

Facts You Should Know about Abortion

INTRODUCTION

Since life begins at conception, abortion is akin to murder because it is the act of taking human life. Abortion is in direct defiance of the commonly accepted idea of the sanctity of human life.

No civilized society permits one human to intentionally harm or take the life of another human without punishment. Why should abortion be different?

Adoption is an excellent alternative to abortion and accomplishes the same result. It removes the baby from the mother. And, with 1.5 million American families wanting to adopt a child, there is no such thing as an unwanted child.

An abortion can result in medical complications later in life; the risk of ectopic pregnancies doubles; and the chances of a miscarriage and pelvic inflammatory disease also increase.

Some of the general complications arising in women due to abortions are **blocked fallopian tubes; weakened cervix; uterine scarring; damage to the woman's reproductive system, which may make her unable to conceive in the future.**

Apart from these common problems, women may also face the **increase in the later probability of tubal babies, hysterectomies, miscarriages, stillbirths, and premature births.**

Abortion is also related to **the increase of chances of breast, uterine, and cervical cancer in women.**

In the instance of rape and incest, proper medical care can ensure that a woman will not get pregnant. **Abortion punishes the unborn child who has committed no crime.**

It should also be added that many Americans who pay taxes are opposed to abortion; therefore it is morally wrong to use tax dollars to fund abortion.

Those who choose abortions are often minors or young women with insufficient life experience to understand fully what they are doing. Many have lifelong regrets

afterwards.

Abortion frequently causes intense psychological pain and stress.

MEDICAL REASONS AGAINST ABORTION

The medical arguments against abortion are many and powerful.

At conception, the embryo is genetically distinct from the mother. To say that the developing baby is no different from the mother's appendix is scientifically inaccurate. A developing embryo is genetically different from the mother. **A developing embryo is also genetically different from the sperm or egg that created it.** A human being has 46 chromosomes (sometimes 47 chromosomes). A sperm or an egg has 23 chromosomes. A trained geneticist can distinguish between the DNA of an embryo and the DNA of a sperm or an egg. **No geneticist can distinguish between the DNA of a developing embryo and its DNA when it later becomes a full-grown human being.**

Another set of medical arguments against abortion surround *the definition of life and death*. If one set of criteria have been used to define death, could they also be used to define life? Death used to be defined by the cessation of heartbeat. A stopped heart was a clear sign of death. **If the cessation of heartbeat is able to define death, then the onset of a heartbeat defines life.**

The heart is formed by the 18th day in the womb. If heartbeat was used to define life, then nearly all abortions would be outlawed.

Physicians now use a more rigorous criterion for death: brain wave activity. A flat EEG (electroencephalograph) is one of the most important criteria used to determine death. If the cessation of brain wave activity can define death, could the onset of brain wave activity define life? **Individual brain waves are detected in the fetus in about 40-43 days.** Using brain wave activity to define life would outlaw at least a majority of abortions.

Opponents to abortion also raise the controversial issue of fetal pain. **Does the fetus**

feel pain during abortion? The evidence seems fairly clear and consistent. Consider this statement made in a British medical journal:

“Try sticking an infant with a pin and you know what happens. She opens her mouth to cry and also pulls away. Try sticking an 8-week-old human fetus in the palm of his hand with a needle. **He opens his mouth and pulls his hand away.** A more technical description would add that changes in heart rate and fetal movement also suggest that **intrauterine manipulations are painful to the fetus.**”

Obviously, other medical criteria could be used. For example, **the developing fetus has a unique set of fingerprints as well as genetic patterns that make it unique.**

The development of *sonography* has provided us with a “window to the womb,” showing us that **a person is growing and developing in the mother’s womb.** We can discern eyes, ears, fingers, a nose, and a mouth. **Our visual senses tell us this is a baby growing and maturing.** This is not a piece of protoplasm; this is a baby inside the womb.

The point is simple. **Medical science clearly points us to a pro-life position rather than a pro-choice view.**

If medical science can be used in any way to draw a line, the clearest line is at the moment of conception. Medical arguments provide a strong case against abortion and for life.

