

# Abortion

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6)<sup>1</sup>**

## Introduction

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that abortion is a constitutional right in their decision on *Roe v. Wade*. On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court ruled on *Dobbs v. Jackson* that abortion is not a constitutional right and that the decision of abortion rights is to be left to individual states. No subject has galvanized Christianity in America in the last half century more than abortion, which is the focus of this study and what the Bible says about it.

I added the above passage from the book of Ephesians to my draft study sometime after I began searching Scripture on this subject. In other words, it didn't seem to have any specific relevance at first. What does it have to do with abortion? Think about it for a moment or two. I will get back to it later in this study. I humbly ask, though, that you don't look ahead to see how I use it. As with most of my studies, I will try to lay a foundation for this subject and gradually build upon it. By the end, I hope to have provided enough information and Scripture references for you to study and ponder to help you understand how you stand—and why—on this subject. Your resulting conclusions will be between you and God.

As I've matured in age and as a child of God, I am used to hearing such phrases as "according to the Bible," "according to God," "Scripture clearly says," etc., from fellow brethren in Christ and those who profess to be Christians. I have also come to realize that many definitive beliefs among Christians are often based on a misunderstanding or misuse of Scripture—beliefs that are attributed to God or the Bible that shouldn't be. How does the prevailing Christian position on abortion stand the test of Scripture?

My position on the subject of abortion, at least in a broad sense, before I started this study is provided below. Admittedly beginning with some bias, my desire was and is to examine Scripture to see if my beliefs about abortion were on solid ground, and to revise my thinking if my understanding of Scripture warranted a change.

- God considers life to begin at conception, because the Bible says that we were conceived in sin (i.e., we inherit the sin nature at conception) and because we were formed in the womb.
- Abortion ends a life; therefore, abortion, without exception, is murder.
- The *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973 did not force anyone to have an abortion.

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<sup>1</sup> All references are quoted from the *New American Standard Bible* (1996). Words in brackets are either equivalent words from the *King James Version* or, if in italics, were added by me for clarification.

- We must be careful not to judge those who undergo abortions because it usually reveals our own hypocrisy.

The last two points indicate my personal dilemma, especially the last one that developed in my thinking in more recent years. We are told that we are supposed to be either *pro-life* (opposed to all abortion) or *pro-choice* (abortion is the woman's decision). In my familiar Christian circles, I most certainly was taught to be *pro-life*. However, I struggled to fit into the *pro-life* doctrine—I just couldn't seem to fully embrace it. I wasn't exactly sure why, though, and rarely shared my thoughts with others. After all, we all knew that abortion is murder and that there is no room for question or discussion. However, questions and discussions, based on what Scripture actually says, help us to grow in the Lord.

The fact that the previous Supreme Court decision did not force anyone to have an abortion is perhaps the main reason I had not spent too much time thinking about the abortion issue. That is, it didn't force believers to sin or compromise our faith. I was 16 years old at the time of the decision, and I doubt that I had even thought about abortion before then. Furthermore, for reasons that I will address in this study, I began to believe that Christians, including some of my relatives and personal friends, were being hypocritical in their reaction to abortion and efforts to end it in this country. Now, at the age of 66, became the time to see for myself what the Bible says about abortion.

### **First Things First**

Through this study I will try to convey what I believe God—through His word—says about the subject of abortion. Because Scripture is the basis for my understanding, this study is directed to my fellow brethren—children of God. It is not intended to tell nonbelievers or our governing authorities what to believe or do about abortion. Therefore, I must begin this study by explaining what I mean about being a child of God.

There are quite a few Christian organizations, denominations, independent churches, colleges, pastors, and concerned individuals who have been actively engaged in trying to end abortions in America. However, we need to define the word *Christian*. In the Bible, the word *Christian* is derived from the Greek word *Kristianos*, which appears only three times in the texts used to translate the Bible: Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and I Peter 4:16. Both the *King James Version* (KJV) and the *New American Standard Bible* correctly contain the word *Christian* or *Christians* in *only* these three verses. Furthermore, in these instances the word is used from the perspective of nonbelievers to describe the people who were associated with Christ in some way. There is no indication in Scripture that believers in Christ referred to each other as *Christians*.<sup>2</sup>

Other Bible versions may use *Christian* or *Christians* in more verses, but they replace other Greek words that are more correctly translated as *brethren*, *believers*, *disciples*, or *saints*. I point this out because the word *Christian* is often misused and misunderstood. Furthermore, I'm afraid that most people who identify as a Christian aren't actually children of God—they are Christian according to what they understand or want it to mean instead of in accordance with the word of God. So, let's move beyond the word *Christian* and define what the Bible says about becoming a child of God.

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<sup>2</sup> See my study **Are We Really Christians?** that discusses the word *Christian* in greater detail and how believers referred to each other in the Bible.

First of all, we need to recognize who we are in our natural condition. Everyone sins, and God sees *all* of us as dead in sin and separated from His righteousness and glory. As hard as it may be for us to comprehend, in our natural condition we are children of Satan and without spiritual hope (Ephesians 2:11-12; I Thessalonians 4:13).

**But now apart from the Law [of Moses] the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:21-23)**

**And you [believers] were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience [nonbelievers]. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Ephesians 2:1-3).**

However, God provided a way—*one way*—to be changed from a child of Satan to a child of God. He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for our sins. Christ took our sins upon Himself and paid the price required by God by dying for us on the cross. His death in itself was insufficient, however. God then raised Christ up from the dead. It is that power of resurrection that ensures the forgiveness of our sins and eternal life in Christ. Because He was raised from death to life, we have life in Christ (Romans 6:3-11).

**He [God the Father] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:21)**

**In Him [Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses [sins], according to the riches of His grace. (Ephesians 1:7)**

**I [Paul] pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His [God's] calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His [God's] might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. (Ephesians 1:18-21)**

**But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:4-7)**

How do we get this forgiveness and eternal life? It is simply this: we are to believe in our heart the gospel (good news) of salvation that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again (Romans 10:8-10). This demonstration of faith acknowledges that we admit that we are sinners in need of salvation and that Christ paid the penalty for us (Colossians 2:13). God saves us by His grace—He only requires belief in the gospel of salvation because no works of righteousness on our part can gain His forgiveness. Upon the moment of belief, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit, meaning that nothing can

separate us from the love of God. That is, because of the love and power of God we can't lose our salvation. Do you believe that Christ died for you?<sup>3</sup>

**Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:1-4)**

**For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)**

**In Him [Christ], you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own [purchased] possession, to the praise of His glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)**

**For I [Paul] am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)**

Among many other blessings we receive by the grace of God when we believe the gospel of salvation, we are considered by God to be His child and righteous in Christ (Romans 8:15-17; II Corinthians 5:21). God considers us to be in Christ at His right hand in the heavens—we are spiritually part of Christ's body (Galatians 3:26-28).

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He [God] chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He [God] predestined us to adoption as sons [children] through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved [our Lord Jesus Christ]. (Ephesians 1:3-6)**

**So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One [Christ] the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:18-19)**

**But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions [sins], made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6)**

**For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His**

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<sup>3</sup> See my studies **Good News!**, **Our Lord Jesus Christ, Which Gospel?**, and others that describe salvation and the blessings we receive when we believe the gospel of salvation.

**glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.** (Philippians 3:20-21)

**For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks [Gentiles], whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.** (I Corinthians 12:12-13)

## **What Does Scripture Say About Abortion?**

The world in which we live is divided about abortion, essentially between the camps of *pro-life* (against abortion) versus *pro-choice* (the right to an abortion). However, my concern is not what *the world* thinks about it. My concern is about what true Christians—members of the body of Christ as described in the previous section—believe about abortion and how we use Scripture to prove our position. I think it is safe to say that a majority of believers, probably even a vast majority, consider ourselves to be *pro-life* and believe that all abortions are wrong because we are certain that an abortion is murder. The purpose of this study is to examine Scripture to see what God says about abortion and how it compares with our beliefs about abortion.

There are a number of verses and passages in Scripture that are used by believers to prove that life begins at conception and progresses in the womb and, therefore, abortion is murder. I have tried to incorporate as many as possible into this study. Perhaps the most-used passage to prove the *pro-life* position is Psalm 139:13-16. For me, Psalm 51:5 has been the verse that proves that abortion is murder, and I needed to find out if I was applying it correctly.

**For You [Lord God] formed my inward parts; You wove [covered] me in my mother's womb. I [David] will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame [body] was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.** (Psalm 139:13-16)

**Behold, I [David] was brought forth [shapen] in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.** (Psalm 51:5)

In searching Scripture, however, I discovered that no Hebrew or Greek word translated as *abortion* appears in the Bible, and there are no verses or passages about a woman terminating her pregnancy. There is only one passage that speaks of an induced miscarriage (Exodus 21:22-25), and only one that refers to what some might consider to be like an abortion (Jeremiah 20:14-18); those passages will be addressed later.

There are doctrines in the Bible that we have given a name that does not exist in the Bible but that are well-founded and true. For example, no Hebrew or Greek word translated as *rapture* appears on the Bible, but the future event we call *the rapture* is a Scriptural truth even though often misunderstood among believers. One has to search Scripture and consider passages in their proper context to

understand the doctrine of the rapture.<sup>4</sup> Can we say the same thing about the doctrine of *pro-life/anti-abortion*?

