The Tragedy of Abortion

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Introduction

Holy Scripture repeatedly indicates that God abhors “hands that shed innocent blood” (Proverbs 6:16-19; Isaiah 59:7-8). Each day in America an average of more than 4,000 precious lives are terminated. These victims die without benefit of trial or counsel. They are executed by some of the most cruel and inhumane techniques ever invented. These deaths occur in family planning clinics and hospitals throughout our land. Conspirators in this atrocity include pregnant women, the medical establishment, legislators, radical groups such as the National Organization of Women and Planned Parenthood, and a majority of our Supreme Court Justices. These victims are not hardened, convicted criminals; they are precious, innocent unborn babies.

Proverbs 6:16-19 ... 16 There are six things which the Lord hates, Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: 17 Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, And hands that shed innocent blood, 18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that run rapidly to evil, 19 A false witness who utters lies, And one who spreads strife among brothers. (NASB95)

Isaiah 59:7-8 ... 7 Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, Devastation and destruction are in their highways. 8 They do not know the way of peace, And there is no justice in their tracks; They have made their paths crooked, Whoever treads on them does not know peace. (NASB95)

Abortion is the most divisive issue facing our nation. Battle lines have been drawn. Armies have been mustered. A moral and ethical war is being fought between those who support a woman’s right to choose, and those who believe that an unborn child has a right to life.

The crux issue involves the sanctity or sacredness of human life. Is humankind simply the highest step in the evolutionary cycle of life, or are we made in the image of God? Are we the by-product of time and chance, or were we put here for a purpose? How we answer these questions will largely determine our position on abortion.

Modern secularists, steeped in the philosophy of evolution, have little reason to regard human life as unique, sacred and hence, valuable. They argue that the developing fetus in a mother’s womb is simply a mass of tissue, no more sacred than the embryo of a guppy or a rabbit.

For those of us who are committed to a Biblical world view, the question that keeps ringing in our ears is, “How does our Sovereign Lord, the God of Heaven and Earth, view human life? What does the Bible have to say on this issue? While abortion is not mentioned specifically by name in either the Old or New Testaments, there are various divine principles that would address this issue.
**Human Life Is Sacred Because Of Its Divine Origin.**

Many passages in the Bible affirm that we are God’s special creation. All things were created by God (Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11). However, mankind possess a unique value: we are made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27; Acts 17:24-28).

*Genesis 1:1 ... In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* (NASB95)

*Revelation 4:11 ... 11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”* (NASB95)

*Genesis 1:26-27 ... 26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”* 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (NASB95)

*Acts 17:24-28 ... 24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 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, 27 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; 28 for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’* (NASB95)

When David gazed into the starry sky, he was overwhelmed at the limitless expanse of the heavens. Man seems insignificant when compared to the vastness of the universe. The psalmist asked why the Lord would notice and care about our plight: “What is man’s place in the grand scheme of things?” The inspired answer revealed that God created us for a purpose, and invested us with a sacred and unique value (Psalms 8:3-5).

*Psalm 8:3-5 ... 3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; 4 What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty!* (NASB95)

Because of the sacredness of human life, the wanton shedding of innocent blood is a great evil (Genesis 9:5-6). Both Testaments affirm, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13; Romans 13:8-10). Literally, this means “Thou shalt do no murder.” The deliberate taking of human life without provocation or just cause is murder. Is that not what happens in an abortion? The child involved is totally innocent, having done no wrong towards the mother, the doctor, or society. Its life is sacrificed because of the selfish considerations of others. The immorality of such an act is inescapable.
Genesis 9:5-6 ... 5 “Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man’s brother I will require the life of man. 6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man. (NASB95)

Exodus 20:13 ... 13 “You shall not murder. (NASB95)

Romans 13:8-10 ... 8 Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. 9 For this, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (NASB95)

In the Greco/Roman society of the first century, life was cheap. In the Roman Empire, sixty million souls lived in abject slavery. Masters treated their slaves as chattel. Blood sport was a highly popular form of entertainment. Tens of thousands flocked to the Coliseum to watch men combat men, men fight animals, and animals devour men. Frenzied mobs demanded more brutality and bloodshed.

