

# Children: Things We Throw Away?

*Parallels between Modern Abortion and Ancient Child Sacrifice*

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**Bible Text:** Psalm 106:32-48

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**Title, Text, and Theme:** Open your Bible to the book of Micah. The title of this morning's message is really a question—"Children: Things We Throw Away?" The answer you are going to hear over and over again is: NO!

In **Psalm 106:32-48**, we have a summary of the history of God's people in the Old Testament. We learn that they "mingled among the heathen, and learned their works" (**verse 35**). Today in America, we have done the same. God judged the nation of Israel. But Israel cried out for mercy. I believe the Lord has already begun His judgment upon our nation. We have forsaken Him and he is forsaken us. But it is not too late as we are going to read. He will hear our cry. But He demands repentance. He demanded that Israel repent of child sacrifice to Molech. In the same way, we our nation must repent and turn to the Lord, not only for the sin of abortion, but from the entire unredeemed life. It is my hope that America will turn, one by one, from the radical selfishness characterized by abortion, to radical selflessness in Christ. God is a merciful God. *If we repent He will hear our cry.* This is the message of Psalm 106.

Let us stand as we read **Psalm 106:32-48**, "They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: 33 Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. 34 They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: 35 But were **mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.** 36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. 37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. 39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. 40 Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. 41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. 42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. 43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry: 45 And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies. 46 He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives. 47 Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise. 48 Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD."

[Prayer for guidance]

**Introduction:** Micah 6:7 asks a question: "shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

I want to bring you to the prosperous city of Carthage during the time of the prophet Isaiah. It is a city on the tip of northern Africa, just east of modern day Algeria. It was the capital of the Carthaginian Empire, one of the longest-living and largest empires in the ancient Mediterranean. Elissa, Queen of Tyre founded the empire, and with her brought the practice of child sacrifice. At the height of the empire, Carthage was the most sophisticated, well-educated, militarily superior, and technologically advanced nation on in the ancient world. And yet in all their sophistication, knowledge, and advancement, they were also destroying millions of babies in child sacrifice each year. A modern historian asks of the ancient people of Carthage:

...how could a culture so well developed morally, intellectually and materially tolerate so 'abominable' a custom? How could a sophisticated people sanction what seems to be such a barbaric practice for so long a time? How at the most [intimate] and critical level could human parents bring about the destruction of their own child?<sup>1</sup>

We could ask the same question about 21<sup>st</sup> century America. "How *can* a culture so well developed morally, intellectually and materially tolerate so 'abominable' a custom as abortion?" How can we with such an intellectual and moral heritage tolerate 50 million abortions in this country since 1973?

In ancient times, child sacrifice was a prominent part of the pagan religions. People would sacrifice a son or a daughter in order to atone for sin, become prosperous, win a victory in war, or gain the favor of a false god. It is horrendous to think about, but it was quite common in ancient times. In today's world, we believe we've achieved a higher state of humanity. Most believe the human race is much kinder and gentler. The truth of the matter is that as long as the practice of abortion is allowed to remain legal, we remain just as barbaric and pagan today as in the past. We may be intellectually and materially sophisticated, but we are just as brutish and cold as ancient Carthage. One of the leaders of the early church, Tertullian, said, "there is no difference as to baby killing whether you do it as a sacred rite or just because you choose to do it."<sup>2</sup> He goes on to say:

For us murder is once for all forbidden; so even the child in the womb, while yet the mother's blood is still being drawn on to form the human being, it is not lawful to destroy. To forbid birth is only quicker murder. It makes no difference whether one take away the life once born or destroy it as it comes to birth. He is a man, who is to be a man, the fruit is always present in the seed.<sup>3</sup>

Tertullian was right. Therefore, there is no difference between ancient paganism and modern abortion.

- I. As we begin I want you to see the **Atrocities** of Abortion as compared with ancient child sacrifice. There are many parallels. Ancient rituals of infanticide and the modern practice of abortion have many things in common. Not much

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<sup>1</sup> P.G. Mosca, *Child Sacrifice in Canaanite and Israelite Religion*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1975, op. cit., pp. 273, 274.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticus IX.*- 6,8.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

has changed except the culture has sanitized the barbarous practices with pleasant sounding words like "pro-choice" and "family planning".

