

Free Grace Broadcaster

ISSUE 220

ABORTION

“Thou shalt not kill.”

Exodus 20:13

Our Purpose

*“To humble the pride of man,
to exalt the grace of God in salvation,
and to promote real holiness in heart and life.”*

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#220

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THOU SHALT NOT KILL

Ezekiel Hopkins (1634-1690)

“*Thou shalt not kill.*”—*Exodus 20:13*

THIS [commandment] forbids that barbarous and inhuman sin of murder,¹ the first-born of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning (Joh 8:48). [It forbids] the first branded² crime that we read of, wherein natural corruption, contracted by the Fall, vented its rancor and virulence:³ the sin of Cain—that great instance of perdition⁴—who slew his brother Abel “because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1Jo 3:12).⁵

The murdering of another is a most heinous⁶ and black sin, a sin that God doth detect and bring to punishment, usually by some wonderful⁷ method of His providence.⁸ [Murder] dogs the consciences of those who are guilty of it with horrid affrights⁹ and terrors and hath sometimes extorted from them a confession of it when there hath been no other proof or evidence.

The two greatest sinners that the Scripture hath set the blackest brand upon were both murderers: Cain and Judas. The one [was] the murderer of his brother; the other, first of his Lord and Master and then of himself.

God so infinitely hates and detests it that, although the altar was a refuge for other offenders, He would not have a murderer sheltered there. He was to be dragged from that inviolable¹⁰ sanctuary unto execution according to that law: “But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die” (Exo 21:14). Accordingly,

¹ The scope of this command is the preservation of that life which God hath given unto man, which is man’s greatest concern. No man is lord of his own or his neighbor’s life; it belongs to Him alone Who gave it, to take it away. (Thomas Boston, *The Complete Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 2, 260)

² **branded** – marked with evil fame.

³ **rancor and virulence** – deep, bitter anger and extreme hostility.

⁴ **perdition** – destruction.

⁵ The purport [*intended meaning*] of this commandment is that since the Lord has bound the whole human race by a kind of unity, the safety of all ought to be considered as entrusted to each. In general, therefore, all violence and injustice, and every kind of harm from which our neighbor’s body suffers, is prohibited. (John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, II, viii, 39)

⁶ **heinous** – hateful; highly wicked.

⁷ **wonderful** – causing astonishment.

⁸ **providence** – What are God’s works of providence? God’s works of providence are His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions. (Spurgeon’s Catechism, Q. 11, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY)

⁹ **affrights** – sudden and great fears.

¹⁰ **inviolable** – to be kept sacred.

we read that when Joab had fled and taken hold on the horns of the altar, so that the messengers who were sent to put him to death durst not violate that holy place by shedding his blood, Solomon gave command to have him slain even there, as if the blood of a willful murderer were a very acceptable sacrifice offered up unto God (1Ki 2:28-31).

Indeed, in the first prohibition of murder that we meet withal,¹¹ God subjoins¹² a very weighty reason why it should be so odious¹³ unto Him: “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Gen 9:6). So that *Homicidium est Decidium*: “To slaughter a man is to stab God in effigy.¹⁴” Though the image of God’s holiness and purity be totally defaced in us since the Fall, yet every man—even the most wicked and impious¹⁵ that lives—bears some strictures¹⁶ of the image of God in his [mind], the freedom of his will, and his dominion over the creatures. God will have every part of His image so revered by us that He esteems him that assaults man as one who attempts to assassinate God Himself.¹⁷

Murder is a crying sin. Blood is loud and clamorous. That first [blood] that ever was shed was heard as far as from earth to heaven: “The voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground” (Gen 4:10). God will certainly hear its cry and avenge it.

But, not only he whose hands are embrued¹⁸ in the blood of others, but those also who are accessory¹⁹ are guilty of murder. As,

(1) *Those who command or counsel it to be done.* Thus, David became guilty of the murder of innocent Uriah; and God, in drawing up his charge, accuseth him with it: “Thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon” (2Sa 12:9).

(2) *Those who consent to murder are guilty of it.* Thus Pilate, for yielding to the clamorous outcries of the Jews, “Crucify him, Crucify him” (Luk 23:21), though he washed his hands and disavowed the fact, was as much guilty as those who nailed Him to the cross.

¹¹ **withal** – therewith.

¹² **subjoins** – to add at the end of a speech or writing.

¹³ **odious** – repulsive; causing hatred.

¹⁴ **in effigy** – to inflict violence upon the image or figure that represents a person.

¹⁵ **impious** – not showing deep respect for God and His ways; wicked.

¹⁶ **strictures** – slight traces.

¹⁷ Scripture notes a twofold equity on which this commandment is founded. Man is both the image of God and our flesh. Wherefore, if we would not violate the image of God, we must hold the person of man sacred—if we would not divest ourselves of humanity, we must cherish our own flesh. (Calvin, *Institutes*, II, viii, 39)

¹⁸ **embrued (imbrued)** – stained.

¹⁹ **accessory** – aiding and encouraging a crime.

(3) *He that concealeth a murder is guilty of it.* Therefore, we read that in case a man were found slain and the murderer unknown, the elders of that city were to assemble, wash their hands, and protest “Our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it” (Deu 21:6-7), intimating that if they had seen and concealed it, they had thereby become guilty of the murder.

(4) *Those who are in authority and do not punish a murder, when committed and known, are themselves guilty of it.* Thus, when Naboth was condemned to die by the wicked artifice of Jezebel—although Ahab knew nothing of the contrivance until after the execution—yet, because he did not vindicate that innocent blood when he came to the knowledge of it, the prophet chargeth it upon him. “Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?” (1Ki 21:19). The guilt lay upon him, and the punishment due to it overtook him, although we do not read that he was any otherwise guilty of it than in not punishing those who had committed it.

And those magistrates who, upon any respect whatsoever, suffer a murder to escape unpunished are said to pollute the land with blood: “Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death...So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it” (Num 35:31, 33).

From “A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments” in *The Works of Ezekiel Hopkins*, Vol. 1, Soli Deo Gloria, a division of Reformation Heritage Books, www.heritagebooks.org.

Ezekiel Hopkins (1634-1690): Anglican minister and author; born in Sandford, Crediton, Devonshire, England.



Violations of the sixth commandment are manifestly on the increase all over the land by suicides, murders, homicides, parricides, fratricides, infanticides, feticides (abortion); and these awful crimes are often perpetrated with such circumstances of horrid cruelty as to cry to heaven for vengeance.—*Original Covenanter Magazine* (Vol. 3:1-3:16, 1881)

THE SILENT HOLOCAUST

Peter Barnes

JOHN Powell¹ has referred to the widespread practice of abortion in our own day as “the Silent Holocaust.” This description is tragically apt, as the treatment of unborn children in the Western democracies can indeed be compared with the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany. Most significantly, Dietrich Bonhoeffer,² the Lutheran pastor whom Hitler sent to the scaffold in 1945, spoke as strongly against abortion as ever he did against Nazism.³ His views are worthy of quotation: “Destruction of the embryo⁴ in the mother’s womb is a violation of the right to live which God has bestowed upon this nascent⁵ life. To raise the question whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The simple fact is that God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life. And that is nothing but murder.”⁶ As early as 1933, as Nazi persecution of the Jews gathered momentum, Bonhoeffer saw clearly the duty of the Christian. He turned to the Word of God, and Proverbs 31:8 was often on his lips: “Open your mouth for the dumb.” This same duty rests upon the Christian in our own day as increasingly abortion is practiced and accepted.

An age of slogans and deadened moral sensibilities inevitably has many depressing features, but two of the more serious are the lack of clear thinking and the debasement⁷ of language. In many places, girls as young as eleven have had abortions; and fourteen-year-olds have returned for their second operation. Yet they would not be allowed to buy liquor and usually would require parental consent before having their ears pierced (this consent is not always required in abortion cases). There are government-sponsored campaigns against smoking by pregnant women because the practice could harm the infant. And unborn children involved in automobile accidents have even secured compensation through the law courts. Yet no action has been taken against the practice of killing the unborn child. In fact, there has been a subtle and pervasive assumption that pro-abortionists are sensitive, liberal, and humane⁸ people who are articulate, intelli-

¹ John Joseph Powell (1925-2009) – author of *Abortion: The Silent Holocaust*.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) – German Lutheran theologian and pastor.

³ Nazism – the political doctrines implemented by Adolph Hitler and his followers.

⁴ embryo – an unborn baby less than 8 weeks old.

⁵ nascent – beginning to develop.

⁶ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, 175-76.

⁷ debasement – reducing in quality.

⁸ humane – showing compassion or sympathy for others.

gent, and in touch with the needs of modern living, while the pro-life side has been often portrayed as a group of dogmatic hard-liners who may even have leanings towards fascism.⁹

In addition, the unborn child has been labeled a “protoplasmic¹⁰ mass” or “fetal tissue,” while abortion itself has been called “a method of post-conceptive fertility control” or, more simply but just as deceptively, “the termination of pregnancy.” This demeaning of words has had profound effects: language is to be treasured, and it was not for nothing that Augustine of Hippo¹¹ referred to words as “precious cups of meaning.” In the present situation, however, words have been used to disguise reality rather than to reveal it. Therefore, before proceeding any further, we should be very clear as to what exactly takes place during every abortion.

Three main methods are used to end the life of an unborn child. First, for early pregnancies, there is the *dilation and curettage* technique (D&C). The cervix is first dilated, and a tube is inserted into the mother’s uterus. This tube is attached to a suction apparatus that tears the little baby apart and deposits him in a jar. A curette¹² is then used to scrape the wall of the uterus to remove any parts of the baby’s body that might still be present. Often the suction tube is not used at all, and the curette is simply used to cut the baby’s body to pieces and scrape out the placenta.

After about the third month of pregnancy, this technique becomes too dangerous for the mother, so a *saline abortion* is employed. This might be called *salt poisoning*. A solution of concentrated salt is injected into the amniotic¹³ fluid in the sac around the growing baby. The salt is absorbed by the baby who is poisoned to death after about an hour. The outer layer of his skin is burned off by the salt; and about a day later, the mother goes into labor and delivers a discolored and shriveled-up baby. A few such babies have been delivered alive, although they rarely survive long. Prostaglandins¹⁴ can also be used after the third month of pregnancy. Prostaglandin chemicals are injected into the uterus, causing the mother to go into premature labor and deliver a dead baby. However, prostaglandin babies have been born alive, much to the embarrassment of some in the pro-abortion camp.

