

Is Scripture Clear About Abortion?

Scripture: Exodus 21:22–25; Psalm 127:3

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Over the last few days, I've noticed several articles concerning a letter circulated by the nation's largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood. The letter, written by members of Planned Parenthood's Clergy Advocacy Board—representatives of various incongruent streams of faith—claims that abortion isn't mentioned in Scripture, and therefore shouldn't be subject to any faith-based prohibitions.

I'd like to add my voice to the growing chorus of believers speaking out against those satanic lies and say that Scripture is indeed clear about the issue of abortion. While the word itself may not appear in Bible, God's Word is not silent when it comes to the vile sin of murdering children in the womb. In fact, there are several biblical principles we can look to that shape how we are to think about this horrific sin.

Every Person Is Created by God

To begin with, God's Word is clear that conception is never an accident. God personally creates every life. Psalm 127:3 says, "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward." Over and over through Scripture, God exerted sovereign control over man's ability to have children (cf. Genesis 16:2, 17:16, 20:18, 25:21; 1 Samuel 1:19-20; Ruth 4:13).

In the midst of Paul's powerful sermon in Athens to the philosophers at the Areopagus, the apostle proclaims God's creative power and control. In Acts 17:24, Paul calls Him "the God who made the world and all things in it." God created everything and continues to be the Creator to this day. Nothing—including man—has come into the world apart from His creative power (John 1:3).

Paul went on to make that very point, saying that God is not

served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, "For we also are His children." (Acts 17:25-28)

In simple terms, we live because God gave us life.

And it's not some distant work on the Lord's part. He's actively involved in the formation of every person. Both David (Psalm 139: 13-16) and Job (Job 10:8-12) credit the formative work of life in the womb to God. They use picturesque language to describe just how fearfully and wonderfully each person has been handmade by the Lord.

There are no biological accidents—that includes deformities and disabilities. In Exodus 4:11, the Lord said to Moses, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?” Every aspect of our being—even those we might consider flaws or defects—has been ordained by the Lord according to His purpose (John 9:3). Every creation is an act of God.

Every Person Is Created in the Image of God

The creation account is very clear that God created man in His image (Genesis 1:26). This sets humanity apart from the rest of creation. In the process, God imbued man with several of His own attributes. The so-called communicable attributes include things like personhood and the ability to have relationships. Like God, we have the capacity to love and hate, to understand, to think, act, choose and feel.

The point is that after God initiates conception, we’re not just the product of a biological sequence or a collection of cells. We’re not simply a lump of expanding human tissue. Our skin, bones, and muscles do not make up the sum of our existence—they are merely a vessel that contains the image of God. Everything we need for thinking, acting, feeling, knowing, trusting and hoping—everything fundamental to being a person—is there, present in the womb.

And the end result of being image-bearers is that each person has an innate value in creation. That’s why God’s Word condemns murderers and advocates the strictest possible punishment for their crime. Capital punishment is a key facet of God’s law, going all the way back to His covenant with Noah. “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man” (Genesis 9:6). Human life is sacred because it was created by God in His own image.

Every Person Is the Object of God’s Loving Care

Throughout Scripture we see that God has made special provision for the poor, weak, and helpless. Over and over, His people are called to look after those who cannot look after themselves. Psalm 82:3-4 gives clear instructions to believers, exhorting us to “vindicate the weak and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them out of the hand of the wicked.” Is there anyone more weak, more helpless, or more defenseless than an unborn child?

There is not adequate space here to go over all the incredible medical phenomena that illustrate how the Lord designed the womb to be the perfect protector for those little unborn lives. It’s staggering how God insulates children inside their mothers, nourishing and preserving them in warmth, health, and safety. And it makes it all the more tragic that so many mothers choose to invade the protection of the womb and terminate the life God has created within.

In His covenant with Israel, the Lord built in a provision for any harm that might come to a child while it was still in its mother’s womb. Exodus 21 presents a graphic scenario:

If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet there is no injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. (Exodus 21:22-25)

According to God's law, killing an infant is murder. Scripture doesn't have to use the word *abortion* to make the point any more clear.

The Good News

There is some good news—the best news, actually—and it wouldn't be right to end here without mentioning it. God's redeeming grace is available, and able to overrule the sin of abortion. The Lord can use even the most heinous acts of sin to display and dispense His grace. Taking the most heinous sin of all—Jesus' crucifixion—as the supreme example, Judas, Pilate, and all the Romans and Jews who conspired against Jesus were guilty of murdering the only truly innocent person in history. But the Lord worked through those sins to accomplish His will and manifest His grace.

The same is true with abortion. It's a horrific tragedy, but God's redeeming grace is still available to all its participants without exception.

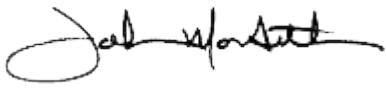
I'm convinced that God redeems murdered infants, that His grace reaches out and takes those little ones to be with Him. Two important passages make that point clear. The first is Psalm 22:9-10, where David writes, "Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb." David was convinced that he belonged to God, even when he was still inside His mother's womb.

That confidence is the reason he could react to the death of his own child with the words he spoke in 2 Samuel 12:23, "I will go to him, but he will not return to me." God's overruling grace protects infants who die and takes them to glory. (For a more thorough discussion of this topic, I've written a book called [*Safe in the Arms of God*](#).)

In addition, there is forgiveness for mothers who have had an abortion. While they may face daily reminders of their sin, they can be washed of its guilt and spared its just punishment through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Likewise, the abortion doctors who are responsible for taking these precious lives can be rescued from the punishment of their sins and forgiven through repentance and faith.

It doesn't stop there. God is exceedingly gracious, and His forgiveness is able to extend to everyone who has even a minor role in this horrible genocide—to abortion clinic nurses and counselors who facilitate infant murder on a daily basis; to pro-choice activists, lobbyists and politicians who fight to keep it legal; to the journalists, talking heads, and entertainers who promote and encourage abortion; and to all the husbands and boyfriends who don't fight to protect the lives of their children. As horrible and unthinkable as abortion is, in His mercy God is willing to forgive the penitent sinner. That's the joyous confession of every believer—God's grace is far greater than our sin.

So does the Scripture have anything to say about abortion? It speaks directly and with clarity to the issue. More than that, it offers the only solution to the guilt and shame suffered by many who participate in it—the redeeming grace of Christ who died and rose again so that repentant liars and thieves and drunkards and adulterers and homosexuals and yes, even murderers, could receive forgiveness and peace with God.



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