

Roe V. Wade: What Now?

Introduction – We are a nation in turmoil and division. The past few years (Racial unrest, covid, elections, violence, etc.) have exposed a problem that has been among us for quite some time. Now with the Supreme Court’s recent overturning of the 1973 Roe versus Wade abortion case, we see even more unrest, anger, and division.

3 main sections to this lesson:

- **Foundation** – What does the Bible have to say about this?
- **Response** – What are we to do about this?
- **Unify** – What can we agree upon?

Laying the Foundation.

- **Abortion is here, has been here for thousands of years, and may be here forever.**
 - I’m not justifying abortion at all by saying this. I’m just saying we have to understand that abortion has been around for a long time (thousands of years), and one court decision will not change that.
 - The overturning of Roe V. Wade leaves us with the same culture / people we had before the decision.
 - King Josiah made many necessary reforms in his day, and God was pleased and commended King Josiah for changing the laws (2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34), but we also must keep in mind that, according to Jeremiah, those legal changes did not change the hearts of the people (Jeremiah 3:6,10).
 - *“Yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD.”*
 - What we have here in America now is the same situation – We have a heart problem. While I believe firmly we should address the laws, change laws, and protect unborn children, we must remember that there are millions upon millions of people who still think abortion is okay.
- **Abortion is the killing of a human life (human being) in the womb.**
 - **Biblically** – In the womb or out of the womb, the Bible speaks of a baby, a person, a human being, a wonder worked by God in the womb. That baby, according to God, deserves to be legally protected and valued as created in the image of Almighty God.
 - **Genesis 1:26-27** – God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
 - **Exodus 21:21-22** – “When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman’s husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay **life for life.**”
 - **Psalm 139:13** – You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.
 - **Luke 1:39-44** – In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, **the baby leaped in her womb.** And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, **the baby in my womb leaped for joy.**
 - John was called a baby in the womb. He was a distinct person with his own emotions.
 - From Lexham Theological Wordbook.

God’s Value

God’s View

God’s Work

What God calls it...a baby.

God’s Judgment

- βρέφος (brephos). n. masc. baby, infant. **A baby, either newly born or not yet born.** This word refers specifically to babies or infants. It is used only by Luke among the Gospel writers—especially in his infancy narratives, where he uses it to refer both to John before his birth (Luke 1:41, 44) and to newborn Jesus (Luke 2:12, 16). Luke 18:15 uses it to refer to the children that people were bringing to Jesus; Jesus proceeds to refer to these children as παιδίον (paidion, “little child”). First Peter 2:2 refers to “newborn (ἀρτιγέννητος, artigennētos) infants (brephos),” who provide a model for how Christians should crave pure spiritual milk.
 - *Isaac Blois, “Children,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Theological Wordbook, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).*
- **Genesis 9:6** – “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.”
- The shedding of innocent blood is condemned from Genesis to Revelation and those who participate in it or promote it will face the wrath of God.
- **Scientifically** – What does science have to say?
 - Today we hear a lot about “trust science.” If we trust science, we’ll see that this is a baby, a distinct human being with its own unique DNA, personality, and fingerprint.
 - There are whole departments of the hospital devoted to saving babies in the womb. In one medical clinic they are “terminating pregnancies” and “aborting fetuses,” but in other medical facilities they are saving babies with prenatal surgery.
 - Someone will say, “this is my body, my choice.” Wrong. It is not your DNA, it is not your body.
- **Legally**
 - Moses’ Law (15th Century BC) – In the nation of Israel an unborn child was a human life that received legal protection (Exodus 22).
 - Middle Assyrian Law (11 Century BC) – In the Middle Assyrian kingdom, abortion was not only outlawed, but it was a capital crime punishable by execution.
 - Roman Law – Abortion was legal at times, but then made illegal.
 - American Law – In other areas of our legal system we recognize this baby as a life deserving of legal protection. For example, just this year in Colorado, a drunk driver was charged with the killing a pregnant woman and her unborn baby.
 - <https://www.kktv.com/2022/04/07/man-drives-over-100-mph-while-drunk-killing-2-women-unborn-child-police-say/>
 - You see, for the Supreme Court to overturn Roe V. Wade is not the Supreme Court’s endorsement of Christianity. **This is not a distinctive Christian issue.**
 - **Cultures have always legislated morality.** There are consistent moral values throughout history.
 - When societies, kingdoms and nations promote injustice and the killing / abuse of whole groups of people, that society or nation will pay the price. **America should have learned this by now!**
- **Abortion is not just about a woman’s body, a woman’s choice, and her right to reproduce:**
 - Biblically, legally and scientifically, this baby is not a woman’s body.
 - It isn’t the mother’s DNA. It is the baby’s DNA.
 - You have reproduced, and this baby, this human life, is the result.
 - 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 7:4 talk about how in matters of sexuality, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit that we have from God and we are not our own. We have been bought with a price and we should glorify God with our bodies and our spirits. Also, when speaking to a married couple, Paul says your body is not your own.