When does the embryo first become a human being? It occurs when he begins growing. That occurs a few seconds after conception occurs, as the sperm unites with the ovum.

LEGAL REASONS AGAINST ABORTION

Surprisingly, the best legal argument against abortion can be seen in the case of *Roe vs. Wade*. It violated standard legal reasoning. In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court chose not to decide when life begins, and then turned around and overturned the laws of 50 different states.

Most of the Supreme Court’s verdict rested upon two sentences: **“We need not resolve the difficult question of when life begins.** When those trained in the respective disciplines of medicine, philosophy, and theology are unable to arrive at any consensus, the judiciary, at this point in the development of man’s knowledge,

is not in a position to speculate as to an answer.”

Although the sentences sounded both innocuous and unpretentious, they were neither. The Supreme Court’s nondecision was not innocuous. It overturned state laws that protected the unborn and has resulted in over 30 million abortions (roughly the population of Canada) in the United States.

The decision also seems unpretentious by acknowledging that it did not know when life begins. But, **if the Court did not know when life begins in the womb, then it should have acted “as if” life was actually in the womb. A crucial role of government is to protect life. Government cannot remove a segment of the human population from its protection without adequate justification for doing so.**

The *burden of proof* should lie with the life taker and the benefit of the doubt should be with the lifesaver. Put another way: “When in doubt, don’t.” A hunter who hears rustling in the bushes should not fire until he knows what is in the bushes. Likewise, **a Court which doesn’t know when life begins should not declare open season on the unborn and declare that it is all right to kill babies.**

The *burden of proof* in law is on the prosecution. The benefit of the doubt is with the defense. This is also known as a *presumption of innocence*. **The defendant is assumed to be innocent unless proven guilty.** Again the burden of proof is on the entity that would take away life or liberty. The benefit of the doubt lies with the defense.

The Supreme Court clearly stated that it does not know when life begins and then violated the very spirit of this legal principle by acting as if it just proved that no life existed in the womb. Even more curious was the fact that, to do so, it had to ignore the religious community and international community on the subject of the unborn.

Had the religious community really failed to reach a consensus? Although there were some intramural disagreements, certainly the weight of evidence indicated that **a Western culture, founded on Judeo-Christian values, held abortion to be morally wrong.** People with widely divergent theological perspectives (Jewish, Catholic, Evangelical, and fundamental Protestants) shared a common agreement about the humanity of the unborn.

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The same could be said about the international legal community. **Physicians around the world subscribed to the Hippocratic Oath.** (“**I will not give a woman a pessary to produce abortion.**”) The unborn were protected by various international documents like the *Declaration of Geneva* and the *U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child*.

Just as there are solid medical arguments against abortion, so also there are legal arguments against abortion. *Roe vs. Wade* was a bad decision that needed to be overturned.

BIBLICAL REASONS AGAINST ABORTION

We should next consider Biblical arguments against abortion.

Why does the Bible not say anything about abortion directly? The answer is simple. Abortion was so unthinkable to an Israelite woman, that there was no need to even mention it in the criminal code.

Why was abortion an unthinkable act? First, children were viewed as a gift or heritage from the Lord. Second, the Scriptures state—and the Jews concurred—that God opens and closes the womb and is sovereign over conception. Third, childlessness was seen as a curse.

One of the key verses to understand in developing a Biblical view of the sanctity of human life is Psalm 139.

In Psalm 139, David praises God for producing his life and being in charge of it. He begins by acknowledging that God is omniscient and knows what David is doing at any given point in time. He goes on to acknowledge that God is aware of David’s thoughts before he expresses them. David adds that wherever he might go, he cannot escape from God, whether he travels to heaven or ventures into sheol (the grave). God is in the remotest part of the sea and even in the darkness. **Finally David contemplates the origin of his life and confesses that God was there forming him in the womb.**

“For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 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.”—*Psalm*

139:13-16, KJV.

Here is the same passage in different words:

“For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful; I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.”

