

The Bible and Abortion

Jer 2:34 Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents: I have not found it by secret search, but upon all these.

Abortion is the killing of the unborn infant. What does the Bible teach about little children and abortion? Is it all right to do? Some maintain that the Bible gives permission to perform an abortion.

Here are the facts about the entire subject:

It seems well at this point to consider what the Bible has to say about the entire subject, especially since the present writer notes that comparatively little dealing with this Biblical background is to be found in anti-abortion material available.

Children are a special gift sent from God:

"I have gotten a man from the Lord." – Gen 4:1

"God hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." – Gen 4:25.

"Because the Lord hath heard . . . He hath therefore given me this son also." – Gen 21:33.

"God hath heard my voice, and hath given me a son." – Gen 30:6.

"And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son." – Gen 30:17.

"And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children, and said, Who are those with thee? And he [Jacob] said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant." – Gen 33:5. [The children were given to the mother and to the father also.]

"So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son." – Ruth 4:13.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." – Job 1:21.

As we have also noted above, children are not only a special gift from God, they are a prayed for gift, also:

A child was given to Abraham in answer to prayer: Gen 15:2-5 (Gen 21:1-2) [The Lord promised Abraham a child from God, and because he believed it, it was counted to him for righteousness – Gen 15:2-6].

Children were given to Isaac in answer to prayer: Gen 25:21.

And in answer to prayer they were given to Leah (Gen 30:17-22), Rachel (Gen 30:22-24), and Hannah (1 Sam 1:9-20).

Here is what the angel said to Zacharias:

"But the angel of the Lord said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John." – Luke 1:13.

The people of God valued every child that they received:

"And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said God hath taken away my reproach." – Gen 30:22-23.

"And she called his name Joseph; and said, The Lord shall add to me another son." – Gen 30:24.

"He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord." – Psalm 113:9.

Children are a precious heritage from the Lord:

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." – Psalm 127:3-5.

It is God's special plan that families have children:

"And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." – Gen 1:28.

"He created not [the earth] in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." – Isaiah 45:18.

"Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord." – Psalm 128:3-4.

PEOPLE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD—EVEN BEFORE BIRTH

God to young Jeremiah: Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, [and] I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Jer. 1:5.

"My substance was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and intricately wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unformed; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. " – Psalm 139: 15-16.

God's plan is that Christian families will have children So that they can be taught of God and raised to serve Him:

"And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt." – Ex 13:8 (and verse 9).

"And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. ." – Ex 13:14-16.

"Only take heed to thyself . . . lest thou forget . . . but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons [grandchildren]. Specially . . . [tell them about Mount Sinai]. ." – Deut 4:9-10.

"And these words, which I command thee this day [the laws of God], shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. ." – Deut 6:6-9.

"And ye shall teach them [to] your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way. ." – Deut 11:19-20. [The future spirituality and success of God's people could only be assured by obedience to this command.]

"Gather the people together: men and women and children . . . that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children, which have not known anything [of how God earlier called and cared for you] may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it." – Deut 31:12-13. (Joshua 8:35.)

"Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord." – Psalm 34:11.

"Give ear, O my people to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth . . . We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength, and His wonderful works that He hath done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who [in turn] should arise and declare them to their children. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." – Psalm 78:1-7. (Prov 1:1.)

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." – Prov 22:6. (Isa 28:9-10.)

"Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation." – Joel 1:3.

"Feed My lambs." – John 21:15.

The people of God thanked Him for the children that He gave them:

"And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the Lord: therefore she called his name Judah ["The Lord be praised"]." – Gen 29:35. (Psalm 113:9.)

They recognized that when God sent a child, it was not only a special gift to be dedicated and trained for Him, but it would become a blessing to them personally:

"And I will bless her, and give thee [Abraham] a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." – Gen 17:16.

"And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people." – Gen 28:3.

"And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." – Gen 5:29.

"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers." – Prov 17:6.

God also commanded that we were not to hurt the fatherless child (or children who might not otherwise have someone to intercede on their behalf:)

"I will be a swift witness against . . . those that oppress . . . the widow and the fatherless." – Malachi 3:5.

"Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry. And My wrath shall wax hot." — Ex 22:22. (Deut 10:18; 14:29.)

"I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him." — Job 29:12.

"Thou art the Helper of the fatherless. Thou wilt cause Thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress." — Psalm 10:14.

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." — Psalm 27:10. (Psalm 68:5; 146:9; Jer 49:11; Hos 14:3.)

[All children have a father, but "fatherless children" are those whose father has died or who no longer wants them. Babies aborted intentionally are "motherless" also.]

The covenant of salvation is offered both to us and to our children:

Gen 6:18; 12:7; 13:15; 17:7-8; 19:12;21:13; 26:3-5, 24; Lev 26:44-45; Isa 65:23; 1 Cor 7:14.

The children are not to be punished for the mistakes and sins of the parents:

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." — Deuteronomy 24:16. (Ezekiel 18:2-4.)

"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." — Ezekiel 18:20. (Children are not to be punished for what the parents did: Ezekiel 18:1-30. Also: Jeremiah 31:29-30.)

