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ABORTION: CREATION VIEW OF THE VALUE OF LIFE

By Matt Promise

This paper examines abortion from several perspectives: biblical, philosophical, logical, scientific, medical, ethical/moral, legal, and historical. Although the examination cannot be exhaustive, it will hopefully lead the reader to seriously reconsider his pro-choice position or be strengthened in his pro-life position.

C. Everett Koop and Francis Schaeffer are most insightful when they say, "...far from being only single issues, abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia strike at the heart of our most basic beliefs about God and man."¹

This paper will focus on the horrors of abortion and infanticide and will not include euthanasia.

Biblical Analysis of Abortion

Psalms 51 reads as follows:

1 To the chief musician, A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness, according to the multitude of Your tender mercies; blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me completely from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against You, You only, I have sinned, and done evil in Your eyes; that You might be justified in Your speaking and be clear when You judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden parts You teach me wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Cause me to hear joy and gladness; the bones You have crushed will rejoice. 9 Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me out from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold

me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways; and sinners will turn back to You. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of shedding blood, O God, O God of my salvation; my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness. 15 O Lord, open my lips and my mouth shall declare Your praise. 16 For you do not desire sacrifice, or I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise. 18 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole offering; then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.²

RC Sproul states:

Professor John Frame, in *Medical Ethics*, made the following observation on Psalm 51:5 [Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.]: ...He [David] 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 relationship to God.³

Sproul states, "It is not merely David's biological substance that dates back to conception, but his *moral disposition* as well."³ And clearly, such a teaching applies to all of us. In fact, it even helps us understand the *particular* example given to John the Baptist next.

Luke 1:40-44

In Luke 1:40-44, John the Baptist leaped for joy when he heard the voice of Mary coming into the room, carrying the Lord Jesus in her womb. John's mother, Elizabeth, knew that John was deliberately leaping with cognition and emotion because even as an unborn child only a few

¹ Koop CE, Schaeffer FA (1983) *Whatever Happened To The Human Race?*, Crossway Books Wheaton, IL, x

² Literal Translation of the Holy Bible, copyright © 1976-2000 by Jay P. Green, Sr. All rights reserved.

³ Sproul RC (1984) *Abortion: Rational Look At An Emotional Issue*, Navpress, Colorado Springs, CO, 56

months along in his fetal development, John *knew* that his God was being carried into the room inside His human mother. Before either John or Jesus was born, John was doing his job as prophet announcing the Messiah.

Sanctity of Life

Clearly it is wrong to take the life of an unborn child, what some call only a potential person or a human non-person. In the gospels, according to Sproul:

Jesus Christ sees the law against murder as including within it not only the act of actual murder, but also the 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 actual destruction of potential life?⁴

Are there any Bible verses that support that human beings are without value or that the unborn have *diminished* value? No. As Sproul states:

Life is regarded as so sacred that it must never be destroyed without just cause. ...The Bible is consistently strong in its support of the exceedingly great value of all human life."⁵...Scripture...assume[s] a continuity of life from before the time of birth to after the time of death. The same language and the same personal pronouns are used indiscriminately for both stages.⁶

So why have people taken the lives of other people all throughout history? The answer isn't a pretty picture. Jeremiah 17:9 (among many other Bible verses) clearly teaches that man is totally depraved and sinful. Koop and Schaeffer comment on this sobering reality:

Yad Vashem is the monument in Jerusalem to the six million Jews and others who were killed in the Nazi Holocaust. ...[Yad Vashem] reminds us of what, unhappily, is possible in human behavior. Those who were murdered were people just like all of us. More important to realize is that those who murdered them were also people just like all of us. We seem to be in danger of forgetting our seemingly unlimited capacities for evil, once boundaries to certain behavior are removed.⁷

What does "the sanctity of life" mean? And what did it once mean? Sproul answers these questions with clarity:

...asecular society may use words with religious moorings that have been abandoned. Today when people speak of the sanctity of life, most mean simply that life has a special value or worth. ...In biblical terms, the sanctity of human life is rooted and grounded in creation. ...Man as a finite, dependent, contingent creature is assigned a high value by his Creator.⁸

