

The Bible And Abortion Student Guide¹

Memory Verse: “So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son” (Ruth 4:13).

Text: Selected Scriptures (NKJV, unless otherwise stated)

The Scripture says, “For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle.” It saddens me that the church or what passes for the church has been filled with uncertainty for so many years on the issue of abortion, and that the sound we should be making in our society has been plagued by uncertainty. Recently I went to a web site for the Religious Coalition For Abortion Rights, a site endorsed by the American Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church, the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), the Church of the Brethren Women’s Caucus and the YWCA. On this web site there was a prayer for mothers contemplating abortion. Part of it read thus:

Creator God....We are made in your image.
You promised that we will grow up to be in you.
Seeds of divinity are planted in us.
You are the destination of our dream.
You wait for us!

In time your care will bring us to perfection.
We are on a voyage.
Our life opens before us like an uncharted sea.
We have no compass but the stars.
You wait for us!

We renew our strength.
We are one with you.
The world is not yet finished.
We are co-creators with you.

Now beloved, if you know your Scripture then you know that this prayer, endorsed by these denominations is absolute blasphemy. Moreover, even if there was a fair argument as a matter of reason for abortion, we as the body of Christ should still be compelled to reject it, because there is an authority that is far greater, more sound, beautiful and excellent than our own thoughts and

¹ *Please Note: If you would like a full copy of the Leader’s Guide, you may stop by the office and request one.*

reasoning, and that is the word of God. It's not that we have "no compass but the stars", we have a wonderful compass, the Bible. And we are not divine "co-creators" with God able to strike out on our own authority, but we are His creatures, of whom He requires obedience. The Bible tells us that He has created all for Himself. We are beholden to Him for all things and in all things.

Following are several principles from the Bible that help us to look at the matter of abortion from a biblical perspective.

1. **Conception is an act of God.** Consider the following verses. What do they tell us?

a. Gen. 20:18

b. Gen. 21:1-2

c. Gen. 29:31

d. Gen. 30:2, 22

e. 1 Sam. 1:5, 6, 19b-20

f. Job. 31:15

g. Eccl. 11:5

h. Jer. 1:5

i. Ps. 139:13-16

Even though conceptions from rape and incest only make up 1 out of every 100,000 pregnancies statistically, this is still an emotionally charged argument some will make. How do these verses help us in thinking about these "hard cases"? _____

What about handicapped children? In light of these Scriptures, is disability a valid reason for an abortion? _____

Consider Ex. 4:11 and John 9:1-3. How do these verses help us in thinking about the "hard case" of children with disabilities? _____

2. The Bible teaches that human life begins at conception. There are several lines of evidence for this given in Scripture, but I will just mention three:

A. The Incarnation of Christ and the description of John the Baptist. What do the following verses tell us about these events? When did the incarnation begin? At what moment was John the Baptist considered a person?

a. Matt. 1:18, 20, 23

b. Luke 1:36

Notice that in Luke 1:36, it tells us that Elizabeth “conceived a son.” John the Baptist was “a son” -- a person -- from the moment of conception. Then in verses 41 and 44, he is called a “babe” (brephos) in the Greek. This same word is used in Luke 2:12, 16, and 18:15 to speak of infants who have been born. (Note also 1 Pet. 2:2). So the Holy Spirit uses the same word to speak of infants, born and unborn, without distinction.

B. The sin nature inheres at conception.

Consider Ps. 51:5, “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” What is David saying here? Is he talking about something illicit or is he speaking of something much more profound? _____

Romans 5:19 tells us about humanity’s inheritance from Adam due to the fall. Ps. 51:5 tells us when we receive it. Therefore, human life must begin at the moment of conception.

C. The testimony of Ps. 139:13-16, Jer. 1:5a etc.

What do these verses tell us God creates in the womb. (Hint: Look at the pronouns). _____

When does this “weaving together” and “forming” take place? _____

Understanding that Scripture tells us human life begins at conception, how does this help us with regard to the issue of abortion? _____

What is the key difference between the loss of human life due to a miscarriage versus an

abortion? _____

How does this impact the way we counsel with people in these situations? _____

3. The Law of God protects a child in the womb, requiring life for life, if the child is killed.
Take a few moments to read Ex. 21:22-24 (Note the NKJV, ESV or NIV are preferable. Both the NAS and RSV contain a deliberate mistranslation of the Hebrew text in v. 22)

In this chapter God is expounding on and explaining the ten commandments by giving examples. God gives what attorneys call “case law” to serve as a guide to the nation of Israel. Now note first that the text says, “If men...hurt a woman with child.” The Hebrew noun for child here is *yeled*, which is the common word for a child both inside and outside of the womb in Hebrew. So God has a “child” in view in the womb. The woman is hurt so that she “gives birth prematurely.” This is the word *yatza*, the Hebrew word used to indicate a birth. This word is **never** used in Hebrew for a miscarriage, only for birth. “Miscarriage” is an entirely different term, *shacol*. A point critical to properly interpreting the text, especially the words “no harm follows” or “further injury.”

So what we have here is a situation where men are fighting and they accidentally injure a pregnant woman, a likely event, especially if she tries to intervene and get them to stop. Because of their violent behavior, she goes into labor and gives birth prematurely (not miscarries). If “no harm follows” or there is “no further injury” then the one responsible will be fined. The fine is imposed because of the danger to which the mother and child were exposed and because of the distress caused by the event and the premature birth. But, if “harm follows” either to the woman **or the child**, then the full weight of the law applies, including life for life, if the child is still born or subsequently dies.