God sets before us an example of saving children that are cast off when born alive [or aborted alive] by mothers who do not want them:

"Thy father was an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live . . . Yea, I sware unto thee,

and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee . ." – Ezekiel 16:3-6, 8-10.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." – Hosea 11:1.

The only Biblical records of men who arranged large-scale killings of infants were the acts of very wicked men:

Pharaoh: Ex 1:22; Herod the Great: Matt 2:16-18.

In Bible times, only the wicked destroyed their children:

They sacrificed them to appease their gods: 2 Kg 17:31; Ezek 16:20-21.

They caused them to walk through fire that they might be consumed in it: 2 Kg 16:3; Jer 32:35; Ezek 16:21.

Some sold them for the money they could make from the sale: 2 Kg 4:1; Neh 5:5; Job 24:9; Matt 18:25.

"Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." – Isaiah 8:18.

God gives us an example to follow in adopting. Children not wanted should be made available for adoption by others:

"It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not My people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." – Hosea 1:9.

"I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons and My daughters from the ends of the earth." – Isaiah 43:6.

"And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." – Numbers 6:27.

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." – Hosea 11:1.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." – John 1:12.

"Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." – Romans 8:15-17.

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren . . . Behold, I and the children which God hath given me." – Hebrews 2:11, 13. [And earthly mothers should not be ashamed of their little ones, either.]

Examples of adoption: Joseph's sons: Gen 48:5, 14, 16, 22. Moses: Ex 2:5-10; Acts 7:21. Esther: Esth 2:7. Israel: Ex 4:22; Hos 11:1; Rom 9:4.

God tells us that the harmlessness and humility of the littlest child is an example of what God loves in humanity [There is no doubt that the smallest child is very precious in His sight]:

"And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." – Matthew 18:2-5. (Mark 10:5.)

God tells us that those who are willing to take and care for such little children, are accepted by God as His children [It is the attitude that counts. Not all of us are in a position to actually raise a child for God.]:

"And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My name, receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me." – Mark 9:36.

"Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth Him that sent Me. For he that is least among you all, the same shall be greatest." – Luke 9:48. [The greatest among us are those willing to do the humble, needful work in caring for the little ones.]

The Bible teaches that the unborn child has a definite personality. It is a human being:

Jesus was conceived in His mother's womb. He was there – a distinct personage – before birth as well as at birth:

"When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost . . . But while he thought on these things, behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, . . . fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins." – Matthew 1:18, 20-21. [It was the person of Jesus, not a blob of growing cells that was in Mary. And He who was fully God was made in human form fully as we are made within our own mothers' wombs: "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." – Hebrews 2:16-17.]

"Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel." – Matthew 1:23.

"When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." – Galatians 4:4-5.

"The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many." – Matthew 20:28.

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.." – John 3:16.

Scripture indicates that John the Baptist was a distinct person within his mother's womb:

"And Mary arose in those days [while pregnant with Jesus], and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah. And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth [the mother of John the Baptist. John was conceived six months before Jesus.] And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou . . . and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed." – Luke 1:39-45. [The living personhood of the embryo and fetus is indicated in these passages of Scripture.]

According to the Bible, it is wrong to willfully, intentionally slay any person—any human being:

Is abortion of the unborn child commanded in the Bible?

No, it is never suggested, requested or commanded by God. Never.

According to the Bible, does God consider any form of abortion to be an acceptable practice?

No. There is no passage of Scripture that indicates that God ever wants men or women to do this terrible thing.

Does not Exodus 21:22-23 teach that God considers abortion to be of no consequence, that it is all right for people to unintentionally or intentionally perform an abortion on a woman?

Here is what Exodus 21:22-24 says:

"If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life. Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." — Exodus 21:22-24.

Some people say that the Bible teaches that if a man kills another man, he is to be slain; but that if he kills a fetus [unborn child], he has done nothing noteworthy and will only receive a small fine.

Here is the truth of the matter:

(1) If a man accidentally slays another (manslaughter), he can flee for refuge so that he can be protected from being killed: Ex 21:13, 28-32; Num 35:11-15, 22-28, 32; Deut 4:41-43; 19:1-10; Josh 20:1-9.

(2) If a man intentionally slays another person (murder), then he should die for what he has done: Gen 4:9-12; 49:7; Ex 20:13; Deut 5:17; Rom 13:9; Ex 21:29-32; Num 35:16-22, 30-31; Deut 17:6; 21:1-9. Many more Scriptural passages could be cited.

(3) Exodus 21:22-23 teaches that if a man accidentally injures a woman so that her child is born prematurely, then that man must pay a fine which will be determined by the judges. (Fines are paid as a "ransom for his life" (Ex 21:30), and this indicates how

serious the matter is. Just because he is fined does not mean that the event was of little consequence.)

(4) Exodus 21:22-23 also teaches that if "any mischief follow," then a more severe penalty must be meted out. What is the "mischief?" It is injury or death to the infant or to the mother. And what is the penalty? It is clearly stated in verses 23 and 24: "And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life. Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." – Exodus 21:23-24.