- Both are premeditated murder.
- Both care nothing for the welfare of the child, only the welfare of the parents.
- Both worship the god of sexual gratification.
- Both were countenanced by the government that was supposed to protect the most weak and helpless.

A. First, consider that both ancient infanticide and modern abortion there is an unwillingness to admit that these practices are **premeditated murder**.

We read in **Psalm 106:37-38**, "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood". The Bible makes it clear here that this was premeditated murder of their sons and daughters. They joined with the pagans in this. America's land too is polluted with blood. The atrocities here are nothing more than they were in ancient times: nothing more than premeditated murder.

Consider that in pagan child sacrifice, no regard was given to the child's suffering. There would be a bronze image<sup>4</sup> of the false deity...

...extending its hands, palms up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire.<sup>5</sup>

You would think the mothers would be beside themselves in grief. This was not the case. In fact, when offering a sacrifice, the mothers were not allowed to shed a single tear, or it was believed it would "ruin" the effect of the sacrifice.<sup>6</sup> The screams and pain of the child were drowned out. The parents and the crowd ignored the pain and helplessness of the child. They did not want to admit to their consciences that they were indeed committing murder. Plutarch, a first century Greek historian, says that:

"the whole area before the statue [would be] filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums so that the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people."<sup>7</sup>

Today, the mother is taught to ignore the personhood and the pain of the child she aborts. She is told that the baby is just a "mere, unfeeling mass of tissue."<sup>8</sup>

Actually, by eight weeks, the baby has his very own fingerprints and can "feel pain".<sup>9</sup> The mother ought to consider that this child is a gift from God, that

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<sup>4</sup> In other cultures, the parents would simply abandon the child to a wilderness where there were wild animals.

<sup>5</sup> "Perpetua," translated by Herbert Musurillo. *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford University Press, 1972), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Nick Frost. *Child Welfare* (Routledge: London, 2005), 48.

<sup>7</sup> "Perpetua," by Musurillo, 127.

<sup>8</sup> Gladys Mwiti, Ph.D. *Young Lives at Risk* (Evangel Publishing House: Nairobi, Kenya, 1997), 6.

this baby is "fearfully and wonderfully made" (**Psalm 139:14**) by a loving Creator.

God forbade His people in the Old Testament from practicing abortion and infanticide. He said in **Leviticus 18:21**, "thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech". God wanted His people to know that infanticide is premeditated murder. This was the so with ancient paganism, and it is true with modern abortion.

B. Second, the emphasis of the modern abortion movement **cares nothing for the welfare of the child, but only the welfare of the mother.**

So it was with the pagan religions:

**Psalm 106:37-39**, "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. 39 Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions." They went a whoring after their own desires and had no regard for their children!

- The pagans would sacrifice their child in order to gain success. Today women will sacrifice their child for the success of finishing her education or of entering into a career.
- For single mothers, life is hard with no father in the home. While women today do not destroy their children out of superstition as the pagans did, she does it for selfish reasons: she wants immediate relief from the crisis.

...the main reason for sacrificing a child was to avert potential dangers in a crisis...Today many times when a woman faces an unwanted pregnancy abortion seems to be the only way to resolve the crisis she finds herself in. The potential dangers to reputation, education, career, etc., become overwhelming.<sup>10</sup>

- The mother wants to have a life beyond taking care of a child. She wants to start a family on her timetable. She looks at the child as an interruption to her life. What selfish thinking! Yet it is prevalent in our country. Sadly, even our incoming president is of this opinion. He said, "if [my daughters] make a mistake, I don't want them punished with a baby".<sup>11</sup> I say mothers should think about the responsibilities of a baby before they give themselves to a man. They should reserve their purity for marriage.

