

40 Years of Abortion in Biblical Perspective, and Some Good News (Gen 1-Rev 22)

There is an 'increasingly pro-life sentiment in this country, as evidenced by the most recent Marist poll (December 2012) which found that more than 8 in 10 Americans favor significant restrictions on abortion. The Gallup Organization (May 2011) found that only 27% of Americans believe abortion should be legal under all circumstances. [But in liberal States and cities, abortion rates are high, and the percentages of pregnancies that end in abortion are still quite high]. NY City's abortion rate [is] 40%¹ (14% of its abortions by married mothers)²

Delaware is not far behind, 33% of pregnancies end by abortion (national average is 19%). Delaware law has few restrictions on killing children, but they did pass a law in 9/2012 that restricts the spanking of children potentially, according to lawyers in this law's forbidding "pain" to children, which it leaves undefined. But the law does not forbid "pain" to unborn children who feel pain during their abortion. That's a fact and a tragic reversal of God's truth

There is much bad news on the abortion front this past week that marks the 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, but I want us to turn to the good news of God's Word in the gospel of Luke as we consider our news in focus of the good news. I want us to consider what the Scriptures say about the life of children, including the unborn, that speak to the horror of abortion, and before we're done I want us to also consider hope of abolition, that it would go the way of slavery.

Luke chapter 2, v. 10 has the familiar words of the angel about the baby born in Bethlehem: "*Do not be afraid, for behold I bring you good news...*" But I want you to notice back in 2:5 what it says of Joseph with his betrothed: ⁵*in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was **with child**.* ⁶*While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.* [so she hadn't given birth yet in v. 5 but the end of the verse says Mary was "*with child*." When the Bible speaks of pregnancy, it uses a phrase "*with child*" literally from Genesis to Revelation (Gen 16:11-Rev 12:12) to show that that the unborn is a "child" in clear biblical language.

But there are stronger affirmations earlier in the good news story: Luke **1:13** *But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.* ¹⁴ *"You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.* ¹⁵ *"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb**.* ["while yet in his mother's womb, the Lord's message calls him "he," a personal pronoun, there's a person in a mother's womb] ¹⁶ *"And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.* ¹⁷ *"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN ... "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news."*

Part of the good news that was about to come is that the hearts of fathers would be turned back to the children. That's part of the good news and what would result from John's and Jesus's teaching. And part of my hope is in God turning the hearts of fathers back to children in our day as well, fathers like Joseph later in this story who protects and cares for the unborn of a teenage unwed mother who in our day and age would have had people counsel her to get an abortion, fathers like Joseph willing to adopt and raise children.

But that's getting a little ahead of ourselves. Keep reading in v. 26

²⁶ *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,* ²⁷ *to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.* ²⁸ *And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."* ²⁹ *But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.* ³⁰ *The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.* ³¹ *"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus ...[now skip down to v. 36] And behold, even your relative Elizabeth **has also conceived a son** in her old age; and she who was called barren is now **in her sixth month** [notice the heavenly messenger speaks not of a fetus but her "son" in the 2nd trimester]*

... ³⁹ *Now **at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah,** [so notice the timeline, the virginal conception couldn't have happened more than days, so at best, an embryo inside as she arrives] ⁴⁰ *and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.* ⁴¹ *When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, **the baby leaped in her womb;** and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.* ⁴² *And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and **blessed is the fruit of your womb!**"* ⁴³ *"And how has it happened to me, that **the mother of my Lord** would come to me?"* ⁴⁴ *"For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, **the baby leaped in my womb for joy.**"**

Only days after conception, the Spirit-inspired word to Mary is "*the fruit of your womb!*" (v. 42b), biblical language for a child in or outside the womb. In v. 43, she is already "*the mother of my Lord.*" She didn't become a mother after the baby was born, if we are speaking biblically, she was a mother once she was pregnant! And from conception, the identity of the child as a person is there, which God's Spirit moves Elizabeth to recognize. It wasn't a tissue, He was totally the Lord, in the words of Elizabeth (end of v. 43).

And the Spirit that was filling John the Baptist while still in his mother's womb recognizes the presence of the Lord Jesus, the 2nd person of the Trinity nearby, and the baby leaps in the womb of Elizabeth for joy, according to v. 44! This baby inside Elizabeth is younger than many babies who are aborted in our country, and the tiny life in Mary is scientifically a zygote recently turned to early embryo in development, but she is already "mother of my Lord"!