Something has changed in modern America. We differ very much from our grandparents. It is now politically incorrect to do some things that our grandparents, and even our parents, could do without shame or fear of being sued by the ACLU. Why has our society changed? Koop and Schaeffer give an insightful answer:

Why has our society changed? The answer is clear: the consensus of our society no longer rests on a Judeo-Christian base, but rather on a humanistic one. ...It puts man rather than God at the center of all things. ...What we are watching is the natural result of humanism in its secular and theological forms, and the human race is being increasingly devalued. ...Man is only one part of the larger cosmic machine. Man is more complicated than the machines people make, but is still a machine, nevertheless. ...By constant repetition, the idea that man is nothing more than a machine has captured the popular mind. ...By "chance" is meant that there was no reason for these things [man coming to being in the universe] to occur; they just happened that way. No matter how loftily it is phrased, this view drastically reduces our view of self worth as well as our estimation of others, for we are viewing ourselves as mere accidents of the universe. ...If the modern humanistic view of man is correct and man is only a product of chance in a universe that has no ultimate values, why should an individual refrain from being cruel to another person, if that person seems to be standing in his...way?⁹

Even just one generation ago, the phrase "sanctity of life" had a very different meaning than it does today. Humanism is rapidly affecting the way many of us think. Now, many lawyers and doctors and increasingly ordinary citizens think less and less of the unborn. Again, Sproul comments on what he has heard in the professional sector:

The unborn remain anonymous "things" that are discarded. Fetuses have no names. They have no personal biographies. They tend to be represented to the public mind as abstract entities. I have heard fetuses described in abortion debates as

⁴ Ibid., 36–37

⁵ Ibid., 28, 37

⁶ Ibid., 53–54

⁷ Koop CE, Schaeffer FA (1983) 2

⁸ Sproul RC (1984) 30

⁹ Koop CE, Schaeffer FA (1983) 4–7

“undifferentiated blobs of protoplasm,” “biological parasites,” and “so much domestic sewage.”¹⁰

A specific example of those who share such horrid views of the unborn is the American moral and political philosopher, Jeffrey Reiman, who recently published the book called *Critical Moral Liberalism: Theory and Practice*.¹¹ John Finnis summarizes Reiman’s radical position:

The newly born child has absolutely no rights. One has no rights at all until one has both awareness of oneself and concern for oneself. New-borns, infants up to an age which he [Reiman] specifies only vaguely, and certain mentally handicapped persons all have no right to life, do not deserve to live, and are not worthy of respect. ...As you can imagine, Reiman has no convincing defence [sic] of his claim that adults have a right not to be killed while they are asleep—given that at that time, they, like infants, lack self-awareness and concern.¹²

Another is nuclear physicist, Winston L. Duke, who states:

...it should be recognized that not all men are human...It would seem...to be more inhumane to kill an adult chimpanzee than a newborn baby, since the chimpanzee has greater mental awareness.¹³

A Biblical response by Sproul follows:

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. It is the human who is given a role of dominion over the earth. Man, not the rat, is God’s vice-regent over creation.¹⁴

The clear testimony of Scripture is again and again that babies are just as human as those of us who are adults outside the womb. A careful study of the Bible leads to the following six conclusions:

1. The unborn are alive and growing from conception, and are human;
2. Conception and growth are important to God;

3. The ‘soul’ can, on the one hand, refer to man as a whole being; on the other hand, to the inner life of man as a thinking, willing, understanding person, and thus as a moral agent;
4. Scripture appears to teach that the image of God is passed on seminally after Adam and Eve;
5. The imputation of the guilt of sin can only happen to a moral agent—not to a body without a soul; and
6. The rejoicing of John the Baptist in the womb is an indication of ‘soul-presence’ since feelings and the will were involved.¹⁵

Philosophical Analysis of Abortion

Modern philosophy is very different than the last 2,000+ years of philosophy. The questions are now no longer being asked by some, due to extreme pessimism. According to Sproul, “Pessimistic, existential philosophy has raised serious questions about the value and worth of humanity.”¹⁶ And the erosion of the Christian base leads to some very shocking positions being held by some philosophers, such as Judith Jarvis Thomson. Finnis comments:

...Thomson...in 1970 produced the first philosophically elaborated argument for abortion along the lines of: a woman has a right to do what she likes with her body, and is under no obligation to lend her assistance to a stranger.¹⁷

Philosopher Edward Carnell summed it up this way:

Modern man appears to be but a grown-up germ, sitting on a gear of a vast cosmic machine which is some day destined to cease functioning because of a lack of power.¹⁷

And the logical consequence of pessimistic philosophy and evolution is this from Sproul, “If our origin is accidental and insignificant and our destiny is annihilation, isn’t it absurd to believe that we might have some significance in between?”¹⁸

Logical (or Lack Thereof) Analysis of Abortion

In 1995, Judith Jarvis Thomson produced a new argument, designed to justify the legal regime of abortion on demand

¹⁰ Sproul RC (1984) 45

¹¹ Reiman J (1997) *Critical Moral Liberalism: Theory and Practice*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD, xiv + 277 pp.

¹² Finnis J (2000) Abortion and Cloning : Some New Evasions <http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/fin/fin_01aborcloneevasions.html> Accessed 2010 Apr 02

¹³ Duke WL (1972) The New Biology, *Reason*, August,4-11

¹⁴ Sproul RC (1984) 32

¹⁵ Fowler P (1987) *Abortion: Toward an Evangelical Consensus*, Multnomah Press, Portland, OR, 142

¹⁶ Sproul RC (1984) 28

¹⁷ Carnell EJ (1948) An Introduction to Christian Apologetics Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 22, from Sproul RC (1984) 29

¹⁸ Sproul RC (1984) 29

and to justify it without showing that there is anything wrong with the essential prolife argument that unborn children have a right not to be intentionally or unjustly killed and a right to the equal protection of the laws against homicide. Quoting Thomson, Finnis¹²13 says, "The argument runs like this:

First, restrictive regulation [of abortion] severely constrains women's liberty. Second, severe constraints on liberty may not be imposed in the name of considerations that the constrained are not unreasonable in rejecting. And third, the many women who reject the claim that the fetus has a right to life from the moment of conception are not unreasonable in doing so.¹⁹"

Finnis continues:

The whole point of this argument, as she [Thomson] makes clear, is to gain its conclusion without contesting the central anti-abortion moral arguments and conclusions, that unborn children have a right not to be intentionally or unjustly killed and a right to the equal protection of the laws against homicide. This is why we should call her position an elaborate evasion.

Her argument, or manoeuvre, fails to meet its objective. She admits that she is offering no argument to show that the unborn are in [sic] different case from (say) the newly-born in relation to being killed, and the moral right not to be killed, and the moral right to have the law's protection. But in the absence of such an argument, the position of the many women who deny that the unborn child has a right to life is not, as she claims, reasonable. *It is unreasonable.*¹² [My emphasis]

...The leading American political philosopher, John Rawls, has adopted the substance of Thomson's argument. ...in an infamous passage of his book *Political Liberalism*, he had claimed that "all reasonable people can be expected to agree" that healthy mature women have the right to kill their child for their own convenience during the first three months of his...unborn life and probably for longer, and that because "all reasonable people can be expected to agree" those who disagree are undemocratic and their opinion must be disregarded without any argument; it would be wrong to try to refute their prolife arguments by public debate with them, say in Congress or the House of Commons.

Koop and Schaeffer give us some frightening words to consider:

As Mother Theresa has said, "If a mother can kill her own children, then what can be next?" Indeed what can be next for all of us? If we can take one life because it does not measure up to our standards of perfection, what is to stop us from taking any life—simply for our own convenience? Abortion and infanticide are only the beginning steps on a slippery slope that will lead to death for all but the planned and perfect members of our society.