The third method, which is used for more developed pregnancies, is the *hysterotomy*.¹⁵ This is like a Caesarean operation, except that in the hysterotomy, the object is not to *save* the child but to kill him. In this case, the baby has to be either killed outright or allowed to die...

⁹ **fascism** – extreme right wing, authoritarian, or intolerant views or practice.

¹⁰ **protoplasmic** – the colorless liquid of a living cell, composed of proteins, fats, and other organic substances in water, including the nucleus.

¹¹ **Aurelius Augustine** (354-430) – Bishop of Hippo Regius in North Africa and theologian.

¹² **curette** – a surgical instrument shaped like a scoop to remove tissue from a bodily cavity.

¹³ **amniotic** – having to do with the amnion, the innermost membrane enveloping an embryo.

¹⁴ **prostaglandins** – a potent substance that acts like a hormone; found in many bodily tissues; has varying hormone-like effects, notably the promotion of uterine contractions.

¹⁵ **hysterotomy** – surgical incision into the uterus.

It is sometimes said that we cannot know when the fetus becomes a human being. In fact, the Supreme Court of the United States maintained just this view in its momentous and tragic decision of 1973,¹⁶ when it virtually allowed abortion on demand. The Court stated, “We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins.”¹⁷ It then went on to imply that issues of theological, philosophical, and biological speculation have *no place in a court of law*. Such a statement gives the appearance of humility, but it flies in the face of biological reality. Even if it were true, the Court’s cavalier¹⁸ attitude to life gives grave cause for alarm. If there is any uncertainty as to when life begins, the duty of the Court is surely to protect what, on the Court’s own admission, might be human life...

Abortion has...become so much accepted in places like Britain, the United States, and Australia, that one child out of every three or four conceived is deliberately put to death in the womb. The statistics have indeed become horrifying. In the United States, for example, perhaps as many as fifteen million died in the ten years following 1973. Based on these figures, it is calculated that the number of babies killed through abortion in four months is approximately equal to the number of Americans killed during the whole of World War II. The womb has become more deadly than the battlefield.

Yet all this has taken place in the name of care and compassion, complete with the touching catch-cry, “Every child a wanted child.”¹⁹...Modern humanists no longer deviate from an accepted standard; it has become increasingly

¹⁶ *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113 (1973): decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that held unduly restrictive state regulation of abortion to be unconstitutional. In a 7–2 vote the Supreme Court upheld the lower court’s decision that a Texas statute criminalizing abortion in most instances violated a woman’s constitutional right of privacy, which the court found implicit in the liberty guarantee of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. (“Roe v. Wade,” *Encyclopedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*, 2011)

¹⁷ **Harold Andrew Blackmun** (1908-1999): Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1970 until 1994, author of *Roe v. Wade*.

¹⁸ **cavalier** – haughty, careless lack of concern.

¹⁹ This phrase appears on the Planned Parenthood web site. Christian apologist Greg Koukl replies to this kind of thinking: “Life might not be beautiful for an unwanted child—I’ll grant that—but why isn’t it?...The initial answer is, ‘The unwanted child’s life is not beautiful because she’s not wanted.’ But it goes deeper than that, doesn’t it? No child’s life is miserable simply by the bare fact that she is unwanted. Being unwanted doesn’t make her life miserable. In this case, it isn’t a *what* that makes the child’s life miserable (being unwanted), but rather a *who* that makes the child’s life miserable (the people, the adults, the parents who don’t want the child). You see, people are miserable not because of the conditions of their conception, but rather because of the way others treat them afterwards...Yes, many unwanted children lead miserable lives. But whose fault is that? It is not the baby’s fault. It’s the fault of parents who would rather kill their children than be obliged to love and care for them.” (Greg Koukl, *Every Child a Wanted Child*, <http://www.str.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5238>)

true that there is no longer any standard from which to deviate...The Prophet Amos had a plumb line by which he could judge Israel (Amo 7:7-9), but modern secular man has been left without any plumb line. As a result, in the abortion debate, he has not simply come up with the wrong answers, he has been unable even to frame the right questions...

Abortion in the Light of God's Word: It is frequently contended that the Bible says next to nothing on the subject of abortion...It is true that the Bible says nothing directly on the subject of abortion, but we do well to remember the important principle laid down by the Westminster Confession of Faith: "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture" (I.vi).²⁰ On these premises, it is certainly possible to derive the biblical attitude to abortion.

The starting point for any study must be Exodus 21:22-25. This text is not without ambiguities and can be interpreted in two possible ways. The first interpretation can be found in the New American Standard Bible:²¹ "And if men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no further injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman's husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise."

If this is the correct translation, it would appear to justify the view that the mother's life is of greater value than that of the unborn child. The unborn child would then be viewed as nascent life rather than as a full human being. However, even this translation does not open the door to abortion but precludes²² it. Here, an accidental abortion leads to a fine. "Good and necessary" deduction would entail that deliberate abortion warrants a much heavier punishment. At most, this view of Exodus 21:22-25 might justify abortion in the now extremely rare case in which the pregnancy seriously threatens the physical life of the mother. The point of the passage would then be the extraordinary protection given to the expectant mother, for manslaughter was not usually a capital offence (Jos 20)—not the lesser protection given to the baby.

²⁰ The same declaration appears with a slight variation in the Second London Baptist Confession of 1677/89: "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture" (I.vi).

²¹ The use of modern translations by the author does not mean that CHAPEL LIBRARY endorses or agrees with these translations. See *English Bible Translations: By What Standard?*, William Einwechter, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

²² **precludes** – rules out; prevents.

The second interpretation, namely that Exodus 21 refers to the death of either mother or child, gains support from the translation of the Authorized Version²³... This says, "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her,²⁴ and yet no mischief follow:²⁵ he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life."

On this translation, it is possible that the verses do not refer to a miscarriage, but to a premature birth. If the young infant survives, the guilty men are fined; but if he dies, it is life for life. In fact, the passage has been understood in this way by the learned Puritan exegete, Matthew Poole, and by Keil and Delitzsch, whose commentaries on the Old Testament have long been regarded as standard works of reference. Calvin's comments are also most instructive. The great Genevan Reformer wrote, "The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being." Hence, he concluded that the passage referred to the possible death of either mother or child. He therefore protested vigorously against the murder of the unborn: "If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light."

This second interpretation of Exodus 21:22-25 has not found widespread support today, but there is much to be said in its favor. In the first place, the Hebrew word for *miscarriage* is not used in the passage, although it can be found in other parts of the Old Testament (e.g. Gen 31:38; Hos 9:14). Instead, Exodus 21:22 uses a word that simply means "to depart" or "to go out." It is used, for example, to describe Abram's departure from Haran in Genesis 12:4. It is also used to describe live births (e.g. Gen 25:26; 38:28-30). Admittedly, it is used of a stillborn infant in Numbers 12:12, but it still needs to be said that the modern translations that insert the word *miscarriage* into the text are interpreting rather than translating.

The second reason for accepting that Exodus 21 refers to the death of either mother or child is more compelling. The Scriptures, as the Word of God, consistently refer to the unborn child as a human being. Every child in the womb is fearfully and wonderfully made by God (Job 31:15; Psa 139:13-16; Isa 44:2, 24; Jer 1:5) in a way that we can never completely understand (Ecc 11:5). There is continuity in life from conception to death; so naturally, when David refers to his origins in the womb, he uses the first-person personal pronoun (Psa 139:13). Even sin is traced back, not to the newborn baby, but to the unborn infant (Psa 51:5; 58:3). As a result, the unborn are always treated in Scripture as human—they can move,

²³ The NIV follows the AV's translation here.

²⁴ "she gives birth prematurely" (NIV)

²⁵ "serious injury" (NIV)

even leap (Gen 25:22, Luk 1:41, 44), be consecrated in God's service (Jer 1:5; Gal 1:15), filled with the Holy Spirit (Luk 1:15), and blessed (Luk 1:42). Furthermore, the same Greek word is used to describe the unborn John the Baptist (Luk 1:41, 44), the newborn baby Jesus (Luk 2:12, 16), and the young children who were brought to Jesus (Luk 18:15). If the unborn child is not a human being, it is difficult to see how these statements could have any meaning. And it is surely significant that when the eternal Son of God became man, He entered Mary's womb. The incarnation,²⁶ the union of the divine with the human, must be dated from the conception, not the birth, of our Lord.

Since the unborn child is a live human being, it is therefore possible for him to die in the womb (*cf.* Job 10:18). The Apostle Paul could even refer to himself as an abortion—an abortion who lived (1Co 15:8). When the prophet Jeremiah broke out into that remarkable cry of despondency²⁷ in Jeremiah 20, he cursed the day of his birth and went on to curse the man who could have killed him in his mother's womb, but did not (Jer 20:14-18). Had the prophet lived in twentieth-century Europe, he might have had his wish fulfilled! The unnamed recipient of Jeremiah's curse was guilty in Jeremiah's jaundiced²⁸ eyes "because he slew me not from the womb" (Jer 20:17). The word that is used here to describe the killing of a child in the womb is the same word that is used to describe David's slaying of Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:50-51. Apparently, Jeremiah knew of no euphemism²⁹ such as "termination of pregnancy."

Throughout Scripture, God's judgment always falls on those who slay the unborn. The prophet Elisha wept when he thought of the crimes that Hazael, the king of Syria, would commit against Israel. In Elisha's words, "[thou] wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child" (2Ki 8:12). Later, the same evil was perpetuated by Menahem, one of Israel's last kings (2Ki 15:16). When the heathen Ammonites ripped open the pregnant women of Gilead, the prophet Amos declared that God's judgment lay close at hand (Amo 1:13). All this indicates that, contrary to some claims, God's Word does give clear-cut guidelines on the subject of abortion.

