

ILLINOIS LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Topical Bulletin, December 2022

Toward the end of this month of December, we celebrate Christmas: the day on which we especially remember the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6) Jesus Christ, true and mighty God from eternity, is He who was born into the world in humility, the babe of Bethlehem. Jesus Christ subsequently grew up, keeping God's Law perfectly for us and later suffering and dying for our sins, shedding His holy and precious blood while nailed to the cross of Calvary. Indeed, "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:4-5) Thus, Jesus Christ is our wonderful Savior, who has provided us peace with God!

As we remember Jesus Christ being born in the flesh, we cannot help but think about what a precious gift He was and is, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:16-18)

Now, while it's a fact that no other child can equal the gift of God's only begotten Son, our Savior; it still behooves us to consider the truth related in Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

Accordingly, this month's topic for consideration is: **realities regarding abortion.**

The overturning of "Roe versus Wade" and all the talk during the recent midterm elections regarding so-called "reproductive rights," render the subject of ABORTION one which needs to be reviewed in the light of God's Word, the Holy Bible. But first, we will consider the terminology involved with the subject.

The American Heritage Dictionary [Second College Edition, 1982, 1985, 1991 by Houghton Mifflin Co.] defines ABORTION as: "Induced termination of pregnancy before the fetus is capable of survival as an individual." PREGNANCY: "The period during which a developing fetus is carried within the uterus." FETUS: "In humans, the unborn young from the end of the eighth week to the moment of birth as distinguished from the earlier embryo." EMBRYO: "In humans, the pre-fetal product of conception up to the beginning of the third month of pregnancy."

The Lutheran Cyclopedia [Concordia Publishing House, 1954, 1975, 1984] states, concerning ABORTION: "Termination of pregnancy before independent viability of the fetus is attained. The practice has generally been condemned by Christians, e.g. Canon 306 of the Council of Elvira. In many parts of the world, medical codes and civil laws regard wilful abortion as a criminal act. In most countries, however, therapeutic abortion (when the mother's health, life, or reason is endangered) is permitted. Many non-Roman Catholic moralists and theologians approve of this practice. Roman Catholic moral theology

condemns abortion as an end in itself, but allows operations for other purposes which may also result in abortion.”

Comment: Note from the foregoing definitions of terms, it is evident that from the time of conception to the time of birth, a woman is pregnant— carrying a living, growing, unborn human. Therefore, the term “ABORTION” can be rightly summarized as follows: IN HUMANS, FATAL TERMINATION OF THE UNBORN YOUNG.

Now, let’s consider what the Holy Bible teaches us concerning the unborn young.

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (Psalm 51:5)

Comment: David, by inspiration of God, acknowledges that he was a sinner from the moment of his conception. Thus, he, like all others from the moment of human conception, was a sinful human being, a person. (This truth will become more clearly evident in the Scripture verses which follow.)

Interestingly, Luther writes, in regards to the above Bible verse: **“Original Sin Even in the Unborn—** Original sin must be something far worse than carnal lust, because it exists and is alive also in those who are young in years, in infants, nay, in the fetus still living in the womb, as Ps. 51:5 shows.”

[What Luther Says, #4156, Concordia Publishing House, 1959, 1986, 1991]

“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. 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 139:1, 13-16)

Comment: Note that in the above psalm, David writes of the fact that the LORD already knew him as a person while he was being formed in his mother’s womb. Yes, while David was an embryo and then a fetus, he was already known by the LORD as a person, body and soul.

“Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

Comment: Observe that the LORD knew Jeremiah as a person before he was formed in the belly and before he came forth from his mother’s womb!

In regards to pregnant women, the phrase “with child” is used 26 times in the Holy Bible. We will presently consider nine of those instances.

“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.” (Exodus 21:22-23)

“And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child.” (2 Kings 8:12)

“As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.” (Ecclesiastes 11:5)

“Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.” (Jeremiah 31:8)

“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border.” (Amos 1:13)

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.” (Matthew 1:18-23)

“But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.” (Luke 21:23)

Comment: The Biblical phrase “WITH CHILD” clearly indicates that an embryo, or a fetus, is already a PERSON, a LIVING HUMAN BEING! When the virgin Mary was WITH CHILD, carrying Jesus in her womb, JESUS WAS CERTAINLY A PERSON!

“And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, 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 1:39-44)

Comment: Notice that John the Baptist, while in his mother Elisabeth’s womb, is identified as a “BABE”— a baby, a real person, NOT just some blob of flesh! Furthermore, Mary, while pregnant, is identified as the mother of Elisabeth’s LORD— JESUS, the fruit of Mary’s womb, being a real PERSON!

“Thou shalt not kill.” (Exodus 20:13)

“Thou shalt not kill.” (Deuteronomy 5:17)

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” (Matthew 19:16-19)

Comment: GOD FORBIDS KILLING AS IN TAKING HUMAN LIFE— KILLING WHICH JESUS DEFINES AS MURDER! God commands love to one’s neighbor, regardless of the neighbor’s age! ABORTION IS MURDER! ABORTION IS THEREFORE FORBIDDEN BY GOD!

THE ONLY PERMISSIBLE TAKING OF HUMAN LIFE IS BY GOD HIMSELF, which He sometimes does through His representatives on earth, lawful civil government. “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” (Romans 13:1-5) “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.” (Genesis 9:6) Hence, God has given to civil government the right to take human life, ONLY by means of just wars and the death penalty (capital punishment). HUMAN LIFE IS NOT TO BE TAKEN BY ABORTION, FOR SUCH IS MURDER!

Realize that if a woman has – in ignorance of the truth – had an abortion, she needs to sincerely repent of that sin and ask Jesus for forgiveness. Likewise, if a doctor – man or woman – has performed an abortion in ignorance of the truth, he or she needs to sincerely repent of that sin, cease from such heinously wicked activities, and ask Jesus for forgiveness.

Holy Scripture assures us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” (Isaiah 55:7) Yes, everyone needs God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, for, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (John 3:36) “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

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