...Ideas have consequences, and abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia are the logical consequences of several powerful ideas.²⁰

Scientific / Medical Analysis of Abortion

In the April 21, 2002 issue of the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Dr. Arthur Caplan, a professor of bioethics and the director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote an opinion article in response to then President Bush's call for a total ban on cloning. He wrote:

The ban the president wants enacted would also make it a felony to make cloned human embryos for stem-cell research. ...The president is wrong. His call for a total ban on all forms of human cloning rests on three extremely controversial claims [including the view] that all embryos are persons from the moment of creation. ...The notion that cloned human embryos are the moral equivalent of babies and children is by no means self-evident. If it is wrong to equate seeds with plants, or nails and wood with houses, then it is at least plausible that it is a mistake to equate an embryo with you. Potential life is not actual life. To treat them as equivalent is to overvalue the former and undervalue the latter.²¹

Was Dr. Caplan correct? Is a seed being compared with a plant the same as comparing an unborn person with a person outside the womb? Is an acorn only a *potential* oak tree, and an unborn person only a *potential* person? What does true science have to say about these controversial and important issues?

Dr. David DeWitt, Associate Professor of Biology at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia, a scientist involved in Alzheimer's disease research, responded to the *Enquirer* the article, "as a biologist...I must point out that once a sperm cell fertilizes an egg, the genetic blueprint of a unique human being is established." He

²⁰ Koop CE, Schaeffer FA (1983) x-xi

²¹ Caplan A (2002) The Cincinnati Enquirer published two commentaries, one pro and one con, under the title 'Cloning at a road block' (21 April 2002). From Cloning misinformation—Dr DeWitt's rebuttal <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2002/0430dewitt_response.asp> Accessed 2010 Apr 03

¹⁹ Thomson JJ (1995) Abortion. *Boston Review* 20(3)

went on to say that even at the early stage of cell division from one to two, two to four, etc., that the embryo can be identified as human, with exactly the same number and type of chromosomes as any human. Further, if the embryos were not alive, the stem cells harvested from them would be *useless* in research.

Sproul states, "No one would argue that human development begins at birth."²² Clearly, a babies begin developing much earlier than at the time of their birth. Here is a summary of what is happening inside the womb for those nine months of development. It is very helpful to see just how developed the baby is at such as young age:

- **Moment of conception:** 46 genes combine (23 from mom, 23 from dad).
- **After 2 weeks:** The baby has a discernable heartbeat, pumping blood that has been produced by the baby throughout his body . Heartbeat in an adult is considered a "vital sign."
- **1 month:** Baby's nervous system is fully developed, and he can feel pain. The mother is only now likely to even begin noticing that she is pregnant ("with child").
- **6 weeks:** Baby is an inch long, but fingers have formed on his hands.
- **43 days:** Baby has detectable brain waves. Like the heartbeat at 2 weeks, brain waves in an adult are considered a "vital sign."
- **6½ weeks:** Baby is moving, but his movement is not yet discernible by his mother. (Not for several more weeks will his movements be detectable by mom)
- **9 weeks:** Baby has unique fingerprints; sexual organs have appeared and kidneys are functioning.
- **10th week:** Baby's gallbladder is functioning.
- **12th week:** All baby's organs are functioning.²³

And yet, some doctors have no problem taking the lives of the unborn. Koop and Schaeffer note:

In one case a prominent New York doctor inserted a needle into the heart of one unborn twin boy and withdrew enough of the child's blood to kill him. ...The case was hailed as a medical milestone by many physicians. ...In that same year a newborn baby boy was starved to death in a Bloomington, Indiana

hospital. It was a clear cut case of infanticide. This baby was also handicapped (although not severely so), and his parents reasoned that death by starvation was better than life with a handicap. Several doctors and lawyers have even suggested that we have a waiting period of several days for all newborn infants before we certify them "truly human." We could then kill "imperfect" children during the first days of life [outside the womb] with no penalty under the law.²⁴

Where can we possibly go next? Koop and Schaeffer give the frightening possibility:

...once the uniqueness of people as creatures is removed and mankind is viewed as only one of the gene patterns which came forth on the earth by chance—there's no reason not to treat people as things to be experimented on and to make over the whole of humanity according to the decisions of a relatively few individuals. If people are not unique, as made in the image of God, the barrier is gone. Once this barrier is gone there is no reason not to experiment genetically with humanity to make it into what someone thinks to be an improvement socially and economically. The cost here is overwhelming.²⁵