## What is Abortion?

### Definitions

The definition of abortion has become very complicated due to various perspectives by the legal and medical professions, and the influences by religious interpretations. A general definition of an abortion might be stated as the end of a pregnancy by natural (miscarriage) or induced occurrence. Some definitions, including from my pre-*Roe v. Wade* edition of *The American Heritage Dictionary* are as follows:

“Induced termination of pregnancy before the fetus is capable of survival as an individual; or any fatally premature expulsion of an embryo or fetus from the womb.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1973 edition)

“The termination of a pregnancy after, accompanied by, resulting in, or closely followed by the death of the embryo or fetus.” (*Merriam-Webster*, current on-line edition)

“The expulsion of a fetus from the uterus before it has reached the stage of viability (in human beings, usually about the 20<sup>th</sup> week of gestation). An abortion may occur spontaneously, in which case it is also called a miscarriage, or it may be brought on purposefully, in which case it is often called an induced abortion.” (*The Britannica Dictionary*, current on-line edition)

“Abortion (termination of pregnancy) is the removal of pregnancy tissue, products of conception or the fetus and placenta (afterbirth) from the uterus. In general, the terms fetus and placenta are used after eight weeks of pregnancy. Pregnancy tissue and products of conception refer to tissue produced by the union of an egg and sperm before eight weeks.” (*Harvard Health Publishing*, Harvard Medical School, 2019)

Anti-abortion efforts usually address only induced abortions. However, there are existing or proposed state laws that imply or directly state that a dilation and curettage (D&C) procedure, which often follows a miscarriage, is an abortion. The implication is that miscarriages can be prevented and occur by choice. According to some religious denominations, churches, and clergy, a miscarriage is the consequence of some sin by the woman and, therefore, is a judgment of God on her. Example definitions of a medical miscarriage and a D&C procedure are as follows:

*Miscarriage*: “A condition in which a pregnancy ends too early and does not result in the birth of a live baby.” (*The Britannica Dictionary*, current on-line edition)

*Dilation and curettage (D&C)*: “A procedure to remove tissue from inside the uterus. Health care providers perform dilation and curettage to diagnose and treat certain uterine conditions—such as

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<sup>4</sup> See my studies **The Mystery (God’s Secret Plan)** and **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** that provide scriptural support for the doctrine of the *rapture*. The word *trinity* is not in the Bible, either, but the doctrine of God existing in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—is scripturally correct.

heavy bleeding—or to clear the uterine lining after a miscarriage or abortion.” (*Mayo Clinic*, current on-line edition)

I suspect that very few women who suffer a miscarriage or undergo a D&C consider those events as abortions. Furthermore, I seriously question the motives of those who impose such judgments on women. We’ll see what Scripture says about miscarriage in a subsequent section.

### **Why Do Women Get Abortions?**

There are many reasons that lead women (and girls) to get abortions. The following reasons probably are the most common but do not cover every instance. Abortion is chosen:

- As a form of birth control (e.g., a pregnancy or baby isn’t convenient or wanted by the woman and/or the man).
- Because of a financial or emotional fear of having and raising a child (e.g., no family support system; the father will not be present; fear of what the father may do to the mother or the child; etc.).
- Because the woman’s life is at risk if the pregnancy continues or goes to term due to an ectopic pregnancy, cancer, or other physical or medical issue.
- When the fetus dies or medical tests show that it will die before birth or won’t survive outside the womb.
- When medical tests show that, although the baby likely will live after birth (at least for a while), it will have specific physical or mental challenges that the woman and/or man doesn’t want to deal with or feels incapable of dealing with (emotionally or financially).
- Because the parents of the girl or woman do not want her to have the baby (e.g., an illegitimate child would be a poor reflection on the family; they are afraid they will have to raise their grandchild; etc.).
- To end a pregnancy due to rape or incest.

### **Common Teaching About Abortion**

As legal abortion (often with limitations) became a common practice in all states after the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, various organizations and individuals who consider themselves to be *Christian* began a list of beliefs that has evolved and expanded over time. Although not all of them are in complete agreement, the following tenants of faith regarding abortion are fairly common.

- Life begins at conception. That is, God considers us to be living beings (persons) at the moment that a woman’s egg is fertilized by the man’s sperm.
- Because life begins at conception, all abortions are murder.
- Unborn babies have the same rights as a living person.
- Depending on the denomination, aborted babies have no choice or chance to be saved, or all aborted babies go to heaven, or both.
- If America turns back to God (e.g., stops aborting babies), then there won’t be a need for abortion and women won’t even experience miscarriages.

Not only are these beliefs taught in many of our churches, I’m convinced that they are the underlying reasons behind current anti-abortion legislation in many of our states. Consequently, many

Christians agree with, and praise God for, this legislation. Furthermore, those who are active in *pro-life* organizations take credit for influencing the Supreme Court to make its recent decision and the state governments to enact restrictive abortion laws or outlaw abortions entirely.

### **A Bible Passage About Abortion?**

As I mentioned earlier, there is only one Bible passage that refers to what some might consider to be about abortion; however, it is presented in a hypothetical context. In it, Jeremiah laments that he wasn't killed before his birth so that his mother would have been his grave.

**Cursed be the day when I was born; let the day not be blessed when my mother bore me! Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, saying, "A baby boy has been born to you!" And made him very happy. But let that man be like the cities which the Lord overthrew without relenting, and let him hear an outcry in the morning and a shout of alarm at noon; because he did not kill me before birth, so that my mother would have been my grave, and her womb ever pregnant. Why did I ever come forth from the womb to look on trouble and sorrow, so that my days have been spent in shame?** (Jeremiah 20:14-18)

Jeremiah's life was difficult because he was a prophet. As a prophet of God, he was rejected by the people of God (Israel) because he spoke the truth of God (see Acts 7:51-53). There was a time, when he was at a particularly low point in his life, that he wished he hadn't been born, to the degree that it would have been better if he had been killed in the womb of his mother. However, he realized in his time of distress and persecution that he was actually delivered by God (Jeremiah 20:11-13). I hope that it is understood that this passage isn't about his mother terminating her pregnancy, so it isn't really about abortion and can't be used to support or condemn abortion. Therefore, there are no Bible verses or passages that refer to abortion.

### **The Emotional Trauma of an Abortion**

Because I'm not a woman, I can't describe the emotional trauma that some, or perhaps many, women experience as a result of an abortion. However, from what I have read and from observing a relative who experienced an abortion, many are devastated (initially or later) and carry emotional scars the remainder of their lives. This saddens me, particularly when it involves my sisters in Christ, and it makes me want to help them through their distress.

Again, please bear with me as I describe the possible reasons for this trauma as I understand it from my very limited perspective. The woman's emotional scars may be attributable, at least partially, to one or more of the following reasons:

- Because of her religious upbringing, she is afraid that she committed murder. Or, in retrospect, she believes that she did commit murder.
- She is judged by her family or friends as a murderer and is ostracized by them.
- She second guesses her decision, wondering what kind of child she would have had and the life she would have shared with it, or if it would have been better to go through with the delivery and give the child up for adoption.
- She wishes she hadn't followed the recommendation of others to abort the child and had resolved and acted upon her own feelings and desires.

- She blames herself for getting pregnant in the first place.

These reasons and others are real and they are powerful. Whatever her reason for getting an abortion, she is remorseful or extremely unsettled and can't seem to leave it in her past and move on. I find myself sympathizing with a woman who is agonizing over her abortion. I try to address how to move forward after having an abortion in a later section.

## When Does Life Start?

When does life actually start? Does life start:

- At the moment of conception, when the woman's egg cell is fertilized by the man's sperm cell?
- When the fetus' heart begins to beat?
- When a fetus can survive outside the womb *without* medical support?
- When a fetus can survive outside the womb *with* medical support?
- When a delivered baby takes its first breath?

Medical science can be used, correctly or incorrectly, to support all of these positions. Most Christians, however, support the first point because the entire abortion issue centers on life beginning at conception. I have believed that life begins at conception most of my adult life. Let's examine Scripture to try to understand what God says about life.

### Conception

Everyone who has ever lived was first conceived. The people in Bible times didn't know the medical science of conception or the development of the embryo. They didn't understand that a sperm cell from the man fertilized an egg cell of the women, and that an embryo developed through cell division. They had no concept of chromosomes or their function. However, they understood conception—that somehow the man's *seed* impregnated the woman through sexual intercourse and that a child developed in the womb. We have only understood the medical processes of conception and gestation in recent times.

Conception has always been a natural consequence of sexual intercourse—that is how God made us (Genesis 4:1). When conception is mentioned in Scripture, it is often in the context of God opening a woman's womb and enabling her to conceive. That is, her womb had been closed by the will of God until He opened it for a specific conception. I don't believe that this was the normal process, because when these occasions are mentioned, they led to the birth of a certain child that became important in the plan and purpose of God (e.g., Genesis 21:1-3; I Samuel 1:19-20; Luke 1:11-25). Women who tried to have children but were unable to get pregnant were referred to as *barren* in Scripture (Genesis 11:30; Judges 13:2-3). Under normal (non-miraculous) circumstances, we now know that the inability to get pregnant is because of some abnormal condition within the woman, the man, or both.

**Now the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, "Because the Lord has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me." (Genesis 29:31-32)**

**Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” She named him Joseph, saying, “May the Lord give me another son.”** (Genesis 30:22-24)

**So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the Lord enabled her to conceive [gave her conception], and she gave birth to a son.**<sup>5</sup> (Ruth 4:13)

In the books of Acts through Revelation, we don't see references to God opening the wombs of specific women to conceive specific children. Apparently, therefore, we don't have the promise that God will open the womb of a woman who petitions God for a child—that occurrence seems to have been reserved for the nation of Israel in accordance with God's prophetic plan for that nation. Personally, however, I consider the conceptions of my three daughters as miracles of God even though I understand the natural process of conception—God created natural processes.

Brethren, the world does not understand this, and I think many believers don't understand it either, but everyone is conceived in sin. Only one verse in the Bible directly says this, but it is this verse that convinced me many years ago that life begins at conception.

**Behold, I [David] was brought forth [shapen] in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.** (Psalm 51:5)

In this context of this verse, David was not saying that the act of sexual intercourse between his parents was sinful, although some denominations interpret the verse as saying that it was, and is, sinful. Instead, I believe this verse is saying that God considers us to be sinful at the moment of conception. There is no tool of medical science that can detect our sinful nature when we are an embryo but, according to God, that is when we inherited it. Therefore, we are spiritually dead in sin before birth, and we remain so until we become alive in Christ when we believe that He died for our sins (I Corinthians 15:1-4, 20-22).

