

Abortion: The New Civil War Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

INTRODUCTION

The Old Civil War

- The Civil War in 1861 marked the beginning of the bloodiest conflict in our nation's history
- In WWII, all of America was united against a common enemy; in the Civil War, a nation was **divided** within itself
- Our nation was **divided** by geography, economic and social status, and most of all, skin color
- **huge economic profits** resulted from the oppression of a particular class of people – African Americans
- they were seen as less than human and that justified their enslavement in the minds of their oppressors
- **680,000** people died to fight that war; **39 people/day over 48 months** were killed

The New Civil War

- There is a new civil war that is raging right now in America that started on January 22nd, 1973
- Our nation is now again divided by **religious** and **philosophical convictions**; the same questions are being asked: Who is human? Who is a person? Who has a right to live freely?
- Huge profits and massive economic gains are made from the oppression and murder of a particular class of people who are said to be less than human or not human at all
- Professors in universities and teachers in classrooms across our country provide **rationale** for this oppression in order to **absolve themselves** from any **moral responsibility**
- **1.4 million** are murdered every year; **3,600** a day → **100x** worse than the bloodiest conflict in American history; **50 million dead**; an **entire generation** obliterated from history
- The new civil war is abortion; the people are the unborn
- only miles from where we worship this morning, innocent children are ruthlessly and grotesquely and legally murdered
- **Abortion is not a political issues – it is a life and death issue!**
- The primary question that determines the outcome of the debate is this – When does life begin?
- **My purpose in preaching this morning is to prove to you that life begins at the moment of conception by three testimonies.**

THREE TESTIMONIES DEMONSTRATE THE FACT THAT LIFE BEGINS AT THE MOMENT OF CONCEPTION.

I. THE TESTIMONY OF SCIENCE HAS SPOKEN

- A baby is from the moment of conception is a **distinct individual** biologically. We know that from the moment of conception all **genetic** information necessary for the full growth and development of the child is present; nothing is ever added to the genetic code between conception and death. The **sex** of the child is determined instantly at the

moment of conception. The only thing that is added to that child biologically between conception and death is **food, water, and oxygen**. These quotes testify to these facts.

- In September of 1970, the editors of the journal *California Medicine* noticed the “curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception and is continuous whether intra- or extra uterine until death.”
- At a U.S. congressional hearing in 1981, scientific experts from around the world testified about the beginning of life:
 - **Dr. Micheline M. Matthews-Roth**, Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School: “In biology and in medicine, it is an accepted fact that the life of any individual organism reproducing by sexual reproduction begins at conception, or fertilization.”¹ Dr. Matthews-Roth gave confirming testimony, supported by references from over 20 embryology and other medical textbooks, that human life began at conception.
 - **Dr. Jerome LeJeune** was Professor of Genetics at the University of Descartes in Paris. He was called the “Father of Modern Genetics” and received the Kennedy Award for his discovery that Down's syndrome (Trisomy 21) was due to an extra chromosome. He gave the following testimony summarizing the evidence concerning the beginning of life: “To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place a new human has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence.”²
 - **Dr. Hymie Gordon**, Founder, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Medical Genetics at Mayo Clinic: “But now we can say, unequivocally, that the question of when life begins is no longer a question for theological or philosophical dispute. It is an established scientific fact. Theologians and philosophers may go on to debate the meaning of life or the purpose of life, but it is an established fact that all life, including human life, begins at the moment of conception.”³

II. THE TESTIMONY OF HISTORY HAS SPOKEN

History has also testified to the sanctity of unborn life by enacting laws which protect the unborn.

- 18th century BC, the **Code of Hammurabi** had a penalty even for unintentionally causing a miscarriage and prohibited abortion.⁴
- 16th century BC, the **Mosaic law** in Exodus 21:22-25 had the same penalty for the injury of an unborn child as it did an adult.
- 12th century BC, **Tiglath-Pileser I**, King of Assyria, punished women who caused themselves to abort.⁵

¹ Subcommittee on Separation of Powers, report to Senate Judiciary Committee S-158, 97th Congress, 1st session, 1981.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Thomas W. Hilgers and Dennis J. Horan, eds., *Abortion and Social Justice* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1972), 122.

⁵ *Ibid.*

- 4th century BC, the Greek physician **Hippocrates**, known as the father of medicine, said, “I will neither give a deadly drug to anyone if asked for, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect. Similarly I will not give to a woman an abortive remedy.”
- 1st century AD, the Jewish philosopher **Philo** of Alexandria condemned abortion, together with the practices of infanticide and child abandonment.⁶
- The ***Didache***, which was the “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,” stated, “Thou shalt do no murder... thou shalt not procure abortion, nor commit infanticide” (2.2).⁷
- 2nd century the Christian apologist **Athenagoras** wrote, “How can we kill a man when we are those who say that all who use abortifacients are homicides and will account to God for their abortions as for the killing of men. For the fetus in the womb is not an animal, and it is God’s providence that he exists.”⁸
- **Tertullian**, another late 2nd century apologist, declared, “For us, indeed, as homicide is forbidden, it is not lawful to destroy what is in the womb while the blood is still being formed into a man. To prevent being born is to accelerate homicide, nor does it make a difference whether you snatch away a soul which is born or destroy one being born. He who is man-to-be is man, as all fruit is now in the seed.”⁹
- **Saint Augustine** (4th century), **Thomas Aquinas** (13th century), and **John Calvin** (16th century) all considered abortion immoral.
- So for almost forty centuries many societies have considered the killing of the unborn not only unjust, but immoral. For years our country did as well, until one infamous court case in 1973 that forever changed the course of this nation.

