

Abortion and the Bible

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Every year in the United States of America, more than one million children are butchered by abortion doctors. Since 1973, when the Supreme Court legalized abortion-on-demand, some **forty-three million babies have been slaughtered** in America (see “Consequences,” 2003). Every year, an estimated forty-six million abortions occur worldwide (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2002). In three decades, an entire generation of children has been forever eliminated. In fact, more than 20% of all babies conceived in this country are killed before they ever see the light of day (Finer and Henshaw, 2003, p. 6)—and the slaughter continues....

Some encouraging signs have surfaced recently. In March 2003, the United States Senate, by a 64-33 vote, approved a ban on the particularly barbaric abortion procedure known as “partial-birth” abortion (Kiely, 2003). In their efforts to sort out the moral and ethical issues involved in human cloning, the President’s Council on Bioethics concluded, among other things, that “the case for treating the early-stage embryo as simply the moral equivalent of all other human cells...is simply mistaken” (Kass, 2002, p. liv). But even these laudable attempts to turn back the tide of moral degradation that has swept over the nation are too little, too late.

A significant number of Americans consider abortion to be an acceptable option. What would one expect? They’ve been browbeaten with the “politically correct” agenda of the social liberals for decades. The highest court in the land has weighed in on the matter, making abortion legitimate by means of the power of “the law.” The medical profession has followed suit, lending its prestige and sanction to the practice of abortion—in direct violation of the Hippocratic Oath. But have the majority of Americans heard the **biblical** viewpoint? Do they even care how **God** feels about abortion? Are they interested in investigating **His** view of the matter? After all, the Bible does, in fact, speak decisively about abortion.

American civilization has undergone a sweeping cultural revolution for over forty years. The American moral framework is being restructured, and this country’s religious roots and spiritual perspective are being altered. The founding fathers and the American population of the first 150 years of our national existence would not have tolerated many of the beliefs and practices that have become commonplace in society. This list of practices would include gambling (i.e., the lottery, horse-racing, casinos, etc.), divorce, alcohol and public

drunkenness, homosexuality, unwed pregnancy, and pornography in movies and magazines. These behaviors simply would not have been tolerated by the bulk of American society from the beginning up to World War II. But the moral and religious foundations of our nation are experiencing catastrophic erosion. The widespread practice of abortion is simply one sign among many of this cultural shift in our country.

But there is still a God in Heaven—the omnipotent, omniscient Creator of the Universe. He has communicated to the human race in the Bible, and He has stated that He one day will call all human beings who have ever lived to account, and He will judge them on the basis of their behavior on Earth. Therefore, every single person is responsible for carefully studying God’s Word, determining how He wants us to behave, and then complying with those directions. It is that simple, and it is that certain.

While the Bible does not speak **directly** to the practice of abortion, it does provide enough relevant material to enable us to know God’s will on the matter. In Zechariah 12:1, God is said to be not only the Creator of the heavens and the Earth, but also the One Who “forms the spirit of man within him.” So God is the giver of life. That alone makes human life sacred. God is responsible for implanting the human spirit within the human body. We humans have no right to end human life—unless God authorizes us to do so. But taking a human life, biblically, is based on that human’s **behavior**. Taking the life of an unborn infant certainly is not based upon the moral conduct of that infant. So if God places the human spirit in a human being while that person is in the mother’s womb, to end that life is a deliberate attempt to thwart God’s action of “forming the spirit of man in him.”

But **when** does the human spirit enter the human body and thereby bring into existence a human being? When does God implant the soul into the body—at birth or prior to birth? The Bible provides abundant evidence to answer that question. For example, the Bible states: “As you do not know what is the way of the spirit, or how the bones grow in the womb of her who is with child, so you do not know the works of God who makes all things” (Ecclesiastes 11:5). In this passage, Solomon equated fetal development with the activity of God. Job described the same process in Job 10:11-12. There he attributed his pre-birth growth to God. David was even more specific.

For You have formed my inward parts; You have covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them (Psalm 139:13-16).

David insisted that his development as a human being—his personhood—was achieved **by God, prior** to his birth, while he was yet in his mother's womb. Some have suggested that Ecclesiastes, Job, and Psalms are all books of poetry and, therefore, not to be taken literally. However, **poetic language has meaning**. Solomon, Job, and David were clearly attributing their **pre-birth personhood** to the creative activity of God.

Of course, many additional passages that make the same point are **not** couched in poetic imagery. Jeremiah declared: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying: 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; and I ordained you a prophet to the nations' " (Jeremiah 1:4-5). Compare this statement with Paul's equivalent claim, in which he said that God set him apart to do his apostolic ministry even while he was in his mother's womb (Galatians 1:15). Isaiah made the same declaration: "Listen, O coastlands, to me, and take heed, you peoples from afar! The Lord has called me from the womb; from the matrix of my mother He has made mention of my name" (Isaiah 49:1).

These passages do not teach predestination. Jeremiah and Paul could have exercised their free will and rejected God's will for their lives—in which case God would have found someone else to do the job. But these passages do teach that God treats people as human beings even **before** they are born. These passages show that a pre-born infant is a **person**—a human being. There is no significant difference between a human baby one minute **before** birth and that same human baby one minute **after** birth. And that status as a human being applies to a person throughout his or her pre-natal development from the moment of conception.