The phrase at the end of v. 42 "*blessed is the fruit of your womb*" is the same phrase we studied this morning in Psalm 127:3 where children are described as a blessing, a gift of God, and the fruit of the womb is a reward, an inheritance. And here is the greatest ever blessedness, because this tiny life is the Son of God to whom the nations were promised by His Father as an inheritance. Amazing!

Turn back to Matthew 1, the other account of gospel good news where heaven speaks clearly about unborn children in the womb:

¹⁸ *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when **His mother Mary** had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be **with child** by the Holy Spirit. [Notice it again that when the virgin conceives, long before she gives birth, she is 'with child' (not mere fetal tissue) and she is already called 'His mother']*

... ²⁰ *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for **the Child who has been conceived in her** [notice this is how heaven views a conception] is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ "She will bear a Son; and you shall call **His** name Jesus, for **He** will save **His** people from their sins." [Jesus is not born yet, but is spoken of as a person with personal pronouns] ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "**BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD***

...

Keep reading in the Christmas story in Luke 2 after the Magi come and Herod sees good news of this baby as a threat to his kingdom: ¹³ *Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." ¹⁴ So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. ¹⁵ He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "**OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.**" ¹⁶ Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and **slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under***

... ¹⁹ *But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel ...*

Russell Moore, in his book *Adopted for Life*, has a chapter called "Joseph of Nazareth vs. Planned Parenthood." He writes in it:

'Several years ago a friend sent me a copy of what just might be the most chilling Christmas card ever sent through the U.S. mail. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the nation's leading provider of abortions, unveiled a holiday greeting card in support of the group's commitment to "reproductive freedom." ... Across the [Christmas] card was the caption "Choice on Earth." [instead of the gospel's "peace on earth," they blasphemously used an abortion buzzword to replace the good news]. In terms of in-your-face hostility, that card can only be compared to a Hanukkah card featuring a menorah twisted into a swastika...[for abortionists to twist a phrase from Scripture to raise funds to kill babies! At the 1st Christmas, Russell Moore says Herod is like Planned Parenthood] Herod protects his position through infanticide...Herod surely didn't think about the fact that he was playing the role of Pharaoh [from *Egypt*, mentioned in v. 13-15], but he was. This scenario is precisely what had played out thousands of years before when another ruler had his power threatened by the offspring of Abraham...What God pronounces as blessing [fruitful multiplying], Pharaoh sees as a curse ... he seeks to remove that threat by any means necessary ... the murder of infants [even as people do today for different reasons to babies who threaten their plans/kingdom]...

... Satan always uses human passions to bring about his purposes. When new life stands in the way of power - whether that power is a Pharaoh's military stability of a community leaders' reputation in light of his teenage daughter's pregnancy - the blood of children often flows. Herod loved his power; so he raged against babies. In the middle of all this stood Joseph ... It's easy to shake our heads in disgust at Pharaoh or Herod or Planned Parenthood. It's not as easy to see the ways in which we ourselves often have a Pharaoh-like view of children rather than a Christlike view. What God calls blessing, we often grumble at as a curse - and for the same reason those old kings did, because they disrupt our life plans. Our "kingdom" may be smaller than that of those old kings, our pyramids and monuments less endearing; but it's all still there.¹³

Did you notice *Egypt* in v. 15? It ties how Joseph protected Jesus as a king is killing all the other baby boys and God says "*Out of Egypt I called my son*"? That's a reference to when God called His adopted son Israel out of Egypt, and he did so through Moses who was also protected as the king Pharaoh is killing other baby boys around him. It's a parallel with Jesus going into and out of Egypt. God kept Moses safe through Miriam (Hebrew for Mary) while the king ordered all newborn babies to a "post-birth abortion" (the act of killing babies right at birth has been done in the U.S.), but Moses is saved, put in a wooden vessel, delivered from death so he can become the human deliverer to bring Israel as God's son out of Egypt away from the baby-killing kingdom and into Israel's land.

