

## HIS OWN IMAGE

Around one-hundred and fifty years ago, the United States ratified the Fourteenth Amendment to the constitution. That amendment reads:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

Nearly fifty years ago, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the Due Process clause of this amendment guarantees citizens a right to privacy, and so a right to induced abortion. The majority opinion stated, "If this suggestion of [fetal] personhood is established, the appellant's case, of course, collapses, for the fetus' right to life would then be guaranteed specifically by the amendment." The justices went further, however, and concluded that the word 'person' in the Fourteenth Amendment does not include the unborn. Simply put, as a fetus is not a person, it has no right to life. Since the Supreme Court's ruling, known as 'Roe v. Wade,' over sixty-three million babies have been murdered by induced abortion. Five days ago, someone published a draft of a majority opinion of the Supreme Court in which the justices state that Roe v. Wade must be overruled. If the Supreme Court do finally overrule Roe V. Wade, then the states will be legally free to make induced abortion illegal. Such a ruling by the Supreme Court will be a righteous ruling, and an answer to the prayers of God's people. Those who approve of induced abortion will be enraged, however, and the conflict between them and those who disapprove will become greater. Today, Mother's Day, those who approve of induced abortion are protesting in front of, and even inside of, Catholic churches. Concerning the published draft, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas said of the court, "We can't be an institution that can be bullied into giving you just the outcomes you want." The same may be said of the Church of Jesus Christ. The church must stand firm against all unrighteousness, including murder by induced abortion.

When God created the world, He lastly created Man, the greatest of His creatures. Man is greatest because God made him in His image. The Scriptures say, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." (Genesis 1:27) God made the first man's body from the ground, and then, with His own breath, He gave it life. The Scriptures say, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Genesis 2:7)

It did not take long for man to violate the image of God. Adam's firstborn son, Cain, killed Adam's second born son, Abel. Cain's attack on Abel was an attack on the image of God, and so an indirect attack on God Himself. This tragedy called for justice, and God rendered it. He said to Cain:

What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth. (Genesis 4:10-12)

Cain was a farmer, and made his living from the ground. Because he defiled the ground by spilling onto it the blood of a man, God cursed Cain such that the earth would no longer produce for him. The ground would not produce for him. Moreover, he would never settle in any land, but rather would be compelled to move from place to place, and no man would give him sanctuary. Cain feared that men would kill him to avenge the murder of Cain, so God forbade any man take Cain's life on penalty of death.

God did not take Cain's life as punishment for his crime, but rather preserved it. The violence of men became so great, however, that God would change His administration. God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (Genesis 6:13) So, God brought a great flood upon the world and destroyed all mankind, save Noah and his household. After the flood God told Noah and his sons, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." (Genesis 9:6) God forbids men kill each other because they are made in His image. Yet, before the flood, the violence of men became so great that God commanded they be punished with the greatest punishment, with capital punishment. Before the great flood, God forbade man to take the life of another; after the flood, He commanded man to take the life of a murderer. This is the foundation of civil government. No man may take his own revenge, but every man must leave revenge to the civil authorities to whom God has entrusted this power. Saint Paul wrote to the Romans of the civil magistrate, "He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." (Romans 13:4)

In the Ten Commandments that God gave to Israel at Mount Sinai, He expressly forbade killing. He said, "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13) He stated this commandment simply and without qualification; yet, in His law He qualified the commandment. God forbids homicide, the killing of a man, but of the killing of men there are different kinds, and those different kinds ought to be differently punished. At Mount Sinai, when God gave the Ten Commandments, He said:

He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. Exodus 21:12–14)

This law distinguishes between murder and manslaughter. According to Noah Webster, "To constitute murder in law, the person killing another must be of sound mind or in possession of his reason, and the act must be done with malice prepense, aforethought or premeditated; but malice may be implied, as well as express." Webster defined 'manslaughter' as, "In law, the unlawful killing of a man without malice, express or implied." This is to say, a person commits murder if he kills with sound mind, and if he kills having beforehand resolved to do so. Murder, because it is premeditated killing, is punishable by death. The Book of Numbers gives examples of murder, which deserve death:

And if he smite him with an instrument of iron, so that he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. And if he smite him with throwing a stone, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. Or if he smite him with an hand weapon of wood, wherewith he may die, and he die, he is a murderer: the murderer shall surely be put to death. The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him. But if he thrust him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait, that he die; Or in enmity smite him with his hand, that he die: he that smote him shall surely be put to death;

for he is a murderer: the revenger of blood shall slay the murderer, when he meeteth him.  
(Numbers 25:16–21)

A man may also kill by misadventure, which Webster defined this way; “In law, homicide by misadventure is when a man, doing a lawful act, without any intention of injury, unfortunately kills another.” In the Book of Numbers it says:

But if he thrust him suddenly without enmity, or have cast upon him any thing without laying of wait, Or with any stone, wherewith a man may die, seeing him not, and cast it upon him, that he die, and was not his enemy, neither sought his harm: Then the congregation shall judge between the slayer and the revenger of blood according to these judgments: And the congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation shall restore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he shall abide in it unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil. (Numbers 25:22–25)

In the Book of Deuteronomy, it says:

And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past; As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live. (Deuteronomy 19:4, 5)

In these cases, one man kills another by accident, and not intentionally. In such cases, the killer is not punished with death.