Revealing the surpassing love of God, Jesus emphasized the sacredness of human life. In offering salvation to all, Christ emphasized the inherent value of each individual (Matthew 11:28-30; 16:26). Little children were especially precious (Matthew 18:1-7), and he rebuked those who tried to turn them away (Matthew 19:13-15).

Matthew 11:28-30 ... 28 “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 “For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (NASB95)

Matthew 16:26 ... 26 “For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (NASB95)

Matthew 18:1-7 ... 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, 3 and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 “Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 “And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 “Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes! (NASB95)

Matthew 19:13-15 ... 13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven...
belongs to such as these.” 15 After laying His hands on them, He departed from there. (NASB95)

**Human Life Is Sacred From The Moment Of Conception.**

If we accept the idea that human life is sacred, another question arises. When does God invest human life with its sanctity? At what point does a unique life come into existence? From a Biblical standpoint, the answer must be that human life is sacred from the moment of conception.

Let us consider a few simple questions: Is there life in a pregnant mother’s womb? Yes. When did this new life begin? At conception. What sort of life is it? Answer this question carefully. If one says that it is not a human life, then what sort of life is it? Animal or vegetable? Remember a child in the womb is the product of two human beings. It is obviously human life. Is this life merely an appendage of the mother’s body? No. It is an altogether new life, different and distinct from the mother.

Everything that we know about genetics and embryology points to the fact that the fetus is a developing human being -- not a guppy or a glob of tissue. Modern science clearly reveals that a child in the womb is a unique human being from the moment of conception. High technology medicine has revealed the fascinating details regarding the miracle of life in the womb.

Human life begins at fertilization. In the first week, the fertilized egg enters the womb of the mother and a new life begins to develop. Even at this early point, the genetic code is complete. At 22 days, the heart begins to beat. At 31 days, the eyes begin to develop. The embryo now has nasal pits & a primitive mouth. At 33 days, the hand plate has formed. At 34 days, leg buds begin to protrude. At 36 days, oral and nasal cavities have formed. At 37 days, the foot plate has formed. At 38 days the upper lip has formed. At 40 days, the arms bend at the elbow. Finger rays become evident. At this point, there is first movement or quickening. Their is measurable human brain function. At 44 days, the eyelids begin to form. At 45 days, the tip of the nose becomes distinct. Toe rays begin to appear. At 48 days, the trunk begins elongating and straightening. At 50 days, upper limbs become longer and bend at the elbows. Fingers become distinct. At 55 days, (in the midst of the 8th week) the beginnings of all essential external and internal structures are present.1

How does the Bible address this issue? Exodus 21:22-25 is an excellent place to start. Please note that there are three different translations of Exodus 21:22. The key phrase is rendered “so that her fruit depart” in the KJV & ASV; it is rendered “miscarriage” in the RSV & NAS Original, and the NRSV; finally, it is rendered “gives birth prematurely” in the NIV, NKJ, and the NASB95.

**KJV**  
Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 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. 23 And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (KJV)
ASV  Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 And if men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart, and yet no harm follow; he shall be surely fined, according as the woman’s husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (ASV)

RSV  Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 “When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined, according as the woman’s husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. 23 If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (RSV)

NIV  Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 “If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. 23 But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. (NIV)

NKJ  Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 “If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges {decide.} 23 “But if there is {any further} injury, you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, 24 “eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 “burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (NKJ)

NAS  Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 “And {if} men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage, yet there is no {further} injury, he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him; and he shall pay as the judges {decide.} 23 “But if there is {any further} injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. (NAS)

NASB95  Exodus 21:22-25 ... 22 “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. 23 “But if there is any further injury, then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise. (NASB95)

Obviously, the translation that we use will affect our interpretation of this passage. Furthermore, the attitude of the translators also affected their rendition of the verse. The KJV was first published in 1611 and the ASV in 1901, far before the modern controversy over abortion. They both vaguely spoke of a woman’s fruit departing from her womb. The RSV and NRSV are both works of liberal scholarship. They say Exodus 21:22 has reference to a woman experiencing a miscarriage. The NASB, which was first published before the Supreme Court ruling in Roe v. Wade in 1973, also speaks of a woman experiencing a miscarriage. However, it is rather enlightening that the New American Standard Bible Update edition of 1995 reverses course and says “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.” The NIV was copyrighted in 1973, 1978 & 1984.
The NKJ was published in 1982, and the New American Standard Bible Update came out in 1995. All of these versions translate Exodus 21:22 so that it refers to a premature birth.