To protect the child from what otherwise would have been death, the baby is adopted, protected and raised by one not biologically related to the boy (in this case, Pharaoh's daughter). Even in the household that was the center of the Egyptian culture of death, the good news is God is at work, and as the grown Moses is used by God to deliver Israel, some Egyptians who convert to the faith are also saved out of that baby-killing kingdom, we read in Ex. 12:38! Even as ungodly nations are murdering children, God's purposes are still at work, not just for the nation Israel, but ungodly nations, too. Judgment comes down, but there is grace to any who repent.

What we read in Matthew 2 is again gospel hope out of holocaust. The horror of killing babies doesn't end the hope of the good news. God repeats the OT pattern in another young girl named Miriam (Mary is the Greek version of the Hebrew name) and another baby boy placed in another unusual wooden carrying case for a baby (a manger this time). In this case, God providentially keeps this Son safe while the king of that day ordered governmental baby-killing.

Again the special child God would use is adopted, protected, and raised by one not biologically related to him (in this case, Joseph of Nazareth). Joseph's actions are in stark contrast to Herod's, and people like Joseph who do what he did for a pregnant teenage mom out of wedlock are in stark contrast to the abortion culture of death in our day. This is an important part of the Christmas gospel story, and it also, according to v. 15, is tied to an earlier story of Exodus.

Like Moses in the OT when God called Israel as a son from Egypt, this Son Jesus is delivered from death so He can become a greater Deliverer of all God's people. Jesus like Israel before Him is also called "out of Egypt" and into the land of Israel (v. 20-21). Jesus is God's greater Son out of Egypt, a greater Deliverer and Redeemer. Jesus is rescued by Joseph out of the culture of death so Jesus can rescue all His people who He will save from their sins (Matt 1:21). Turn to Genesis 1 and I want you to see God's plan for mankind in the beginning to the end of the Bible, Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. In the NT good news, the gospel story, there is a much bigger story it's a part of, and a much bigger picture we need to see.

Gen 1:27 *God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.* ²⁸ *God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply [this is the blessing of children, Ps 127:3], and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

God creates the first man and woman and then gives them ability to pro-create (meaning God is creating life but allowing a couple to be the pro-creative agents of life that day forward).

It's a blessing and responsibility, and every time procreation takes place, another person is being created in the image of God to reflect His image and glory and to fill the earth with it and use the earth's resources.

I mentioned before the Presbyterian Church-USA denomination's 9/2012 convention refused to pass a resolution limiting abortion by their denomination but did pass a resolution at the same meeting to help "save the planet" (as if man can – when in actuality the saving it needs is from God's wrath). Apparently saving the planet is more important to them than saving people in the womb from actual destruction. Religious apostasy is maybe no more clearly shown than professing Christians crusading to protect the environment but not protecting God's image in a womb's truly fragile environment.

Turn now to Genesis 3, where the father of all lies, the serpent of old, Satan, first comes to deceive God's people. We know the story but I want you to look at 3:15 what God says to the serpent or devil: ¹⁵ *And I will put enmity Between you and **the woman**, **And between your seed and her seed*** [that's talking about life from intercourse, the seed or offspring that grows in the womb, that OT Law later often speaks of as "offspring of the womb," using this same word]

Satan is going to oppose the seed of woman even within the womb. Revelation 12 calls him "*the great dragon ... the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world*" and it says a woman "*was **with child**; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth* [till the end of the Bible, the unborn is a child] ... *the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.*"

It's hard not to think of Exodus 1, which echoes Gen 1, Rev 12: Exodus 1:7 says Israel was "*fruitful and...multiplied,*" same terms as Genesis 1, fulfilling the blessing of children, but it says Pharaoh felt his kingdom threatened by all these babies, especially the boys.

¹⁵ *Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other was named Puah;* ¹⁶ *and he said, "When you are helping the Hebrew women to give birth and see them upon the birthstool, if it is a son, then you shall put him to death; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live."*

As horrific as that sounds, baby killing of an ethnic people, killing based on gender as soon as you can see the gender, that's exactly what still happens around the world and in America, but with just more sophisticated ways to see the gender ahead of time and other ways to kill the child today. I've seen hidden cameras in abortion clinics where the mom wants to see if it's a boy or girl to decide if she's going to kill the baby, and the abortions agree, but say don't write that down for the reason, technically we're not supposed to.

