



*The Sacrificed*

**Psalm 139:13 For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb.**

**14 I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And *that* my soul knows very well.**

**15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, *And* skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.**

**16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When *as yet there were* none of them.**

In those beautiful verses the psalmists description of the work of God in creating men. He knows all their days before they are even born, and to him nothing about them is secret or hidden. For God is the one who weaves them together in their mother's womb. John Calvin has a beautiful commentary on this passage, he writes:

*"That nothing is hid from God David now begins to prove from the way in which man is at first formed, and points out God's superiority to other artificers in this, that while they must have their work set before their eyes before they can form it, he fashioned us in our mother's womb. ... Should an artisan intend commencing a work in some dark cave where there was no light to assist him, how would he set his hand to it? In what way would he proceed? and what kind of workmanship would it prove? But God makes the most perfect work of all in the dark, for he fashions man in mother's womb. The verb which means weave together, is employed to amplify and enhance what the Psalmist had just said. David no doubt means figuratively to express the inconceivable skill which appears in the formation of the human body. When we examine it, even to the nails on our fingers, there is nothing which could be altered, without felt inconveniency, as at something disjointed or put out of place; and what, then, if we should make the individual parts the subject of enumeration? Where is the embroiderer who — with all his industry and ingenuity — could execute the hundredth part of this complicate and diversified structure? We need not then wonder if God, who formed man so perfectly in the womb, should have an exact knowledge of him after he is ushered into the world."*

Truly man is "fearfully and wonderfully made" by his God his Creator. God knew you in the womb, from the very moment of your conception. Actually, he knew you, everything about you before you were even conceived. And you were not merely knit together by Him in the womb, truly any animal on earth can lay claim to having been knit together by God.

YOU ALONE of all the created things on this earth where created in His Image. Only men can claim to have been made after the image of their maker and endowed with an immortal soul. That is why there is such a profound difference between killing a Chicken and killing a man. Chickens, and even Bald Eagles are not made in the image of God, and given that precious spark of immortality. In giving the reason for capital punishment for murder in Genesis 9:6 God says this:

"Whoever sheds man's **blood**, By man his **blood** shall be shed; For in the **image** of God He made man."

To destroy the life of a man, to murder him, is to deface the very image of God and to commit the gravest of sins and therefore it requires the gravest of punishments.

But when does one become a bearer of the image of God? When can one truly be said to be a human being? A full-fledged person? The Bible is clear on that issue. You are fully a person, known to God and created in His image at conception and you because he has given you an immortal soul, you can never lose that personhood.

Would that that were obvious to everybody, however Scientists and Lawyers struggle over that question today, some now are even proposing answers to that question that would rob newborns of the right to be considered persons.

Perhaps you think I'm exaggerating. Well let me give you some quotes from an MIT professor of Psychology and best-selling author by the name of Stephen Pinker. You may recall that a few years back, there was a flurry of cases where teenagers killed their newborn children, and in most cases received radically reduced sentences or were even let off. Stephen Pinker wrote in the New York Times to defend these teenagers and to try to excuse the practice of "Neonaticide"

[EXPLAIN WHY PINKER CALLS IT NEONATICIDE *NOT* INFANTICIDE]

Pinker stated: "Several moral philosophers have concluded that neonates are not persons, and thus neonaticide should not be classified as murder. Michael Tooley has gone so far as to say that neonaticide ought to be permitted during an interval after birth. Most philosophers (to say nothing of nonphilosophers) recoil from that last step, but the very fact that there can be a debate about the personhood of neonates, but no debate about the personhood of older children, makes it clearer why we feel more sympathy for an Amy Grossberg than for a Susan Smith."

Pinker went on to explain: "It seems obvious that we need a clear boundary to confer personhood on a human being and grant it a right to life" he says and then points out that "To a biologist, birth is as arbitrary a milestone as any other. Many mammals bear offspring that see and walk as soon as they hit the ground. But the incomplete 9-month-old human fetus must be evicted from the womb before its outsize head gets too big to fit through its mother's pelvis. The usual primate assembly process spills into the first years in the world. And that complicates our definition of personhood."

To complicate the already complicated issue further Pinker asks "What makes a living being a person with a right not to be killed?" and then helpfully points out "No, the right to life must come, the moral philosophers say," (incidentally Pinker never mentions these mysterious moral philosophers) "from morally significant traits that we humans happen to possess. One such trait is having a unique sequence of experiences that defines us as individuals and connects us to other people. Other traits include an ability to reflect upon ourselves as a continuous locus of consciousness, to form and savor plans for the future, to dread death and to express the choice not to die. And there's the rub: our immature neonates don't possess these traits any more than mice do."

Mice, Infants, there's not a whit of difference. Those of you who are thinking ahead will already have figured out that this also robs coma victims, the senile, and a host of other people who aren't at 100% mental operating capacity of their person-hood. Follow that reasoning and you quickly arrive at a strong argument not only for "Neonaticide" but for Euthanasia. In very short order you are back at Nietzsche and the superman, the will to power, and the "I have a right to live because I am strong but you weak sub-persons don't" philosophy that we supposedly fought the Nazis to end.

How is it then that we have come to the point where Professors in the best Universities in America are now paid to teach our children the very same vile philosophies we hung people for at Nuremburg???

Part of the answer to that question is idolatry, pure and simple.

