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disregarded.

The unlawful taking of human life demands a reckoning. After ridding the earth of the corruption of violence in a worldwide deluge (Genesis 6:5-13), God told the survivors, Noah and his family, *“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God, He made man”* (Genesis 9:6). No other creature is worthy of vengeance.

No man is justified cursing another man. One must exercise control over his own words, as it is written, *“No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so”* (James 3:8-10).

Man’s place in the world is superior to animal life. *“God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’ 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). Because man was made in God’s image, but animals were not, animals are subject to man’s dominion.

This is not to suggest animals deserve abuse from mankind, for *“A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel”* (Proverbs 12:10). Animals ought to receive kindness and cruelty should not be tolerated. Thus, God, through Moses, commanded Israel, *“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain”* (Deuteronomy 25:4). Yet, even in this, the Lord intends a deeper application about one’s regard for his fellow man. Paul, defending his apostleship to the Corinthians, wrote, *“It is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.’ Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written... Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel”* (1st Corinthians 9:9-10, 14). The proper treatment of animals is about learning the proper treatment of humanity because humanity is superior to animals inasmuch as humanity bears the image and likeness of God.

“THE WHOLE WORLD LIES UNDER THE SWAY OF THE WICKED ONE”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

The last vestiges of public decency are now being displayed when politicians and celebrities acknowledge the foundational fact of biology that men are men, women are women, and none can change their gender. This is true. *“He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created”* (Genesis 5:2). Moral people applaud the courage of public figures willing to state the obvious about transgenderism. And that is how low modern society has sunk.

The debate over transgenderism has taken the heat away from the issue of homosexuality. Not that long ago, Bible believers were still pressing the fact that, among other sinners, neither *“homosexuals, nor sodomites... will inherit the kingdom of God”* (1st Corinthians 6:9-11). Very few are vocal about this any longer, as it requires great boldness just to say a man cannot be a woman.

Before homosexuality was so widely accepted, the hot topic for moral discussions was promiscuity because *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge”* (Hebrews 13:4). Now, though, seemingly decent people will either overlook fornication, or even flaunt it themselves, while condemning homosexuality and transgenderism.

Prior to the broad cultural acceptance of sexual immorality, there was a general concern about serial monogamy in the form of divorce and subsequent marriage. Jesus preached, *“Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”* (Matthew 19:9). Concern about divorce gave way to concern about pre-marital sex, which was followed by widespread acceptance of homosexuality, and now the fight is on about switching genders.

Acknowledging these cultural failures is not a matter of pining after a bygone era of moral uprightness, for there never was such a time (Ecclesiastes 7:10). Rather, the point is that one moral outrage replaces another because the world at large is corrupt. *“The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one”* (1st John 5:19). God’s people must live in defiance of social custom, loyally adhering to His moral standards, and never yielding to the devil.

"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"

ACTS 16:30

LEARN THE GOSPEL

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

BELIEVE IN CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

CONFESS CHRIST

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 3:19; 17:30

BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER"

HEBREWS 10:24-25

SUNDAY

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

WEDNESDAY

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.
Members Expected.**

"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN ANY TRESPASS... RESTORE SUCH A ONE"

GALATIANS 6:1

CONFESS TRESPASSES

James 5:16; 1st John 1:9

REPENT OF SIN

Acts 8:22

PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS

Acts 8:22

REMAIN STEADFAST

1st Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN"

PROVERBS 25:11

"We expose evil, not to gasp and marvel at the brazen insolence of it or to look down upon those steeped in it, but rather to strip it of its deceitful façade, mark it for avoidance, and learn to appreciate the grace God offers. We do this, not out of a sense of self-righteous piety, but out of a full recognition that we are all guilty and must do all we can to pull others from the fire that destroys souls (Ephesians 5:11-14)."

– Doy Moyer

"WHOLE COUNSEL"

ACTS 20:27

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"MORE VALUE"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Human life is more valuable than animal life. This is a fact stated not less than three times by Jesus Christ.

While preaching against anxiety, assuring His hearers of their worth before God, the Lord said, *"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* (Matthew 6:26).

In teaching the fear of God over the fear of man, He said, *"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows"* (Matthew 10:29-31).

Explaining the relative importance of Sabbath-keeping, Jesus taught, *"What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep?"* (Matthew 12:11-12).

What the Master explained on multiple occasions is an echo of what is learned from the very beginning of creation. *"In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God"* (Genesis 5:1). Being made in God's likeness necessarily implies the tremendous worth of humanity and attendant consequences when that worth is

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