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<sup>9</sup> *Proposed Constitutional Amendments on Abortion: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary, House of Representatives, Ninety-fourth Congress, Second Session*, (Published by U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 401.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew White, M.D. *Abortion and the Ancient Practice of Child Sacrifice* (Journal of Biblical Ethics in Medicine, Volume 1, Number 2) 27.

<sup>11</sup> Barack Obama. The Dallas Morning News article, "*Obama's 'punished with a baby' remark (Topic of the Day)*", Monday, April 07, 2008.

- “Another woman may experience much less of the anxiety and fear that accompany a crisis. She may simply see the pregnancy as an intrusion into her self-serving lifestyle and an obstacle in the way of the road to her success. Sadly this woman's offspring must be sacrificed so that she can continue uninterrupted with her plans for the future”.<sup>12</sup>
- Another motivation for abortion is avoiding a stigma—perhaps the child was conceived from a relationship of fornication or adultery.
- Other mothers perhaps do not think they can handle the financial responsibilities, much less the emotional toll of motherhood.

Sadly, 3500 times every day in America, a mother believes for her own comfort and welfare she should end the life of the child. I have to stop and ask a question: *what about the comfort and welfare of the child?* Do you see the deadly and monstrous selfishness of our culture that would take the life of a helpless child in exchange for comfort?

Paganism was just as self-centered. They would sacrifice their children for their own comfort—when they wanted to have great favor in life and great success, or even when they wanted to avoid a crisis, they would sacrifice their infant.<sup>13</sup>

C. Both pagan child sacrifice and modern abortion are from the devil.

**Psalm 106:37** says, “Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils”. Infanticide in any form is satanic. It is murderous. **John 8:44** says, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” Let us recognize that the wicked one would not have us to be merciful and support adoption. He would not have us do the hard work of parenting. He would not want us to sacrifice an education or a career to raise a child. Let us cast off the works of darkness and live as children of light!

D. Another parallel between ancient paganism and modern abortion is the **worship of the god of sexual gratification**. In ancient times, God warned His people not to have illicit relationships in the groves of Asherah. The Lord tells Israel in **Isaiah 1:29**, “They shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.” It was in the groves that the people of Israel forsook God and fornicated at pagan shrines of Asherah. “Child sacrifice...may have been a convenient way to dispose of the consequences of the illicit sexual practice...”<sup>14</sup> of Molech and Asherah worship.

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<sup>12</sup> White, *Abortion and the Ancient Practice of Child Sacrifice*, 36.

<sup>13</sup> P.G. Mosca, *Child Sacrifice in Caananite and Israelite Religion*, Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1975, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> White, *Abortion and the Ancient Practice of Child Sacrifice*, 36 [emphasis author's].

"It is no secret that in American society **extramarital sexual intercourse** (fornication and adultery) is the cause of most pregnancies that end in abortion."<sup>15</sup>

The pagans wanted sexual gratification with no commitment. It is the same in American culture today. Pregnancy is a risk that many men are willing to take knowing they can do away with their responsibilities with \$900 and a trip to the abortion clinic.

- E. We see a fourth parallel between modern abortion and ancient paganism. Those leaders in Israel who were in a position to protect the welfare of the helpless were the very people who were carrying out their destruction. So it is in our country today.

In **Psalm 82:2-4**, God commands us to protect the helpless. In Israel, those who were appointed by God to protect the weak and needy, were taking advantage of them. "How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Selah. 3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. 4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid *them* out of the hand of the wicked."

Two inscriptions at Carthage even show that occasionally the parents would sacrifice a handicapped child hoping to later receive a healthy one as a substitute. In one inscription a man named Tuscus says that he gave Ba'al "his mute son Bod'astart, a [handicapped] child, in exchange for a healthy one."<sup>16</sup>

It is the same today. Pregnant women facing the possibility of having a handicapped child are given the option of ending the child's life.

It is a shock that we will do all we can today to give the best life to someone outside of the womb if they become handicapped or debilitated in some way. We have all kinds of technology to help in the best quality of life. Yet inside the womb today, we are no better than the ancient pagans. Like those in Carthage, we are intellectual, sophisticated, and barbaric all at the same time. And all of this is countenanced by the leadership of our country. Those who are ordained by God to protect the weak are the very ones approving their destruction. It was the same in ancient Israel.

