intelligently Questioning Darwinism](#)

This Discovery Institute article by Casey Luskin provides practical tips for how students can keep a level head when studying evolution. In the article includes a link to "The College Student's Back to School Guide on Intelligent Design. Go to <http://www.discovery.org/a/12791>.

[Sacrificial Love](#)

We hear about the need for individuals to sacrifice for the good of the whole. This Breakpoint article examines how we can determine if a call to sacrifice is worth following, pointing to the life of Jesus. Go to <http://www.breakpoint.org/features-columns/articles/12877-sacrificial-love>.

[White Meat or Dark?](#)

This Breakpoint commentary by Chuck Colson discusses the effort to turn on genes birds to produce a "chickenosaurus" with dinosaur traits. The problem, he says, isn't scientific, but moral. Genetics may hold great promise, they also create a temptation to play God. Go to <http://www.breakpoint.org/commentaries/13061-white-meat-or-dark>.

[Multiverse Musings](#)

This RTB article by Jeff Zweerink examines how the multiverse concept conflicts with the big bang model. He also discusses what cosmologists mean when they say the universe is flat. Go to <http://www.reasons.org/MultiverseMusingsDoesItjivewiththeBigBang>.

Book Reviews

Signature in the Cell

Stephen C. Meyer
Harper Collins, 2009

Reviewer: Mike Brown

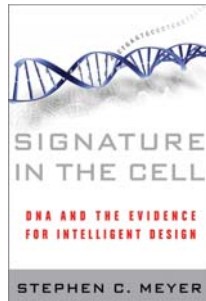
In a review of Dr. Meyer's latest book, Access Research Network stated:

"Dr. Meyer shows how the digital code in DNA points powerfully to a designing intelligence behind the origin of life. Signature in the Cell presents a radical and comprehensive new case, revealing the evidence not merely of individual features of biological complexity but rather of a fundamental constituent of the universe: information. He is the first to bring the relevant data together into a powerful demonstration of the intelligence that stands outside nature and directs the path life has taken."

The book is over five-hundred pages long, but is very readable and follows the story of Dr. Meyer's journey into research on intelligent design. As he states in the prologue, the book does not just make an argument; it also tells a story about the mystery that has surrounded the discovery of the digital code in DNA and how that discovery has confounded repeated attempts to explain the origin of the first life on earth.

A fascinating subject that is addressed in the book is how researchers have now discovered that information doesn't just reside in our DNA but also at higher levels. Dr. Meyer states:

"There is now a wealth of embryological evidence showing that DNA does not wholly determine morphological form in organisms. DNA directs the synthesis of proteins and RNAs. It also helps to regulate the timing and expression of the synthesis of various proteins within cells. Yet DNA alone does not determine how individual proteins assemble themselves into larger systems of proteins; still less does it, by itself, determine how cell types, tissue types, and organs arrange themselves into body plans. Instead, other factors—such as the three-dimensional structure and organization of the cell membrane and cytoskeleton, and the spatial architecture of the fertilized egg—play important roles in determining body-plan formation during embryogenesis."



More Than a Theory

Hugh Ross
Baker Books, 2009

Reviewer: Greg Moore

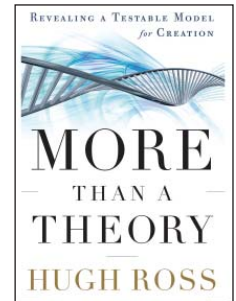
Many atheists claim that naturalist evolution is the only model for the question of origins that can be considered by science. In this book, Dr. Ross examines the basis and justification for a testable creation model. If you want to understand RTB's creation model, this is the book for you.

Ross begins by examining scientific complaints against creationism and intelligent design. He discusses how those complaints are justified because young earth creationism lacks scientific validity, whereas intelligent design lacks a predictive component. He then compares this to the RTB creation model which can be tested and directly compared to the models of naturalism.

In the following chapters, Ross provides a comprehensive look at the RTB creation model. He begins by examining the biblical structure of the model. He then examines and puts the specific areas that make up the model to the test including the origin of the cosmos, formation of galaxies, stars and planets, the origin and history of life, and the origin and history of humanity. He concludes this section with a discussion of various "why" questions that help to illuminate why God may have chosen to create in a manner consistent with the RTB model.

In the final chapters, Ross scores the competing models based on predictions that have been fulfilled, not fulfilled and falsified. These results provide significant support for the RTB model. He also discusses additional testing tools for creation/evolution models which help illustrate why the RTB model is a viable alternative to naturalism and "more than theory."

For those who are looking for scientific information to defend their Christian convictions, this book provides an excellent overview of basic science apologetics, written in a way this is understandable to the average reader.



KILLING FOR HATRED OR GREED

The worst motives for killing are hatred and greed. Both motives led to murder. It might require premeditation, and lead to first-degree murder; if the intent is sudden, at the time of the killing, then we call it second-degree murder. The Bible does not distinguish between these two degrees in the passages dealing with murder. In Numbers 35:20-21 the Lord set down for the Israelites the worst cases of murder:

“If anyone with malice aforethought shoves another or throws something at him intentionally so that he dies or if in hostility he hits him with his fist so that he dies, that person shall be put to death; he is a murderer.”