By divine Inspiration, David is here speaking of God’s relationship with him while he was growing and developing before birth. Notice that the Bible does not speak of fetal life as mere biochemistry. **The description here, in Psalm 139, is not of a piece of protoplasm that someday will become David; this is David already being cared for by God while in the womb.**

In verse 13, we see that God is the Master Craftsman who fashioned David into a living person. In verses 14 and 15, David reflects on the fact that he is a product of God’s creative work within his mother’s womb; and he praises God for how wonderfully He has woven him together.

David draws a parallel between his development in the womb and Adam’s creation from the earth. Using figurative language in verse 15, he refers to his life before birth, when “I was made in secret and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.” This poetic allusion harkens back to Genesis 2:7, which says that Adam was made from the dust of the earth.

David also mentions that God’s eyes saw his (David’s) unformed substance. This shows that God knew David even before he was known to others. The term, which can be translated *unformed substance*, is a noun derivative of a verb meaning “to roll up.” When David was just forming as a fetus, God’s care and compassion already extended to him. The reference to “God’s eyes” is an Old Testament term used to connote divine oversight of God in the life of an individual or group of people.

Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (*Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6*). Bearing the image of God is the essence of humanness. And though God’s image in man was marred at the fall, it was not erased (*cf. 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9*). **Thus, the unborn baby is made in the image of God and therefore fully human in God’s sight.**

Another argument against abortion can be

found in the Old Testament legal code.

We are told in *Exodus 21:22-25*, that 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. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

***Exodus 21:22-25* therefore teaches that, if a woman gives birth prematurely but the baby is not injured, then only a fine is appropriate.** However, if the child dies, then the law of retaliation (*lex talionis*) should be applied. In other words: **According to this Bible passage, killing an unborn baby would carry the same penalty as killing a baby that has been born. A baby inside the womb has the same legal status as a baby outside the womb.**

Some commentators have come to a different conclusion because they believe the first verses only refer to a case of accidental miscarriage. Since only a fine is levied, they argue that an unborn baby is merely potential life and does not carry the same legal status as a baby that has been born.

There are at least two problems with this interpretation. First, the normal Hebrew word for *miscarry* is not used in this passage (*cf. Gen. 31:38; Exod. 23:26; Hos. 9:14*). Most commentators now believe that the action described in *Exodus 21:22* is a premature birth, not an accidental miscarriage. Second, even if the verses do describe a miscarriage, the passage cannot be used to justify abortion. The injury was accidental, not intentional (as abortion would be). Also, the action was a criminal offense and punishable by law.

ADDITIONAL REASONS AGAINST ABORTION

A key question is when does a human being become a person?

The Supreme Court's decision of *Roe vs. Wade* separated personhood from humanity. In other words: **In *Roe vs. Wade*, the judges argued that a developing fetus was a human (i.e.,**

a member of the species of *Homo sapiens*) but not a person. Since only persons are given fourteenth Amendment protection under the Constitution, the Court argued that abortion could be legal at certain times.

This left to doctors, parents, or even other judges the responsibility of arbitrarily deciding when personhood should be awarded to human beings.

This theory, that an unborn baby is a human being but not a person, is not a legal principle; but it is a play on words. Yet it was used to permit the killing of millions of unborn babies.

The Supreme Court's separation of personhood from humanity has resulted in demoralizing society. Men and women need no longer be responsible for their conduct.

It eventually led to infanticide (which is what partial birth abortion is—killing the full-term baby at birth with scissors jabbed in the back of his or her neck) **and also to the trend toward euthanasia**—the killing of older people.

Another mysterious word that the Supreme Court used to prove its point was "viability" (which means "living, alive").

The Court said that states could, indeed, outlaw abortions performed after a child was viable. **But the Court did not clearly explain when it thought the child was viable, that is, actually alive!**

This sounds like ridiculous reasoning, and it is; yet untold millions of Americans have died because of this foggy reasoning.

The Court ruled that the timing of when the baby became "viable" (alive) could be much later—indeed, many months later. In the Court's thinking, viability is an arbitrary criterion; also it theorized that there is no biological reason why the line needs to be drawn near the early stages of development.

Ethicist Paul Ramsey frequently warned that **any argument for abortion could logically be used as an argument for infanticide.**

Oh, my friend, do what you can to protect the unborn! They are God's children also, just as you and I are! —vf