- This talk of my body, my right, my choice dismisses everything and everyone else from the discussion:
 - The baby is dismissed from the discussion.
 - The baby's father is dismissed from the discussion.
 - The baby's family is dismissed from the discussion.
 - The community is dismissed from the discussion.
 - The Word of God is dismissed from the discussion.
- We cannot as a society dismiss males as not qualified to participate in this discussion. America dismissed women and blacks from public discussion and voting, how did that work out for us? But in America today the pendulum has swung from one extreme to another. In 1920, women were just getting the right to vote, before then we had dismissed them from having a say. But now just over 100 years later, men are dismissed in these discussions as if we don't have a say.
- Remember, this is not about a woman's body. This is Biblically, scientifically and legally a human being and has been so for the beginning of time. We must not push aside men from discussing and deciding what happens to those human beings created in the image of God.
- **Abortion brings about lasting devastating consequences:**
 - **Upon civilization** (How does it go for nations, kingdoms and civilizations when we summarily wipe out a whole segment of our population?). Abortion is genocide.
 - **Upon the family** (there are kids who will never toddle around the house, never say "I love you Mommy and Daddy," never sit at the table, never come to Bible class, never contribute to society, never become a doctor or a preacher or a teacher or a nurse or mom or a dad).
 - **Upon the church** (7 in 10 women who had an abortion are professing Christians).
 - <https://research.lifeway.com/2021/12/03/7-in-10-women-who-have-had-an-abortion-identify-as-a-christian/>
 - **Upon the woman who had an abortion.** The physiological, psychological, spiritual pain that follows the abortion (the stuff you don't hear by the activists, politicians, pundits and Hollywood types. Notice society does not frame this as a "mother's right to choose," because that would change the mindset.
- **Abortion is a failure of mankind to live as God designed us to be.**
 - It is a failure of men who, like Adam, listened to Eve instead of to God.
 - It is a failure of men who treat women like objects to be used for their own gratification.
 - Biblical reality check – Many times in the Bible, women have been put in horrible and desperate situations because of men (Tamar, Dinah, Leah, etc.)
 - It is a failure of women to view their own bodies and others' bodies as created in the image of God.
 - It is a failure of women to fulfill the most basic and fundamental of their callings: protect their babies.
 - It is a failure of civilization as a whole to view all beings as created in the image of God.
 - It is the failure of the church collectively and of Christians individually to teach, to train, to nurture, to prepare, to reach out, to stand up, to be empathetic, to be merciful and compassionate, and to help.

The Christian's response.

- **Pray and lift up holy hands (1 Timothy 2).**
 - Men, especially you, be pure in this dark world. Be leaders. Stand up for the oppressed, the violated, the abused, and the unborn. Be a protector, not a predator.
 - Pray for our leaders. Pray for opportunities to share the gospel. Pray for wisdom. Pray for healing.
- **Stand on the authority of the Word of God.**
 - How many of our current cultural issues would be settled if we just listened to the first 11 chapters of the Bible (Gender, marriage, racism, LGBTQ, pornography, murder, shootings, violence, abuse, etc.)?
 - Do you understand why there is such an all-out assault by Satan and his minions on the first 11 chapters of the Bible? Take those away and you have no authority, no standard, no right and wrong, no Creator.
 - **Psalm 11:2-3** – *for behold, the wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart; if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"*