Even kings were not exempt from this rule. King Ahab through greed arrested and executed Naboth, who owned a coveted vineyard. The Lord told the prophet Elijah that Ahab was a murderer who would die for his crime.¹⁰ When King David arranged to have Uriah the Hittite killed in action on the battlefield, so that David could cover his guilt of adultery with Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan declared that David was a murderer, who would suffer punishment from God.¹¹ While David fought many wars and killed many people, the Bible never condemns him, except in this one case: “For David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD and had not failed to keep any of the LORD’s commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.”¹²

By the Bible’s standards, to kill an innocent person because of hatred or greed is the worst form of killing, murder, and deserves the most severe penalty. Jesus referred to these same motives when he taught that hating someone or considering him of no value was a way in which we could break this commandment.¹³

ACCIDENTAL KILLING

In a few examples the terms of the sixth commandment are used to describe killing someone accidentally.¹⁴ This usually is called manslaughter. If we are careless, thoughtless, or negligent, and someone dies as a result, we have broken the sixth commandment. We have caused an innocent person to die, and are guilty. However, the Bible distinguishes this type of killing from that done because of hatred or greed. In this case it was unintentional, without malice or wish to harm. If the court found a person guilty of manslaughter, it ordered him to remain in one of six designated cities for a period of time, ending with the death of the ruling high priest.¹⁵ This might be compared to a kind of house arrest or internal exile. Of course, this penalty was much less severe than the death penalty given for premeditated murder.

Because God values human life, he commands us to protect our own lives and the lives of others.¹⁶ For example, he commanded, “When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you

may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof.”¹⁷ We should keep this commandment in mind when we drive our cars or engage in any activity that may bring danger or ourselves or others.

SELF DEFENSE AND NATIONAL DEFENSE

Nowhere does the Bible forbid necessary killing in self-defense. Rather, such action is expected. For example, if a homeowner killed a thief breaking into his house in the daytime, when such a measure of self-defense was obviously unnecessary, the homeowner was considered guilty of murder. But if he killed the thief breaking into his house at night, when it could not be seen whether the thief had any intention to harm the occupants, the homeowner was innocent.¹⁸ Just before his arrest Jesus made sure that his disciples had swords to defend themselves if necessary.¹⁹

On a wider scale, self-defense may require several people, or even an entire community or nation, to arm themselves and to defend themselves, by killing their attackers. When Nehemiah, the governor of Jerusalem, saw the city threatened by enemies, he armed the citizens with swords, spears, and bows, and exhorted the people: “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”²⁰ Just as Nehemiah, people who believe and respect the Bible have for centuries fought alongside of those who were defending their lives and liberties against unscrupulous aggressors. For self-defense the Bible approves one person’s taking the life of another, or one nation’s going to war against another.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Many Protestants have been happy that members of the Roman Catholic Church support their campaign to end abortion. On that point both agree. However, the same Roman Catholics often oppose capital punishment. They say that we are forbidden to take any human life—whether an innocent baby or a condemned murderer. Is there a difference? What is to be done to murderers? This issue began early in the Bible. When God brought Noah and his family out of the ark after the great flood, God told him,

“For your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”²¹

In the earliest days the task of executing this punishment was assumed by a relative of the victim, called the “avenger of blood.” He tracked down and killed the murderer. God approved of this arrangement, provided that the legal assembly found the suspect guilty of premeditated murder. If found guilty, the court was to “hand him over

to the avenger of blood to die.”²² The trial was to be fair, requiring at least two witnesses, whose testimony could be cross-examined.²³ The avenger of blood also was the designated enforcer of the required exile for cases of manslaughter; if the guilty person left the city too soon, the avenger was permitted to take his life.²⁴

As Israel advanced into a complex nation, the duty of executing capital offenders fell to the king, rather than to the avenger of blood. God commanded the various kings to judge righteously and to execute judgment on offenders, according to the laws prescribed in the Old Testament.²⁵ The various executions of criminals ordered by David and by Solomon illustrate this part of the king’s office.

This responsibility of the state did not change with the New Testament dispensation. When Jesus was asked what powers to believers should recognize, he replied, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”²⁶ Caesar’s authority, which Jesus confirmed, included the power of capital punishment. Of course, Jesus expected the rulers to exercise their authority with justice in God’s sight.²⁷

Likewise, the apostle Paul upheld the right of rulers to use the sword to avenge the innocent and execute the guilty:

“Rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”²⁸

Notice that the magistrate, Paul says, “bears the sword,” that is, he exercises capital punishment against those who “do wrong.” Especially significant is the term translated here “an agent of wrath” acting as God’s servant. The designation “agent of wrath” (KJV “a revenger to execute wrath”) recalls the office of the avenger of blood in the Old Testament.²⁹ When Paul himself stood before Festus, Procurator of Judea, faced with grave charges, he said, “If I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!”³⁰ He trusted that justice would prevail and he would be acquitted; but he upheld the death penalty for crimes deserving it.