The Biblical injunctions³⁰ against child sacrifice are also not without relevance for the abortion debate. God did not allow the Israelites to enter Canaan until the iniquity of the Amorites was complete (Gen 15:16). As Canaanite culture became more debased, God prepared the Israelites to take possession of the Promised Land. Repeatedly, God warned the Israelites not to imitate their heathen neigh-

²⁶ See FGB 219, *The Person of Christ*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

²⁷ **despondency** – feeling downcast, disheartened, and hopeless.

²⁸ **jaundiced** – the state of taking an unfavorable view.

²⁹ **euphemism** – a word or phrase used in place of a term that might be considered too direct, harsh, unpleasant, or offensive.

³⁰ **injunctions** – formal commands.

bors (e.g., Lev 18:24-30; 20:23). One of the things that God especially warned against was the sacrificial offering of children through fire to the Ammonite god Molech (Lev 18:21; 20:2-5; Deu 12:31; 18:10). However, as early as Solomon's reign, the worship of Molech was taking place in Israel (1Ki 11:7). The practice of child sacrifice soon spread to Moab (2Ki 3:27) and even to Judah, where Ahaz in the eighth century B.C. (2Ki 16:3; 2Ch 28:3) and Manasseh in the seventh century B.C. (2Ki 21:6; 2Ch 33:6) were guilty of the crime. In 722 B.C., the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, partly because of Israel's participation in this brutal and idolatrous practice (2Ki 17:17, *cf.* Psa 106:34-39).

These child sacrifices prompted the prophets to declare God's judgment upon His people and to command repentance. Isaiah and later Jeremiah and Ezekiel were particularly moved to denounce the worship of Molech (*cf.* Isa 57:5; Jer 7:31; 19:4-5; 32:35; Eze 16:20-21; 20:31; 23:37, 39). When God said that He would not hear the prayers of the Judeans because their hands were full of blood, it is likely that the child sacrifices were at least partly in mind (Isa 1:15). Much later, as Jerusalem edged closer to disaster, the godly king Josiah tried to reform Judah according to God's Law. Part of this reformation consisted of trying to abolish these sacrifices of children to Molech (2Ki 23:10). It is indeed a sobering thought that the valley of Hinnom, to the south of Jerusalem, which was the site for these child sacrifices (2Ch 33:6; Jer 7:31), was later used by Jesus as a picture of hell (e.g., Luk 12:5). The word *hell* or *Gehenna* comes from the Greek word *geenna*, which in turn comes from the Hebrew *gê* (valley of) *hinnöm* (Hinnom).

God's Word thus has much to say to us on the issue of abortion. Today, we see again Rachel, the woman of faith, weeping for her children because they are not (Mat 2:18). Arguments in favor of abortion will also prove to be arguments in favor of euthanasia and infanticide—and hence a return to the practices of Pharaoh (Exo 1) and Herod (Mat 2:16-18). Those who hate God invariably love death (Pro 8:36). Unborn life is indeed human life, and so embraced by God's commandment that forbids murder (Exo 20:13). The cause of the unborn child is thus God's cause: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up" (Psa 27:10).

From *Abortion*, 3-6, 9, 15-21, The Banner of Truth Trust. Used by permission of US office, 4/24/12, www.banneroftruth.org.

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THE BIBLE AND SANCTITY OF LIFE

R. C. Sproul

IN biblical terms, the sanctity¹ of human life is rooted and grounded in creation. Mankind is not viewed as a cosmic accident but as the product of a carefully executed creation by an eternal God. Human dignity is derived from God. Man as a finite, dependent, contingent creature is assigned a high value by his Creator.

The creation account in Genesis provides the framework for human dignity: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Gen 1:26-27). Creation in the image of God is what sets humans apart from all other creatures. The stamp of the image and likeness of God connects God and mankind uniquely. Though there is no biblical warrant for seeing man as godlike, there is a high dignity associated with this unique relationship to the Creator. It has often been suggested that whatever dignity was given mankind through creation was erased or canceled through the Fall. Since evil mars the countenance of human beings, is the original image still intact? Because of the Fall, something profound has stained the greatness of humanity. Therefore, we now must distinguish between the image of God in its wide and narrow senses.

The image of God in the *narrow* sense concerns mankind’s ethical capacity and behavior. In creation, man was given the ability and the responsibility to mirror and reflect the holy character of God. Since the Fall, the mirror has been splotched² by the grime of sin. We have lost our capacity for moral perfection, but we have not lost our humanity with this ethical loss. Man may no longer be pure, but he is still human. Insofar as we are still human, we retain the image of God in the wider sense. We are still valuable creatures. We may no longer be worthy, but we still have worth. This is the resounding biblical message of redemption. The creatures God created are the same creatures He is moved to redeem.

Because Christians speak so tirelessly about human sin, do they have a low view of humanity? Indeed, they have a low view of human *virtue*, but not a corresponding low view of human worth or importance. It is precisely because the Bible has such a high view of human dignity that Christians take human sin so seriously. If

¹ **sanctity** – the quality of being sacred or holy.

² **splotched** – marked with heavy splashes, spots, or stains.

one rat steals another rat's food, we do not get morally outraged. But if one human steals another human's food, we rightly become concerned. The biblical view indicates that human theft is more serious than rat theft because humans are a higher order of being. As the psalmist indicated, we are created "a little lower than the angels" (Psa 8:5). This ranking of value is deeply rooted within our own humanity. For instance, when the president of the United States is killed, we do not refer to the deed merely as homicide or murder. We have a special word for it: *assassination*.

During the news reports that followed the announcement of the assassination of President Kennedy,³ the reporters seemed to have difficulty finding words powerful enough to express their outrage. They called the assassination "diabolical," "fiendish," "inhuman," and other such terms. I wondered at the time what made it difficult to describe Kennedy's murder simply as one human being killing another human being. Not only a devil or a fiend can commit murder. A person is not instantly shorn of humanity when he kills another human. Lee Harvey Oswald⁴ was a human being when he pulled the trigger in Dallas. Does this mean, then, that in the hierarchy of value President Kennedy had more human dignity than Officer Tippit,⁵ who was killed the same day in the same city by the same man? By no means! The murder of Officer Tippit was just as much an assault on his dignity as the murder of Kennedy was on his. Each was a human person. Each had personal worth and dignity. Kennedy's person was no more laden with dignity than Tippit's. What made the outrage over Kennedy's death greater than that over Tippit's death was the office Kennedy held. He was the president of the United States. He was the supreme *publica persona*⁶ of our land. It is by similar reason that an offense against a human is more outrageous than an offense against a rat. Both the rat and the human are creatures created by God. But the "office" of a person is considerably higher than the "office" of the rat. It is mankind—not the rat—who is made in the image of God. The human is given a role of dominion over the earth. Man, not the rat, is God's vice-regent over creation. Does capital punishment violate the sanctity of life? The principle of the special dignity of mankind is echoed later in Genesis in the institution of capital punishment: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen 9:6). This text is not a prophecy. It is not saying simply that those who live by the sword will die by the sword. Rather, the passage is a divine mandate for capital punishment in the case of murder. The significant point is that the moral basis for capital punishment in Genesis is *the sanctity of life*.

³ **John Fitzgerald Kennedy** (1917-1963) – 35th President of the US, assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

⁴ **Lee Harvey Oswald** (1939-1963) – alleged assassin of President John F. Kennedy.

⁵ **J. D. Tippit** (1924-1963) – Dallas police officer shot and killed by Lee H. Oswald.

⁶ **publica persona** – public person.

The biblical ethic is [this]: because man is endowed with the image of God, his life is so sacred that any malicious destruction of it must be punished by execution. Note that this verse implies that God considers an assault against human life an assault against *Himself*. To murder a person is to attack one who is the image-bearer of God. God regards homicide as an implicit attempt to murder God. The sanctity of life is reinforced and reaffirmed in the Ten Commandments. We read, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exo 20:13). The biblical prohibition against murder is widely known in our society. It is frequently appealed to as a moral ground against capital punishment. When the state of Pennsylvania voted to reinstate the death penalty for murder, the legislation was vetoed by then-Governor Milton Shapp. Shapp explained to the news media that the ground for his veto was that the Ten Commandments said, “Thou shalt not kill.” Governor Shapp should have read on. If we turn just a single page in Exodus, we see what the Law of God required if someone broke the command prohibiting murder: “He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death” (Exo 21:12). The punitive measures against murder underscore the gravity of the crime precisely because of the value of the victim. Life is regarded as so sacred that it must never be destroyed without just cause. Many Old Testament statements speak of the dignity of human life as it rests in divine creation, including the following:

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33:4).

“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture” (Psa 100:3).

“Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded” (Isa 45:9-12).

“But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand” (Isa 64:8).

Interestingly, Jesus Christ gave the most important explanation of the Old Testament view of the sanctity of life: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Mat 5:21-22). The words of Jesus have vital significance

for our understanding of the sanctity of life. Here Jesus broadened the implications of the Old Testament law. He was speaking to religious leaders who had a narrow and simplistic grasp of the Ten Commandments. The legalists of His day were confident that if they obeyed the explicitly stated aspects of the Law, they could applaud themselves for their great virtue. They failed, however, to grasp the wider implications.

In Jesus' view, what the Law did not spell out in detail was clearly implied by its broader meaning. This quality of the Law is seen in Jesus' expansion of the prohibition against adultery: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Mat 5:27-28). Here Jesus explained that a person who refrains from the physical act of adultery has not necessarily been obedient to the whole Law.

The law on adultery is a complex one, including not only actual illicit intercourse but also everything that falls between lust and adultery. Jesus described lust as adultery of the heart. The Law not only prohibits certain negative behaviors and attitudes, but by implication, it requires certain positive behaviors and attitudes. That is, if adultery is prohibited, chastity and purity are required. When we apply these patterns set forth by Jesus to the prohibition against murder, we understand clearly that, on the one hand, we are to refrain from all things contained in the broad definition of murder; but on the other hand, we are positively commanded to work to save, improve, and care for life.⁷ We are to avoid murder in all of its ramifications⁸ and, at the same time, do all that we can to promote life.⁹ Just as Jesus considered lust a part of adultery, so He viewed unjustifiable anger and slander as parts of murder. As lust is adultery of the heart, so anger and slander are murder of the heart. By expanding the scope of the Ten Commandments to include such matters as lust and slander, Jesus did not mean that it is just as evil to lust after a person as it is to have unlawful physical intercourse. Likewise, Jesus did not say that slander is just as evil as murder. What He did say is that the law against murder includes a law against anything that involves injuring a fellow human unjustly.