Hebrew Scholar Jack Cottrell says this about this passage, “Clearly, then, the interpretation of this passage that is most faithful to the text is that which distinguishes 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 Lex Talionis principle applied to both...” “Lex Talionis” being the principle of judgment announced in verse 24. This interpretation, Beloved, is fully in keeping with the understanding of all the ancients. One ancient Rabbi, Kusudo, for instance says this, “The harm means either the death of the woman or the death of the child. If in either case then what is required is life for life.” This is the proper interpretation.

How valuable, then, is the life of the child in the womb as compared to the life of an adult? _____

How would a command such as Gen. 9:6, for example, apply for child in the womb? _____

4. God is particularly compassionate towards the helpless. Consider the following verses. What do they tell us?

a. Ps. 9:18

b. Ps. 82:3-4

c. Prov. 14:31

d. Prov. 17:5

e. Prov. 30:14

f. Prov. 31:8-9

God has special concern for the weak, defenseless and helpless. And dear friends, there is no person more weak, defenseless and helpless than an unborn child. Proverbs 31 verse 8 and verse 9 say this, “Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and the needy.” Beloved who is more speechless than the unborn child who has been appointed to die? Who is more mute? Who is in more desperate need that somebody open up his or her mouth and speak on that unborn child’s behalf? Who is there who is more needy? There is no one.

I was doing some research on the internet in preparation for this lesson, and I went to a pro-abortion site which was offering a pre-written sermon for pro-abortion pastors to give to the congregation in celebration of and in honor of the Roe v. Wade decision. I was curious, so I read it, and as I expected there was not even a single Scriptural reference in the entire sermon. No verses were read or quoted. There was only a passing reference to the woman who was cured by Jesus of the issue of blood, an affliction that she suffered from for 12 years. The theme of the sermon strangely enough was compassion, and the argument of the person that wrote it was that as Jesus was compassionate, we should have compassion on women by allowing them to terminate their pregnancies. Because, as the author said in essence, “the woman is particularly oppressed and helpless and a victim in the whole thing if we don’t give her this choice.

The woman had no choice in the matter? She had no choice before she had sex? The woman was helpless in the matter? The woman, who put herself in this situation, was somehow the oppressed victim? No mention was made of the baby. What about Christ’s compassion for the helpless little infant, His own special creation that He has woven together in the mother’s womb? What about Christ’s compassion on the one that was truly needy and helpless, the one who has no voice of his own? No authority was stated by the author other than his own whim, but we

have authority from God Himself, Who is mighty in His compassion for the helpless.

How can you be a vehicle of compassion in this struggle for both the unborn and women, who are lost, confused and in danger of walking a path of misery for their souls? Be specific. _____

5. The child in the womb is a neighbor and love demands his or her protection. This is the primary argument of the ancients, both Jews and Christians against abortion in their day.

Consider Lev. 19:18 and Luke 10:25-37. How can you apply these texts to the unborn? In particular the Lord's illustration of loving your neighbor given in Luke? _____

To listen to these proponents of abortion who cry out that the baby as an enemy trying to destroy the woman's freedom, or an enemy trying to destroy her economic stability, or an enemy trying to destroy her feminine figure, or an enemy trying to betray her promiscuity, to somehow see the baby as an enemy, somebody to be destroyed is a hellish and frighteningly evil twist and denial of the truth. It doesn't matter how the child got there, that child is a neighbor to be loved and cared for, not some inconvenient mass of tissue to be thrown out. This was the key fact in ancient Judaism and the first church's response to abortion.

Abortion was used even then, as one Roman historian put it: 1) to conceal illicit sex; (nothing new about that); 2) to protect rich women who were impregnated in their love affairs with low class men and did not want to give birth to these children and have to spend money on them; and 3) to allow a woman to preserve her sex appeal, to preserve her figure.

And they had some effective techniques. There was a medical journal written by Cirranus, a Greek, at the time of the early church. In his gynecological book, that is a Greek word by the way, he gives all the procedures for how to go through the birth canal and how to mix the poisons. They used drugs to cause an abortion, and they knew what worked by trial and error. Another simple method they used was to bind a woman's stomach tight with ropes so that the child could not develop, would eventually die and be miscarried. They also accepted the use of blades and hooks through the birth canal, though this was much more dangerous to the woman, obviously.

The Jews and Christians spoke out against these practices. For instance, in the Didache called

“the teaching of the twelve,” a first century work written while the apostles were alive as a manual of church order, it sets forth the way of life and the way of death. One of the key elements of the way of death is abortion. It says things like this, “You shall not murder a child by abortion. For that little one is a neighbor to be cared for.”

So the Church Fathers had this problem even then and were forced to address it.

I believe that God is a God of grace and He will forgive. Forgiveness is available for this sin and all who truly call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But Beloved, this awesome reality of God’s grace does not exonerate us or end our responsibility as the people of God to proclaim the truth and rescue the perishing. Let us love our neighbors, both the women and the children, taking a stand against this terrible scourge in our society, and providing help, counseling and comfort to others before abortion and post-abortion if necessary.