III. THE TESTIMONY OF GOD HAS SPOKEN

1. God makes no distinction between babies inside the womb or outside

- in the New Testament, the same Greek word is used of unborn babies, newborn babies, infants, and toddlers
- Look at **Luke 1:41-44** – 41 And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the *baby* leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, “Blessed among women are you, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the *baby* leaped in my womb for joy.
- There are two things in this verse. One is the word baby in verse 41 and 44 is the word *brephos*, referring to the unborn child. The second thing is that nothing but a fully human baby inside the womb would ever leap for joy. Joy is not a characteristic of anything but humans.
- in **Luke 1:15**, it says of John the Baptist that “*he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother’s womb.*” The Holy Spirit does not indwell that which is not fully human.
- So we see here that word *brephos* is used to describe the **unborn child**.

⁶ John A. Rasmussen, “Abortion: Historical and Biblical Perspectives,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 43 (1979), 19.

⁷ Cited from the translation of Kirsopp Lake, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. I (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, 1912).

⁸ John T. Noonan, Jr., ed., *The Morality of Abortion* (Cambridge, Massachusetts.: Harvard, 1970), 11.

⁹ *Ibid*, 12.

- Now look at **Luke 2:12**. It says, “And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger.” And then in verse **16** it says, “And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as he lay in the manger.” Here is the same word, *brephos*, used for a **born baby**. Exact same word.
- **1 Peter 2:2** says, “as newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word.” Same word, *brephos*.
- In Acts 7:19 *brephos* refers to the children killed at Pharaoh’s command. So this word is used of babies in the womb and outside the womb without any distinction whatsoever.

2. the child in the womb is created by God in His image

- **Psalm 139:13-14** says, “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”
- Notice the it says Thou didst weave ME in my mother’s womb. Not a blob; not a fetus; not a potential person; but ME, meaning he was complete with the image of God while yet in the womb. A child in a mother’s womb is a wonderful work of God’s own hand and as such has **intrinsic value**.
- **Job 10:8-11** says, 8 “**Your hands fashioned and made me altogether**, and would You destroy me? 9 'Remember now, that You have made me as clay; And would You turn me into dust again? 10 'Did You not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese; 11 **Clothe me** with skin and flesh, and **knit me** together with bones and sinews?”
- Here again we have an account of God creating a child in the womb down to the intimate details of clothing with skin and knitting together bones and sinews.
- Biology and medicine has a somewhat irreverent way of describing this process of growth and development. They reduce it down to all the necessary chemicals and bio-molecular processes and they say that it is those mechanisms which make a human child. Well, the Word of God says here that God makes all that work.
- Again in **Job 31:15**, he says, “Did not He who made me **in the womb** make him, and the same one fashion us **in the womb**?” It is absolutely unquestionable from the Word of God that He creates us in the womb with the image of God.
- **Gen 1:27**, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”
- Remember also that it is a scientific fact that gender is determined at the moment of conception and that is when the image of God is present.

3. the life of the unborn is protected by Mosaic Law

- **Genesis 9:6** says, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed.” This verse gives the institution of capital punishment.
- In **Exodus 21:22-25**, we find the same punishment instituted for a woman with child who has a miscarriage or further injury. It says, “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.” So we see that a baby’s life is protected by the same punishment as an adult’s life. There is no

distinction in the Scriptures on punishment for injury inflicted upon a person inside the womb or out.

- Notice that it says “you shall appoint as a penalty **life for life**” → the child’s life is just as valuable as the life of the grown man who committed the crime
- 4. **personal pronouns are used to describe the unborn**
 - **Jeremiah 1:5** says, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.”
- 5. **the unborn are called by God before birth**
 - In **Judges 13:7** an angel prophesied concerning Samson saying, “Behold, you shall conceive and give birth to a son, and now you shall not drink wine or strong drink nor eat any unclean thing, for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God **from the womb** to the day of his death.”
 - In **Isaiah 49:1**, Isaiah says, “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.**”
 - In **Gal 1:15**, Paul says that God “had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace”
 - **SUM**: there is no distinction in Scripture between unborn baby, born baby or grown man – they are all created in the image of God, all are protected by Mosaic Law, they are described by God in deeply personal terms, and they are called by God while still in the womb.
 - Let philosophers reason, let politicians debate, let judges make decisions, but **GOD HAS SPOKEN!** The issue is settled.
 - **Ps 11:1-3** – In the LORD I take refuge; How can you say to my soul, “Flee *as* a bird to your mountain; 2 For, behold, the wicked bend the bow, They make ready their arrow upon the string to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart. 3 If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do?”
 - The foundations are eroding and one of two things will happen. Either God will move through His people and revival will come on a national scale OR God will judge and destroy America – this is not the promised land!

CONCLUSION

A Plan for Action

1. **VOTE!!!** At every level (city, county, state, national). If a Christian votes for a candidate who supports abortion, then they participate in it and are sinning. If there are no pro-life candidates, don’t vote!
2. **Get educated.** Read books, articles. Listen to sermons, debates.
3. **Engage** the public. Challenge people and their assumptions. Make them support their contentions. College students – challenge your professors.
4. **Be involved** on a local level by supporting Christian organizations that are pro-life, such as Crisis Pregnancy Centers.
5. **PRAY!!!** Pray for educators, politicians, schoolteachers, those making a decision about abortion.