⁷ As every positive command implies a negative, so every negative implies a positive. Therefore, in so far as God says, "*Thou shalt not kill*," viz. thyself or others, He thereby obliges men to preserve their own life and that of others. (Thomas Boston, *The Complete Works of Thomas Boston*, Vol. 2, 260)

⁸ **ramifications** – consequences of actions, especially when complex or unwelcome.

⁹ To be clear of the crime of murder, it is not enough to refrain from shedding man's blood. If in act you perpetrate, if in endeavor you plot, if in wish and design you conceive what is adverse to another's safety, you have the guilt of murder. On the other hand, if you do not according to your means and opportunity study to defend his safety, by that inhumanity you violate the law. (Calvin, *Institutes*, II, viii, 39)

How does all of this apply to the abortion issue? In Jesus' teaching, we see another strong reinforcement of the sanctity of life. Murder of the heart, such as slander, may be described as "potential" murder. It is potential murder because, as an example, anger and slander have the potential to lead to the full act of physical murder. Of course, they do not always lead to that outcome. Anger and slander are prohibited, not so much because of what else they may lead to, but because of the actual harm they do to the quality of life.

When we link the discussion of the sanctity of life to abortion, we make a subtle but relevant connection. Even if it cannot be proven that a fetus is an actual living human person, there is no doubt that it is a potential living human person. In other words, a fetus is a *developing* person. It is not in a frozen state of potentiality. The fetus is in dynamic process—without interference or unforeseen calamity, it surely will become a fully actualized living human person. Jesus Christ sees the law against murder as including not only the act of actual murder, but also actions of potential murder. Jesus taught that it is unlawful to commit the potential murder of an actual life.

What, then, are the implications of committing the actual destruction of potential life? The actual destruction of potential life is not the same thing as the potential destruction of actual life. These are not identical cases, but they are close enough to make us pause to consider carefully the possible consequences before we destroy a potential life. If this aspect of the law does not fully and finally capture abortion within the broad and complex prohibition against murder, a second aspect clearly does. As I stated earlier, the negative prohibitions of the law imply positive attitudes and actions. For instance, the biblical law against adultery also requires chastity and purity. Likewise, when a law is stated in a positive form, its negative opposite is implicitly forbidden. For example, if God commands us to be good stewards of our money, clearly we ought not to be wild spenders. A positive command to diligent labor carries an implicit negative prohibition against being lazy on the job. A negative prohibition against actual and potential murder implicitly involves a positive mandate to work for the protection and sustenance of life.

To oppose murder is to promote life. Whatever else abortion does, it does not promote the life of the unborn child. Although some people will argue that abortion promotes the quality of life of those who do not desire offspring, it does not promote the life of the subject in question—the developing unborn child. The Bible is consistently strong in its support for the exceedingly great value of all human life. The poor, the oppressed, the widowed, the orphaned, and the handicapped—all are highly valued in the Bible. Thus, any discussion of the abortion issue ultimately must wrestle with this key theme of Scripture. When the destruc-

tion or the disposal of even potential human life is done cheaply and easily, a shadow darkens the whole landscape of the sanctity of life and human dignity.

From *Abortion: A Rational Look at an Emotional Issue*, copyright 1990, 2010; used by permission of Reformation Trust Publishing, www.ligonier.org/reformation-trust.

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The more unnatural any act is the more horrid. It is unnatural for a man to be cruel to his own flesh; for a woman to go about to kill the child in her womb—O how your ears *tingle* at such a flagitious [*shockingly brutal*] act!—*William Gurnall*

MANKIND AND THE DEATH FACTOR

George Grant

“All they that hate me love death.”—Proverbs 8:36

SADLY, because all men without exception are sinners, the most fundamental factor in understanding anthropology¹ is the Thanatos factor. With entirely non-Freudian implications,² the Thanatos Syndrome is simply *the natural sinful inclination to death and defilement*. All men have morbidly embraced death (Rom 5:12).

At the Fall, mankind was suddenly destined for death (Jer 15:2). We were all at that moment bound into a covenant with death (Isa 28:15). Scripture tells us, “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Pro 14:12; 16:25).

Whether we know it or not, we have chosen death (Jer 8:3). It has become our shepherd (Psa 49:14). Our minds are fixed on it (Rom 8:6), our hearts pursue it (Pro 21:6), and our flesh is ruled by it (Rom 8:2). We dance to its cadences³ (Pro 2:18) and descend to its chambers (Pro 7:27).

The fact is “the wages of sin is death” (Rom 6:23) and “all have sinned” (Rom 3:23). “There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes” (Rom 3:10-18). And, all those who hate God love death (Pro 8:36).

It is no wonder then that abortion, infanticide, exposure, and abandonment have always been a normal and natural part of human relations. Since the dawning of time, men have contrived ingenious diversions to satisfy their fallen passions. And child killing has always been chief among them.

Virtually every culture in antiquity was stained with the blood of innocent children. Unwanted infants in ancient Rome were abandoned outside the city walls to

¹ **anthropology** – the study of men.

² **non-Freudian implications** – *thanatos* in the theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was mankind’s urge for self-destruction. The author’s point is that the Thanatos Syndrome to which he refers is not Freud’s, but the revelation of man’s radical depravity set forth in God’s infallible Word.

³ **cadences** – rhythms.

die from exposure to the elements or from the attacks of wild foraging⁴ beasts. Greeks often gave their pregnant women harsh doses of herbal or medicinal abortifacients.⁵ Persians developed highly sophisticated surgical curette procedures. Chinese women tied heavy ropes around their waists so excruciatingly tight that they either aborted or passed into unconsciousness. Ancient Hindus and Arabs concocted chemical [contraceptives] ... Primitive Canaanites threw their children onto great flaming pyres as a sacrifice to their god Molech. Polynesians subjected their pregnant women to onerous⁶ tortures—their abdomens beaten with large stones or hot coals heaped upon their bodies. Japanese women [stood over] boiling cauldrons of parricidal brews.⁷ Egyptians disposed of their unwanted children by disemboweling and dismembering them shortly after birth. Their collagen⁸ was then ritually harvested for the manufacture of cosmetic creams.

None of the great minds of the ancient world—from Plato and Aristotle to Seneca and Quintilian, from Pythagoras and Aristophanes to Livy and Cicero, from Herodotus and Thucydides to Plutarch and Euripides—disparaged child killing in any way. In fact, most of them actually *recommended* it. They callously discussed its various methods and procedures. They casually debated its sundry legal ramifications. They blithely⁹ tossed lives like dice.

Abortion, infanticide, exposure, and abandonment were so much a part of human societies that they provided the primary *leitmotif*¹⁰ in popular traditions, stories, myths, fables, and legends.

The founding of Rome was, for instance, presumed to be the happy result of the abandonment of children, [Romulus and Remus]... Oedipus was presumed to be an abandoned child who was also found by a shepherd and later rose to greatness. Ion, the eponymous¹¹ monarch in ancient Greece, miraculously lived through an abortion, according to tradition. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, was supposedly a fortunate survivor of infanticide. According to Homer's legend, Paris, whose amorous indiscretions started the Trojan War, was also a victim of abandonment. Telephus, the king of Mysia in Greece, and Habius, ruler of the Cunetes in Spain, had both been exposed as children according to various folk tales. Jupiter, chief god of the Olympian pantheon, himself had been abandoned as

⁴ **foraging** – searching for food.

⁵ **abortifacients** – drugs or other means that cause abortion.

⁶ **onerous** – oppressive.

⁷ **parricidal brews** – boiling mixtures used to kill a near relative, in this case, one's baby.

⁸ **collagen** – protein that is present in the form of fibers that make up bone, tendons, and other connective tissue in the human body, which yields gelatin when boiled.

⁹ **blithely** – carelessly.

¹⁰ **leitmotif** – recurring theme.

¹¹ **eponymous** – of a person who gives his or her name to something, e.g., Ion founded the Ionians, a primary tribe of Greece.

a child. He in turn exposed his twin sons, Zethus and Amphion. Similarly, other myths related that Poseidon, Aesculapius, Hephaistos, Attis, and Cybele had all been abandoned to die.

Because they had been mired¹² by the minions¹³ of sin and death, it was as natural as the spring rains for the men and women of antiquity to kill their children. It was as instinctive as the autumn harvest for them summarily to sabotage their own heritage. They saw nothing particularly cruel about despoiling the fruit of their wombs. It was woven into the very fabric of their culture. They believed that it was completely justifiable. They believed that it was just, good, and right.

But they were wrong. Dreadfully wrong.

Life is God's gift. It is His gracious endowment upon the created order. It flows forth in generative fruitfulness. The earth is literally teeming with life (Gen 1:20; Lev 11:10; 22:5; Deu 14:9). And the crowning glory of this sacred teeming is man himself (Gen 1:26-30; Psa 8:1-9). To violate the sanctity of this magnificent endowment is to fly in the face of all that is holy, just, and true (Jer 8:1-17; Rom 8:6). To violate the sanctity of life is to invite judgment, retribution, and anathema (Deu 30:19-20). It is to solicit devastation, imprecation,¹⁴ and destruction (Jer 21:8-10). The Apostle Paul tells us, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal 6:7).

But the Lord God, Who is the giver of life (Act 17:25), the fountain of life (Psa 36:9), the defender of life (Psa 27:1), the prince of life (Act 3:15), and the restorer of life (Ruth 4:15), did not leave men to languish hopelessly in the clutches of sin and death. He not only sent us the message of life (Act 5:20) and the words of life (Joh 6:68), He sent us the light of life as well (Joh 8:12). He sent us His only begotten Son, the life of the world (Joh 6:51), to break the bonds of death (1Co 15:54-56)... "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Joh 3:16)... In Christ, God has afforded us the opportunity... to choose between fruitful and teeming life on the one hand, and barren and impoverished death on the other (Deu 30:19).

Apart from Christ it is not possible to escape the snares of sin and death (Col 2:13). On the other hand, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Co 5:17). All those who hate Christ "love death" (Pro 8:36), while all those who receive Christ are made the sweet savor of life (2Co 2:16).