The meaning of Exodus 21:22 hinges on our understanding of the word “depart.” This word is frequently used in the Old Testament and has a great variety of applications. Thomas defines yatsa as “to go or come out” [3318]. BDB says it means “go or come out.” The TWOT says it means “go out, come out, go forth.” Does this refer to a premature birth or miscarriage?

The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament offers the following comments: “The verb is used in Exodus 21:22 of a blow delivered with malice and potentially capable of causing death (v. 35). If such a blow accidentally lands on a pregnant woman causing premature birth and not a miscarriage, no death penalty is exacted (RSV). This interpretation is supported by the proximity of ‘her fetus goes out’ and ‘and there shall be no accident involving death’ (cf. KB, used in Gen 42:4 of accidental death), as well as verses 23–25. So NIV: ‘and she gives birth prematurely.’ footnote: Or, ‘she has a miscarriage.’ This verse figures prominently in the biblical teaching regarding abortion.”

I believe the meaning of the passage is clear and definitive: If two men fight, and a pregnant woman goes into premature labor, and yet, despite her travail, she gives birth to a healthy baby, the offenders may be punished. However, if the baby dies (i.e., if harm follows), then the offender(s) shall pay with his life. This is entirely consistent with the pro-life position.

What is the witness of Scripture about the beginning of individual human life? Consider the inspired words of David where the unborn child is described as having an individual personality (Psalms 139:13-16). God’s purpose for the prophet Jeremiah predated his birth (Jeremiah 1:4-5). So also with the apostle Paul (Galatians 1:15-17). These passages clearly show that the unborn child is not just a blob of fetal tissue. Neither is it merely an extension of the mother’s body to be removed and cast aside as one would pull a tooth. Instead, a unborn child is a separate human being.

Psalm 139:13-16 ... 13 For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. 14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; 16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them. (NASB95)

Jeremiah 1:4-5 ... 4 Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (NASB95)

Galatians 1:15-17 ... 15 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. (NASB95)
Our society distinguishes between the embryo, the fetus, and a newborn child. Scripture makes no such distinction. The same Greek word that refers to a babe in the womb (Luke 1:41, 44) also refers to a newborn infant (Luke 2:12, 16; 18:15; Acts 7:19) or a young child (2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 2:2). Thomas defines *brephos* as “an unborn or a newborn child” [1025]. BDAG say it refers to “(1) a child that is still unborn, fetus, child; (2) a very small child, baby, infant.” Strong/Thayer say it refers to “(1) an unborn child, embryo, a foetus [i.e., variant spelling of fetus]; (2) a new-born child, an infant, a babe.”

Luke 1:41 ... 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (NASB95)

Luke 1:44 ... 44 “For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. (NASB95)

Luke 2:12 ... 12 “This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (NASB95)

Luke 2:16 ... 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. (NASB95)

Luke 18:15 ... 15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. (NASB95)

Acts 7:19 ... 19 “It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. (NASB95)

2 Timothy 3:15 ... 15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (NASB95)

1 Peter 2:2 ... 2 like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, (NASB95)

We must not allow the use of clinical terms to cloud the issue. Christians should ask themselves, was it the Christ-child in Mary’s womb, or some otherwise insignificant mass of fetal tissue? Would it have mattered if she had sought an abortion (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7; 49:1-3; Matthew 1:18-25)?

Genesis 3:15 ... 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.” (NASB95)

Isaiah 7:14 ... 14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel. (NASB95)

Isaiah 9:6-7 ... 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the
increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (NASB95)

Isaiah 49:1-3 ... 1 Listen to Me, O islands, And pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called Me from the womb: From the body of My mother He named Me. 2 He has made My mouth like a sharp sword, In the shadow of His hand He has concealed Me; And He has also made Me a select arrow, He has hidden Me in His quiver. 3 He said to Me, “You are My Servant, Israel, In Whom I will show My glory.” (NASB95)

Matthew 1:18-25 ... 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 “She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” 22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.” 24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (NASB95)

“The God who has invested human life with special value and sacred worth is the same God who frames and fashions human babies in the womb. Human babies don’t become human at some variable point in their development. They are conceived human. As humans, created in the image of God, they possess the unique sacredness God invests in all human life.”

