

LIFE, DEATH AND ABORTION

Have you ever been asked by a new or dear friend a question on abortion.

"When do I feel life begins?"

Perhaps the most crucial question in the long abortion debate is when the fetus is to be considered a human being. I've heard many answer from conception to the moment of birth.

I've listened to evidence for the particular positions on this subject taken from science -- such factors as genetic uniqueness (science of heredity - one soul) the development of the cardiovascular system (heart) or the presence of brain waves.

From this we could answer this question as many have before me from my emotions or what others have determined it to be. But I'm not able to do this in a good clear conscious, to come to the same conclusion as so many have.

We understand without any doubt in my system that we are created by a greater being than any of us in human form. And most come to a conclusion based on completely human understanding or as its call scientific knowledge.

We tried to accept it as such but I couldn't be at peace with it.

But we feel inside that we must understand from both sides. From our human framework as well as from the spiritual framework of the understanding my God has given me through His word and His Holy Spirit which dwells within me to help me come to the spiritual understandings of His will in His creation.

Most of us have been searching for many years as I do now for the understanding of life, what its all about, the reason it was created in the first place. that I might be able to come to some understanding within myself to be able to live with myself and others around me in peace.

Most of us have had children entrusted to us by God. From the first child to the last. And we may have asked ourselves, "did we create these lives or did we have help?" So we searched from the beginning and we know now it all begins with God. In the body of our existent life to come to understanding I now hold firm in my heart and mind. That God is the creator of all life, so with this we search His Word, The Bible for answers. This should be our first source of information.

After searching the Bible the problem is that the biblical teaching directly relevant to the abortion debate is quite scanty.

We know there are a few passages that are used by people such as Psalms 139:13-15, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderful complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is

marvelous -- and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion!"

Job 3:11, "Why did I not perish at birth, and die as I came from the womb?"

Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart. I appointed you as my spokesman to the nations."

Luke 1:39-44 "A few days later Mary hurried to the highlands of Judea to the town where Zachariah lived, to visit Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "You are favored by God above all other women, and your child is destined for God's mightiest praise." What an honor this is, that the mother of my Lord should visit me! When you came in and greeted me, the instant I heard your voice, my baby moved in me for joy!"

These are often cited as evidence that God considers the unborn child fully human.

This line of evidence has led many Christians to conclude that abortion is the killing of a human being and is therefore wrong, except when resorted to as the lesser of two evils.

Another passage of Scripture to which an appeal is being made more and more in the current debate as it goes on is Exodus 21:22-25 "If men who are fighting hit or hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit departs from her, (miscarriage), but she lives, then the man who injured her shall be fined whatever her husband shall demand, and as the judge approve. But if any harm comes to the woman and she dies he shall be executed. If her eye is injured, injure his, if her tooth is knocked out, knock his out; and so on - hand on hand, foot on foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, lash for lash."

A number of evangelicals are among those who think this passage indicates that the Bible makes a distinction between fully human life and the life of the fetus. The verses are taken to mean that a fetus is not considered to be a soul or a fully human person and that it is therefore of less inherent value than an already born person.

If this interpretation is correct, the implication for abortion dilemma are significant indeed. Some might feel justified in appealing to this passage to excuse indiscriminate abortion. But even if this extreme were not reached, still this interpretation could have a profound influence upon how the principle of the lesser of two evils is applied to the problem.

In the past most Christians have agreed that if the presence of the fetus is a threat to the life of the mother, then the principle of the lesser of two evils would justify aborting it. In other words, while the listing of the fetus has been considered a less serious wrong than letting the mother die because of its presence.

But now the people who's interpretation would have us believe that the fetus is not a soul based on Exodus 21:22-25 that the unborn fetus is qualitatively inferior to fully human life, then the Bible believing Christian must give serious consideration to the contention that there are several

circumstances that may be greater evils than abortion, such as mental disorder in the mother, the probability that the child will be born malformed, or the trauma of pregnancy resulting from rape.

Despite the widespread acceptances of this view of Exodus 21:22-25 this interpretation does not seem to me to be supported by the text itself.

A careful examination of these verses can yield conclusions quite different from these. (1) that verse 22 refers to the premature birth of an otherwise healthy child, and)2) that an injury to the child no less than to the mother called for the application of the lextalionis (eye for eye).

There is no linguistic justification for translating verse 22 to refer to a miscarriage. The source rendered in both the King James and the American Standard Version "so that her fruit depart" literally reads to me, "and her children come out." (as the A.S.V. indicates)

This text itself makes no distinction between any harm done to the child and any harm done to the mother. This is simply not the point of contrast in the passage. What is being contrasted is a situation in which harm comes to neither mother nor child, and a situation in which either one or the other is harmed. In the former situations, the premature birth of the infant is not considered to be harmed at all. The text specifically says that if the woman is struck so that her children come out, "and there not be harm" the adversary shall be fined. The fine presumably is imposed because of the danger to which mother and child are exposed and the parents' distress in connection with the unnaturally premature birth.