¹² **mired** – sunk down in swampy mud; held fast.

¹³ **minions** – servants.

¹⁴ **imprecation** – curses.

The implication is clear: The pro-life movement and the Christian faith are synonymous.¹⁵ Where there is one, there will be the other: for one cannot be had without the other. Further, the primary conflict in temporal history always has been and always will be the struggle for life by the Church against the natural inclinations of all men everywhere.

Conclusion: Death has cast its dark shadow across the whole of human relations. Because of sin, all men flirt and flaunt shamelessly in the face of its specter. Sadly, such impudence has led to the most grotesque concupiscence¹⁶ imaginable: the slaughter of innocent children. Blinded by the glare from the nefarious¹⁷ and insidious angel of light (2Co 11:14), we stand by, paralyzed and mesmerized. Thanks be to God, there is a way of escape from these bonds of destruction. In Christ, there is hope. In Him, there is life, both temporal and eternal. In Him, there is liberty and justice. In Him, there is an antidote to the Thanatos factor. In Him, and in Him alone, there is an answer to the age-long dilemma of the dominion of death.

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¹⁵ This does not mean, however, that everyone who is pro-life is in fact a Christian.

¹⁶ **concupiscence** – eager desire; lust.

¹⁷ **nefarious** – extremely wicked.

ANSWERS TO ABORTION ARGUMENTS

Joel Beeke

WHAT is the justification for legal abortion? Let us examine the arguments used by those who promote abortion to determine on how strong of a foundation this practice is based.

Argument 1: The fetus is not a human life, therefore it may be killed. While the fetus will eventually become a human child, this argument says it is not yet so. But science indicates otherwise. First, the words *embryo* and *fetus* are Greek and Latin words that simply mean “young one.” When scientists speak of a human embryo or fetus, they are not putting it in the category of another species, but are simply using technical terminology for a stage of development, like the words *infant*, *child*, *adolescent*, and *adult*. A human fetus is a young human person in the womb. It is natural and correct for mothers to speak of the fetus as “my baby” or for pregnancy books to say “your child.”

Second, from conception, the child has its own genetic code that clearly identifies it as *homo sapiens*—part of the human race. The child’s DNA also has a distinct code from the mother, showing that he or she is not a part of her body, but a distinct individual living temporarily within her.

Third, ultrasound¹ imaging shows that very early in the process of development the embryo grows into a recognizable human form. The child is not a blob of tissue, but a highly complex, though tiny, baby. At three weeks after conception, a baby’s heart begins beating and pumping blood through the body. At six weeks, a baby’s brain waves are traceable. Virtually all surgical abortions silence a beating heart and a functioning brain. At eight weeks, the arms, hands, legs, and feet are well developed and the child’s fingerprints are starting to form. At eleven weeks after conception, all of the baby’s internal organs are present and functioning. By the end of the first trimester, the baby kicks, spins, somersaults, opens and closes hands, and makes facial expressions.

By any reasonable standard, a human fetus is a young human being. To kill an innocent baby is murder. That is why the products of abortion are so ugly: severed hands, feet, and heads, wrapped up in bags and discarded. On an intuitive level, we know this. People can shrug off the image of a side of beef or a chicken drumstick, but images of abortion horrify and grieve us because they are images of a dismembered human body. Unborn children are precious human beings and must be protected.

¹ **ultrasound** – using the reflections of high-frequency sound waves to construct an image of a body organ, commonly used to observe fetal growth.

Argument 2: The fetus is not fully human because it is dependent on another. Is a baby kangaroo not a kangaroo because it lives in its mother's pouch? Of course not. The location and situation of a human being does not make him or her any less human. Arguments for abortion based on dependence tread on dangerous ground. If dependency makes a person less human, then on that ground we would have the right to kill infants outside the womb, people on dialysis, handicapped people, and the elderly. May we kill all dependent people?

Consider two mothers several months into their pregnancies. One child is born prematurely, and the other remains in the womb. The first is utterly dependent on medical intervention to survive, and the other on her mother's body. Is it right to kill the prematurely born baby? How would the hospital staff react if the mother entered the neonatal² ward with a knife to attack her child? If it is not right to kill the premature child, then why is it right to kill the child in the womb? Both are dependent. Both are children. Both must have legal protection.

Argument 3: A woman has a right to do with her body as she desires. We affirm a woman's authority over her body. But there are limits to what we can *rightfully* do with our bodies, including causing harm to another human being. Abortion involves the death of her child. To argue that the living fetus is part of the mother's body defies reason: which organ of her body is it? When the unborn child's heart beats, whose heart is it? When the fetus's brain waves can be traced, whose brain is it? Every pregnancy involves two people: a mother and a child; the rights of both must be considered.

Whenever we speak of the rights of two human beings, we must guard against the more powerful person taking advantage of the weaker person. It is the responsibility of the powerful to protect the weak. It is especially the responsibility of a mother to protect her child. Does any mother have the right to do whatever she pleases with her children? On the contrary, she has the responsibility of caring for them or seeing that someone else cares for them. Certainly, motherhood calls for sacrifice. We should expect adults to make sacrifices of their resources and freedoms when necessary to preserve the lives of children.

Argument 4: Sex and reproduction are private matters into which we must not intrude. We believe that human sexuality is a very private matter: it expresses the deep intimacy that a husband and wife share. But sex has very public consequences. How we exercise our sexuality contributes to the restraint or spread of disease, the treatment of women with honor or rape, the nurture or sexual abuse of children, and the strengthening or dissolution of families that are the foundation of society. Society therefore has a compelling interest to guard the dignity of marriage, women, and children with respect to sex and reproduction.

² **neonatal** – relating to newborn children.

People sometimes argue that the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to privacy in sexual and reproductive matters. Read the Constitution, and you will not find any such right there. In reality, the Fourth Amendment acknowledges the right of security against “unreasonable searches and seizures” without a “warrant,” but says nothing about sexuality, children, or abortion.

Someone might sarcastically say, “I thought what I did in my bedroom was my own business.” But if there is reasonable cause to believe that you are murdering a child in your bedroom, then it becomes a matter of public intervention by the authorities. Privacy is not an absolute moral right. But killing a child is an absolute moral wrong.

Argument 5: Making abortion illegal would force women into dangerous, back-alley abortions. The idea of the crudely done abortion resulting in a bleeding, dying mother (and a dead child) has been widely used by abortion advocates. But in reality, 90 percent of abortions performed before they became legal were done by physicians in their offices. The idea of thousands of women dying yearly until abortion was legalized is a myth. In 1972, thirty-nine mothers died in the United States from abortions. The *American Journal of Obstetrics³ and Gynecology⁴* (March 26, 2010) admits that the legalization of abortion has had “no major impact on the number of women dying from abortion in the U.S....legal abortion is now the leading cause of abortion-related maternal deaths in the U.S.”

Every woman who dies from a botched abortion is a tragic loss. But so is every child who dies from a successful abortion. We should not make it legal to kill babies in order to make the killing safer for the adults involved. Furthermore, abortion has medical and psychological risks; making it illegal would actually protect the lives and health of millions of women.

Argument 6: Better to die before birth than to live as an unwanted child. First, to give a human being the power to determine the future life of another individual based on whether he is “wanted” or “unwanted” is most dangerous. Do we have the right to kill people based on whether or not we want them? Such a viewpoint leads highly cultured societies to commit genocide⁵ against the mentally challenged and “inferior” races.

Second, is the child never wanted by anyone? Many mothers did not want the pregnancy but cherish the child, especially after birth. There are also many parents who want to adopt a child. To say that the child is not wanted now by its mother does not mean it will never be loved.

³ **obstetrics** – the branch of medicine dealing with childbirth and care of the mother.

⁴ **gynecology** – the branch of medicine that deals with the diseases and hygiene of women.

⁵ **genocide** – the systematic killing of people based on ethnicity, religion, etc.

Third, this argument has horrifying implications for “unwanted” children already born. If it is better to kill the baby than to let it be unwanted, then what does that imply about homeless children? Children with abusive parents? Would it be loving to kill these children? Of course not; love calls us to teach their parents to care for them or to find parents for them. In the same way, if unborn children are truly “unwanted,” we should try to help their mothers to see them differently or help the children to find adoptive parents. Did you know that Steve Jobs⁶ was unwanted by his birth mother and the adoptive parents the government initially chose?

Fourth, what gives us the right to decide whether it is better for a person to live or to die? Are we the owner of that person’s life? Do we know with certainty the child’s future? Do not many “unwanted” children overcome severe physical or emotional handicaps in their youth and function as useful adult citizens? Do not many people in painful situations nevertheless wisely choose to live rather than to kill themselves?

In the end, the seemingly compassionate argument for the “wanted” child makes no sense at all. At best, it is an emotional, illogical appeal; at worst, it is a mask for deadly selfishness.

Argument 7: Pro-life advocates are trying to force their beliefs on other people. In reality, all who participate in an abortion force their views on another, namely on the unborn child—so strongly, in fact, that it results in his or her death. If the unborn child is a human being, then how can one be accused of trying to force his own belief on another when trying to protect the life of the child from his or her killer? If the unborn child is a human being, then abortion is *murder*. If abortion is murder, we must do all in our power to stop it.

The Declaration of Independence says, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” Currently the rights of some people are more “equal” than others are because their “liberty and the pursuit of happiness” apparently justifies taking the “life” of others. This seriously undermines the political foundation of our nation. But if people exercise their popular power of voting to direct the government to protect all people’s right to life, they simply do what the Declaration of Independence says they should.

After critically examining seven basic arguments for abortion upon demand, can we honestly conclude on a rational and ethical basis that abortion should be

⁶ **Steven Paul Jobs** (1955-2011) – American inventor, computer entrepreneur, and founder of Apple, Inc.

legal? These arguments are flimsy reasons for murdering more than a million babies each year. This is especially evident when we consider that less than 5% of all abortions are for reason of rape, incest, or a danger to the mother's life. More than 95% of abortions take place for the sake of finances, career, personal convenience, or other selfish reasons. Are these compelling reasons for killing human beings?