**And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience [nonbelievers]. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions [sins], made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him [God] in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.** (Ephesians 2:1-6)

There is no evidence of our sinful nature until after we are born and begin to sin. I won't go into a discourse on what some believers consider to be the so-called *age of accountability* (this concept is not in the Bible), but children exhibit the sinful traits of disobedience and defiance (and other sins) at a very young age, even before they can talk. I don't believe they are choosing to sin at that time (i.e., they can't process the difference between right and wrong), but are naturally doing so because they were born with the sin nature. Brethren, we need to face the fact that we were born spiritually dead because we were conceived in sin.

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<sup>5</sup> Ruth's son was Obed, who was in the lineage of King David and of Christ (Ruth 4:16-21; Matthew 1:1-6).

Because of their sinfulness and disobedience to God, God will withhold the ability to conceive from the people of Ephraim<sup>6</sup> as part of His judgments against them. Please note that when this judgment occurs sometime in the future (after the rapture), there will be no births because there will be no pregnancies, and there will be no pregnancies because there will be no conceptions. Furthermore, those who are pregnant when this judgment is instituted will suffer miscarriage. Brethren, God is sovereign in all things, and I'll address His sovereignty later in the context of this study.

**As for Ephraim, their glory will fly away like a bird—no birth, no pregnancy and no conception! Though they bring up their children, yet I [the Lord God] will bereave them until not a man is left. Yes, woe to them indeed when I depart from them! Ephraim, as I have seen, is planted in a pleasant meadow like Tyre; but Ephraim will bring out his children for slaughter. Give them, O Lord—what will You give? Give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts. (Hosea 9:11-14)**

What about our Lord Jesus Christ when He was conceived, born, and lived and died as a man? Was He conceived in sin, also? No. First of all, we know that Jesus the human was sinless because He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf (i.e., He took our sins upon Himself and paid our penalty by dying for us on the cross).

**He [God the Father] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (II Corinthians 5:21)**

Whereas all naturally conceived humans have a human father (one way or another), Jesus' father was not Joseph but God the Father (Luke 3:21-23). Mary was truly a virgin when she conceived and remained so until the birth of Jesus, after which she and Joseph had additional (sinful) children (Matthew 1:24-25; Mark 6:1-4; John 2:12). Her egg was fertilized by God in a miraculous way (somehow through the Holy Spirit) that is not explained in Scripture (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35)—in a way that we can only accept by faith that it occurred.

The fact that David understood that he was sinful because he was conceived in sin, and that we know that Jesus wasn't sinful, strongly suggests that our sin nature is passed onto each and every person through the human father. Only Jesus was sinless because His Father is sinless. Although our sin nature manifests itself through sinful thoughts, words, and actions, it is a spiritual condition and not a physical condition; therefore, it can't be detected through medical science.

## **Formed in the Womb**

Everyone who ever lived was formed in the womb after conception. The Bible says that God fashioned us in the womb. Furthermore, for some people at least, the Bible says that God knew them while in the womb (e.g., David, Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul).<sup>7</sup> As stated earlier in this study, Psalm 139:13-16 is perhaps the key passage used by *pro-life* advocates to prove that life begins in the womb. This and other similar passages appear to support that position. As with everything in Scripture,

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<sup>6</sup> Ephraim was a half-tribe of the family of Joseph (Genesis 48; Joshua 14:4). However, in this context, *Ephraim* probably refers to some or all the tribes of Samaria (subsequently referred to as *Israel*—as differentiated from *Judah*—in the Old Testament) that had broken off from Judah (Benjamin aligned with Judah) and the house of David (Hosea 6:4; 7:1; I Kings 12:16-19; Isaiah 9:8-9).

<sup>7</sup> Brethren, God knows all things but hasn't revealed all things; these people are simply examples where Scripture says that he knew them in the womb. God has known every child of His since the beginning.

however, we need to take all Scripture into consideration before drawing a decisive conclusion on a particular subject.

**Yet You are He who brought me [David] forth from [took me out of] the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb. (Psalm 22:9-10)**

**For You [the Lord God] formed my [David's] inward parts; You wove [covered] me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame [body] was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. (Psalm 139:13-16)**

**Listen to Me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord [God] called Me [Jesus Christ/Messiah] from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me [made mention of my name]. (Isaiah 49:1)**

**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.<sup>8</sup> You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 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. (Luke 1:13-15)**

**But when God, who had set me [Paul] apart [separated me] even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. (Galatians 1:15-17)**

Every woman who has been successfully pregnant for a certain period of time knows the miraculous feeling of her unborn child's movement within her. She can feel her unborn child's repositioning and stretching, its hiccups, and sometimes its reaction to outside stimulus (e.g., talking, sounds, her movements, etc.). We have examples of this amazing feeling in Scripture.

**Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If it is so, why then am I this way?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger." When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. (Genesis 25:21-24)**

**When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And how has it happened to me, that the mother**

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<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth's son would be known as John the Baptist (Luke 3:1-6; Matthew 3:1-3).

**of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.” (Luke 1:41-44)**

Aren't these two passages definitive proof that our lives begin in the womb? We know that Rebekah's sons were born and became Jacob (later known as Israel) and Esau, and that Elizabeth's son became John the Baptist, and how God used them for His purposes. However, do they mean that God considered them to be living *beings* while in the womb? Let's continue to examine Scripture.

## **Miscarriage**

As stated previously, the medical definition of a miscarriage is when a pregnancy ends too early and does not result in the birth of a live baby. The Bible refers to miscarriage in this way, describing miscarriage as an *untimely birth*, or that the woman *gives birth prematurely (her fruit departs for her)*. An untimely birth suggests that miscarriage also covers the situations where a baby has a full-term gestation but is born dead (a stillbirth), and born alive and then dies shortly thereafter because it couldn't survive for some reason (Job 3:11-16).

Miscarriage is actually a very common occurrence after conception. Among people who know they are pregnant, about 10 to 20 percent of the pregnancies will end in miscarriage. Many more miscarriages occur in women before they even know they are pregnant (mayoclinic.org). From a medical science perspective there are many reasons that miscarriages occur, usually resulting from some abnormality within the developing embryo or fetus. Some miscarriages may be influenced by the woman's actions such as smoking, drinking alcohol, taking certain drugs, or overall poor health during pregnancy (e.g., the woman is malnourished, sickly, stricken with cancer, etc.). Miscarriages can also occur at any stage of pregnancy because of a physical injury to the woman.

There are some who teach that a miscarriage occurs as a result of some unconfessed sin by the woman. They believe that if only she didn't sin and was completely submissive to God, then she wouldn't have experienced a miscarriage. Furthermore, some believe if that we (America or mankind) would only turn back to God and obey His commandments, then we will not experience any miscarriages. They use a couple of Bible verses to prove their position. However, they are using the Bible incorrectly, because they don't understand the difference between God's prophetic program involving Israel and its promised kingdom, and this dispensation of grace that has nothing to do with Israel's warnings and promises.<sup>9</sup>

**“Behold, I [*the Lord God*] am going to send an angel before you to guard you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Be on your guard before him and obey his voice; do not be rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him. But if you truly obey his voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will completely destroy them. You shall not worship their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds [*works*]; but you shall utterly overthrow them and break their sacred pillars**

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<sup>9</sup> See my studies **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)**, **Our Lord Jesus Christ**, and **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** that discuss the differences of God's programs and commands regarding the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God.

**[images] in pieces. But you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I [God] will remove sickness from your midst. There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.”** (Exodus 23:20-26)

We’ve already looked at Hosea 9:11-14 regarding the judgments of Ephraim involving no conceptions or births; the judgments will also include miscarriages for the women who are pregnant at the time the judgments begin (Hosea 9:14). The above passage from Exodus is part of God’s commandments and promises to Israel through Moses for when they entered their land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Please note that *if* they obeyed *everything* that God commanded them, then no woman *of Israel* would be barren or suffer a miscarriage (among other blessings).

Israel, however, was disobedient (i.e., they didn’t destroy all the nations in the land of Canaan prepared for them and they did serve their idols) so the nation *never* experienced those blessings. Not until they enter their prophesied kingdom when Christ is King will they experience these blessings. They will do so at that time because their hearts will be changed so that they will no longer sin, and they will be miraculously obedient to all of God’s commands according to His will (Ezekiel 36:22-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34). Brethren, these promises don’t and can’t apply to America or any other country—we were never God’s chosen nation and we’ll never turn to God and be sinless. We are not Israel nor are we spiritual Israel as many teach in the name of God. We can’t claim God’s national promises to Israel.

How is miscarriage portrayed in Scripture? If we were formed in the womb and God knew us in the womb, then it is not a stretch to think that a miscarriage is an end of a life. It may be a surprise to many brethren to see what the Bible actually says about miscarriage.

**“Why did I [Job] not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me, and why the breasts, that I should suck? For now I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept [died] then, I would have been at rest, with kings and with counselors of the earth, who rebuilt ruins for themselves; or with princes who had gold, who were filling their houses with silver. Or like a miscarriage [untimely birth] which is discarded [hidden], I would not be, as infants that never saw light.”** (Job 3:11-16)

**O God, shatter their [wicked men’s] teeth in their mouth; break out the fangs of the young lions, O Lord. Let them flow away like water that runs off; when he aims his arrows, let them be as headless shafts. Let them be as a snail which melts away [has disappearing slime] as it goes along, like the miscarriages [untimely births] of a woman which never see the sun.** (Psalm 58:6-8)

**If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, however many they be, but his soul is not satisfied with good things and he does not even have a proper burial, then I say, “Better the miscarriage [untimely birth] than he, for it comes in futility and goes into obscurity; and its name is covered in obscurity. It never sees the sun and it never knows anything; it is better off [has more rest] than he.”** (Ecclesiastes 6:3-5)

Please read these passages carefully. Regarding miscarriage, we find:

- A miscarriage is a discarded infant that never sees the light of day.
- A miscarriage is considered in the same context as the slime that disappears as a snail moves forward.

- A miscarried fetus comes in futility and goes into obscurity, its name is covered in obscurity, it never sees the sun, and it never knows anything.