The illusion that the birth of the child is in itself harm or injury (even to the of death) is created by the addition of the word "other" or "further", either in verse 22 or in verse 23. As translated verse 22 in others as "suffers a miscarriage but no other harm happens." The addition of "other" or "further" implies that some harm has already been done, namely, the alleged miscarriage: this is then judged to be relatively insignificant in that it draws only a fine. But as far as I can find out the original text contains no such word as "other" or "further". It clearly and simply says that this first contingency is

a case in which no harm occurs. Even though the child is born prematurely, it is unharmed. The text will permit no other understanding.

Only in verse 23 is the possibility of harm introduced, and it reads literally, "and if harm occurs." The text does not say that this is further harm, nor that it applies only to the mother. It makes absolutely no distinction between the mother and child. Clearly, then, the interpretation of this passage that is most faithful to the text is that which distinguished between a premature birth that harms neither the mother nor the child and a premature birth in which one or the other is injured or even dies. In the latter case the life of the fetus is valued just as highly as the life of the mother, and the lextalionis principle applies to both.

There is absolutely no warrant for concluding, as some have that in this passage "in contrast to the mother, the fetus is not reckoned as a soul." Thus "the weight of scholarly opinion" to which

some appeal is outweighed by the text itself. This compulsion about Exodus 21:22-25 will by no means settle the abortion issue.

Since I believe that God is the giver and creator of all life, I feel that when the seeds of the male and female come together life begins. God puts His power of creation in the seeds to begin life, the implantation of the embryo.

The birth of a baby is truly an awe-inspiring event. It is actually a greater miracle than any other event known to science. A human baby is the most complex of nature's marvels, possessing a body that is already to function remarkable well at birth. It is true as some say that many animals have well developed bodies at birth, and some are physically more mature than the human. However, only a human being has the possibility for developing a mind that can comprehend these wonders of nature, and the ability to use this knowledge in the service of his fellow men.

The wonderful drama of birth begins, first of all, within the body of the mother. There, hidden in darkness, a tiny speck appears on the surface of one of her ovaries. This speck is so small that it scarcely can be seen by the unaided eye. The human egg, or ovum or seed.

This egg appears to be quite small, yet it is one of the largest cells in the human body. Small as the female egg may appear, the male sperm cell is infinitely smaller. It would take 85,000 sperm cells to equal one ovum in size, but only one sperm cell is needed to fertilize the waiting ovum.

Every month the drama is repeated. The ovum, or egg cell, is prepared within a tiny pocket of cells, deep inside the ovary. When all is ready it finds its way to the surface, waiting for the climactic moment when another human life begins. This is the process called ovulation. The male sperm must arrive there at precisely the right moment if another human life is to begin. The chances certainly are against that tiny sperm as it struggles to find its way to the waiting ovum.

It is swift race for such tiny cells each sperm is provided with a tail that thrashes about, driving forward the tiny head containing the nucleus. Millions of these cells may be in that race to find the ovum. they must swim against, what is to them, a heavy current that flows through the fallopian tubes, the uterus, and the cervix -- only a few reach the ovum. But the first one to do so breaks through the wall of the ovum and unites with the female nucleus, carrying with the characteristics of the father to meet with the characteristics of the mother. by some chemical or electrical means, as yet unknown, the rest are shut out. And now the union of the two cells into one is complete, the dramatic moment of fertilization has been accomplished.

Who knows what the future holds for this tiny cell which is still too small for the average human eye to see? During the next nine months that tiny speck will grow into a baby, a living child, fifteen million times greater in size than it is now. Much of the future personality, including facial features, color of hair and eyes, texture of the skin, and even the shape of the fingernails is determined at fertilization! The whole pattern of physical growth has been set in motion. This is the beginning, the creative moment of human life.

From this critical period of development begins. First one cell this divides and becomes two. These divide and become four, eight, sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four and so on. Each change

proceeds in perfect order. each little cell is helping to shape the growth and development of those that follow. This takes place in a tiny dark world of water.

Something that sounds like when we were created anew in the water we were in when someone said I baptize you into the Name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit.

To understand even more fully inside of me, I had to go a step further to understand what God has said when He said "Thou Shall Not Murder." (Exodus 20:13)

Biblical authorities agree that "murder" is a more correct reading of the original inspired Hebrew than the word "kill".

For it is possible to kill yet not to murder. And it is important to understand that only the letter of God's Law was given to ancient Israel, whereas Christians are to live even by the spirit and fullest intent of that Law as magnified by Christ Himself.

Under the original letter of the law, it was intentional killing or murder which was forbidden. Remember that in the same "book of covenant" given to Israel, God commanded them to kill or execute those guilty of major crimes (Ex. 21"12-17). Also, the instructions in Numbers 35:9-34 show that accidental killing was not regarded as murder.

Just as capital punishment was commanded by God for serious crimes under the "letter" of the law, so the commanded wars of Israel are viewed not as acts of wholesale murder but the carrying out of the Divine will through human instruments.

Notice Deuteronomy 7:1-2, that God directly commanded Israel to exterminate the healthier tribes in the land of Canaan!

Notice and this is important that in all these cases where God permitted man to take life, it was only as His agent - at His express will.