From *Is Abortion Really So Bad?*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

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WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

R. C. Sproul

THE question of when life begins is tightly linked to the secret of life itself...Concepts such as *human*, *living*, and *person* have been the subject of much discussion and analysis. Plato sought desperately for a description that would clearly distinguish humans from all other species of animals. He finally chose “featherless biped¹” as his working definition. This lasted only until one of Plato’s students threw a plucked chicken over the academy wall with an attached note that read, “Plato’s man.”

When we turn to the Bible, we discover that it offers no explicit statement that life begins at a certain point or that there is human life before birth. However, Scripture assumes a continuity of life from before the time of birth to after the time of birth. The same language and the same personal pronouns are used indiscriminately for both stages. Further, God’s involvement in the life of the person extends back to conception (and even before conception). This passage supports the point: “For thou hast possessed my reins:² thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them” (Psa 139:13-16).

The psalmist credits God for fashioning him in the womb. He also uses the term *me* to refer to himself before he was born. It is noteworthy that the Hebrew word translated as “unformed substance” is the Hebrew word for “embryo,” and this is the only instance of that word in the Bible.

Another passage relevant to God’s involvement in life within the womb occurs in Isaiah: “Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to

¹ **biped** – an animal that uses two legs for walking.

² **reins** – the seat of human feelings or affections; representative of the heart.

bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength” (Isa 49:1-5).

This passage indicates not only that the unborn baby was distinct from the mother and was treated with a unique personal identity, but that his formation in the womb was the activity of God.

A similar treatment concerns the Prophet Jeremiah: “Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jer 1:4-5). Jeremiah is told that God knew him before he was born. God had personal knowledge of the person of Jeremiah before the person Jeremiah was born. This indicates that God treated Jeremiah in a personal manner and as a personal being before birth. It is also significant that God “set apart” or sanctified Jeremiah before birth. Clearly, God extends the sanctity principle to life in the womb. Even those who do not agree that life begins before birth grant that there is continuity between a child that is conceived and a child that is born.

Every child has a past before birth. The issue is this: Was that past personal or impersonal, with personhood beginning only at birth? It is clear that Scripture regards personhood as beginning prior to birth. As David says, “Behold, I was shapen³ in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psa 51:5). Professor John Frame, in *Medical Ethics*, made the following observation on Psalm 51:5: “Personal continuity extends back in time to the point of conception. Psalm 51:5 clearly and strikingly presses this continuity back to the point of conception. In this passage, David is reflecting on the sin in his heart that had recently taken the form of adultery and murder. He recognizes that the sin of his heart is not itself a recent phenomenon but goes back to the point of his conception in the womb of his mother...The personal continuity between David’s fetal life and his adult life goes back as far as conception and extends even to this ethical relation to God.”⁴

In Psalm 51, David recounts his personal moral history to the point of conception. An impersonal being, a “blob of protoplasm,” cannot be a moral agent. If David’s moral history extends back to conception, then his personal history also must extend to the same point. Not merely David’s biological substance dates back to conception, but his moral disposition as well.

The New Testament provides a fascinating text that has bearing on the question of life before birth: “[Mary] entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she

³ **shapen** – fashioned.

⁴ John M. Frame, *Medical Ethics* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1988), 94.

spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy” (Luk 1:40-44).

This passage describes the meeting between Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, and her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist. Upon their meeting, John, while still in the womb of his mother, leaped for joy. This behavior was consistent with the designated prophetic role of John, who was commissioned by God to “announce” the Messiah. In this instance, John performed his prophetic duty before either he or Jesus was born. These verses show that before John was born, he exhibited cognition⁵ and emotion. He leaped because he was in a state of joy. The joy was prompted by his recognition of the presence of the Messiah.

Some people may dismiss the relevance of this passage because (1) the writer is speaking poetically or hyperbolically;⁶ (2) the passage says nothing about life from conception, only about life prior to birth; or (3) the occasion represents a special miracle and does not prove that other babies could have such prenatal⁷ ability. To answer the first objection, it is erroneous to dismiss the passage because it is poetic or hyperbolic. The literary form of this portion of Luke’s Gospel is unambiguously⁸ historical narrative, not poetry. Also, hyperbole is an exaggerated statement of reality. If this incident is presented with hyperbole, that simply means John did not leap as high or recognize as much as the text implies. The second objection, that the passage says nothing of conception as the beginning point of life, is correct. The passage clearly indicates, however, that John had human powers of cognition and emotion (signs of personality) prior to birth. The third objection, that this incident was a special miracle, is more weighty. Unless we claim that a normal fetus has the ability to recognize the near presence of another fetus in another woman’s womb, we must concede that there is something extraordinary or miraculous about this occurrence. It is possible that God miraculously enabled the prenatal John to have extraordinary cognitive powers that do not belong to average unborn children.

However, if we grant the miracle, we are still left with a difficult question: Was the miracle an act of extending normal powers beyond the normal limits or an act of creating the powers? Did the unborn John the Baptist have the natural abilities of cognition and emotion, abilities that were extended by a miracle, or were the very powers of cognition and emotion created by God? There is no way to answer

⁵ **cognition** – the mental action of acquiring knowledge and understanding by thought, experience, and the senses.

⁶ **hyperbolically** – exaggerated statements not meant to be taken literally.

⁷ **prenatal** – before birth.

⁸ **unambiguously** – clearly defined with only one meaning.

that question absolutely. However, before we dismiss the passage in Luke, two observations must be made. In many other biblical miracles, we see God extending powers or abilities that already exist. For example, in 2 Kings 6:15-17, God opened the eyes of the servant of Elisha so that he could see an angelic host. God did not first miraculously have to give the servant the power to see. Rather, the limit of his natural ability to see was extended. Likewise, for John to recognize Jesus Christ while each was still in his mother's womb, God did not necessarily have to create the powers of cognition and emotion. The second observation is that, however we evaluate this incident, one thing is certain: John the Baptist was an unborn child who manifested cognition and joy...The Bible clearly indicates that unborn babies are considered living human beings before they are born. The weight of the biblical evidence is that life begins at conception.

The development of a human being is a process that begins at conception and continues until death. No one would argue that human development begins at birth. The moment of conception combines forty-six genes—twenty-three from the mother and twenty-three from the father—so that a unique individual begins the process of personal human development. After two weeks, there is a discernible heartbeat. The heart circulates blood within the embryo that is not the mother's blood, but blood the unborn baby has produced. After about six weeks, the embryo is still less than an inch long but has undergone considerable development. Fingers have formed on the hands. At forty-three days, the unborn baby has detectable brain waves. After six and a half weeks, the embryo is moving; however, because of the tiny size of the unborn baby and the thickness of the mother's abdominal wall, she does not sense "quickenings" or movement until several weeks later. By the end of nine weeks, the fetus has developed a unique set of fingerprints. By this time, the [reproductive] organs of the male have already appeared so that the gender of the unborn baby can be distinguished. The kidneys also have formed and are functioning. By the end of the tenth week, the gallbladder is functioning. All the organs of the body are functional by the end of the twelfth week, and the baby can cry. All of this is accomplished during the first three months of pregnancy.

In adults, heartbeat and brain waves are commonly referred to as "vital" signs. When both brain waves and the heartbeat cease for a period of time, a patient may be declared legally dead. Vital signs are a demonstration of life. When such signs are clearly present in the developing embryo, why are people so reluctant to speak of prenatal life? The embryo or fetus is not yet an independent living human person, but that does not mean he or she is not a living human person. If independence is the critical criterion for distinguishing living people from living non-people, then we must admit (as some readily do) that even birth does not yield a living person. At birth, the baby is disconnected physically from the mother—and

in that sense is independent—but a newborn is still desperately dependent on outside help for survival. The newborn can breathe by himself in most cases, but he cannot feed himself.

In our quest to understand the presence of life, it is helpful to have an understanding of death. Since death is the cessation of life, it gives clues into the essential elements of life itself. One problem with our definitions of life and death is seen in the case of stillborn babies. Are stillborn babies “dead babies” or “never-have-been-alive babies”? It is commonplace for physicians to speak of stillborn babies as babies who have died...

The fetus *looks* like a living human person. It *acts* like a human person. The embryo has the genetic structure of a human person. It has the vital signs of a living human person. The fetus has sexuality and movement. Often, it sucks its thumb, reacts to music, and kicks its legs. With this cumulative⁹ evidence, it would seemingly require powerful evidence to the contrary to conclude that a prenatal baby is not a living human person.

Why do people resist this conclusion? The answer is prejudice. Indeed, prejudice is a powerful force in the debate concerning abortion. If we regard the embryo or fetus as a living human person, then the moral implications of destroying that person prior to birth are enormous! As long as we can convince ourselves that a fetus is not human until birth, we are relieved of those difficulties. Even if we conclude that an embryo is a living human person prior to birth, we have still not established that life begins at conception. All we have established is that life begins before birth. The clearest lines of demarcation¹⁰ in the continuum¹¹ between conception and birth are the conception and birth themselves. If we grant that a fetus is a living human person merely five minutes—even *five seconds*—before birth, then birth cannot be the point when life begins. In my judgment, the evidence from science is as weighty as that inferred from the Bible that a fetus is a living human person prior to birth. If that is so, then we must locate the beginning of that life either at the point of conception or at some point between conception and birth.

From *Abortion: A Rational Look at an Emotional Issue*.



Paul tells us of the old Gentiles that they were “without natural affection” (Rom 1:31). That which he aims at is that barbarous custom among the Romans, who oftentimes, to spare the trouble in the education of their children and to be at liberty to satisfy their lusts, *destroyed their own children from the womb*, so far did the strength of sin prevail to obliterate the law of nature and to repel the force and

⁹ **cumulative** – created by gradual additions.

¹⁰ **demarcation** – the action of marking the boundary or limits of something.