- **Show the love of Christ (John 13:34-35):**
 - To those with whom I disagree.
 - To those who have had an abortion (7 out of 10 profess to be Christians).
 - To hold a sign of an aborted baby at an abortion clinic and saying “Baby killer” to a woman going in or coming out is not standing on the truth, nor is it showing the love of Christ.
 - Talking about abortion with such disgust and anger that a woman who has had an abortion would never open up to us...that also is not showing the love of Christ.
 - It may make you uncomfortable, but if we as Christians are not creating the culture and environment of safety around us where people feel safe to be vulnerable about very deep and dark things, then we are not showing the love of Christ. What if we have preached so hard and so vehemently against homosexuality that someone who is struggling with those desires would never admit it in a million years because of how they fear they will be treated. What if someone is overwhelmed with the weight of guilt of having an abortion and she is dealing with the mental, physical and spiritual anguish of her past, but she would never let her Christian brothers and sisters know because of how she will be treated? If that culture is present, either in the community or within me individually, then we are not showing the love of Christ.
 - **Luke 15:1-2; Luke 7:36-50**
 - To those who are in a crisis pregnancy (either women in our midst, or contact a local faith-based pregnancy clinic to see how you can help).
 - To those who have put themselves in an absolute mess and need help digging out of it.
 - To those who are trying to adopt or foster children (~450,000 children in foster care system).
 - To those children who need a home (James 1:27).
- **Preach the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)**
 - Preach to the mommas and doctors (Westley Pollard)
 - Preach to the daddies
 - Preach to the young men / women while they are young about the value of each human life.
 - Preach by the life that you live.
 - Such were some of you (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). That includes us all. We all need God’s saving grace.

Upon what can we agree?

- Can we agree to pray together for God’s wisdom and guidance on these matters?
- Can we agree on the authority of the word of God from the very first verse?
- Can we agree that our primary focus is to preach the gospel?
- Can we agree to create a culture that promotes and encourages life?
- Can we agree to create an environment where people feel safe to talk to us about their past/present?
- Can we agree to come together as a community of believers to show the love of Christ to those with crisis pregnancies and those who are trying to adopt and foster children?

Last Slide

- Look among us...Redeem the Time!
- Help Support Adoption
 - SacredSelections.Org (An organization started by Christians to help Christians adopt children)
- ~450,000 Children in Foster System
- Faith-Based Pregnancy Clinics

From David Corrozza, co-founder of Sacred Selections:

“Through the efforts, generosity, courage and compassion, 360+ families have adopted 408 children, 54 have been baptized, 5 birth mothers have been baptized and the name of God and His Son have been mentioned in many, many court records through Christians that have stated their reasons for giving these children a home.”

Lexham Bible Dictionary on Abortion in Antiquity:

Historical Context

A variety of opinions seem to have surrounded the practice of abortion in antiquity. For example, Virgil used the word “children” to describe the unborn, and Juvenal used the word “humans” to describe fetuses in the womb. On the other hand, Aristotle wrote about abortion in a way that may indicate the practice was considered normal (Kapparis, *Abortion*, 40, 50–51).

Ancient Near East

The Middle Assyrian Laws, which date as far back as the early 11th century BC, specifically addressed abortion. In these laws—a collection of legal codes including decrees of the Assyrian kings and Amorite legal customs (Tetlow, *Women, Crime, and Punishment*, 126)—abortion was considered a serious offense against the state and was punishable by death. This was probably due to two different concerns:

1. Abortion was an offense against familial ties because of the mother-child relationship.
2. Abortion was a crime against the state because it killed future citizens, particularly soldiers.

If a woman was found guilty of inducing abortion, she would be impaled on a stake and denied burial. The bloodshed in death would remove the offense against the state, and the denial of burial was recompense for polluting the land, in keeping with the ancient fear of shedding innocent blood (Tetlow, *Women, Crime, and Punishment*, 137–38).

