

Introduction

January is the 43rd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision. That decision addressed an issue that's as polarizing in America today as the slavery issue was in the 19th century. It has two parts. First, do mothers have the moral and constitutional right to abort their preborn children? Second, do preborn children have the moral and constitutional right to live? Americans are divided. According to a 2015 Gallup Poll, 50% consider themselves "**pro-choice.**" They believe mothers have the right to abort. 47% consider themselves "**pro-life.**" They believe preborn children have the right to live.

Those are the points of view. The question is, "**Which is right?**" Let me answer that question thoughtfully and objectively today.

The Moral Component

We begin with the moral component of the issue. Do mothers have the moral right to abort their preborn children or do preborn children have the moral right to live? It's one or the other. It can't be both.

Morality is rooted in God's nature and thus His commandments, which are a reflex and a reflection of His nature. That means that doing what He prohibits is immoral and doing what He mandates is moral.

So, we start there in addressing the moral component of the choice or life issue. Does the Bible specifically prohibit abortion? Or does it specifically mandate life for the preborn? The answer to both questions is "**No.**" Pro-choice people are quick to point that out and to draw a conclusion from it. Abortion isn't immoral.

But they're too quick. There's a clear-cut reason that God doesn't specifically prohibit abortion or mandate life in the Old Testament. Brilliant Old Testament scholar Meredith Kline identified what that is: "**The most significant thing about abortion in Biblical law is that there is none. It was so unthinkable that an Israelite woman should desire an abortion that there was no need to mention this**

offense in the criminal code.” He was right. As we’ll see in our text, the Israelites viewed the pre-born as children and their killing by abortion as murder. They took it for granted that the Sixth of the Ten Commandments prohibited it. So, God didn’t have to say it.

He didn’t have to say it in the New Testament either, for the same reason. From its inception, Christianity considered abortion evil and perverse. Christian statements from the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. affirm that. I’ll quote just two of those as samples. In the 1st century, the *Epistle of Barnabas* stated in 19:5: **“Thou shalt not kill a child by abortion. Neither shalt thou destroy it after it is born.”** In the 2nd century, *The Didache*, a catechism for new converts, declared, **“Do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant.”** New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger summed it up well: **“It is really remarkable how uniform and how pronounced was the early Christian opposition to abortion.”** The first Christians, in other words, viewed the preborn as children and their killing by abortion as murder. Their consensus was uniform and pronounced – so much so that the New Testament writers didn’t see any need to address the issue.

That remarkable homogeneity of the first Christians stemmed from their grasp of God’s nature and His resulting posture toward the preborn. He’s perfectly holy and good and cherishes the preborn because He is. The first Christians understood what David did in Psalm 139:16. This verse is **“a powerful reminder of the value He (God) sets on us, even as embryos, and of His planning our end from the beginning”** as Bible commentator Derek Kidner explained it. That is the most significant fact about preborn children in all stages of development. God sets infinite value on each one and plans his or her end from the beginning.

It’s clear. Mother’s don’t have the moral right to abort their preborn children. And preborn children do have the moral right to live.

The Constitutional Component

Let’s move now from the moral component of the choice or life issue

to the constitutional component. It has two parts.

First, does the U.S. Constitution give mothers the right to abort their preborn children? In *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Casey v. Planned Parenthood* (1992), the U.S. Supreme Court decided it does. Many of us disagree, but that's what it decided. The Due Process Clause in the 14th Amendment makes the abortion decision a privacy right that states can't prohibit until the preborn are viable, which legislatures decide.

The second part is this. Does the U.S. Constitution give preborn children the right to life? The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments state, **"No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."** Are preborn children **"persons"** in terms of those amendments? That question really is the heart of the abortion issue. If they are that, persons, then they have the right to life and cannot be aborted in spite of the privacy right of mothers. So, I ask you. Are preborn children persons and if so, when are they? I believe the answers are **"yes"** and **"at conception"** and here's why, for two reasons.

One reason is biological – because of what happens at conception. 23 chromosomes from the sperm and 23 from the egg unite into one cell. Thus, that one cell contains 46 chromosomes, which is the entire genetic code for a full human being, for a **"you"** or a **"me."** That one cell starts the whole process of life and growth. Life and growth are all there from the beginning. World-renowned geneticist Jerome Lejeune concludes as a result that the fertilized egg is **"a beginning of the new marvel that we call a human."** So, at the moment of conception, he says, **"a man is a man"** or a human being is a human being, that is, a person. We know the preborn are persons at conception for that biological reason.

We know they're persons also for a Biblical reason. It's our text, Exodus 21:22-25. In it, men are fighting and one strikes the pregnant wife of the other. The wife, as a result, then gives premature birth to her child. According to verse 22, the wife's husband can prosecute the man who struck her. If the judge finds that he struck her but there was no injury, he levies a monetary fine against him. But if there was injury

or death, verses 23-25 prescribe the punishment – public whipping if an injury or capital punishment if a death.