These are sobering passages with a message that is difficult for us to comprehend because it does not fit how many of us think today. These untimely births imply that the unborn children were alive, but that they were not considered to be persons (i.e., living beings)—they didn't have a name and it was as if they never existed. Here is another passage that is also often overlooked or misunderstood among brethren.

**“If men struggle with each other and strike a woman with child so that she gives birth prematurely [her fruit depart from her], yet there is no injury [to the woman], he shall surely be fined as the woman’s husband may demand of him, and he shall pay as the judges decide. But if there is any further injury [to the woman], then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”** (Exodus 21:22-25)

In this case, which was written as part of the Law of Moses (a commandment of God to Israel—Exodus 20:1; 21:1), a pregnant woman loses her unborn child through miscarriage due to a struggle between two men. In other words, the woman is inadvertently struck during the struggle, which results in the miscarriage. The loss of the fetus is considered to be as the loss of property (Exodus 22:1-5); that is, the woman’s husband could be compensated for the projected worth of the child had it been born and lived. If the woman was injured or killed, then the perpetrator would be judged to suffer in the same way. Brethren, if this situation occurred today, the *pro-life* position would be that the unborn child was murdered (perhaps legally designated as *manslaughter* or *criminally negligent homicide*); however, the Law of Moses doesn't support our current thinking (nor does anything else in Scripture).

### ***Personal Experience***

My wife, Linda, experienced two (and probably three) miscarriages as we were trying to start a family together. As a married couple, we experienced them together. Initially, we both felt a profound sense of loss (I tried to comfort Linda as best I could) and the difficult realization that we might not be able to have children. Thankfully, our faith was strong and before long we remembered that God was working everything out according to His will. If that meant having no children, then so be it. God gave us each other, and that was more than enough. There was the possibility of adoption, but we hadn't really thought much about it at that point. As it turned out, we were blessed with three children—the last two as twins!<sup>10</sup>

### **The Breath of Life**

The previous passages about miscarriage suggest that the miscarried fetus or child is as if it never existed. Please consider that the unborn child can't survive without the woman's uterus and placenta, and the umbilical cord between the placenta and the fetus (which is cut *after* the baby is born). In the quest to understand the definition of life or the beginning of life—according to God's revealed perspective—please carefully read and consider the following passages.

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<sup>10</sup> We believe that the third suspected miscarriage was the loss of a twin embryo during our first successful pregnancy.

**Then the Lord God formed man [Adam] of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and [the] man became a living being [soul]. (Genesis 2:7)**

**“Behold, I [the Lord God], even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.” (Genesis 6:17)**

**So they [every beast] went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life. (Genesis 7:15)**

**All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind [every man]; of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life [the breath of life], died. (Genesis 7:21-22)**

**But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; and the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; and let the fish of the sea declare to you. Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this, in whose hand is the life [soul] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind? (Job 12:7-10)**

**Then Job continued his discourse [parable] and said, “As God lives, who has taken away my right [judgment], and the Almighty, who has embittered my soul, for as long as life [my breath] is in me, and the breath [spirit] of God is in my nostrils, my lips certainly will not speak unjustly, nor will my tongue mutter deceit.” (Job 27:1-4)**

**You [the Lord God] hide Your face, they [the sea animals] are dismayed; You take away their spirit [breath], they expire [die] and return to their dust. (Psalm 104:29)**

**Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord while I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. Do not trust in princes, in mortal man, in whom there is no salvation. His spirit [breath] departs, he returns to the earth [ground]; in that very day his thoughts perish. (Psalm 146:1-4)**

**Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord! (Psalm 150:6)**

**I said to myself concerning the sons of men, “God has surely tested them in order for them to see that they are but beasts.” For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies so dies the other; indeed, they all have the same breath and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity. (Ecclesiastes 3:18-19)**

**Stop regarding man, whose breath of life [breath] is in his nostrils; for why should he be esteemed? (Isaiah 2:22)**

**Thus says God the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it. (Isaiah 42:5)**

**“Yet you, his [King Nebuchadnezzar’s] son, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, even though you knew all this, but you have exalted yourself against the Lord of heaven; and they [Belshazzar’s people] have brought the vessels of His [God’s] house before you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines have been drinking wine from them; and you have praised the gods of**

**silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which do not see, hear or understand. But the God in whose hand are your life-breath [breath] and your ways, you have not glorified.”** (Daniel 5:22-23)

**“The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served [worshipped] by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things.”** (Acts 17:24-25)

**Only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things [abominations] which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the Lord your God.** (Deuteronomy 20:16-18)

**Then Joshua turned back at that time, and captured Hazor and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms. They struck every person [all the souls] who was in it with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was no one left who breathed. And he burned Hazor with fire.** (Joshua 11:10-11; see also Joshua 6:15-21; 10:40; 11:12-15)

**Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people.** (Genesis 25:8; see also Genesis 25:17; 35:29; 49:33; Acts 5:5, 10)

Please think about the following takeaways from the above passages:

- God gave Adam the breath of life and *he became a living being*.
- God gives every person the breath of life.
- In the land covered by the flood of Noah’s day, everything with the breath of life—man *and* animal—was destroyed.
- When Israel entered its promised land—the land of Canaan—they were to destroy every person who had breath (as commanded by God through Moses—Joshua 11:15); for Jericho, the destruction included every man, woman, child, and their livestock (Joshua 6:21).
- Everything with breath—man and animal—dies and returns to dust.
- We die when we breathe our last breath.

It would appear from the above passages, then, that God defines living things, whether mankind or animals, as having breath. They became alive with their first breath, and died with their last breath. At the time of the flood and when Israel entered Canaan, certainly there were pregnant women among all the women who were killed, and yet their unborn are never listed among those being destroyed—they had not taken their first breath yet.

## **What is a Mother?**

When is a woman a mother? I think the answer is obvious to most of us, but here are some common definitions.

“A female that has borne an offspring, or who has adopted a child or otherwise established a maternal relationship with another person.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1973 edition)

“A female parent.” (*Merriam-Webster, The Britannica Dictionary, Cambridge English Dictionary*, current on-line editions)

A mother, therefore, is a woman who has a child whom she has given birth, has adopted, or been given custody or guardianship and is raising the child as her own. Until that time, she is not a mother even if she is pregnant. We don't give Mother's Day cards to childless women, or to pregnant women who don't have children.

### **What is a Child?**

The word *child* is used in two different ways in Scripture. The first has to do with the fetus before birth, when a pregnant woman is referred to as being *with child*. As we saw in a previous section, however, a child is not considered to be a living being until it breathes. Once the child is born, it is referred to as a child, or as a son or daughter, and is named.

**Moreover, the angel of the Lord said to her [Hagar], “I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.” The angel of the Lord said to her further, “Behold, you are with child, and you will bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael, because the Lord has given heed to your affliction. He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; and he will live to the east [in the presence] of all his brothers.”** (Genesis 16:10-12)

**“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child [conceive] and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”** (Isaiah 7:14)

**Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together [had sexual intercourse] she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 1:18)

**Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, “If it is so, why then am I this way?” So she went to inquire of the Lord. The Lord said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.” When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.** (Genesis 25:21-24)

**Then Esau ran to meet him [Jacob] and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, “Who are these with you?” So he said, “The children whom God has graciously given your servant.”** (Genesis 33:4-5)

**She [Hanna] said, “Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you [Eli the priest], praying to the Lord. For this boy [Samuel] I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of Him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.** (I Samuel 1:26-28)

**Behold, children are a gift of the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. (Psalm 127:3-4)**

**Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)**

**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline [nurture] and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)**

**When I [*Paul*] was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. (I Corinthians 13:11)**

### **What is a Lifespan?**

If a man dies at the ripe old age of 93, his years are measured from the time he was born; i.e., he *lived* 93 years. If we talk about our 3-month-old grandson, his age is measured from the time he was born. Life was measured this way in Scripture, also (e.g., Genesis 5:8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, 31; Deuteronomy 4:9; 30:15-20; Joshua 1:5; Proverbs 3:1-2).

**Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. (Genesis 23:1)**

**These are all [the days of] the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people. (Genesis 25:7-8)**

**There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven—a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2)**

The gestational period is never described as nine months in Scripture; it only says in a few instances that a woman gave birth when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, her days were completed, or her hour has come. However, the gestational period is never included in a person's age.

**When her [*Rebekah's*] days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. (Genesis 25:24)**

**Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there the days were completed [accomplished] for her to give birth [be delivered]. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:4-7)**

**"Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world." (John 16:21)**

## When Did God Know Us?

It is now time to address the Scripture passage at the very beginning of this study. A common belief among those who hold to *pro-life* teaching is that aborted babies are not given a chance to choose salvation and, therefore, there are fewer Christians in the world than there should be. Furthermore, if there were more Christians, then we would have a more godly nation and enjoy greater blessings from God as promised in the Bible. Brethren, Scripture does not support these lines of thought.

We have seen that everyone who has ever lived was first conceived in sin and then formed in the womb. We have seen several examples in Scripture where it says that God knew specific individuals and set them apart for His service while in the womb. Brethren, when did God actually know us believers as His children in Christ? Please read the following passages carefully and prayerfully. Hopefully you will see that God knew us since *before* the foundation of the earth—long before we were physically conceived.

**Now the word of the Lord came to me [Jeremiah] saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated [sanctified] you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations.”** (Jeremiah 1:4-5)

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us [believers—children of God] with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons [children] through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us [made us accepted] in the Beloved.** (Ephesians 1:3-6)

**And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He [Christ] would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.** (Romans 8:28-30)

**And He [God] did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory, even us, whom He also called, not from among the Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.** (Romans 9:23-24)

**Also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His [God’s] purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will.** (Ephesians 1:11)

**But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning [eternity] for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.** (II Thessalonians 2:13-14)

**Who [God] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity [before the world began].** (II Timothy 1:9)

One particular truth of Scripture that most children of God (believers) struggle with or simply refuse to believe is the subject of predestination, which is referred to in the above passages. We have been taught to believe that our salvation is solely our choice—we become saved when we choose to accept Jesus Christ as our Savior. This implies that God is hoping that we will choose to be saved and is thankful when we do so. Brethren, this is not how God works.<sup>11</sup>

As we have seen from Scripture, miscarried fetuses—those who are untimely born—are as if they never existed. As hard as it may be for us to comprehend, I now believe that aborted fetuses should be considered the same way—as if they never existed. Everyone whom God has chosen for salvation was conceived, formed in the womb, physically born, and given the breath of life. No act on our part, whether it be through contraception or abortion, can stop the birth and life of one whom God has chosen for salvation since before the foundation of the earth.