Finally, some homicide is justifiable, particularly in the case of self-defense. The law of God says:

If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double. (Exodus 22:2–4)

If a man break and enter into a house by night, the householder may assume that the housebreaker may murder him, and so he may defend himself. If a man break and enter into a house by day, then the householder may assume that the housebreaker means him no harm, and so he must not kill him. Of course, this law is meant to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary killing; a man must use his best judgment in any circumstance. God forbids a man may take the life of another except to prevent, or to punish, the taking of an innocent life. Murder is a premeditated killing, and it is punishable by death.

Is induced abortion murder? For some, the answer to this question hinges on the question concerning the personhood of the unborn. Some say that the unborn is not a person, and so killing it is not murder. This is just so much sophistry, however. Over time, pagans have developed sophisticated arguments to contradict the most obvious truths. The argument that the unborn human being is not a person and so its mother may justifiably kill it has as much reason in it as the argument that a female is male because she believes she is, and so may justifiably mutilate her body. It has as much reason in it as arguments against the existence of God. The

unborn human being, whether embryo or fetus, is alive, and to kill him is to commit murder. That killing an unborn baby is morally wrong should be obvious to all. Yet, the Christian is bound to give an answer to the unbeliever, and many faithful Christians have done so, from both philosophy and science. Yet, for the Christian, the decisive arguments are from Scripture.

The Scriptures teach, and science confirms, that human life begins at conception. Moreover, a human life is continuous from conception to death. Although a human being develops by natural process, God is the cause of that process, as He is the cause of all natural processes. God closes wombs, and He opens them. He causes conception, and He prevents it. He is the creator, and the fashioner, of every human being. Job, in his great distress, lamented his existence. Job lamented his birth, even his conception. He said, “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.” (Job 3:3) When Job was conceived, a man was conceived, and he was the same man from conception through birth. Job said further:

Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. (Job 10:8–12)

Job recognized that God formed him from start to finish. David wrote the same in the Book of Psalms:

For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:13–17)

How dare anyone presume to destroy what God has created! How dare anyone take away life that God has given! How dare anyone deface the image of God!

When Adam sinned, he became guilty and sinful, and, because he sinned, all of his posterity come into the world in the same condition. (Romans 5:12) This is true of every person from the moment of conception. King David, after he sinned with Bathsheba, wrote in the Psalms, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm 51:5) David, like every person, was conceived a sinner.

The Scriptures do have a word for ‘embryo,’ “the first rudiments of an animal in the womb, before the several members are distinctly formed.” (Webster) However, the word for ‘child’ is used to refer both to a child before birth and also after. (Compare Exodus 21:4 and 21:22; Luke 1:41 and 2:12)

The law of Moses has no law specific to induced abortion, because that sin is assumed under the general class of murder. Nevertheless, there is a passage that does refer to spontaneous abortion, and it is important in the case against induced abortion. The law of God 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 21:22–25)

In this case, if two men fight each other, and a woman with child intervene, and in the struggle she is hurt such that she is prematurely delivered of her child, but the child survives unharmed, then the man that caused the woman harm must pay compensation to her husband. If she or the child die, then the man who caused the death must die. This law upholds the unborn child's right to life.

When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, she visited her cousin, Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John, and Mary greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth said to Mary:

Blessed art thou among women, 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. (Luke 1:42–44)

John the Baptist, when he, still in the womb of his mother, heard the greeting of Mary, mother of Jesus, leaped for joy. John, although unborn, was a child with consciousness and emotion.

When a child is conceived, it is not the body alone that is created, but a whole person, body and soul, for this is what a person is. When the Holy Spirit caused Mary to conceive Jesus, He caused her to conceive a whole person. Jesus is the incarnate Son of God. He is not merely human, as the Ebionites said, nor is He solely divine, as the Docetists said. He is not a lesser deity, as the Arians said, nor is He partly human, as the Apollinarians said. He is not two persons, as the Nestorians said, nor is His nature a mixture of divine and human, as the Eutychians said. Jesus was, from the point of conception, one person, with two natures, divine and human. If an unborn child is, at any point in gestation, not a person, then Jesus was at some point not a person. If He was at some point not a person, then He is not the Incarnate Son of God. If He is not the Incarnate Son of God, then there is no redemption, and all is lost. Jesus, however, is the incarnate Son of God, and He died, and rose from the dead, to secure our redemption.

Abortion is grave sin. It is the sin of murder. Yet, it is a sin that God forgives like He does any other, when the sinner repents. The murders of so many children in a nation make that nation liable to judgment. So, Christians preach against the sin of abortion, but also preach the forgiveness that Christ grants to them that repent.

Let us understand that abortion is murder. Let us strive to persuade people not to kill their children. Let us preach repentance, and the forgiveness found in Jesus Christ.

Now unto the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.