Voddie Baucham has said before Barack Obama became president, four times Obama 'voted not to protect the lives of children, even who were alive after a failed abortion ... to say that if an abortion is unsuccessful and that child survives, that that child should not have legal protection and should be killed anyways ... In major cities across the U.S., more than half of all pregnancies of black women end in abortion. We've been targeted [Voddie says of fellow black Americans]

...before Planned Parenthood and Margaret Sanger's Negro Project we've been targeted by abortionists, and now to see black people flock to a party whose platform and history has been dead set on their annihilation boggles my mind.⁴

The targeting of abortion based on ethnic group or gender is not new under the sun. Before radical liberals in our day, before Herod or Pharaoh, is the serpent opposing the seed of woman in warfare and trying to poisonously wound the seed's heel (v. 15b) if he can. The serpent hates the woman's seed, especially the Jesus to come.

Russell Moore comments on Rev. 12: 'Jesus showed his disciple John what the story behind the story is ... crouching before this woman's birth canal is...[Satan] who seeks to "devour" the baby... then "*became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring*" (Rev. 12:17) and has done so ever since.

The demonic powers hate babies because they hate Jesus. When they destroy "the least of these" (Matt. 25:40, 45), the most vulnerable among us, they're destroying a picture of Jesus Himself [the image of God] ... They are also destroying the very picture of newness of life and dependent trust that characterizes life in the kingdom of Christ [a baby in Matt. 18:4]. Children also mean blessing—a perfect target to those who seek only to kill and destroy (John 10:10) ... The satanic powers want the kingdoms of the universe – and a baby uproots their reign. So they rage all the more against the babies ... the protection of children isn't charity. It isn't part of a political program fitting somewhere between tax cuts and gun rights...It's spiritual warfare [Moore says adoption is warfare].

Our God forbids ... children to Molech, a demon-god who demands the violent sacrifice of human babies (Lev. 20:1-8) ... He further warns that he will cut off from the people of God not only the one who practiced such sacrifice but also all who "*at all close their eyes to the man when he gives one of his children to Molech*" (Lev. 20:4) [sobering words for God's people today closing eyes to violent killing of babies today]. Behind Molech, God recognizes one who is "*a murderer from the beginning*" (John 8:44).⁵

Revelation 12:5 explains further Satan's desire to devour a child, because it says a woman's son was born who would rule all nations (the very thing Adam and Eve did not do, rule the earth, because of their sin, God has to send another Adam, a greater Son to fulfill it). Gen 3:15b is what theologians call "the first gospel" because of what the Lord says next of a future child yet to born of woman: *He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel ...*

Satan as a serpent will try to fatally wound as many of the seed of the woman as he can, who he hates as enemies with enmity, but in the future, a Son born of woman will fatally wound Satan's head. He wants to oppose God's creation command so that instead of multiplying God's image, man murders God's image. This is why abortion, or any murder, is so serious to God. Turn to chapter 9.

Genesis 9:1 *And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth ... "Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.* ⁶ **"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.** ⁷ *"As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it."*

We could keep going into Exodus and see how murder, taking innocent life, violates the Ten Commandments, and the very next chapter speaks of “*life for life*” in the case of the unborn (Ex 21). Exodus 23:7 says “*do not kill the innocent.*” Deuteronomy warns against shedding the blood of the innocent and talks about how the land will be judged that does so (Dt. 19:10, 21:8-9, etc.). It puts a curse of judgment on those who kill the innocent for money (27:5).

Psalms 106:38 includes children in the shedding of innocent blood. Amos 1:13 says God’s wrath won’t hold back from those who rip the womb of a pregnant woman, murdering even the most helpless. But I don’t want to end on a hopeless note, we have gospel hope, hope for even those once entrenched in Satan’s “war on women.”

And in the NT it seems that even out of a baby-killing household or dynasty of Herod, one is saved and becomes a church leader (Acts 13:1)? Even in the darkest times and societies in history and in our times, God is saving and changing sinners to be part of a new culture of life. There is hope even for those who have been part of the culture of death on any level. Even at higher levels of the abortion industry today, there are many abortionists and even some former staunch pro-abortionists, even out of Planned Parenthood, who are joining the cause of life, and some converting to Jesus as way, truth, life!