¹¹ **continuum** – a continuous series of things that blend into each other so gradually and seamlessly that it is impossible to say where one becomes the next.

power of it. Examples of this nature are common in all nations—amongst *ourselves*—of *women murdering their own children* through the deceitful reasoning of sin. And herein sin turns the strong current of nature, darkens all the light of God in the soul, controls all natural principles [that are] influenced with the power of the command and will of God. Yet this evil hath, through the efficacy of sin, received a fearful aggravation. Men have not only slain but cruelly sacrificed their children to satisfy their lusts.—*John Owen*

Although unhesitatingly and uncompromisingly committed to the cause of child killing, [Lawrence] Tribe, a well-known professor of constitutional law at Harvard, is forced to admit that abortion can only be advocated by those who have jettisoned the last remaining remnants of biblical orthodoxy. He essentially—and accurately—defines the titanic struggle between pro-lifers and pro-choicers as the struggle between *Christian* absolutes and *pagan* absolutes.—*George Grant*

Zeal [for Christ] will make a man hate everything that God hates, such as
drunkenness, slavery, or infanticide, and long to sweep it from
the face of the earth.—*J. C. Ryle*

PROCLAMATIONS OF GOD'S WORD AND ABORTION

Joel Beeke

PROCLAMATION 1: **God created mankind in His own image.** Most people intuitively know that human beings are on a different level than animals. Even the theory of evolution cannot completely erase the sense most people have of how sacred human life is. Animals are beautiful and valuable, but we would kill a grizzly bear to save a child without any qualms of conscience. We know that people are special.

The Bible explains this sense of the sanctity of human life when it says in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Men and women, whatever their age, have a special value far above the birds and beasts (Mat 10:31) because they are God's most special creation on earth. We should cherish and protect human beings, not just for their usefulness, but because they represent God's glory in a unique manner.

Proclamation 2: God rules life and death, ability and disability as the sovereign King. We also have a sense that it is not right to "play God" with other people's lives. We realize that we do not have the right to treat people as if we owned them and could dispose of them as we see fit. The Bible explains this by telling us that God is the King Who owns and rules all of His creation (Psa 95:3-5). He alone has the sovereign right to do what He pleases with people (Dan 4:35).

When God created the world, there was no death or pain; all was "very good" (Gen 1:31). Death came through Adam's disobedience to God's Law (Gen 2:17; Rom 5:12). But even so, God retained His sovereignty over human life and death. "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive" (1Sa 2:6). He rules over human ability and disability. "And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" (Exo 4:11). So the Bible teaches us to receive each human life from God's hand, even if it is a child born with a handicap or into a difficult family situation. God has a wondrous way of bringing good out of evil (Gen 50:20). We are to bow before His authority as the King of the universe and not try to play God with other people's lives.

Abortion trespasses into divine territory by taking into the hands of man what belongs to the Lord alone. It insults His sovereignty and foolishly grasps the authority to make decisions for which we do not have the necessary wisdom. Con-

sider the following historical case: The father has syphilis, the mother has tuberculosis. They have already had four children—the first is blind, the second died, the third is deaf and dumb, and the fourth has tuberculosis. The mother is pregnant with her fifth child. Will you perform an abortion for them? If so, then you just killed Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), a famous German composer and pianist! Playing God with human lives produces tragic results.

Proclamation 3: God forbids the killing of innocent human life. Even after the Fall, though man's heart was totally corrupted by sin (Gen 6:5), God told us that remnants of the image of God remain (Jam 3:9); and therefore we must treat human life with great respect. God says in Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." The sixth of the Ten Commandments says, "Thou shalt not kill" (Exo 20:13), which in context means we must not take innocent human life. To kill innocent people is to attack God, for they bear His sacred image.

Proclamation 4: God reveals the human personhood of the unborn child. God personally forms each child in the womb. Job said, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (Job 33:4). David exulted, "Thou hast...covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa 139:13-14). What God makes in the womb is a "me"—a person who has a "soul."

David also confessed, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa 51:5). From his conception in the womb, David was "in sin." Objects and animals cannot be sinners; they have no moral accountability. Only a person can be a sinner. So the sad reality that we are in a state of sin from conception proves that conception creates a human person. Abortion is an attack upon a human person with the intent to kill. It is premeditated murder.

Proclamation 5: God declares His judgment against the killers of the unborn. The Lord has a special compassion for the weak when they are oppressed by those more powerful than they are, whether it is the foreigner, the widow, or the orphan. He threatens deadly wrath against oppressors (Exo 22:21-27). No one is more vulnerable than an unborn child is.

For this reason, God included this law in His legislation for Israel: "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life" (Exo 21:22-23). "Her fruit depart" is literally "her offspring come out." The law envisions the accidental injury of a preg-

nant woman with the result of a miscarriage,¹ when two men are fighting. If God decreed the punishment of an *accidentally* induced abortion, how much more will He punish an *intentional* abortion? God abhors all crimes against women, but violence against pregnant women especially provokes Him to punish the offending nation (Amo 1:13).

This does not justify taking personal vengeance or acts of violence against abortion providers. But it does warn us that if our nation will not protect the innocent, then God will deal severely with our nation. Senator Jesse Helms² wrote, “The highest level of moral culture is that at which the people of a nation recognize and protect the sanctity of innocent human life...Great nations die when they cease to live by the great principles which gave them vision and strength to rise above tyranny and human degradation...No nation can remain free or exercise moral leadership when it has embraced the doctrine of death.”

Proclamation 6: God calls sinners to repentance for forgiveness of sins. When we declare God's proclamations against abortion, we do so being painfully conscious that we all have sinned in many ways (Rom 3:23). We speak as sinners who have found mercy with God, inviting other sinners to find the same mercy. For this purpose, God sent Christ to die for sinners and to rise again: “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Act 5:31).

In Christ Jesus, there is a promise of forgiveness to all who come to Him. But that promise is coupled with the command to repent (Luk 24:47). Repentance is God's gift for the salvation of a sinner by which a sinner, out of a sense of the evil of his sin and the goodness of God's mercy in Christ, turns from sin to God with grief for and hatred of his sin, and with full intent to obey God by His gracious help.

Perhaps you have been a party to abortion: a father who encouraged the death of your child, a mother who submitted herself to the deadly instruments, a doctor or nurse who performed the procedure, a vocal supporter of abortion in public policy, or just a silent citizen who has allowed millions of children to die without voicing your protest. If this is the case, then you are guilty of bloodshed against the image of God.

But the Lord Jesus Christ [calls] you, “Come now, let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa 1:18). He stretches out His

¹ For the discussion of an alternate view of this interpretation, see article 2, “The Silent Holocaust,” pp. 7-10.

² **Jesse Helms** (1921-2008) – five-term Republican United States Senator from North Carolina and a leading conservative. He served as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1995 to 2001. The quotation is from a speech in the U.S. Senate on January 11, 1977.

nail-pierced hands to you, calling you to “come” to Him, and promising, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa 55:1, 7).

From *Is Abortion Really So Bad?*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.



An even more chilling development comes in the form of an article just published in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*. Professors Alberto Giubilini of the University of Milan and Francesca Minerva of the University of Melbourne and Oxford University, now argue for the morality and legalization of “after-birth abortion.”

These authors do not hide their agenda. They are calling for the legal killing of newborn children. Giubilini and Minerva now argue that newborn human infants lack the ability to anticipate the future, and thus that after-birth abortions should be permitted. The authors explain that they prefer the term “after-birth abortion” to “infanticide” because their term makes clear the fact that the argument comes down to the fact that the birth of the child is not morally significant.

They propose two justifying arguments: First: “The moral status of an infant is equivalent to that of a fetus, that is, neither can be considered a ‘person’ in a morally relevant sense.” Second: “It is not possible to damage a newborn by preventing her from developing the potentiality to be a person in the morally relevant sense.” Thus: “The moral status of an infant is equivalent to that of a fetus in the sense that both lack the properties that justify the attribution of a right to life to an individual.”

Those assertions are as chilling as anything yet to appear in the academic literature of medical ethics. This is a straightforward argument for the permissibility of murdering newborn human infants. The authors make their argument with the full intention of seeing this transformed into public policy. Further, they go on to demonstrate the undiluted evil of their proposal by refusing even to set an upper limit on the permissible age of a child to be killed by “after-birth abortion.”—*Al Mohler*

We have laws against homicide, and if the unborn child is recognized
legally and morally as a human being, abortion would be
rightly seen as murder.—*Al Mohler*

MOLECH IS ALIVE AND WELL

Franklin E. (Ed) Payne

“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.”—Leviticus 20:1-5

MOLECH was a god of the Ammonites to whom children were “passed through the fire.” That is, they were sacrificed. Sacrifices are made to gods to obtain their favor and to gain prosperity, pleasure, and power.

Is abortion any different? More to the point: is abortion not child sacrifice? The reasons for abortion are clear. People want sexual pleasure (often as fornication and adultery) without the biological consequences. People want prosperity, but children cost a lot of money; and they interfere with activities that give power and prestige. Children cause many inconveniences to parents. Children require that women be homebound “slaves” (according to liberals). Thus, Molech is alive and well today. People do not believe that some deity will reward them for their child sacrifice, but they believe that they will gain rewards by the destruction of their children.

Let us be sure about God’s position in this passage. Not only was the one who gave the child to be sacrificed to be stoned to death, but *anyone who knew of the act and allowed it to go unpunished* (“hid their eyes”). God’s judgment rested not only upon the person, but also upon his family. Today, the large majority of our society “hides its eyes,” while the government and the medical profession officially commits child sacrifice. Far worse, most who call themselves “Christians” condone the practice...And, physicians are the priests who commit this sacrifice.

The people of the United States ought to be frightened! God has not changed. He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8). He *will* bring His judgments upon us...

Abortion Is a Symptom: A primary principle for medical practice is the distinction between symptoms and diseases. For example, a cough may indicate pneumonia, sinusitis, lung cancer, tuberculosis, or any number of other diseases. The same principle applies here. Abortion is not the disease: it is a symptom. The dis-

ease is *secular humanism*,¹ as it is commonly referred to. More specifically, it is an anti-God mentality that has no standard of right and wrong. The cure is not only to pass laws that prohibit abortion. The cure is regeneration or being “born again.”² When that happens, [God changes] a person from being a secular humanist to a Bible believer.

Being anti-abortion is a non-negotiable ethic for true Christians. The practice is totally against the character of God and His design for the human race. Everywhere God is described as the God of life, not of death...The true definition of life is communion with God. Nowhere is the death of innocent people a biblical solution to any problem.