Please consider the following question: “Is God subject to our will, or are we subject to His will?” If we believe that the practice of abortion is thwarting God’s plan for us and the world, then we are saying that God is subject to our will. We are saying that His decisions are dependent on what we decide to do. Brethren, this is not what God says about Himself in the Bible—He is the Almighty, sovereign God, and nothing happens that He hasn’t planned or permitted to happen according to His predetermined plan.

Through the Bible, God has provided everything we need to know about what He has done for us (through Christ) and His plans for His people and the world. However, God has only enabled His children to understand the Bible; the nonbelieving people of the world can’t understand the things of God or understand what God has in store for them. Unfortunately, believers—all believers—struggle with understanding the things of God because we still have the sin nature within us that opposes the truth of God (Romans 7:21-25). Therefore, we can only understand the things that God opens our eyes to understand—everything is by the grace of God (Acts 16:14).

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [doctrine], for reproof, for correction, for training [instruction] in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped [thoroughly furnished] for every good work. (II Timothy 3:16-17)**

**But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised [discerned]. (I Corinthians 2:14)**

**For this reason I [Paul] too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints [fellow brethren], do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His**

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<sup>11</sup> Brethren, we were dead in our sins until we were made alive in Christ—by God (Ephesians 2:1-10). No one who has ever died has decided or chosen to come back to life—not even Christ (Ephesians 1:18-23; Acts 2:29-35). Please see my study **Salvation and the Sovereignty of God** that attempts to explain the scriptural truth of predestination in the context of God’s sovereign will.

**right hand in the heavenly places, for above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** (Ephesians 1:15-21)

### **So, When Does Life Start?**

Most children of God, and many others in the world, believe that life starts at conception. This is the position I unswervingly held to since early adulthood. We believers have used Scripture to prove our position. Does this mean that God considered us to be living persons before we were born? Most of us would intuitively and emphatically answer “Yes!” However, we need to discern between what we believe Scripture says and what it actually says. As a reminder, here are some of the conclusions from the previous sections regarding God’s perspective of the beginning of life:

- Everyone *who has ever lived* was conceived and formed (fearfully and wonderfully made) in the womb.
- A miscarried embryo or fetus (a child *untimely born*) is considered by God as if it never existed (at least as He has revealed it to us in Scripture—Romans 11:33-36); it never saw the light of day or had taken its first breath.
- People (and animals) are given the breath of life by God. God considers us to be alive because we breathe, and dead when we no longer breathe.
- A mother is someone who has a child by some means and has raised it as her own child.
- Although a pregnant woman is considered to be *with child*, a child is someone who has been born and is reared to become an adult.<sup>12</sup>
- Our lifespan is measured from the time of our birth—our first breath, to the time of our death—our last breath.
- God knew His children *before* conception; in fact, He knew us *before* the foundation of the world. No abortion, or anything else, can thwart God’s plan and purpose for His people and the world.

Therefore, I’m convinced (from God’s revealed perspective) that life starts after a successful birth when we start to breathe and continue to live. In addition to the passages about miscarriage and the breath of life provided earlier, perhaps I can clarify my conclusion to some extent.

From the perspective of those of us who are alive, life started at conception. The key phrase, however, is *those of us who are alive*. When David was writing that he was conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5) and that he was formed in the womb (Psalm 139:13-16), he was speaking from the perspective of one who had been born and later matured into a man. If he hadn’t been conceived or born (or if he had been conceived but hadn’t been born), then it would have been as if he had never existed—he wouldn’t have been able to write how God brought him into being. Miscarriage is described this way in Scripture, even when it is triggered by a sinful action (e.g., fighting between two men—Exodus 21:22-25). I believe we should consider abortion in a similar fashion. I am not saying here that abortion is right or wrong—in fact, I believe it is the wrong choice in most cases as I will discuss later—but I no longer consider it to be the end of a life in the eyes of God.

During my wife’s pregnancies, we decided not to find out the gender of our unborn children prior to their births. When my wife was pregnant with twins, which was confirmed six weeks prior to their

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<sup>12</sup> However, many children, for a multitude of reasons, don’t live long enough to become adults.

delivery, we picked out names for two daughters, two sons, and a daughter and a son. We greeted our first daughter by name as she was delivered, and then greeted our second daughter by name as she was delivered. If either one or both had tragically died shortly after birth, we would have still known them by their names and would have mourned them as our lost children (this isn't supported by Scripture, but I think we would have responded that way). We most certainly would have mourned if they had not survived the pregnancy (i.e., they miscarried or were stillborn), but we would not have known them as our children—they had not lived; their lives had never started.<sup>13</sup>

## Is Abortion Murder?

Since *Roe v. Wade* was passed in 1973, outspoken Americans who profess to be Christians believe that every abortion is murder and that America is guilty of killing literally millions of unborn children (because there have been many millions of abortions in America since then, and an untold number before then). Consequently, there has been a concerted and growing effort to overturn that ruling, and God is now being praised that it finally has been overturned. Now, I believe the focus of the *pro-life* movement will be to make sure all states outlaw all abortions. It is probably unlikely that all states will do so (unless subsequent Supreme Court decisions overturn specific state decisions to allow abortions), but the effort to end all abortion will continue nevertheless.

There are several legal levels of murder regarding how it is prosecuted, including murder in the first, second, or third degree; manslaughter; criminally negligent homicide; etc. Even the Bible implies different levels of murder (Exodus 21:12-14). Basic definitions say that murder is “the crime of unlawfully killing a person, especially with malice aforethought” (*Merriam-Webster*, current on-line edition), or “the unjustified killing of one person by another” (*The Britannica Dictionary*, current on-line edition). In these and similar legal definitions, murder involves the unlawful killing of *another person*.

This definition of murder holds up in Scripture. There is a distinction between lawful and unlawful killing, and murder is always associated with unlawful deaths. Even King David was guilty of murder when he ordered the death of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, to cover up his adultery with her (II Samuel 11:14-25).

**“You shall not murder [kill].”** (Exodus 20:13)

**“Surely I [God] will require your lifeblood [blood of your lives]; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, for every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.** (Genesis 9:5-6)

**“If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death.”** (Leviticus 24:17)

**And He [Jesus] was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders,**

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<sup>13</sup> I admit that this would be our perspective today—I'm not sure how we would have reacted to a stillbirth. However, we had already experienced miscarriages before our first child was born, and we didn't consider them as losing children. Our principal concerns at the time were my wife's health (due to possible complications associated with a miscarriage) and whether she would ever be able to bear children.

**adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”** (Mark 7:20-23)

**But we know that the Law [of Moses] is good, if one uses it lawfully [correctly], realizing the fact that [the] law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I [Paul] have been entrusted.** (I Timothy 1:8-11)

Under the Law of Moses, the punishment for murder was death (Exodus 21:12). Brethren, we ought to be thankful that God took the Law out of the way—He nailed it to the cross with Christ (Colossians 2:13-14; Galatians 3:10-14; Romans 6:14). Furthermore, believers in this dispensation of grace are not instructed to demand or impute the death penalty for murder (we leave those decisions to the laws of our governing authorities). For those who disagree, then we should comply with the entire Law of Moses and also demand the death penalty for not keeping the Sabbath day laws (Exodus 20:8-10; 31:14-15), hitting or cursing our father or mother (Exodus 20:12; 21:15, 17), and committing adultery (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10). Please think about these things.

Although abortion is not referenced in the Bible, those who believe that abortion is murder point to Bible passages mentioning the shedding of *innocent blood*. Those passages, however, address killing *people* who do not deserve to die, including children (*sons* and *daughters*) who were being sacrificed to idols by their Israelite parents. However, there is nothing in Scripture that enables us to include deaths of the unborn in this context.

**“Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I [God] will not acquit [justify] the guilty.”** (Exodus 23:7)

**They [Israel] did not destroy the peoples [the nations in the land of Canaan], as the Lord commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and learned their practices, and served their idols, which became a snare to them. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; and the land was polluted with the blood. Thus they became unclean in their practices, and played the harlot in their deeds.** (Psalm 106:34-39)

**There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: haughty eyes [a proud look], a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife [discord] among brothers.** (Proverbs 6:16-19)

In the study to this point, I have addressed the Bible verses and passages that are used by Christians to prove that life begins at conception and that abortions, therefore, are considered by God to be murder. As I attempted to prove my similar position through Scripture, however, I began to see things differently.

The first thing I learned, through the use of my concordances,<sup>14</sup> was that the Bible does not mention abortion or what we consider to be abortion. Because, by definition, miscarriage is considered to be a natural abortion in today's medical terminology, I needed to see what Scripture says about miscarriage. It does talk about miscarriage as an untimely birth, but does not consider it to be the end of a life. As I then investigated what God says about life, I began to see that He considers life to be from the time of our first breath to the time of our last breath.

These were all new discoveries to me as I prepared this study. I also investigated the Internet, looking for Bible verses on abortion. There are numerous Christian websites that address abortion, and many of them list verses about abortion. Most of the sites admitted that the Bible doesn't directly speak to abortion, but they all say that there are plenty of verses that tell us that abortion is not only wrong but is murder. I looked up *all* of the verses in the first several websites that came up in my search, one of which listed 83 verses or passages (StillFaith.com). As I had discovered through my search in my concordances, not one of the verses addressed abortion. Instead, they primarily spoke of conception, forming in the womb, miscarriage, birth, babies, children, the wonders of life, and murder, many of which are included in this study. Several of the sites listed verses from Numbers 5:11-31 that describes the test for infidelity under the Law of Moses; however, that passage has nothing to do with the woman being pregnant or about abortion. They did not list (or properly explain), however, the passages about miscarriage (i.e., the fate of the *untimely born*) or the definitions of life and lifespan (i.e., first breath to last breath) presented in this study.