In considering the things permitted ancient Israel, bear in mind also that they were one of the physical nations of this earth -- whereas God's kingdom is now a spiritual entity. In describing the difference the apostle Paul stated: "For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life". (II Cor. 3:6)

Remember the principle set forth by Jesus Christ regarding what Moses' "permitted" the unconverted Israelites to do in certain cases; "For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning it was not so." (Compare Matt. 18:8 with Mark 10:5)

God's original purpose is that man should learn not to kill. And although it was "permitted" in certain instances to carnal, unconverted people of Israel, we shall see that God is now developing in His Spirit begotten children the character to love, to serve and to save life - not to destroy it.

"And God said., Let us make man in our image after our likeness: and let them have dominion (Gen. 1:26)

Man is given life by his Creator. He did not give it to himself. Neither may he take it from himself -- or from others. Life is sacred because it is God given.

Isaiah 42:1 shows us our Lord came to this world to "magnify" God's law and make it honorable.

Jesus traced the source -- hate and anger in Matt. 5:21-22.

These words are Jesus Christ's application of the sixth commandment to us. If we harbor hate and anger in our hearts, we are harboring the "spirit" of murder!

Action follows thought. First think, then we do! The Spirit of Christ guides us not only to control our actions, but to control our thoughts and our attitudes! In part, the New covenant is the process

of God writing His Law in our hearts, and minds, and inward parts. (Heb. 8:10)

God spoke to Paul in Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

Man is incapable of taking vengeance with proper wisdom and justice to all concerned. God alone has the wisdom and power and the "right" to take vengeance on human beings -- to the extent of executing them if need be. The true Christian must learn that God is real -- and that His protection and His vengeance just as real!

Verses 20-21 shows us how to deal with our enemy. It takes real strength of character to serve others this way. It takes spiritual wisdom to realize that he (our enemy) is a fellow human being, made in the image of God, and simply misguided for the time being in his thoughts and actions.

Paul was allowed to bring to us directly from the lips of Christ: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. James 1:17

He has given us our lives, our strength, our minds, our abilities everything we have or hope to have comes from Him! In order to live happily forever as God's Son, man also must learn to give -- to serve to love. This is the great lesson of life.

I feel the perfect definition of this highest of all attributes -Christian love -- is given in the 13th chapter of I Corinthians.

The spirit of malice and murder is the exact opposite of this basic attribute which God requires of His sons. Read what John emphasizes of this point in I John 3:14-15).

God warns us of the wrong emotions of lust and hate and covetousness I John 2:15-16. Jesus said: "Whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her had committed adultery with her

already in his heart." (Matt. 5:28) So it is with hate and violence and murder! If you'll "look on•, Be Careful.

The breaking down of Spiritual principles. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof." (Prov. 18:21)

Paul speaks or describes the attitude of men who have forgotten God: Roman 1:29-30 and judgment of God verse 32.

Many men have spoke of peace but the greatest was our Lord Himself. Matt. 5:43-44 lays this feeling out for me.

If the people would only understand what Paul stated in II Cor. 10:3 or what James tells us in James 4:1-2.

Men do not believe that God could give them individually and nationally -- the things needed.

Jesus Christ came preaching the good news of the government or rule of God. That rule is based on the Ten Commandments -- God's Spiritual Law.

Jesus magnified that Law and showed its spiritual intent and purpose. He taught that if we even hate our brother, we are spiritually guilty of murder! Jesus taught that men should obey the laws of God and prepare for His coming kingdom by yielding themselves to let God's laws His character -- be placed within them. The essence of the matter is that Jesus Christ is against the spirit of murder in every form. He is against war -- and someday He will put an end to it forever!

He is against all malice and envy and hate. Jesus taught the dignity of man and the sacredness of human life -- "Created in the image of God." And the great Father of Jesus Christ, the Almighty God who governs the universe from His throne in heaven, that God thunders at an age of violence and rebellion: "Thou shalt not murder".

With these precepts and understanding, abortion is something I can't agree with as the world lays it out. Life is of God. The purpose for life is layed out in His Word, the Bible. No matter how we would try to change it, it can't be changed to suit our own thinking to make it right for us. God our Father will always be who He is and What He is and the longer I live the more I truly appreciate that fact. There is only one truth and way to live to be at peace and thats His way, not ours. May His Christ, our Lord help us all to come to this understanding of life and what it is all about.

You may copy and distribute this information only to friends and family without changes, without charge and with full credit given to the author and publisher. You may not publish it for general audiences.

This publication is intended to be used as a personal study tool. Please know it is not wise to take any man's word for anything, so prove all things for yourself from the pages of your own Bible.

**The Church of God, Ministries International
1767 Stumpf Blvd.
Gretna, LA. 70056**

More FREE literature is available at our Internet Web Site:

www.thecogmi.org

**© Copyright 2010 The Church of God Ministries International. All rights reserved
The activities of the Church of God, Ministries International are paid for by
tithes, offerings and donations freely given by Christians and co-workers who are
dedicated to preaching the gospel according to Jesus Christ.**