Answering Various Objections

What About The Question Of Choice?

Does abortion simply relate to a woman’s freedom over her own body? In a civilized society, there is no such thing as unrestrained freedom. As someone once said, “I am free to swing my arms, but that freedom stops in front of another person’s nose.” I am thankful for the freedoms we enjoy in this country, but I am also glad there are limitations on those freedoms. We are not free to violate the rights of other people. This principle holds true in religion as well. Christianity brings spiritual freedom, but we must not misuse our liberty as an occasion to sin (1 Corinthians 8:8-9; Galatians 5:13-14; 1 Peter 2:16). Yes, a woman has rights, but so does the unborn child. Children have the right to life. Furthermore, both men and women must recognize that their bodies belong, not just to themselves, but to God (Romans 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

1 Corinthians 8:8-9 ... 8 But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. (NASB95)
**Galatians 5:13-14** ... 13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (NASB95)

**1 Peter 2:16** ... 16 Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. (NASB95)

**Romans 14:7-8** ... 7 For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; 8 for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. (NASB95)

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** ... 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (NASB95)

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**What About The Question Of Viability?**

Many people attempt to justify abortion based on the issue of viability. According to current law, states may not interfere with a woman’s decision to terminate her pregnancy during the first trimester. In the second trimester when abortion becomes more dangerous than childbirth, the state has a legally compelling interest in protecting the health of the mother, and may place some reasonable restrictions on obtaining an abortion. During the third trimester once a fetus reaches viability, the state may act on its compelling interest to protect human life and prohibit abortions except those necessary to protect the life and health of the mother.

In fact, most abortions are performed by the 15th week of pregnancy, long before the fetus is able to survive outside the womb. Is it reasonable to say that abortion is allowable while the fetus is dependent upon its mother, but not afterward? There are many adults who cannot live without assistance, but must depend upon others for health care, or rely on machines or medication to survive. Does the fact that a person cannot survive independently take away their humanity?

If we dispose of unwanted children based on this reasoning, I fear for the aged and the handicapped. Euthanasia could be easily justified by the same rational. Will we eliminate everyone who cannot survive without the assistance of others: the elderly, senile, weak, physically and mentally handicapped, etc.? If we lose respect for human life, our society is doomed. Have we become such a cruel, savage and barbaric society that we no longer care about human life in its most dependent state?

“While abortion is the focal point of the attack on the sanctity of human life in America, it is but the leading edge of a wedge that will increasingly divide our society. If we can kill the helpless unborn, then we can kill the helpless disabled. If we can kill the helpless disabled, then we can kill the suffering ill. If we can kill the suffering ill, we can kill the unproductive members of society. If developing human life has no value, then perhaps someday legislators will decide that human life after the age of 70 has no value. What we do to our babies we will do to anyone!”
**What about cases of rape, incest, or severe fetal abnormality?**

Many would justify abortion by asking, “What about circumstances where a woman becomes pregnant through rape or incest? What about cases of severe fetal abnormality?” Admittedly, such situations are difficult, and arouse strong emotional responses. Nevertheless, there are Biblically based answers that may be given.

First of all it is critical to remember that the vast majority of abortions do not happen as a result of any of these reasons. In fact, according to a study in Family Planning Perspectives (published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, which is the research arm of Planned Parenthood), less than 6% of all abortions done in the United States are done for all of these reasons combined. However, this infrequency has never prevented pro-abortion proponents from using these examples as scare tactics to reinforce a false perception that there is a need for abortion in desperate cases.

The hard cases are always brought up because they carry so much emotional weight with the general public, who don’t know the facts about abortion in the United States. Moreover, because many people are quite afraid of how they would respond themselves to any of these circumstances, it is easy for abortion proponents to prey on those anxieties.

So what is the pro-life speaker’s job? It is to address those fears sympathetically, rationally, and factually. Taken separately there are solid reasons why abortion should not be resorted to in these cases. Taken collectively this small minority of cases proves the adage that hard cases make bad law.

Certain realities need to be restated in any response. Once again it is vital to remind the audience that the circumstances of the baby’s conception change nothing about the baby herself or abortion’s inherent brutality. The baby’s development is no different. The methods used to end that life remain just as violent.