Look over at **2 Chronicles 28:1-4**. Here we have King Ahaz in the time of Isaiah taking the throne and being the first not only to allow child sacrifice, but to actually participate in it. "Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign...but he did not *that which was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father. Verse 3, "Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen."* Ahaz as well as many of the leaders in Israel (particularly northern Israel) either allowed it or participated in it. Those whom God gave to protect Israel were preying on their most helpless citizens!

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Kennedy, C., "Queries/Comments," *Biblical Archeologie Review*, May/June 1984, p. 20, citing J. Feuvier's article "Une Sacrifice d'Enfant chez les Numides," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slave*, 1953.

So it is today. Our senators and congressman were elected to protect and defend our rights and liberties, especially for the weakest among us. Even our declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." It seems some men, if they be weak or in the womb, have lost their right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in America!

**Application:** Our doctors and nurses who are in a place of great esteem are giving advice to young impressionable single mothers. Their advice should be responsible. Instead they in many cases give advice that will destroy not just the child's life, but the mother's also as she is left to defy her God-given conscience and deal with the profound guilt of murder. The doctor who is supposed to protect her welfare urges her to break the universal laws of nature, the laws of God in her own conscience.

Having shown you the atrocities of abortion and showing you how it parallels ancient paganism, let us go back to our text in Psalm 106, and let me show you that God

- II. The **Amazing Grace** of God to sinners. With all the atrocities, not only of abortion, but of all sin, God is a merciful and pitiful God. The Scriptures says that we are "without strength" to save ourselves.

Turn back to **Psalm 106**. The enemies of God's people had the upper hand. They were influencing the culture and practices of Israel. Israel had turned from the Lord and

Look at our text in **Psalm 106:34**, "They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them: 35 But were **mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.** 36 And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. 37 Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, 38 And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood". Look at **verse 40**, "Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance. 41 And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them. 42 Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand. 43 Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity. 44 Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry". Listen to their prayer in **verse 47**, "Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise".

As horrible as the sin of abortion is, it is forgivable by the grace of God!  
*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.*

There is no unpardonable sin, except the very rejection of grace! God's grace and mercy can pardon any sin! **Psalm 103:12**, "As far as the east is from the west, so far [will] he removed our transgressions from us".

As the hymn writer said:

*His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,  
His power no boundary known unto men;  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.*

**Conclusion:** Our country has adopted the ways and the attitudes of the heathen. The foremost value of the pagan is SELF FIRST. Can we not see this in our culture?

What can you do to make a difference?

1. If you call yourself a Christian, live like a Christian in all of life! If we are to create a culture of life once again in our country, Professing Christians must live as genuine Christians! We are to show that the life lived for God is most fulfilling and rewarding. Just as "the way of the transgressor is hard", the way of the righteous is spiritual prosperity. If you sow to the flesh you will reap destruction. If you sow to the Spirit, you will reap life everlasting. All of life is to be kept sacred!

2. Secondly, cherish the sacredness of all of life. If children are not to be things we throw away, we must take heed that we not throw away any of our sacred lives. This includes:

- There is sacredness in moral purity reserved for the marriage covenant. Our children must learn self-control, discipline, and believe that God's way and plan for marriage is the best.

Consider the consequences of pre-marital sex. You can only give your purity away one time. Your virginity is to be kept as a precious treasure to be given to your spouse on your wedding night.

Be your example as an adult in the congregation. You must all show that purity is possible and enjoyable to our young people whether you are married or single. Above all you must exemplify that fidelity to God in your purity is both **fulfilling** and **rewarding**.

- There is a sacredness to old age. The Psalmist says in **Psalm 71:9**, "Cast me not off in the time of old age: forsake me not when my strength faileth".

The only way to stop a mindset of paganism in America is to bring the light of the Gospel. God's grace can cleanse us from every sin!

Let us pray.