Women who once believed the lie that they can do whatever they want with their own body, not only has DNA science shown that a tiny baby in her womb is distinct from her and is independent life, but the Bible says “*Your body is not your own...Glorify God with your body.*” We’re not free to do whatever we want with our body anyways, God owns us, and calls us to glorify the God who created us as image-bearers and who pro-creates the unborn to this purpose

Even for those who don’t believe the Bible, one of the things that gives me great hope is that the current generation is the most pro-life in decades, and one of the factors is they’ve grown up seeing sonograms of their baby brothers or sisters on their fridge and it doesn’t take a scientist to tell that’s a baby not a blob of tissue. In recent polls the number who identify themselves as pro-choice are a record low 41%. Even within the decreasing numbers who call themselves “pro-choice,” Gallup data shows 79% of pro-choice Americans believe abortion should be illegal in the third trimester of pregnancy and 60% support 24-hour waiting periods and parental consent for minors [at odds with many liberal Democrats]

That’s from the 1/14 *TIME* magazine cover on *Roe v. Wade* that says “Abortion Rights Activists...Have Been Losing Ever Since”: “In 2011, 92 abortion-regulating provisions--a record number--passed in 24 states ... North Dakota ... South Dakota, Mississippi and Arkansas--have just one surgical-abortion clinic in operation. The number of abortion providers nationwide shrank from 2,908 in 1982 to 1,793 in 2008 [now more pro-life counseling centers] ... at the state level, abortion-rights activists are unequivocally losing.”⁶

... There are fewer doctors willing to perform the procedure and fewer abortion clinics open for business. Pro-choice activists have been outflanked by their pro-life counterparts, who have successfully lobbied for state-based regulations that limit access. Scores of states now require women to undergo counseling, waiting periods or ultrasounds prior to obtaining abortions ... [or] get permission from their parents if they want to terminate ... public opinion is also increasingly on their side.

Thanks to prenatal ultrasound and advanced neonatology, Americans now understand what a fetus looks like and that babies born as early as 24 weeks can now survive ... support state laws regulating the procedure and fewer and fewer are identifying themselves as “pro-choice”...⁷

Those things give me hope that if as God’s people, if churches, can live and proclaim a biblical view of children, adoption, sexuality, if more Josephs and William Wilberforces will rise up and speak up, I have hope that abortion can go the way of slavery in our lifetime.

But my greatest hope is in the gospel. We could go to the end of the Bible and murderers are kept out of the kingdom of heaven, but it also says in Revelation 22, those whose robes have been washed can enter, in other words those who repent and trust Christ and His shed blood, all their sins are washed away. It’s not unforgiveable sin to be guilty of murder. Just ask Paul, the former murderer of innocent blood, who is in heaven. We could look to David in the OT, whose sin led to the death of his baby boy, and David was also guilty of murder, but he repented of his sin and now is in heaven.

It may be some who listen to this message, if not here, maybe in the future, are guilty of a great sin (whether abortion or something else) – I assure you, Jesus is a greater Savior than you are a sinner. And if you truly repent and come to Him in faith, all your sins can be covered by His blood. All of us are murderers at least in heart (Matthew 5), and our sin is the cause of Jesus dying on the cross, but He forgives and calls us to now speak the way, truth, and *life*. Listen to the words of a believing mom in Proverbs 31 to a son:² “*O my son, O son of my womb ... [she says in v. 8] “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all ...”*

Scripture calls us to speak up for the rights of those who are unable to speak for themselves. God can hear the blood of the murdered crying out to Him from the ground, He says in Genesis 4:10. Let’s not give up, but let’s stand up for Jesus as soldiers of the cross, and let’s be willing to step up like Josephs to care for pregnant teenage moms, to adopt a child in some cases, or to help others to, and to point as many people as we can to Christ and to His gospel hope.

¹ <http://www.lifenews.com/2013/01/24/new-york-governor-pushing-bill-for-3rd-term-abortions/>

² <http://nyc41percent.com/>

³ Russell Moore, *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*, p. 61-65.

⁴ <http://speakfortheunborn.com/voddie-baucham-on-abortion/>

⁵ *Ibid.*, 63-66.

⁶ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2132761-1,00.html>

⁷ <http://ideas.time.com/2013/01/03/has-the-fight-for-abortion-rights-been-lost/#ixzz2J7QYXHzi>