PACIFIST ARGUMENTS

How do we understand the command of Jesus to turn the other cheek? Are we not to do good to our enemies?³¹ The Christian must answer that these commands relate to personal insult and injury, not to attack or murder. Christians should not return insult for insult, slap for slap, but should demonstrate mercy and forbearance. Paul said it was better even to be defrauded than to bring disrepute to the Savior’s name.³² These exalted teachings, if uniformly adopted, would

transform all of society, and they should mark the Christian. But they were never intended to be principles of civil government in dealing with aggression or criminals. God has entrusted the state with the responsibility as his servant to maintain the civil order and punish evildoers.

How can the Bible approve of war and capital punishment, and still claim to honor human life? The answer lies in the justice of God. God himself has established the value of the human being by making him in his image. All people—Christian and non-Christian alike—bear that image.³³ Actually, by executing the murderer for his crime, we recognize the value and dignity of even that criminal; his life is of such value that it alone can suffice to satisfy God’s justice, as well as human justice. Human life is sacred, and should be in God’s hands alone. When someone usurps God’s authority and kills an innocent person, God’s justice is offended, and the criminal’s life is forfeited. Only the guilty person’s death can satisfy God’s justice.³⁴ In this dispensation the state has this responsibility. By himself executing the guilty, man is to learn with what wrath God views murder, and with what zeal we should protect the innocent.

THE VALUE OF LIFE

God holds human life as sacred, but not as absolute. Other things are even higher, as truth, liberty, justice, faith, and love. Sometimes we must sacrifice even our lives to defend and promote a higher good. The famous American patriot Nathan Hale said, “I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country.” Jesus said, “Whoever loses his life for me will save it.”³⁵

For the Christian “to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”³⁶ He fears not physical death, but rather, spiritual death.³⁷ It is more important for us to obey God, even if that means killing others, or risking or losing our own lives. When we are called upon to carry out the legitimate duties of our country or state to defend ourselves, our families, and our fellow citizens, and to punish evildoers, we must obey God. By so doing we will be honoring human life, and will be obeying the sixth commandment.

John Battle is president of Western Reformed Seminary in Tacoma. He holds a B.A. in Bible Languages and M. Div. & Th. D in New Testament. He is a trained RTB apologist and member of the Seattle RTB Chapter.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Pro. 6:17.
- ² Gen. 9:5.
- ³ These words can be conveniently found in Robert Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible, under the word “kill.” This reference shows the various Greek and Hebrew words translated “kill” in the

- KJV.
- ⁴ Ex. 20:13; Dt. 5:17; Mt. 5:21; Mk. 10:19; Lk. 18:20; Rom. 13:9; Ja. 12:11.
- ⁵ As Er and Onan in Gen. 38:7-10, and King Herod Agrippa I in Acts 12:23.
- ⁶ E.g., Dt. 7:1-2; 20:16-17.
- ⁷ Gen. 6:7, 13, 17; 7:4, 21-23; 8:21.
- ⁸ Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:14.
- ⁹ “Kill” is used in the KJV, ASV, RSV; “murder” is used in the NASB, NIV, NRSV, NKJV, NLT.
- ¹⁰ 1 Kings 21:19.
- ¹¹ 2 Sam. 11-12.
- ¹² 1 Kings 15:5.
- ¹³ Mt. 5:21-22.
- ¹⁴ Num. 35:11; Dt. 19:3.
- ¹⁵ Num. 35:22-25.
- ¹⁶ Cf. WSC 68.
- ¹⁷ Dt. 22:8.
- ¹⁸ Ex. 22:2-3.
- ¹⁹ Lik. 22:36-38.
- ²⁰ Neh. 4:14.
- ²¹ Gen. 9:5-6.
- ²² Dt 19:10-13.
- ²³ Dt. 19:15-19.
- ²⁴ Num. 35:26-27.
- ²⁵ 1 Sam. 12:13-15.
- ²⁶ Mk. 12:17.
- ²⁷ Jn. 19:11.
- ²⁸ Rom. 13:3-4.
- ²⁹ The expression in Greek literally means “one who executes retribution unto wrath.”
- ³⁰ Acts 25:11.
- ³¹ Mt. 5:39, 43-45; Lk. 6:27-31, 35.
- ³² 1 Cor. 6:7.
- ³³ Gen. 1:26-27, 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Ja 3:9.
- ³⁴ Gen. 9:5-6; Num. 35:33; compare the blood of Abel (Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24).
- ³⁵ Lk 9:24.
- ³⁶ Php. 1:21.
- ³⁷ Mt. 10:28; Mk. 8:36.



Seattle Chapter Reasons To Believe

Who Are We?

The Seattle Chapter of Reasons To Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons To Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in the ministry. We serve the Puget Sound area and are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinism and young-Earth creationism.

What Do We Do?

Our mission is to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other scientifically and biblically sound resources.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Assembling a team of local apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Working with teachers and homeschoolers to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

We welcome your involvement and support. For more information, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Seattle RTB, PO Box 99683, Seattle, WA 98139-0683.

Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at seattle@reasons.org. You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.