Yet it is not unusual when the hard cases are discussed for a kind of mental gymnastics to take place in the minds of people who have otherwise accepted the pro-life arguments but seem to believe that everything is somehow different in the hard cases.

Look, first, at the arguments in favor of abortion when the baby will have a severe fetal abnormality. Any answer has to tear aside the veil of prejudice that drives the notion that it is somehow kinder to kill a person with a disability or a disease before she is born than to let her “live in that condition.”

The pro-lifer’s job is to bring sanity to the situation by firmly rejecting the “quality of life” argument, the very dangerous idea that there are some lives not worthy of living. This response reminds our listeners that every life is unique, every life is valuable. By establishing this baseline, you can show them that aborting a child because of possible abnormality is nothing less than blatant and deadly discrimination against people with disabilities.
Shockingly, the types of disabilities included by pro-abortionists in the list of purportedly “good reasons” for an abortion range from the truly severe to relatively minor; the list of the latter grows lengthier every year. Abortion is becoming a search-and-destroy method for eliminating less-than-“perfect” people. Rather than pursuing medical solutions to some of these difficulties, there is a regular use of techniques, like amniocentesis, to identify problems in the unborn so that an abortion can be performed more expediently. In light of this reality the pro-life response must insist that we don’t cure disease by killing the patient.

The next two hard cases are typically asked together, so we will answer them in a similar fashion. When it comes to pregnancies that result from rape and/or incest, real violence has been done to women. Pro-lifers must fully appreciate the fear that swirls around any discussion of rape and incest.

Your answer must begin in compassion; a woman has been violated, often violently. If pro-lifers care deeply about the lives of women facing any difficult pregnancy - - and we do - - obviously we care no less in the case of rape or incest.

Simply stated, rape is an act of violence against an innocent woman. When someone has been through an ordeal of this magnitude she deserves to be treated with the deepest compassion, enormous support, and special care.

But while society is finally recognizing that rape is an act of violence against an innocent victim, it still fails to recognize that abortion is also an act of violence against another innocent victim.

If the woman does become pregnant, a rare but possible occurrence, she may be made to feel twice as tainted when society is not prepared to cope with the circumstances of this child’s conception. Counselors and abortion providers encourage abortion as the perfect “solution.”

Irrationally, society expects her to kill her unborn child, not for something the child has done, but for the crime of his/her father. Once again the mother is pitted against her child.

Subjecting her to an abortion only compounds the initial violence of the rape. Only in this second tragedy, the woman becomes the aggressor against her own child.

Although research in this area is limited, at least two studies done with women who’ve become pregnant following a rape have clearly shown that women who aborted their children feel twice victimized and angry about the abortion (Mahkom, “Pregnancy and Sexual Assault,” Psychological Aspects of Abortion, University Publishers of America [1979], pp. 53-72).

Women in one study who carried their babies to term, although frightened at first, felt they had done the more positive thing by giving their children life; they felt they had turned something awful into something good (Mahkom and Dolan, “Sexual Assault and Pregnancy,” New Perspectives on Human Abortion, University Publishers of America [1981], pp. 182-199). A women who tries to face any sort of crisis pregnancy alone is at
risk. Whatever the circumstances of her life, each woman deserves support and proper
care throughout her pregnancy and beyond it to prevent more harm being done either
emotionally or physically. Help like that is found at the over 3,000 pro-life mother-
helping centers across the country. That is the true measure of compassion for mother and
child.

All of the responses to these various arguments have to take into account that most of the
time they stem from some kind of fear on the part of the questioner. People are unfamiliar
with or afraid of how they would cope with a disability so they rush to reject the lives of
babies with disabilities. Understandably, there is concern about the violence of rape or
incest, but at best that fear leads to a misplaced sense of chivalry, at worst a coldhearted
rejection of both victims of the crime.

While hard cases can make bad law, they can also offer the greatest challenge to create
the kind of life-affirming society we want to live in.

Was Saul less than fully human because of bodily illness (Galatians 4:12-16) or physical
ailments (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)?

