

A Person Before Birth

10/20/2024

Jeremiah 32:35

“They built the high places of Baal in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to offer up their sons and daughters to Molech, though I did not command them, nor did it enter into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”

This offering of one's children to Molech has been described as the heating a statue of the false god with fire until it is red hot and then laying your baby on its outstretched arms in sacrifice. I would hope that everyone who considers what that would be like should indeed describe it as an abomination. Yet some of God's people participated in this evil right there in Jerusalem.

The title of today's lesson comes from a sermon I heard about 4 years ago. Most of the Scripture references from that sermon also appear in this one, however the added words and thoughts are mine. Let us begin with a question this morning.

What do you call a baby in the mother's womb?

Some insist that we not call them babies but rather a fetus. Fetus is a Latin term meaning offspring. In today's world however this term is used to describe a stage of development in the womb. There has been much discussion and debate over when a zygote, embryo and fetus become or can be rightly called a baby by some. And the reference point for this, sometimes called a goal post, has been moved several times during my lifetime. Such as at X amount of weeks since conception one can be called a child but before that they are not. Today In California an unborn baby is sometimes referred to as not being a person.

This morning I would like for us to examine and consider what God's Word has to say about the subject of those who are in their mother's womb.

1. Children inside and outside of the womb

We begin in **Genesis 3:16**

“To the woman he said,

*“I will surely multiply your pain in **childbearing**;*

*in pain you shall bring forth **children**.*

Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,

but he shall rule over you.”

Childbearing - In Hebrew = *hêrôn hêrâyôn* pronounced *hay-rone'*, *hay-raw-yone'* meaning pregnancy and physical conception. Thus what we call childbearing begins at conception.

Children - In Hebrew = *ben* pronounced *bane* means a son as in builder of a family. This the one in the womb is seen as the start of a family.

Genesis 25:21-22

*“And Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife, because she was barren. And the Lord granted his prayer, and Rebekah his wife **conceived**. The **children** struggled together within her, and she said, “If it is thus, why is this happening to me?” So she went to inquire of the Lord.”*

Here again we see the idea of conception as the beginning point. And those in her womb are referred to as her children. The Hebrew word *ben* is used here once again in describing the two who were struggling with each other within her.

Exodus 21:22-25

*“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, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.”*

This passage of Scripture has been criticized by many through the saying - ‘an eye for an eye and both go blind’. But let’s consider this passage from the standpoint of justice. Which is something people also often call for.

Here the word translated as **children** is the Hebrew word *yaled* pronounced *yeh'-led* meaning something born, that is, a lad or offspring
KJV Usage includes: boy, child, fruit, son, young man (one).

Notice here both the woman and the *yaled* are considered persons with rights of protection. Including up to life for life. And there is no stated age limit of the life of the one in the womb.

Luke 1:39-42

*“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!”*

Baby = *brephos* pronounced *bref'-os* = Greek meaning an infant (properly, unborn) literally or figuratively.

Luke 2:16 *“And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the **baby** (brephos) lying in a manger.”*

Notice Luke 1 inside the womb and Luke 2 outside the womb both are called *brephos*, as defined above.

2. The value of a person within the womb

Let us consider an account found in **2nd Kings 15:16**

*“At that time Menahem sacked Tiphshah and all who were in it and its territory from Tirzah on, because they did not open it to him. Therefore he sacked it, and he ripped open all the women in it who were **pregnant.**”*

Pregnant = *hâreh hârîy* pronounced *haw-reh'*, *haw-ree'* from the Hebrew word *hârâh* pronounced *haw-raw'* meaning to become pregnant.

Question should we have any less feeling of horror and sorrow for the babies spoken of here in this account than we do for the women?

Amos 1:13

“Thus says the Lord:

*“For three transgressions of the Ammonites,
and for four, I will not revoke the punishment,
because they have ripped open pregnant women in Gilead,
that they might enlarge their border.”*

Should the Ammonites reason for doing this have justified their actions against these women? And how about for those in their mother's womb?

I think most if not all would find it absurd to find justification for such an action as this.

3. God values all life born and unborn

Jeremiah 1:5

*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”*

At the moment of conception our DNA contains everything that is needed to make us into the adults we will become.

Galatians 1:15

*“But when he who had **set me apart** before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me,”*

Greek = *set me apart from my mother's womb*. Thus God's plan for this individual started when he was yet in his mother's womb.

Psalms 139:13-16

*“For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.*

*My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them."*

Through science mankind is only beginning to understand what is spoken of here in Psalm 139. The great intricacy and unimaginably fine detail and balance of chemicals with which our physical bodies have been made is just now being discovered. And now more and more leading scientists are coming to the conclusion that such amazing design has to have had a designer. They are realizing that random chance and mutation simply cannot even begin to account for what is being discovered about the human body.

Job 31:13-15

*"If I have rejected the cause of my manservant or my maidservant,
when they brought a complaint against me,
what then shall I do when God rises up?
When he makes inquiry, what shall I answer him?
Did not he who made me in the womb make him?
And did not one fashion us in the womb?"*

If we are not to bring harm or injustice to those who like we were made in the womb, then surely we are not to bring harm or injustice to those who are yet in the womb, the unborn.

Luke 18:15-17

"Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Oh how backward we can become in our thinking and caring for those of whom God has created.

Proverbs 31:8

*"Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute."*

Let us open our mouths for those who can not speak for themselves. For they also have a right to live the life God has given them.

I will close with this thought -

On November 21, 1694 François-Marie Arouet came into this world as a baby. You probably don't recognize him by that name. He became better known by his nom de plume or a pen name of Voltaire. He was a French writer, philosopher, satirist, and historian. Famous for his wit and his criticism of Christianity and of slavery, Voltaire was an advocate of freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and separation of church and state. Voltaire lived during the period of time known as The Enlightenment. During the time when Sir Isaac Newton was making discoveries

about the physical world. And it is yet another example of a period of time in which mankind came to think of themselves as being wiser and on a higher moral plain than their creator. But Voltaire also understood well the pitfalls of such thinking and the disasters which can come from it. One such saying of his I think illustrates this well. He is credited with having said - **“Anyone who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.”**

When we think of the word atrocities what type of things come to mind? Perhaps it is WW1 or the Holocaust or Stalin’s reign of terror or the atomic bombs that were dropped on Japan.

But there has been something that has taken more innocent lives than all of these things listed above combined. And the mothers of those innocent lives taken in this manner have been taught the absurdity of calling it ‘their right’ to do so. Approximately half of those young lives taken in this manner have been female themselves. What is to be said of their rights? But then again in the wisdom of our day who can even say what a woman or female is!

Absurdities often appear in the form of lies, and Scripture warns us about the one who is the father of lies. Let us as God’s children be the light that we are called to be. And to shine the light of truth into this dark world.

God is the author of life. And God declares us to be a person before we are born. For we are created in His image. And this amazing work of God begins long before we leave the womb.

Mankind’s sin can take many forms, and all sin leads to death Scripture warns us. But God is merciful and able to forgive if we turn from our sins and repent. If you have not yet responded to God’s offer of becoming a child of God that opportunity is available to you as well. We invite you to come as we sing.