

Abortion

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In the news yesterday was the 21st anniversary of the Roe v Wade Supreme Court decision in which this nation formally and officially made abortion legal constitutionally. The result since then has been that in the United States, it is statistically confirmed that the most dangerous place for anyone to be with regard to the preservation of one's life is in a woman's womb. And that statistic or fact in itself is mind boggling. But then to read the actual statistic for 1993. In 1993, the number of abortions soared to an all-time high of 1.7 million each year killed in the United States and torn out from the mother's womb—outright murders.

Dr. Bernard Nathanson, a founder of the National Abortion Rights League, performed about 5,000 abortions following the Roe v Wade decision and Dr. Nathanson vehemently subscribed and promoted the pro-abortion arguments, but he has since then changed his mind. Sometime during the Reagan White House, Dr. Nathanson made an about face and actually turned and became anti-abortion. And he had a comment to make about as to a woman's right to control her own body, which is one of the major arguments they are use for abortion. He says,

I think everyone should control their own body. But we have very sound data which have demonstrated that the fetus is not part of the woman's body. It is an uneasy tenant, immunologically distinct, biologically distinct. It is not, in fact, a part of a woman's body.

Now, life begins at the moment of conception, and any abortion after that point is outright murder and a crime committed against the sixth commandment. At six weeks of the fetus' growth, the kidneys, stomach, and the liver begin to function. By the seventh week, the tiny baby has all its outer and inner organs and the baby has its own measurable brain waves. Now think about that. What distinguishes in adults from being dead or alive medically? It is whether they have brain waves or not. So, a baby at the

seventh week has those brain waves. By the eighth week, the nervous system is in place.

At 10 weeks, the pre-born child has everything found in a newborn baby. By the 12th week, chemicals to transmit sensations from nerves through the spinal cord to the brain exist, giving the ability to feel pain. The fetus reacts the same way a full grown individual reacts when it is exposed to something painful. For example, by squirming or thrashing with an accelerated heartbeat and higher blood pressure. So there is no difference with the fetus and how it reacts to pain. Starting at 12 weeks, there is no difference at all in how we feel pain and where a fetus suffers. The fingerprints are completely formed. The baby weighs about one ounce and all that is left is to grow, and that is as of 12 weeks.

That is a mind-boggling thing to take into your mind and just actually meditate on because look how many abortions are done after that period, and the pain that is involved in in those abortions.

In a letter to President Reagan during his term of office, 26 doctors emphasized that scientific methods make it clear that pre-born babies feel pain during an abortion and they believe that the pain is even felt before the 12 week period in many cases.

Now, about 100 years ago, an attorney actually made a statement that really sums up what we have today in this nation. The Italian attorney was Rafael Balestrini, and he warned that whenever abortion becomes a social custom, it is the external manifestation of a people's decadence.

Even beyond that, we know in this nation it has become a way of life. When you are killing 1.7 million fetuses a year, it has become a way of life. And that decadence can also be seen in the churches today. Even mainstream Christian churches approve of abortion. For example, there are some hospitals that are church owned, for example, the United Methodists own quite a few hospitals throughout this nation and they all perform abortions. So how can someone that says they believe in God and the principles of God, support and keep going such hospitals?

Many of these Christian churches believe that under certain circumstances, abortion is justified. They say that since the New Testament is silent on abortion, that the early Christians must have been pro-choice. What reasoning? I mean, if you want to convince yourself of something, you can convince yourself of anything.

So what I would like to ask is, what was society's position on abortion at the time that the apostles wrote the books of the New Testament?

Let us take a look at some of the writings that were written around that time and see that there is a reason why there is very little mention in The New Testament about abortion. And that reason is that during the first century, it was unthinkable. It was not considered, it was not an issue. Judaism was firmly opposed to abortion.

Some of the writings that influenced the thought at that time, for example, one writing was written between 50_{BC} and 50_{AD}. And it was a popular Jewish writing called, The Sentences of Pseudo-Felicities. And that said that, "A woman should not destroy the unborn baby in her belly, nor after its birth throw it before the dogs and vultures as a prey." So that was a side writing that said that you shall not do this.