Brethren, if God considers abortion to be murder, why doesn't the Bible specifically say so? The Law of Moses covers nearly every sinful act known to man. What isn't specifically covered in the Law was addressed in Proverbs (e.g., sins associated with pride—Proverbs 16:18-19; 21:4, 24; 29:23), by Jesus (e.g., the intent of the heart and not just the act of sin—Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 33-37), and in Paul's letters (e.g., the deeds of the flesh—I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:17-19; 5:3-6, 18; Colossians 3:5-9; I Timothy 6:10). Abortion is never in the list of sins.

Again, if God considered abortion to be murder of some degree, I believe that it would be specifically mentioned in Scripture. Abortion was practiced in Egypt during the time of Israel's sojourn there, and it is likely the Israelites were aware of it.<sup>15</sup> It was also part of the ancient Greek and Roman cultures.<sup>16</sup> The Law of Moses (the Law of God) was intended to show the righteousness of God and separate the nation of Israel from *all* the other nations, which were ungodly and enemies of God. Israel was commanded to not do the sinful things that all the other nations did. However, abortion was not included in the Law of Moses or any other part of Scripture.

Some faiths and cultures consider the unborn child to be part of the woman's body until it is born alive and the umbilical cord is cut. Such a belief supports the idea that the choice of either bearing the

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<sup>14</sup> *Abingdon's Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (James Strong, Abingdon Press, 1983), *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Robert L. Thomas, Holman Bible Publishers, 1981), *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament* (George V. Wigram, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1997), and *The Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament* (George V. Wigram, Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Abortion techniques used by Egyptian Pharaohs were recorded in the ancient Egyptian *Ebers Papyrus*, which dates from about 1600 B.C. (Museum of Contraception and Abortion, Vienna, Austria).

<sup>16</sup> *Ancient Abortion History* (abort73.com).

child or having an abortion is up to the woman. It is not my purpose to argue for or against what people who don't believe that the Bible is the word of God believe on this subject. However, I am not familiar with any verses or passages that would argue against that position. Therefore, I could not say "According to God, you are wrong."

Although I'm not saying in this section of the study that abortion is right or wrong, I am saying that the Bible cannot be used to say or prove that abortion is murder. Brethren, we need to be very careful how we use Scripture. If we use it correctly, we bring glory to God. If we use it incorrectly, at the very least we are demonstrating our own ignorance. At worst, we are dishonoring God and leading others to blaspheme Him just as Israel did through their disobedience (Romans 2:24).

## **Sex and Sexual Sin**

Abortion is ending a pregnancy. Reasons for getting an abortion, at least some of them, have already been presented. Without conception and pregnancy, however, there would be no abortions. Therefore, I believe it is important that we talk about pregnancy, and sex, from God's perspective.

Pregnancy is a natural consequence resulting from sexual intercourse between a man and a woman. At least that is how pregnancy used to occur before procedures for artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization were developed. For the sake of this study, and the context of this section, I want to address sexual intercourse, from both good and bad perspectives.

Brethren, God takes sexual intercourse very seriously. We know from Scripture and experience that the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil (I Timothy 6:10; Hebrews 13:5). However, it seems that more attention is paid to sexual sin in the Bible than to sin related to money (I haven't verified this statement). The Bible talks plainly about sexual sins such as fornication, adultery, rape (Deuteronomy 22:25-29), incest (Leviticus 18:6-17; 20:12), homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9-10; I Timothy 1:8-11), prostitution (Proverbs 23:27-28; I Corinthians 6:15-16), and even sex with animals (Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16). Truly, there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9). However, God also explains the sanctity of sexual intimacy, which we'll look at first.

### **Sex as God Intended**

Sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God. This gift of God is limited, however, to specific conditions that many people, including many believers, choose not to abide by or simply ignore. What are these conditions, and why does God consider them to be so important?

From the beginning, God intended and specified that sexual intercourse was to occur between a married man and his one wife. Yes, there is much polygamy in the Old Testament. We have numerous examples of men, including men of God, who had multiple wives (at the same time) and had children through them and their hand maidens (their wives' servants). To me, this demonstrates the sinfulness of men (e.g., dominance, arrogance, lust, lack of self-control, etc.) and their selfish disregard for the instructions of God. It also shows that our sinfulness can't thwart the plan of God and that He often uses our sinfulness to accomplish His will. But who are we to test the will and grace of God by disobeying Him (Matthew 4:7; Romans 6:1-2)?

Back to my point, marriage and sex are extremely important to God. God made Adam and Eve specifically for each other. He made them as husband and wife, and Adam *knew* Eve (Genesis 4:1—KJV); that is, he had sexual intercourse with her. God used them as our example for a man to leave his parents and cling to his wife—his one wife (Genesis 2:24). With Adam and Eve God established His intent—His righteous will—for His children to set them apart from the rest of mankind. According to God:

- Marriage is between one man and one woman (I Timothy 3:2, 12).
- The man and woman are to be virgins until after they are married (I Thessalonians 4:3-7; I Corinthians 6:13-20; 7:1-5). See also the section below about fornication.
- The marriage relationship is compared to the relationship between Christ and His church—the members of His body (Ephesians 5:22-25, 28-30; I Corinthians 6:15; 12:12-13). God considers a husband and wife to be one flesh, just as all believers are one in Christ; we are in Him and He is in us (Genesis 2:24; Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 1:27).
- We are not to defile the marriage bed by committing adultery (Hebrews 13:4).

Sexual intimacy between a husband and his wife is how God designed us for reproduction. Although conception and the growth of the embryo to a fully developed baby is fully explained by medical science, I consider the entire process as a miracle. A child—the product of the physical union between a man and woman—is a gift of God. However, conceiving a child isn't the only reason for our physical union. The love and pleasure we experience during sexual intimacy is also a gift of God; He did not intend sex to be solely for procreation as some teach (e.g., Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon 4:1-5; 5:10-14; I Corinthians 7:1-5).

Can sexual intercourse or other sexual intimacy between a husband and wife be sinful? Yes, it can. God intended sex to be an expression of love between a husband and wife. That means that it should be consensual and based on a relationship of respect and selflessness. The wife's body belongs to the husband, and the husband's body belongs to the wife. Our desire should be for each other (Song of Solomon 7:10-13). We (men in particular) should not force our will on our spouse to satisfy our *needs*, for that mindset is similar to rape.

**The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (I Corinthians 7:3-5)**

## **When Sex is Sin**

How do we compare or live up to God's plan for sex? Unfortunately, our sexual behavior often shows our disregard and disobedience of God's instructions and intentions for us. Let's look at what God says about fornication and adultery, because these behaviors often lead to a decision to have an abortion.

### ***Fornication***

*Fornication* is an old English word, still sometimes used today, describing pre-marital sex. It sounds like a nasty or judgmental word—it makes sex bad—so it no longer has common usage. A couple of definitions are as follows:

“Sexual intercourse between a man and woman not married to each other.” (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 1973 edition)

“Consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other.” (*Merriam-Webster*, current on-line edition)

Depending on the context, the word *fornication* in the Bible, which is most prevalent in the KJV, may be referring to sex between two unmarried persons or to sexual immorality in general. That is, it can include adultery, rape, any type of homosexuality, prostitution, and pornography, all of which have been with us since the beginning.

It is not uncommon for many people to begin their sexual experiences during their teenage years. If they remained virgins through high school, they often lost their virginity before getting married. Many of those who do not get married for one reason or another have sexual relationships regardless. I’m not so naïve to not realize that many of us believers fall into one or more of these categories. What does Scripture say about fornication?

**I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people [fornicators]; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother [professing believer] if he is an immoral person [fornicator], or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.** (I Corinthians 5:9-11)

**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [by perversion], nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.** (I Corinthians 6:9-11)<sup>17</sup>

**Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality [fornication], but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.** (I Corinthians 6:13)

**Flee immorality [fornication]. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.** (I Corinthians 6:18)

**Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. But immorality [fornication] or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly [foolish] talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure**

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<sup>17</sup> This and similar passages in Paul’s letters (Romans through Philemon) aren’t saying that believers will lose their salvation if they commit any of these sins because our salvation is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14) and God considers us to be righteous in Christ (II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:8-10). Instead, Paul is reminding us that we should no longer do the very things that God will judge the unrighteous (ungodly) people for doing (Revelation 20:11-15).

**person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** (Ephesians 5:1-5)

**Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality [fornication], impurity, passion [inordinate affection], evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience [nonbelievers], and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.** (Colossians 3:5-7)

**For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality [fornication]; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel [body] in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification [holiness].** (I Thessalonians 4:3-7)

The above passages were written by the Apostle Paul to believers—fellow members of the body of Christ. He did so because fornication was a problem among brethren then, as it is now. There was, and is, no intention in his exhortations to change the behavior of the world (nonbelievers) because it is their nature to sin (I Corinthians 5:9-13).<sup>18</sup> However, he used his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ to exhort fellow believers to maintain their own bodies in moral sanctity, which is possible because we have the Holy Spirit working within us (Romans 8:9-17; I Corinthians 6:9-11).

It is a prevailing thought that abstinence is a hopeless objective because we are sexual beings. I hope that it is evident from these passages that God has always considered fornication to be wrong (sinful). How many believers justify their sexual behavior by saying that they love the other person and plan to marry him or her. It is still wrong, for both participants, because we are exhorted to possess our own bodies in sanctification and honor and to flee (avoid, or run away from) immorality. To compound the problem, how many times is a sexual relationship conducted that didn't end in marriage to the other person? Let's demonstrate some self-discipline. Waiting until marriage before engaging in sex is an example of true love, respect, and commitment to each other. Furthermore, if both partners wait until marriage before having sex, then there is no fear of getting pregnant or acquiring sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Adultery**

Adultery is probably understood by most people. It is commonly defined as sexual intercourse or intimacy between people when one or both of them are married to someone else. The power of the word is taken away when we refer to such a relationship as *an affair*, but it is adultery nevertheless. What does Scripture say about adultery?

