

Abortion: A Biblical and Theological Analysis —Part Three

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What Does the Bible Teach About Abortion? (con't)

We are presenting nine lines of biblical argument showing that abortion is morally wrong. Last time we noted: (A) Scriptures which reveal that God views the fetus in the womb as a full human life, a person; (B) Scriptures which teach that God relates to the unborn in a personal manner; (C) Scriptures which indicate some men are called to God's service or purpose from the womb; (D) Scriptures which indicate that all human life, even the unwanted, belongs to God. We now continue.

E. Scriptures that teach we must defend and protect the weak, the defenseless, the innocent, the needy, and the unwanted prohibit abortion.

Consider the following Scriptures that indicate God's concern for the weak, the needy, the defenseless and those who cannot speak on their own behalf.

Proverbs 31:8-9—Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Psalms 82:2-4—How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked? Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

The Bible is full of Scriptures like this. There can be no doubt that they also apply to the innocent unborn who are the most defenseless, innocent and needy. Indeed, God will hold us accountable for their welfare.

Proverbs 24:11-12—Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?

In fact, numerous Scriptures condemn the killing of innocent life. Many of the following Scriptures apply to those who perform abortions.

Proverbs 6:16-19—There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, *hands that shed innocent blood*, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.

Proverbs 17:5—He who mocks the poor *shows contempt for their Maker*; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 12:6—The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the speech of the upright rescues them.

Deuteronomy 27:25—"Cursed is he who accepts a bribe to strike down *an innocent person*." And all the people shall say, "Amen."

Deuteronomy 19:10—Do this so that *innocent blood* will not be shed in your land, which the Lord your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

Isaiah 1:15—When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. *Your hands are full of blood.*

Isaiah 59:2-3, 4b, 7b—But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear. For *your hands are stained with blood*, your fingers with guilt. Your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue mutters wicked things.... They rely on empty arguments and speak lies; they conceive trouble and give birth to evil.... Their thoughts are evil thoughts; ruin and destruction mark their ways.

Jeremiah 22:17—But your eyes and your heart are intent only upon your own dishonest gain, and on shedding *innocent blood* and on practicing oppression and exhortation.

Luke 17:2—It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble.

Hebrews 4:13—Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

F. Scriptures that indicate God has a plan even for the handicapped and deformed prohibit abortion.

Scriptures teach that God values those who are deformed or handicapped: “Who has made man’s mouth? Or, who makes him dumb or deaf or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” (Ex. 4:11) Isaiah warns: “Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd [piece of clay] among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making’? Does your work say, ‘He has no hands’? Woe to him who says to his father, ‘What have you begotten?’ or to his mother, ‘What have you brought to birth?’ This is what the Lord says—the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands?” (Is. 45:9-11)

The Lord Jesus Christ taught that the man born blind from birth was born that way in order to glorify God (John 9:1-4). If a person’s deformity can bring glory to God, who are we to kill such persons and thereby prevent them from fulfilling God’s plan for their lives?

Can one imagine Jesus accepting the idea of denying life to the handicapped or deformed? Did He not teach: “See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.... Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish” (Mt. 18:10,14). All of these verses and more demonstrate that the Bible is not silent on denying life to the unwanted or unloved who are handicapped (cf. Job 33:4; 32:8; Is. 42:5; 44:24).

The act of abortion was considered an act of murder and completely unacceptable to both Jews and Christians.¹ The opposition to abortion in the early Church was so pronounced there was simply no need for an explicit command. Princeton University professor Bruce Metzger refers to “the opposition of the early church to contemporary practices of abortion. It is really remarkable how uniform and how pronounced was the early Christian opposition to abortion.”²

Indeed, the very reason the early Church was so opposed to abortion was the clearly discernible biblical facts and principles we have already discussed.

G. Scriptures that indicate that the personhood of Christ was present from conception prohibit abortion.

Another way to decide whether abortion is a justifiable practice is to think through the implications of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The question is, at what point was the personhood of Jesus present?

In brief, it *had* to be present at the point of conception. Both the New Testament and the doctrinal creeds of the Church affirm that God became man at the point of conception. The Eternal Son of God became Incarnate in Mary's womb. Christ's personal history on earth began not when He was "born of the virgin" but when He was "conceived by the Holy Spirit" (Lk. 1:31, 35).

It is significant that God chose to begin the process of Incarnation at the point of conception rather than at some other point. But Christ "had to be made like his brethren in all things" (Heb. 2:17); His human history, like ours, had to begin *at conception*.

Lawyers, Herbert T. Krimmel and Martin J. Foley argue that because Jesus was fully present at conception so must every other person be as well:

Now, given the facts established by Holy Scripture that (a) Christ was fully God and fully man and (b) Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, our argument can be stated succinctly:

1. "Conception" literally means the process which terminates the initial presence in the womb of that which is conceived (i.e., the single cell entity referred to in biological terms as a zygote). Consequently, when one says that Mary conceived by the activity of the Holy Ghost, one must mean that which the Holy Ghost produced in and through conception was the initial presence of the zygote.

2. The zygote the Holy Ghost brought about in Mary's womb was Jesus Christ; true God and true man, in His human nature like man in all things except for sin.

3. If Jesus (true God and true man) was present in His mother's womb from the first moment of His conception, then it follows that other men must also be alive and existing as human beings from the first moments of their conceptions; for unless they are the same as Jesus in this respect of their human nature, He would not be like them in every essential human respect except for sin. This is to say, then, that a human being must be fully present as such from the moment of conception.³

Finally, Hebrews 10:5 refers to the body that God prepared for Jesus which can only refer to his body in the womb. "Therefore, when Christ came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire but a body you prepared for me'" (see Isaiah 49:1-7).

(to be continued)

Notes:

¹ James K. Hoffmeier, (ed.) *Abortion: A Christian Understanding and Response* (Grand Rapids, MI, Baker, 1987), pp. 49-87.

² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

³ Herbert T. Krimmel and Martin J. Foley, "Abortion and Human Life: A Christian Perspective" *The Simon Greenleaf Law Review*, Vol. 5 (1985-1986), pp. 12-13.