Legal / Historical Analysis of Abortion

Archibald Cox, Jr. (May 17, 1912–May 29, 2004), an American lawyer and law professor who served as U.S. Solicitor General under President John F. Kennedy, first special prosecutor for the Watergate scandal, pioneering expert on labor law, and also an authority on constitutional law, commented on the Roe vs. Wade decision:

The opinion fails even to consider what I would suppose to be the most compelling interest of the state in prohibiting abortion: the interest in maintaining that respect for the paramount sanctity of human life which has always been at the center of Western civilization.²⁶

But, as Koop and Schaeffer say almost in response:

What we regard as thinkable and unthinkable about how we treat human life has changed drastically in the West. For centuries Western culture has regarded human life and the quality of the life of the individual as special. It has been common to speak of "the sanctity of human life."²⁷

²² Sproul RC (1984) 59–60

²³ Ibid., 60

²⁴ Koop EC, Schaeffer FA (1983) ix

²⁵ Ibid., 8

²⁶ Sproul RC (1984) 39

²⁷ Koop EC, Schaeffer FA (1983) 3

Looking back thousands of years ago, Sproul states:

Abortion [and euthanasia are] specifically mentioned in the famous Oath of Hippocrates, which reads as follows: “I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion. With purity and with holiness I will pass my life and practice my Art.”²⁸

According to Koop and Schaeffer:

...the the Hippocratic Oath...has traditionally been taken by the graduates of American medical schools at the time of their commencement. But in 1971 the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Toronto School of Medicine both removed the phrase “from the time of conception” from the form of the oaths they now use.²⁷

Human life is being devalued. Although both now and throughout history, when abortion and infanticide have been legal, the Jewish and Christian communities have outlawed both.²⁹

Koop and Schaeffer make the excellent observations:

...eventually every nation in every age must be judged by this test: *how did it treat people?* ...The final measure of mankind’s humanity is how humanely people treat one another. ...Each era faces its own unique blend of problems. Our own time is no exception. Those who regard individuals as expended raw material—to be molded, exploited and then disregarded—do battle on many fronts with those who see each person as unique and special, worthwhile and irreplaceable.³⁰

Conclusion: What Can We Do?

There are several things we can and ought to do about stopping abortion.

First, we must pray, and believe when we pray. God really can change hearts, and we must not pray with unbelief.

Second, we must educate ourselves. We must learn all we can about both sides of the abortion debate. We must learn about past injustices to other people groups and how those injustices were eventually stopped. We can be inspired by William Wilberforce, who tirelessly fought to

end slavery in England and succeeded after decades and much opposition. We might also be in our fight against abortion for a long time, even a lifetime.

Third, we should target those who are on the fence, those who are not firmly entrenched.

Fourth, we should target liberal churches and liberals. Liberal pastors can be shown from the clear teachings of Scripture and by clarifying misunderstood passages the value of the unborn and the illegitimacy of combining woman’s rights with pro-choice arguments against the unborn.

Fifth, we should target doctors and hospitals. As stated earlier, doctors used to use the Hippocratic oath and historically have been protectors of human life.

Sixth, we should pressure politicians and public officials or vote them out if they won’t listen. Also, vote intelligently, after carefully looking at the positions of candidates.

Seventh, we should seek out parents and families. Many young women feel alone and can receive care and support from us.

Eighth, we should volunteer or financially support anti-abortion clinics. You can use your talents, time, and finances according to your desires.

May God bless our efforts. ☩

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, May 13, 7:00 P.M., Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 631

Dan Reynolds will briefly review William Dembski’s recent book *The End of Christianity* dealing with finding a good God in an evil world. We will also review some recent creation news and watch selected creation videos.

²⁸ Sproul RC (1984) 47

²⁹ Gorman MJ (1982) *Abortion and the Early Church* InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, 21, quoted Sproul RC (1984) 48

³⁰ Koop EC, Schaeffer FA (1983) 1

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