First century Jewish Civilian Oracles, as they were called (and I am going to struggle with some of these early names), includes among the wicked two groups: 1) women who produce abortions and unlawfully cast their offspring away, 2) and sorcerers who dispense abortion medicines. And those people by these writings were labeled as very wicked people. Another book of some influence in the first and second century_{BC} was the book of First Enoch, which says that an evil angel taught humans how to smash the embryo in the womb. So this was a popular belief at that time as well. They believed a demon had actually influenced and instructed people on how to do that.

Writing between 25_{BC} and 41_{AD}, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, which you heard of, Philo of Alexander, wrote an exposition of the commandment of murder in which he taught that, "Anyone who induces abortion must be

fined if the fetus is unformed, and given the death penalty if it is formed." As you know, Philo was a historian writing about the laws at that time and that there is no doubt what was to happen to a person causing an abortion.

Then the next one was in the first century. And that was the Jewish historian Josephus. He wrote that, "The law [speaking of the Ten Commandments], orders all the offspring to be brought up and forbids women either to cause abortion or to make away with the fetus. A woman convicted of this was regarded as having committed infanticide because she destroyed a soul and diminished the race." And then of course, we all know that, as the Jews call it, the Pentateuch, in Exodus 21, that there is something that is said about abortion. If you turn with me to Exodus 21 we will take a look at that. This did heavily influence society at that time as well.

Exodus 21:22-23 [and this is regarding violence in general] "If men fight and hurt a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no lasting harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him ;and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if any lasting harm follows [this includes abortions and whether intended or not intended], then you shall give life for life."

So there is the death penalty involved if a fetus is killed. Now, there are no contradictory early Jewish texts that have been discovered that are pro-choice, that are for abortion or even indicate that abortion is okay. Everyone that has ever been found has been an anti-abortion consensus throughout.

Now in the New Testament in Matthew, if you will turn with me there, we will just see a small indication that abortion was not a consideration under this circumstance where Joseph found out about Mary.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

This was Joseph's idea of what he wanted to do. He was a just man and he did not even consider abortion. What he wanted to do was quietly put Mary away and let her have the baby in a quiet manner without any embarrassment

involved, before he found out, of course, that Mary received the seed from the Holy Spirit or by way of the Holy Spirit. And so, this is a small indication, but it is an indication that Joseph never even considered abortion.

Abortion just was not thought of at this time. It was not considered, it was not an issue. So that is why you do not read very much about abortion in the New Testament or anything specific in the New Testament. It was not an issue at the time that needed to be discussed or covered. So the writers felt no need to cover that. It was something that was so appalling to society it was not considered. So there was not an issue that needed to be covered there that I feel personally is the very reason why there is nothing mentioned specifically in the New Testament about it.

Now, if you go to other principles, there is plenty in the New Testament that indicates that we should not commit abortions.

In closing, I would like to just cover one of those principles very quickly. And that is that abortion is an act of perverted religious faith, especially for the woman who undergoes an abortion because it affirms a belief in man as ultimate rather than as created in the image of God. What it does when a woman gets an abortion or someone else causes an abortion or a woman is supported in her abortion, it puts man above God. It makes man the one who is deciding who lives and dies. Man then becomes above God in deciding life or death.

Turn with me to I Corinthians 6, verse 19. This section of I Corinthians is about glorifying God in body and spirit, but it is about looking after the body that you have been given.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which is God's.

Notice there in verse 19, it says you are not your own. Man does not have the right to determine who lives or dies. All things are God's and they were all created by Christ.

Please turn with me to Colossians 1, verse 16. And that says,

Colossians 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

We are all Christ's. Christ is the one who should be the one controlling us and making decisions in our lives. We should be doing our best to take care of the body that we have been given. We have been given our bodies not only to take care of personally, but also bodies that come out of ours in the way of fetuses and births of children. They are separate individuals from the mother, but yet they are something that we are to protect.

Man only has a limited authority that God has given him, as you know, and all life is under God's law. God, not the state, not the individual, not the parent Only God is Lord of life. God's will governs. Men and nations may deny that fact, but they can deny it all they want. The truth still stands firm that only God has the right to choose life or death for us. Unless we have the decision to make whether we are going to stand up for God's Word, and then we can decide that we are willing to die for His Word. But other than that, God has the decision over life or death.

And then to close on a positive note. As you know, Psalm 127:3 says, "Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is His reward.