Further, He describes Himself as the God of the fatherless and calls for the special care of the fatherless (Deu 14:29; Isa 1:17; Jam 1:27). Certainly, today’s unborn children are fatherless. The Supreme Court in its *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 disallowed the father [from] having any right to say what is or is not done with the unborn baby.³ Not only does this law apply to babies conceived out of wedlock, but those conceived *within* marriage as well. Thus, the heart of marriage can be ripped out along with the unborn baby. This destruction of marriage was the reason that God’s judgment was applied to families as well as individuals (Lev 20:5).

The unborn are among the most defenseless of people. They cannot voice protest. They cannot run away from danger⁴...By contrast, God designed the unborn to be the most protected. Their nourishment is constant and dependable. Their environment is quite comfortable and unchanging. They do not have to interact with people and be hurt by them. They are well protected physically, often so well that the mother can be seriously injured, and they are not...

Abortion and the Family: We should understand that abortion represents as much, if not more so, a destruction of the family as destruction of human life. The most intimate human relationship is the “one flesh” nature of husband and wife (Gen 2:24b; Mat 19:1-10). The highest call for one human to care for another is that the husband should love his wife “even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Eph 5:25) and to “nourish and cherish” her as he does his own body (Eph 5:28-29). The negative statement of this oneness is, of course, the Seventh Commandment: “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exo 20:14).

¹ **secular humanism** – the belief that humanity is capable of morality and self-fulfillment without belief in God.

² See FGB 202, *The New Birth*, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

³ Curt Young, formerly Executive Director of the National Christian Action Council, first made the author aware that *Roe v. Wade* had the effect of making all children legally fatherless while in the womb.

⁴ As is clearly and violently portrayed in the video, *The Silent Scream*.

Most abortions are the “cure” for pregnancies that are a result of sexual promiscuity. The extent of this promiscuity is directly correlated to the value placed upon God’s design of sexuality for marriage. Certainly, the most “Christian” society will have some sexual immorality, but not openly and as prevalent as the one in which the family has been devalued. Both the man and the woman who are promiscuous make the statement that the limitation of sexuality to marriage is unimportant. Abortion, the destruction of the life created by that union, is a further denial of the value of the family into which the child would have been brought. The pregnancy that results from promiscuity does not have to end in abortion. The baby could be placed for adoption. Thus, abortion is not a consequence of promiscuity but an additional statement that the raising of a child in a family is unimportant. In reality, the mother acts in a way that considers her unborn child to be better off dead than being raised in a family!

Abortion causes further decline in the family. At times, the stressed mother may think toward her children, “I could have aborted you and avoided this trouble.” Heaven forbid, but some even voice this thought! Husbands and wives are less fearful of adultery, knowing that abortion is an efficient and hidden “backup” to a consequent pregnancy. Further, as the number of children increases in a family, the temptation increases to prevent further stress on the family budget by the abortion of the next child.

Abortion assists the state in its control of the family. The biblical pattern is for grown children to take care of their parents when they are no longer able to take care of themselves (Mar 7:6-13). With no children, the elderly must depend upon the state to care for them, if they have not made sufficient provision for themselves (and most have not). Even with one or two children, the burden upon so few might be more than they are able to handle along with their own financial responsibilities...

The Social Consequences of Abortion: Babies, children, and the adults that they become are a source of knowledge and wealth for a society. Unfortunately, some think that the larger the population, the fewer the resources that are available on a per capita⁵ basis. What is not considered are the resources of the growing population, especially in an industrial society. First, the goods and services necessary to raise these children to adulthood are considerable. Pregnant women have to have special clothes and medical care. Babies and children need clothes, food, and bigger houses. When they enter school, they need supplies and teachers. All these items create industries and jobs for large numbers of people.

By the time the children start school, they become buyers themselves. Their early impact may not be great, but the spendable income of today’s teenagers is

⁵ **per capita** – for each person.

staggering. Then, when they marry and have their own children, they compound the goods and services necessary. As they enter the work force, they become producers. Their talents and knowledge increase efficiency and production. And, they become taxpayers!...It is ironic that babies are being aborted because of their financial liability to families and to the nation. These are short-term savings, if they are savings at all. In the long run, abortions are a considerable loss of human resources and productivity to a nation. As Christians, we should adopt the axiom⁶ that any violation of God's laws has a severe economic consequence in the long run. Abortion in itself is heinous,⁷ but its consequences extend far beyond the act alone. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23)—both directly to the unborn child and indirectly to the economic and social health of a nation.

From "Abortion: The Killing Fields" in *Biblical Healing for Modern Medicine*.

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⁶ **axiom** – an established or generally accepted principle.

⁷ **heinous** – outrageously wicked.

GREAT FORGIVENESS FOR GREAT SIN

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”—Ephesians 1:7

SINNER, if you trust in Christ, He will forgive you the blackest sin into which you have ever fallen. If—*God grant that it may not be true!*—the crime of murder should be on your conscience, if adultery and fornication should have blackened your very soul, if all the sins that men have ever committed, enormous and stupendous in their aggravation, should be rightly charged to your account, yet, remember that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1Jo 1:7); and “all that believe are justified from all things” (Act 13:39), however black they may be.

I like the way Luther¹ talks upon this subject, though he is sometimes rather too bold. He says, “Jesus Christ is not a sham savior for sham sinners, but He is a real Savior Who offers a real atonement for real sin, for gross crimes, for shameless offenses, for transgressions of every sort and every size.” And a far greater One than Luther has said, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa 1:18). I have set the door of mercy open widely, have I not? There is no one here who will dare to say, “Mr. Spurgeon said that I was too guilty to be forgiven!” I have said nothing of the kind. However great your guilt, though your sins, like the great mountains, tower above the clouds, the floods of divine mercy can roll over the tops of the highest mountains of iniquity and drown them all. God give you grace to believe this and to prove it true this very hour!

The greatness of God’s forgiveness may be judged by the *freeness* of it. When a poor sinner comes to Christ for pardon, Christ does not ask him to pay anything for it, to do anything, to be anything, or to feel anything, but He freely forgives him. I know what you think: “I shall have to go through a certain penance of heart, at any rate, if not of body. I shall have to weep so much, or pray so much, or do so much, or feel so much.” That is not what the gospel says. That is only your fancy. The gospel [says], “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Act 16:31). Trust Jesus Christ, and the free pardon of sin is at once given without money and without price (Isa 55:1).

Another thing that indicates its greatness is its *immediateness*. God will forgive you at once, as soon as you trust Christ. There was a daughter, well beloved by her

¹ **Martin Luther (1483-1546)** – German leader of the Protestant Reformation.

father, who, in an evil hour, left her home and came to London. Here, having no friends, she soon fell a prey to wicked men and became an utter wreck. A city missionary met with her, spoke faithfully to her about her sin, and the Holy Spirit brought her to the Savior's feet. The missionary asked for her father's name and address; and at last, she told him. But she said, "It is no use for you to write to him. I have brought such dishonor on my family that I am quite certain he would not reply to any letter." They wrote to the father and stated the case; and the letter that came back bore on the envelope, in large text hand, the word *Immediate*. Inside, he wrote, "I have prayed every day that I might find my child and am rejoiced to hear of her. Let her come home at once. I have freely forgiven her, and I long to clasp her to my bosom." Now, soul, if thou seekest mercy, this is just what the Lord will do with thee. He will send thee mercy marked *Immediate*, and thou shalt have it at once. I recollect how I found mercy in a moment, as I was told to look to Jesus, and I should be forgiven. I did look; and, swift as a lightning flash, I received the pardon of sin in which I have rejoiced to this very hour. Why should it not be the same with you, the blackest and worst sinner here, the most unfeeling and the least likely to repent? Lord, grant it; and Thou shalt have the praise!

Again, the greatness of God's forgiveness may be measured by the *completeness* of it. When a man trusts Christ and is forgiven, his sin is so entirely gone that it is as though it had never been. Your children bring home their copybooks without any blots in them; but if you look carefully, you can see where blots have been erased. But when the Lord Jesus Christ blots out the sins of His people, He leaves no marks of erasure: forgiven sinners are as much accepted before God as if they had never sinned.

Perhaps someone says, "You are putting the matter very strongly." I know I am, but not more strongly than the Word of God does! The Prophet Micah, speaking to the Lord under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Mic 7:19). Not into the shallows, where they might be dredged up again; but into the great deeps, as in the middle of the Atlantic... "What! All my sins gone?" Yes, they are all gone if thou believest in Jesus, for He cast them into His tomb where they are buried forever!...If I am in Christ Jesus, the verdict of "No condemnation" (Rom 8:1) must always be mine, for who can condemn the one for whom Christ has died? No one, for "whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom 8:30). If you have trusted your soul upon the atonement made by the blood of Christ, you are [forgiven]; you may go your way in peace, knowing that neither death nor hell shall ever divide you from Christ. You are His, and you shall be His forever and ever...

Now I close by showing you how really God forgives sin. I am sure He does; for I have proved it in my own case, and I have heard of many more like myself. I have known the Lord to take a man full of sin, renew him, and in a moment to make

him feel—and feel it truly too—“God loves me!” He has cried, “Abba, Father.” And he has begun to pray and has had answers to prayer. God has manifested His infinite grace to him in a thousand ways. By-and-by, that man has been trusted by God with some service for Him, as Paul and others were put in trust with the gospel, and as some of us also are. With some of us, the Lord has been very familiar and very kind and has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

Now I have done when I have just said that, as these things are true, then nobody ought to despair. Come, sister, smooth those wrinkles out of your forehead. You have been saying, “I shall never be saved”; but you must not talk like that, for Christ’s forgiveness of sin is “according to the riches of his grace.” And, brother, are you in trouble because you have sinned against God? As He is so ready to forgive, you ought to be sorry that you have grieved such a gracious God. As He is so ready to forgive, let us be ready to be forgiven. Let us not leave this [subject], though the midnight hour is about to strike, until we have received this great redemption, this great forgiveness for great sin.

Thus have I preached the gospel to you! If you reject it, it is at your peril...I can say no more than this. There is pardon to be obtained by believing. Jesus Christ is fully worthy of your confidence. Trust Him now, and you shall receive full and free forgiveness. The Lord help you to do so, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

From a sermon delivered on Lord’s Day evening, December 31, 1876,
at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892): Influential English Baptist preacher; born at Kelvedon, Essex, England.