**You shall not commit adultery.** (Exodus 20:14)

**The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself [his own soul] does it.** (Proverbs 6:32)

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<sup>18</sup> I must confess that I have known nonbelievers who demonstrate far better moral characteristics—sexual behavior and otherwise—than fellow brethren, which is a sad commentary on how we conduct our lives as children of God and ambassadors for Christ.

**“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”**  
(Matthew 5:27-28)

**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate [*by perversion*], nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. (I Corinthians 6:9-11)**

**Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)**

As with fornication, adultery has always been sinful in the eyes of God. We should be thankful that we are no longer under the Law of Moses but under grace in this dispensation of the grace of God. Although adultery is still wrong and just as despised by God, He does not want us to put adulterers to death (the Law of Moses required that both the man *and* woman be put to death—Leviticus 20:10).

Perhaps the most well-known example of adultery in the Bible is the account of King David and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, a man fighting for Israel in David’s army (II Samuel 11:1 – 12:23). David not only committed adultery with Bathsheba, but she became pregnant. David then tried unsuccessfully to have the pregnancy look like it was the result of intercourse between Bathsheba and her husband whom David had ordered home from battle. That attempt at coverup didn’t work, however (because of Uriah’s sense of duty to his soldiers), so David successfully schemed to have Uriah killed in battle so that there would be no proof that he wasn’t the father of Bathsheba’s unborn child. Consequently, David, the King of Israel, was guilty of adultery, deceit, *and* murder. As required by the Law of Moses, David and Bathsheba should have been put to death for adultery (with a second death sentence for David for murder). When confronted with his sins by the prophet Nathan, David repented to God and, by the grace of God, he didn’t face his consequence under the Law. However, his son died soon after birth as a consequence of David’s sin, as prophesied by Nathan. There are many things we can learn from this example, one of them being that we should not commit adultery—one sin led to more sins.

Adultery encompasses more than the actual sexual act. Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28 that the intent of our heart (i.e., looking at, or thinking about, another woman with sexual desires—lust) is just as sinful as the act itself. This applies to fornication as much as it does with adultery, even though fornication was not punishable by death under the Law of Moses (Exodus 22:16-17). As believers, we need to examine ourselves—our desires—to see if we are being adulterous in any way.<sup>19</sup> If we are, we need to flee immorality in whatever ways it presents itself and reset our minds on what is right and true (Philippians 4:8-9; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:1-17).

### ***Conclusions Regarding Sexual Sin***

Apparently the most common reason for getting an abortion is to end an unwanted pregnancy resulting from an act of consensual fornication. In this case, abortion is essentially a form of birth control to hide sinful behavior. Although probably not as common, an abortion to end a pregnancy resulting

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<sup>19</sup> For example, how do we think about a friend, neighbor, or coworker; what kind of TV shows or movies do we watch; what kind of books or magazines do we read; what do we search for and watch on the Internet; etc.?

from an adulterous act is also a form of birth control to hide sinful behavior. This appears to me to be attempts to make two wrongs a right, something we humans are quick to justify. Brethren, sins that we consciously commit or justify lead to more sins, and destroy our personal relationships and our fellowship with God. We are incredibly slow learners, and often never learn because of our own pride and lack of self-control.

We are repeatedly warned to discontinue living according to the deeds (fruit) of the flesh (I Corinthians 6:9-11, 18; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:17-19; 5:3-6; Romans 8:12-13). The lists of such deeds invariably begin with sexual immorality. We have very few laws against behavior associated with the deeds of the flesh—with few exceptions they are constitutional rights.<sup>20</sup> However, they are considered as sinful by God, who is our Judge through Christ (John 5:25-27; Romans 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:9-10).

**Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality [fornication], impurity, passion [inordinate affection], evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience [nonbelievers], and in them you [brethren] also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.** (Colossians 3:5-9).

The fact that these lists of sins repeatedly appear in Paul's letters as warnings to fellow believers demonstrates that we are capable of *all* of these sins. If we are honest with ourselves, we have seen one or more of these deeds in ourselves and in our fellow brethren. For example, fornication is likely very common among brethren of all ages, but believers also conduct adulterous and other sexually immoral activities.

Brethren, we are exhorted to stop living according to sin and, instead, to live according to the Spirit (Romans 8:12-17; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 4:20-24; 5:7-10; Colossians 3:12-15). We need to teach the truth of God to our fellow brethren (II Corinthians 6:1-10; 13:7-8; Ephesians 4:14-16),<sup>21</sup> separate ourselves from fellow brethren who are living overtly sinful lives (I Corinthians 5:9-13), but leave judgment to God. We need to humbly remember how easily any of us can fall into sexual sin and try to help those who are mired in sexual sin (Galatians 6:1-3).

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.** (Galatians 5:22-25)

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<sup>20</sup> We have the constitutional right to be sexually immoral to a great extent, including behavior associated with fornication, adultery, homosexuality, prostitution, and adult pornography.

<sup>21</sup> We can't change the world for the natural man cannot understand the things, or truth, of God. We can only present the gospel of salvation to nonbelievers and then leave it in the hands of God who believes the gospel.

## The Fate of the Unborn

A deep-seated and gripping concern among many believers is that aborted babies have no chance to be saved because they have no choice. Therefore, it is concluded that we are killing innocent life and also potential Christians. I have already tried to address this concern under the section **When Did God Know Us?** A follow-on line of thinking is that all aborted babies go to heaven; or worse, they all go to hell. What does Scripture say?

I hope I have adequately demonstrated that the Bible doesn't say anything about abortion, so it doesn't say what happens to aborted embryos or fetuses. I have also presented what Scripture says about miscarriages: that the *untimely born* child is as if it never existed—it never experienced the breath of life. This is all that is said. If in God's eyes it didn't exist, then He wouldn't say that it either went to heaven or hell, which He didn't.

I've also presented that we are conceived in sin and demonstrate our sinful behavior even in our early toddler years. Does this mean that the fetus is sinful and goes to hell? No. When David proclaimed that he was conceived in sin, he was a person who had been conceived, formed in the womb, born, and lived as a person. I believe that David was saying that we are sinful people because we were sinful from conception; that is, we didn't become sinful sometime after we were born. Again, if the fetus didn't become a living being through birth, then sin doesn't have any application to it.

But doesn't the Bible say that David's first (illegitimate) son by Bathsheba went to heaven? This is what I was taught in my youth and have always believed (mostly, as explained below). As part of this study, I needed to verify that understanding, and this is what I concluded from the account in II Samuel 12:14-23. I've already discussed David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba, and that the prophet Nathan said that their son would die because of David's sin. What can we deduce from the account of their son's death?

### David's Son

The child died on the seventh day after birth (II Samuel 12:18). After he died, David told his servants "I will go to him, but he will not return to me" (II Samuel 12:23). Does this mean that the child went to Abraham's Bosom/Paradise where David and the other kingdom children of God went when they died (Luke 16:19-26; 23:39-43),<sup>22</sup> or does it simply mean that David would eventually die, also, as those before him?

Abraham died "and he was gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:8), Ishmael died "and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 25:17), Isaac died "and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 35:29), and Jacob died "and was gathered to his people" (Genesis 49:33). When Aaron and Moses died, they were gathered to their people (Numbers 20:26; 27:12-14; Deuteronomy 32:48-52). Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,

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<sup>22</sup> Prior to the Apostle Paul and this dispensation of grace, the children of God weren't promised that their souls would go to heaven in the immediate presence of God when they died. Instead, they are waiting in a place of God referred to as *Abraham's Bosom* and *Paradise* until they are raised up to enter into Christ's kingdom on earth (Revelation 20:4-6; Ezekiel 37:11-14; John 6:39-44; 11:24). On the other hand, Paul says that the souls of all members of the body of Christ become present with the Lord when we die (II Corinthians 5:6-9), and that we are already spiritually seated in the heavens in Christ at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:18-21; 2:4-7; Philippians 3:20-21).

Aaron, and Moses were children of God, but it is doubtful that Ishmael was. I believe that these verses are simply saying that these people died just as their ancestors had died.

Furthermore, Joseph made his brothers promise that they would take his bones when they left Egypt and bury them in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—Canaan (Genesis 50:24-25). This was done when Moses led Israel out of Egypt, and Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem (of Canaan) in the ground that Jacob had purchased (Exodus 13:17-19; Joshua 24:32). So, Joseph was gathered to his people when he died, and his bones were physically buried in Israel's promised land.

Apparently, David's child did not have a name because there is no name for him in Scripture; we have the names of the firstborn, as well as some sons that followed, of most of the men of Israel mentioned in the Old Testament. Also, the child died on the seventh day after birth, which is a day earlier than he would have been circumcised according to the Law of Moses (Leviticus 12:1-3). It appears that the Israelites did not name their sons until eight days after birth—the day of their circumcision—by which time it was likely the child would continue to live. John the Baptist and Jesus were both named on the eighth day even though an angel of the Lord told their father or mother what to name their unborn child (Luke 1:13, 26-31, 57-63; 2:21).

It is possible, therefore, that this child of David was not considered to be a person in the eyes of God, and that II Samuel 12:23 simply means that the child died. Additionally, because David's child died so soon after death, his birth may have been considered the same as a miscarriage, or one that was *untimely born*. I'm not certain about my conclusions regarding this child, but I'm providing my thoughts for your consideration. *If* this is the case, then we don't have any clear or implied indication in Scripture that there is *any* spiritual destination for miscarried or aborted embryos or fetuses. It is best to leave these things to God and to trust Him, for they are beyond our understanding.

### **What About the Man?**

Frankly, men have it easy. All pregnancies require a man. Unfortunately, many of us men take no responsibility when an unwanted pregnancy occurs. In such cases we are being exceedingly selfish, to put it lightly. We dump all responsibility on the women, often blaming them for getting pregnant. How many men demand that their partner get an abortion to avoid responsibility, or leave their partner to avoid having to help raise the child?