When the Israelites entered the promised land that God was giving them they were warned not to embrace the false gods of the Canaanites whom they were driving out. Go ahead and turn in your bibles to Deut. 12:28

***28 "Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.***

*29 " When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land,*

*30 "take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'*

*31 "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.*

*32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.*

These people, these Canaanites whom they were dispossessing worshipped false gods of their own devising, not the true God who was their creator, and one of the ways they tried to obtain the favor of these idols was by the sacrifice of their own children. The followers of Molech for instance would make an image of their god which was essentially a huge hollow statue with a opening in his stomach.

They would kindle an intense fire in the statue and then they would place their infant children in the outstretched arms of the image, and the infant would then roll by the force of gravity into the furnace. This is what the Lord is referring to when he speaks of them burning their sons and daughters and what is elsewhere in the Bible called "causing your children to pass through the fire."

Sadly, after the Israelites settled in Canaan, they forgot the goodness and mercy of their God, and they turned their back on His word. So when the Israelite farmer was enduring a drought he would think to himself, My family and I are starving here! Well the people who inhabited this land used to worship Baal, the rain God. So if I want it to rain here, I need to worship Baal as well. Now how did that nation worship their God. Oh yeah. They would sacrifice their children in times of greatest need. I will do likewise. I can worship Yahweh, and hedge my bets by sacrificing to Baal as well.

God is a merciful God, he warned them not to do this, not to adopt the abominable practices of the Canaanites, not to sacrifice their children, for it would be a curse to them. But they did not listen. So God who is still merciful chastised them and told them to repent. Again and again he sent his prophets to them to condemn them for their idolatry. But they hardened their hearts and would not believe.

Just before God judged them by destroying their nation through the Babylonians, God again sent a prophet named Ezekiel to condemn them. He reminded them that God had found them in their weakness in Egypt, struggling in their blood, and delivered them and married them to himself, and he provided for them giving them food and clothing and shelter, but that they had played the harlot and gone after false Gods, and in particular he says of them:

*Ezekiel 16:20 "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. Were your acts of harlotry a small matter,*

*21 "that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through the fire?*

*22 "And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.*

These are not their children whom they are sacrificing, they are GOD's covenant children he reminds them. Created in His image and born to Covenant parents to be raised in the training and admonition of the Lord. And instead they are sacrificed to false gods by their selfish and unbelieving parents.

Why have we as a society gotten to the point were we are allowing men like philosophies like Pinker's to predominate. Because of Idolatry. We have forsaken the God of our fathers and His word, and His mercy, and His Goodness, and now we are serving false gods of our own devising. Gods of money, and convenience, and success, and personal peace. In our false religion we have come to believe that Eagles are precious, but babies are expendable, and we have imbibed and continue to imbibe a host of terrible lies from the Devil. Always, we hear the age old lie "Hath God said?" NO, surely not, if you only do this you'll have all the happiness and power you need.

The other part of the answer lies in our desensitization. A few days ago, a ruling of the Supreme Court called Roe vs. Wade turned 30. For 30 years legalized Abortion has been the law of the land.

But what does that really mean, I think we can easily lose sight of what that means. Let me quote some numbers, that may at least for us put this back into perspective. The following are death tolls, let me start with the bloodiest war in American History, the American civil war: 620,000 dead

Korean War (TOTAL): 1.3 Million

World War 1 (TOTAL) - 8,500,000

Hitler: 20 Million

Stalin's Regime: 20-40 Million

Total Number of Abortions in the United States since 1973: 43,358,592 and that number increases by 4,000 a DAY.

In a few years that number will top the death toll for the bloodiest conflict in human history, WW2 which claimed 50 Million lives.

How any people could hear those figures and then just shrug their shoulders and go on, is beyond me. But perhaps even more disturbing is that a Los Angeles Los Angeles Times poll conducted in Jan, 2000 showed that a majority of Americans believe that abortion is murder, but the majority of respondents to that particular poll also indicated that that they still felt that abortion should be legal. Now that is desensitization.

Some might say we should be happy that at least the majority sees abortion for what it really is – legalized murder. But I believe we should be horrified that we have become a nation so desensitized to this issue that we can see it for what it is – the stripping away of the God given right to life all people are created with and the killing of a child created in the image of God – and yet still insist on our "right" to practice it.

This year we must realistically reflect that 30 years have passed without America taking any real steps to end the evil of abortion. And my earnest prayer is that someday, just as our nation was eventually galvanized to put an end to the horrific practice of slavery, we will elect lawmakers and appoint judges who really will end the practice of abortion on demand. My hope is that this change will not take as long as it took to end slavery.

But if my only hope were in politics, I would feel wretched indeed. You and I on the other hand have been reading in the last few weeks about the coming of one particular newborn who changed everything. We also read how an infant in the womb could leap at the sound of the voice of that child's mother. That particular child was the Messiah, Jesus Christ. And he too, grew to adulthood and was eventually sacrificed, but not on the altar of convenience, not sacrificed to a false God. His death was to be a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. A propitiating death that can cover the sins even of the inhabitants of a nation given over to lawlessness and infant sacrifice.

But there is more even than that to the good news of Jesus Christ: the very same God who sent the prophet Ezekiel to chastise the people for their harlotry and infant sacrifice, and to declare before them the consequences of breaking his law also sent the same prophet to tell them:

***26 "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.***

***27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.***

***28 "Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.***

***29 "I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.***

Law/Gospel – CHRIST THE TRUE HOPE FOR THE SACRIFICED

How I changed from Pro-choice to Pro-Life