Roman Empire

Originally, abortion was legal in the Roman republic. However, that stance may have changed around Cicero’s time because the empire needed more citizens (Kapparis, *Abortion*, 197). While there was some emotional investment in having children, in the dominant Roman culture of the first and second centuries it was more common to see children as a financial or material asset. Parents primarily saw offspring as security for the later years of life. Those who wanted to ensure well-being in old age needed the younger generation to care for them. For those living in poverty, children were especially necessary to provide financial security by their manual labor. This may have been why adoption was practiced. Adoption was common in Roman society and provided adoptees an important status. Its prevalence could imply that abortion was not socially desired.

Children also provided immaterial benefits, as they were often considered part of a person’s essence and were believed to carry on their parents’ specific features, personality traits, and attributes. Further, they were responsible for burying and honoring their deceased parents. This offered hope that the memory of the parent would be carried into the future (Bakke, *When Children Became People*, 25). Parents grieved upon the death of a child both because of regret over the lost investment in that child and because of the stark reality that the parent had to bury the child that was supposed to carry out the same act for the parent (Dixon, *Roman Family*, 111). The value of children therefore makes it difficult to imagine abortion being a universally accepted practice in the Roman Empire, even when it was legal. Over time, abortion was increasingly frowned upon within Rome and was eventually prohibited (Kapparis, *Abortion*, 197).

Ancient Methods of Abortion

Abortion has been practiced for millennia; through most of history, it was induced by herbal chemistry. Both contraceptives and abortion-inducing agents were used by a variety of cultures. An inscription from ancient Sumer lists what is likely a recipe for inducing abortion, and Egyptian papyri dating as far back as 1500 BC make references to chemicals being used to induce abortion (Riddle, *Eve’s Herbs*, 35, 68). The earliest medical writing from Egypt, dated around 1850 BC, contains recipes for preventing conception (Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion*, 67).

Chemically induced abortions appear to have been attempted in ancient Sumer, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Euripides indicates that women practiced abortion at the time of the Trojan Wars (Kapparis, *Abortion*, 7). Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) wrote about various herbs that could induce an abortion and recorded superstitions about inducing abortion, such as having a woman step over a crow’s egg (Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion*, 66–83; Kapparis, *Abortion*, 28). Orally administered and externally applied drugs, including chemicals and herbal substances, were used to attempt to induce abortion, but physical means were also known to be used. A surgical procedure to remove a fetus may have existed as far back as the first century AD (Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion*, 66–83; Kapparis, *Abortion*, 28, 12–27).

Biblical Perspectives

The only scriptural text potentially connected to the termination of an unborn child is in the Mosaic law in Exodus: “When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman’s husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life” (Exod 21:22–23 ESV). In the Hebrew text, the one harmed may be understood as the fetus or as the woman, but the Septuagint refers explicitly to the harming of the fetus. Although this text does not specifically address the issue of intentional abortion, the use of “children” in the context of harming the unborn associates a penalty with the harm/death of the unborn.

The psalmist’s declaration to God that “you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb” (Psa 139:13 ESV) seems to establish abortion as unacceptable. Since human beings are made in the image of God (Gen 1:27), and the psalmist declares that God forms each unborn child (Psa 139:13), many biblical ethicists find the idea of abortion counterintuitive to God’s design.

What did early Christians say about abortion?

Many of the early church fathers spoke out about the practice of abortion. John Chrysostom in the East and Jerome in the West both condemned it (Bakke, *When Children Became People*, 132–33). Other examples include:

- The Didache, one of the most prominent extrabiblical early church documents, explicitly forbids abortion: “Do not abort a fetus or kill a child that is born” (Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, 419).
- Basil declared that a woman who had induced an abortion should be tried for murder (Kapparis, *Abortion*, 48).
- Augustine extensively spoke against abortion, particularly as he wrestled with theological issues such as the existence of the soul (Bakke, *When Children Became People*, 133).

In the first few hundred years of Christianity, the discussion of abortion revolved around when the unborn fetus actually became human. Although not all Christian writers were explicitly anti-abortion (Kapparis, *Abortion*, 33–52), by the Middle Ages, the majority of Christians condemned the practice (Riddle, *Contraception and Abortion*, 3).

Selected Resources for Further Study

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¹ J. Ryan Davidson, [“Abortion in Antiquity,”](#) ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).