Consider further the recorded visit that Mary, the mother of Jesus, made to Elizabeth, the mother of John the baptizer. Both women were pregnant at the time.

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:39-44).

Notice that Elizabeth's pre-born baby is being represented as a living human being. In fact, the term "baby" used in verses 41 and 44 to refer to the pre-born John is the exact same term that is used in chapter two to refer to Jesus **after** His birth as He laid in the manger (Luke 2:12,16). So in **God's** sight, whether a person is in his or her **pre-birth** developmental state, or in a **post-birth** developmental state, that person is still a **baby**! In Luke 1:36, John the

Baptist is referred to as “a son” from the very moment of **conception**. All three phases of human life are listed in reverse order in Hosea 9:11—birth, pregnancy, and conception.

If abortion is not wrong, Mary would have been within her moral and spiritual rights to abort the baby Jesus—the divine Son of God! Someone may say, “But that’s different, since God had a special plan for that child.” But the Bible teaches that God has special plans for **every** human being. Every single human life is precious to God—so much so that a single soul is more significant than everything else that is physical in the world (Matthew 16:26). God sacrificed His own Son for every single human being on an **individual** basis. Each human life is equally valuable to God. The unrealized and incomprehensible potential for achieving great things by millions of human beings has been forever expunged by abortion. The remarkably resourceful potential of even one of those tiny human minds—now extinguished—may well have included a cure for cancer, or some other horrible, debilitating, and deadly disease.

Another insightful passage from the Old Testament is found in Exodus 21:22-25. This passage describes what action is to be taken in a case of **accidental** injury to a pregnant woman:

If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no lasting harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any lasting harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe (NKJV).

This passage has been mistranslated in some versions. For example, some versions use the word “miscarriage” instead of translating the Hebrew phrase literally—“so that her children come out.” The text is envisioning a situation in which two brawling men accidentally injure a pregnant bystander. The injury causes the woman to go into early labor, resulting in a premature birth of her child. If neither the woman nor the child is harmed, then the Law of Moses levied a fine against the one who caused the premature birth. But if injury or even death resulted from the brawl, then the law imposed a parallel punishment: if the premature baby died, the one who caused the premature birth was to be executed—life for life. This passage clearly considers the pre-born infant to be a human being, and to cause a pre-born infant’s death was homicide under the Old Testament—homicide punishable by death.

Notice that this regulation under the Law of Moses had to do with injury inflicted **accidentally**. Abortion is a **deliberate, purposeful** termination of a child’s life. If God dealt severely with the **accidental** death of a pre-born infant, how do you suppose He feels about the **deliberate** murder of the unborn by an abortion doctor? The Bible states explicitly how He feels: “[D]o not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked” (Exodus

23:7). As a matter of fact, one of the things that God **hates** is “hands that shed innocent blood” (Proverbs 6:17).

This matter of abortion is a serious matter with God. We absolutely must base our views on **God’s** will—not the will of men. The very heart and soul of this great nation is being ripped out by unethical behaviors like abortion. We must return to the Bible as our standard of behavior—before it is too late.

When one contemplates the passages examined above, and compares them with what is happening in society, one surely is amazed and appalled. For example, women have been indicted and convicted of the murder of their own children when those children have been just a few months old. The news media nationwide, and society in general, have been up in arms and outraged at the unconscionable behavior of mothers who have so harmed their young children so as to result in death. Most Americans have been incensed that a mother could have so little regard for the lives of her own children. Yet the **same** society and the **same** news media that are outraged at such behavior would have been perfectly content for the **same** mother to have **murdered** the **same** children if she had simply chosen to do so **a few minutes or a few months before those children were actually born!** Such is the insanity of a civilization that has become estranged from God.

A terrible and tragic inconsistency and incongruity exists in this country. Merely **taking possession** of an egg containing the pre-born American bald eagle—let alone if one were to destroy that little pre-birth environment and thus destroy the baby eagle that is developing within—results in a stiff fine and even prison time. Yet one can take a **human child** in its pre-born environment and not only **murder** that child, but also receive government blessing to do so! Eagle eggs, i.e., **pre-born eagles**, are of greater value to American civilization than **pre-born humans!** What has happened to our society? This cannot be harmonized in a consistent, rational fashion. The ethics and moral sensibilities that lie behind this circumstance are absolutely bizarre.

The ethical disharmony and moral confusion that reign in our society have escalated the activity of criminals who commit a variety of heinous crimes—killing large numbers of people, raping women, and doing all sorts of terrible things. Yet, a sizeable portion of society is against capital punishment. Many people feel that these wicked adults, who have engaged in heinous, destructive conduct, should not be executed—a viewpoint that flies directly in the face of what the Bible teaches (Romans 13:1-6; 1 Peter 2:13-14). God wants evildoers in society to be punished—even to the point of capital punishment. Yet, we will **not** execute guilty, hardened criminals, while we **will** execute innocent human babies! How can one possibly accept this terrible disparity and the horrible scourge of abortion?

The ultimate solution to every moral issue is genuine New Testament Christianity and the objective standard of the Bible. If all people would organize their lives around the precepts and principles presented in the Bible, civilization would be in good shape. No other suitable alternative exists. There is simply no other way to live life cohesively, with focus, with perspective, with direction, and with the proper sense of the purpose of life.

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