Galatians 4:12-16 ... 12 I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become
as you are. You have done me no wrong; 13 but you know that it was because of a bodily
illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time; 14 and that which was a trial to
you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel
of God, as Christ Jesus Himself. 15 Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I
bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them
to me. 16 So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? (NASB95)

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ... 7 Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this
reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a
messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! 8 Concerning this I
implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. 9 And He has said to me, “My grace
is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will
rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10
Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with
persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.
(NASB95)

Did Jesus treat the handicapped and infirmed as inferior to those who were whole (Luke 5:17-26;
John 9:1-7)?

Luke 5:17-26 ... 17 One day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and
teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea
and from Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.
18 And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were
trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. 19 But not finding any way to
bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the
tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus. 20 Seeing their
faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.” 21 The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?” 22 But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, “Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins have been forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 24 ‘But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,’—He said to the paralytic—”I say to you, get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.” 25 Immediately he got up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God. 26 They were all struck with astonishment and began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen remarkable things today.” (NASB95)

John 9:1-7 ... 1 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?” 3 Jesus answered, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 “We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 “While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.” 6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and applied the clay to his eyes, 7 and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which is translated, Sent). So he went away and washed, and came back seeing. (NASB95)

Adoption is a glorious alternative, giving life to the innocent unborn, and hope to others who may be childless (Esther 2:5-7; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:3-6).

Esther 2:5-7 ... 5 Now there was at the citadel in Susa a Jew whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, 6 who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the captives who had been exiled with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled. 7 He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle’s daughter, for she had no father or mother. Now the young lady was beautiful of form and face, and when her father and her mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter. (NASB95)

Romans 8:14-17 ... 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him. (NASB95)

Galatians 4:4-5 ... 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (NASB95)

Ephesians 1:3-6 ... 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to
Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (NASB95)

Conclusion

An average of 1.5 million human babies, made in God’s image, are aborted each year in the United States of America. Since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in its infamous Roe v. Wade decision in 1973, fifty million children have been killed. This is many times the total number of Jews who died in the Nazi holocaust. That horrible statistic would be unimaginable if it were not true. In the face of this, Pharaoh’s extermination of the Hebrew male children was but a ripple on the ocean of time (Acts 7:17-19). The slaughter of the innocents in Bethlehem by Herod pales in comparison to the ongoing tragedy of today: today many a Rachel does not weep for her children; she lifts up her own hand against them (Matthew 2:16-18; cf. Jeremiah 31:15).

Acts 7:17-19 ... 17 “But as the time of the promise was approaching which God had assured to Abraham, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, 18 until there arose another king over Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph. 19 “It was he who took shrewd advantage of our race and mistreated our fathers so that they would expose their infants and they would not survive. (NASB95)

Matthew 2:16-18 ... 16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. 17 Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she refused to be comforted, Because they were no more.” (NASB95)

Jeremiah 31:15 ... 15 Thus says the Lord, “A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; She refuses to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more.” (NASB95)

God has always shown concern for those powerless members of society (Isaiah 1:16-17; Jeremiah 22:3). Oppression of such persons invariably met with divine retribution (Malachi 3:5). If God demanded that Israel show compassion toward widows, orphans and strangers, should we not also be concerned about the innocent unborn? What class of society is more powerless? What class of society is more innocent? What class of society has been more victimized?

Isaiah 1:16-17 ... 16 “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Reprove the ruthless, Defend the orphan, Plead for the widow. (NASB95)

Jeremiah 22:3 ... 3 ‘Thus says the Lord, “Do justice and righteousness, and deliver the one who has been robbed from the power of his oppressor. Also do not mistreat or do violence to the stranger, the orphan, or the widow; and do not shed innocent blood in this place. (NASB95)
Malachi 3:5 ... 5 “Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien and do not fear Me,” says the Lord of hosts. (NASB95)

The Biblical witness is consistent and clear. God has invested human life with sacredness and uniqueness from conception onward. Christians must not be silent on the issue of abortion (Isaiah 58:1; Ephesians 5:11).

Isaiah 58:1 ... 1 “Cry loudly, do not hold back; Raise your voice like a trumpet, And declare to My people their transgression And to the house of Jacob their sins. (NASB95)

Ephesians 5:11 ... 11 Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; (NASB95)

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iv Tyler Morning Telegraph, 6/16/83, Sec. 1, page. 5.