(5) Thus, if a man accidentally causes a premature birth, then he shall pay a fine; but if it then results in crippling, or death, the man is to receive in kind. And we are here only speaking about accidental abortions.

(6) Although the concepts of accidental manslaughter and premeditated (preplanned) murder are both in the Bible (see "1" and "2," above), and the concept of accidental, unexpected and unplanned abortion of a baby is given once in the Bible (Ex 21:22-24), – yet the concept of intentional, preplanned abortion is to be found nowhere in the Holy Scriptures. The very idea of intentionally killing an unborn child – or even worse, killing them by the hundreds and thousands, – is totally foreign to the lives of God's people in the Bible, and so it is never mentioned. Some events are so terrible that they go beyond the simple accidental slaying of a person, or even the premeditated slaying of a human. Such is the case of modern on-demand abortion as requested by mothers and as carried out by certain physicians, hospitals and clinics.

This need not be surprising. Some crimes are so serious that they are mentioned in Scripture as occurring, but no penalty is described. They are obviously so terrible that they would receive the only sentence ever commanded in Scripture for premeditated murder: Death by stoning. An example would be cannibalism. It is an extreme form of preplanned murder, and the penalty would, of course, be a sentence of death. (Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57; 2 Kg 6:28-29; Jer 19:9; Lam 2:20; 4:10; Ezek 5:10.) But as you will see from an examination of those Scriptures, only the event is mentioned, no penalty is affixed. Such a terrible crime would obviously receive the death sentence.

We know from the Bible that any sin can be forgiven. David prearranged the death of a trusting helper who was one of his closest friends (2 Samuel 11). And David pled for forgiveness and received it (Psalm 51). So also may anyone reading this article who has earlier committed an abortion or permitted it to be done, can now seek God and ask for and receive forgiveness. But do not imagine that you can receive forgiveness if you accept abortion as morally right, acceptable, or something you may encourage others to do. Great evils must be abhorred and put away. There is no other recourse in regard to sin. It must be fled from. We cannot dally with it; we cannot toy with it; we cannot consider the suggestions of those who would recommend approval of it.

The truth is that, as we would apply the words today, Exodus 21:22-23 is referring to a miscarriage as a result of an accident; it is not speaking about an intentional abortion.

The advocates of abortion teach that the Bible does not forbid modern abortion operations. That is correct. But neither does the Bible forbid smoking, heroine, LSD, and a number of other modern immoral acts. But the principles are there, nonetheless.

The advocates of abortion also teach that Exodus 21:22-24 teaches that a man only has to pay a fine if he aborts a child and it dies.

But

(1) a fine, or something very severe (to be determined by the judges) had to be done, for, Scripture says, "he shall be sorely punished." (Ex 21:22.) So whatever this fine or punishment may have been, it was considered very serious. Neither mothers who request abortions, nor their physicians who do it, are paying fines today for what they are doing to the unborn children.

(2) The fine was only paid if the child was born alive prematurely. For then the woman's "fruit" came out of (departed from) her "and yet no mischief" followed (read Exodus 21:22). The "mischief" would be injury or death to the child or to the mother.

(3) The result is a very serious punishment. It is stated in verses 23 and 24. "life for life, . . . wound for wound," etc. And that is serious punishment.

(4) The above was for accidental abortion, not intentional abortion. Such would be premeditated murder.

Here is what C. Everett Koop, M.D., former U.S. Surgeon General, says about the matter. He was surgeon-in-chief of Children's Hospital, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and has authored books on the topic of abortion:

"I have spent thirty-six years in the practice of pediatric surgery, longer than anybody else now practicing in this country..

"Some raise Exodus 27 as a proof text that God doesn't regard the unborn child in the same way as He does the newly born child. But if you read the text carefully, you will find it says that if a man in argument with another man accidentally strikes a woman and she has a premature birth, there is to be a fine. Nothing here is premeditated.

"But if any further mischief is done – and I take that to mean a deformity of the baby or the death of the baby – then the old law applies of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

"Francis Schaeffer [author of a number of books on abortion] checked the exegesis [meaning] of these verses with five Hebrew scholars and was convinced that God means just that, and in no way does He mean to downgrade the worth of the unborn child." – C. Everett Koop, M.D., as told to Dick Bohrer, "Deception-On-Demand," in *Moody Monthly*, May, 1980.

Here is what Heaven thinks of men who make a practice of killing people:

"Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbor secretly. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person." – Deuteronomy 27:24.

"The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief." – Job 24:14. [Few people are as poor and needy as the unborn child.]

"When He [God] maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them: He forgetteth not the cry of the humble." – Psalm 9:12.

"The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent." – Psalm 10:2.

"Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men, in whose hands is mischief." – Psalm 26:9.

"The wicked watcheth the righteous and seeketh to slay him." – Psalm 37:32.

"Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph? . . . They slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless." – Psalm 94:3, 6.

"These . . . things doth the Lord hate: . . . A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood." – Proverbs 6:16-17.