There's a vital interpretive issue in this text. To whom does the word "**injury**" in verse 22 apply – just the mother or the preborn child as well? Pro-choice people claim it applies only to the mother, in which case this legislation considers the pre-born child not a human being.

But that isn't so! Take note of two facts.

First, in verse 22, the NASB translates the Hebrew word for what's in the woman's womb as "**child**," which is a literal translation. That Hebrew word denotes a child, a fully developed human being. This legislation, therefore, considers the pre-born to be children just as the born are.

Second, the Hebrew sentence structure in verse 22 suggests that the word "**injury**" applies to both the mother and her pre-born child. As the scholarly *Keil and Delitzsche* Old Testament commentary explains, "**The omission of *lah*, also, apparently renders it impracticable to refer the words to injury done to the woman alone.**"

Those two facts make it clear. God prescribes the same penalty for injuring or killing the preborn as for injuring or killing their mothers. He doing so reveals that He considers the unborn to be children.

For those two reasons then, the biological and the Biblical, we know it's true. Despite what the Supreme Court ruled, the preborn are persons at conception. Consequently, they have the constitutional right to life.

Wrong and Dangerous

Since the preborn have the moral and constitution right to life, abortion is morally wrong. It's a sin, murder in fact, and violates the Sixth of the Ten Commandments, "**Don't murder.**"

But abortion isn't just wrong. It's dangerous as well. The United States Constitution guarantees life only for "**persons.**" So, the Supreme Court legalized abortion by arbitrarily separating aliveness from personhood. The preborn are alive but aren't persons. And since they

aren't persons, they don't have the Constitutional right to life.

But that position opens the door. If the court says that about the preborn, what prevents it from eventually saying it about the seriously ill, the elderly, the physically or mentally handicapped, and so on. Yes, they're alive but because of their condition, they aren't persons pursuant to the Constitution. Separating aliveness from personhood opens the door. It leads logically from killing the preborn to eventually killing anyone that society deems a burden. There are respected thinkers in fact, like bioethicist Peter Singer, who argue just that.

Mother Teresa said it as poignantly as it can be said, "**In cultures where mothers destroy their own children, no one is safe.**" That isn't an exaggeration. Abortion isn't just wrong. It's dangerous as well.

Be Pro-life and Pro-choice

So, be pro-life not pro-death. Value, protect, and promote life for the preborn. That's our call and we answer it by doing these things. First, learn the Biblical, moral, biological, legal, and social truths about choice and life. Second, proclaim what we've learned clearly and lovingly. Persuade others one by one to be pro-life. Third, act to protect and promote life for the preborn. Adopt children, meet the material needs of pregnant women, vote intelligently, support pro-life groups, attend pro-life rallies, write elected officials, and more. And fourth, pray persistently and thoughtfully about choice or life issues and for the people involved. Those people include political decision makers, pro-choice leaders, pro-life leaders, pregnant women, and the preborn.

We must be pro-life. We must do all of those things until America once again values, protects, and promotes life for the pre-born.

But we must be pro-choice as well – in a particular context.

Consider this pro-choice slogan on a protester's placard, "**Sex is beautiful; reproduction is optional.**" It represents, I believe, the primary aim of most pro-abortionists. It's to promote sexual freedom. Men can practice unrestrained sex without physical and social

consequence. Because of pregnancy, women can't. But abortion levels the playing field. Women can practice unrestrained sex and if the physical and social consequence, which is the pregnancy, occurs, it can be eliminated by abortion on demand. For most pro-choice people, the woman's right to choose is secondary. Sexual freedom, unrestrained sex without consequence, is primary.

Statistics compiled by the NAF (National Abortion Federation), a pro-choice group, confirm that. Only 1% of the 1.3 million yearly abortions in America are to spare trauma from rape or incest. Only .2% are to save the life of the mother. All the rest, 98.8%, are to eliminate inconvenient babies. Also consider that 83% of the women to whom these statistics apply are unmarried. The NAF concludes, as a result, **"Married women are significantly less likely than unmarried women to resolve unwanted pregnancies through abortion."** You realize what that means. At least 83% of abortions are the final result of illicit sex.

In the abortion debate, almost everyone focuses on the pregnancy. But the first issue is about the illicit sex act that produced it. Focusing on that, I'm pro-choice. Pro-choice is the best solution to the abortion problem. The right choice, not having illicit sex, at the right time, before the pregnancy begins, would almost eliminate abortion as a major issue in America today.

So let's make that right choice by doing what Paul commanded in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, **"Abstain from sexual immorality"** and **"know how to possess your own vessel (body) in sanctification and honor."** Let's practice, proclaim, and promote sexual purity. That's the most effective and immediate way to resolve the choice or life issue.

Conclusion

So there you have it – the resolution of the choice or life issue. Simply put, it's this. On the one hand, be pro-life. Protect and promote the life of the unborn. On the other hand, be pro-choice. Choose and promote sexual purity before the pregnancy begins.