Although the account did not include pregnancy, John 8:1-11 provides excellent insight into the irresponsible thinking process of too many men. A group of scribes and Pharisees (religious leaders of Israel) brought before Jesus a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery to see if He would judge the situation according to the Law of Moses, which they said required the woman to be stoned to death. Jesus told them that he who was without sin should cast the first stone at her; none did and they all left. Did Jesus defy the Law of Moses? No, for the Law of Moses required that both the man *and* the woman be stoned (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22), and they had known the man because she was caught in the act (John 8:4). Brethren, these were religious men who were trying to use Scripture, incorrectly, to their own advantage and to test the Son of God. I see the same thing happening with the abortion issue—Christian organizations, denominations, and pastors incorrectly using Scripture to prove the guilt of the woman, and we men have been happy to go along with the false teaching.

If abortion is criminalized again, which is occurring in many of our states, then the man involved in getting the woman pregnant should be held responsible if she gets an abortion. It is the man who should bear the penalty for forcing the woman to have to decide whether to break the law and undergo a medically unsupervised abortion. Furthermore, if the woman decides to bear the child in accordance with the law, then the man should be held accountable and responsible for raising the child or ensuring that the child is legally adopted. That is how I see it as a man who is a child of God.

## **The Blessing or Dilemma of Medical Science**

Abortions have been with us forever, originally through the uses of herbs, potions, and rudimentary manual procedures (including types of surgery). Apparently, some ancient methods were very *successful* (i.e., resulted in an abortion as intended) and are still in use today. However, no one knows how many women died or were rendered sterile through these procedures. Even so, abortions were an accepted practice in many cultures, and likely sought by women for the same reasons that women have abortions today.

I am a scientist through education and job experience, but I have no education or training in medical science. So please bear with me as I superficially delve into medical science regarding pregnancy and birth in the context of abortion. I will leave it to you to search the Internet or other sources to understand or verify (or refute) what I'm trying to convey. This is provided as food for thought because so many of us have a very narrow focus on certain topics, especially abortion. Perhaps some things aren't as clearly right or wrong as we'd like to think.

In many ways, medical science has presented a certain dilemma that didn't have to be considered in the past. Because we know more how the body works and how to repair it, we have more choices. Consider the following examples of choices that have become available through advancements in medical technology:

- If I have a bad knee or hip, do I live with the condition or replace it?
- If I develop cataracts, do I just go blind or do I have them removed?
- If my child is born with a cleft palate, do I let her or him live with it or do I try to have it repaired as best as possible?
- If I contract a serious illness, do I let it take its course and possibly suffer physical or mental damage forever or even death, or do I seek medical treatment?
- If I have an irregular heartbeat that will lead to death without treatment, do I have a pacemaker installed?
- If I suffer a heart attack when still expecting to live additional productive years, do I want my wife to accept the natural consequences (likely death soon after) or do I want her to try to have the damage medically corrected?
- If a disease is spreading through the population, do I refuse preventative treatment in the name of God and hope that I will not contract it, or do I follow the advice of medical experts and use a vaccine if available (e.g., for polio, smallpox, diphtheria, measles, influenza, COVID-19, etc.) to help prevent serious illness or possible death to myself and those around me?

- If my spouse or child develops cancer, do I pray for a miracle and likely watch them suffer and die,<sup>23</sup> or do I try to help them get better through using the best available medical treatments?
- If my baby is born prematurely but alive, do I pray for a miracle and watch it die, or do I let the doctors and nurses of the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) do everything they can to save my child?
- If my pregnant wife begins to hemorrhage or doctors are convinced through testing that she will die if her pregnancy goes to term, do I tell her God wants her to die for the sake of the unborn child that may or may not live, or do I lovingly encourage her to have an abortion if she so desires to have one?

Before medical advances in technology and knowledge in the latter 1900s, we had no idea what caused miscarriages, still births, infant mortality, maternal mortality, or the inability to conceive children. Unfortunately, the easiest explanation was that there was something spiritually wrong with the woman, so failed pregnancies or the death of the woman were considered to be her fault. Even today, the misunderstanding and misuse of Scripture by believers or people who consider themselves to be Christians lead many people to the same conclusions regardless of medical explanations. As a believer and a scientist, this saddens and often angers me.

Current medical technology allows us to monitor and understand pregnancy to provide the best possible outcomes for the unborn child and the woman. Through a wide range of blood tests, amniotic fluid tests, ultrasounds, and other specialized tests, we can monitor the health of the fetus and the woman during pregnancy. The breadth of understanding that can be gained regarding the health of the fetus was considered impossible not too many decades ago. *Some* examples of what medical professionals can determine from various tests during pregnancy are as follows:

- If the embryo is inside the uterus (normal) or outside the uterus (ectopic)
- If the fetus has one or more deformed or missing organs or limbs
- If the fetus has a blood disorder or disease
- If a fetus will likely die before birth or at birth, or will require intensive care after birth to survive
- If the child will be born with mental challenges
- If the woman risks life-threatening illness or death if the fetus goes to term

All of these determinations require a decision of some kind by the people involved. For example, ectopic pregnancies, which occur when the fertilized embryo is established in a fallopian tube or elsewhere outside the uterus, *never* result in a birth. An estimated 1 in 50 pregnancies (2 percent) is ectopic ([americanpregnancy.org](http://americanpregnancy.org), [verywellfamily.com](http://verywellfamily.com)). Normally, the woman's body will naturally abort the embryo through miscarriage without harming the woman, but not always. If a miscarriage doesn't occur (or does occur accompanied by hemorrhaging or other complications), then treatment—abortion through medication or surgery—is required soon after diagnosis to prevent serious medical complications, including death, to the woman. I can't help but wonder how many women have died because of an ectopic pregnancy. Fellow husbands, are you willing to let your wife die if you knew she had an ectopic pregnancy?

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<sup>23</sup> See my studies **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** and **Prayer** that explain why we don't have miraculous sign gifts in this dispensation of grace, and that we can't expect to receive what we pray for.

Consider premature babies, also. Until not long ago, premature babies always died. Now, however, prematurely born babies often can be saved through the application of modern technology in hospital NICUs. Up until a certain point of gestation, usually well into the third trimester, an unborn child or premature baby cannot survive outside the mother without artificial means. As for me, if the doctors think that my premature child has a chance to be saved, I would gladly and thankfully let them do what they know best to give my child the best chance at survival.

I'd like to address in vitro fertilization (IVF). This difficult and painful process is usually undertaken when a wife and husband cannot conceive a child through sexual intercourse and they greatly desire to have a child from their own egg and sperm. Before 1978, when the first successful IVF occurred, this option wasn't even available to couples (history.com). Therefore, the choice now is either to remain childless, adopt a child, try artificial insemination, or try to have a baby through IVF. Some people (including fellow brethren) say that IVF is wrong because we're playing God. Couldn't that be said about *any* use of medical advances we now have at our disposal, including fertility medication? Are any of us in a position to tell (judge) a person who was conceived through IVF that they are alive against the will of God? I won't do that. All life comes from God.

How many medical choices do we make in our lifetime, many of them not even available just a short time ago? We use medical technology to our advantage all of the time. Are we really in a position to judge others about what medical technologies, including abortion, they use in their decision making?

### **Personal Examples**

I'm going to start with Linda, who I thankfully married in 1981 and who is the mother of our three wonderful daughters. Our marriage and subsequent children would have never occurred without medical advances that were available by the grace of God and were used by Him for His purposes. Linda was born with hemolytic disease, a blood disorder resulting from incompatibility of the *Rh* antigen between her and her mother (and perhaps her father, also). She would have died soon after birth without treatment. Her doctors recognized her condition, and she needed two blood transfusions as well as blood medications to survive. I, for one, am exceedingly thankful and blessed that she did survive! This disease can now be identified and successfully treated during pregnancy.

As mentioned earlier, Linda experienced at least two miscarriages, which occurred early in her pregnancies. After the second one, her doctor recommended a D&C procedure to clean out her uterus to avoid potential complications, including sterility, from remaining embryonic or fetal tissue. This was considered to be a normal post-miscarriage health procedure. We don't know if it helped or not, but Linda had two successful pregnancies after that and we are very thankful. Today, some *pro-life* advocates consider a D&C procedure to be an abortion and that it should be included directly or by implication in anti-abortion legislation. Consequently, fewer doctors are willing to perform a D&C because of the potential risk of lawsuits or other criminal actions being brought against them. I strongly believe that criminalizing D&C procedures is wrong and I'm concerned for the health and well-being of the women who need them.

As for me, I was conceived after my mother took fertility drugs at the recommendation of her doctor. There is no way of knowing that my conception was enabled by the drugs, but that is what her doctor understood at the time. I am thankful to be alive.

When I was 18 years old, I suffered a severe side ache and immediately went to my doctor who was a general practitioner. He couldn't diagnose my condition and referred me to a surgeon. Through extensive testing over the next couple of days, it was determined that my right kidney had failed and that I would likely die from a burst kidney without emergency surgery to repair or remove the kidney. It took two tries (the first surgery was unsuccessful), but not only was my life saved, I retained both kidneys. Again, I'm thankful to be alive. I am alive by the grace of God, who used my doctors and modern medical science to accomplish His will and purpose for my life.

## Obedience to Governing Laws

Prior to the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, which affirmed a constitutional right to a legal and safe abortion nationwide, thirty states prohibited abortion without exception, sixteen states banned abortion except in certain special circumstances (e.g., rape, incest, and health threat to the woman), three states allowed residents to obtain abortions, and New York allowed abortions generally.<sup>24</sup> In their decision, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated all of these laws, and set guidelines for the availability of abortion, returning abortion to its early-1800s status when the procedure was generally accepted in this country.

Among other things, *Roe v. Wade* established a trimester framework that defined the end of the first pregnancy trimester (12 weeks) as the threshold for state interest, such that states were prohibited from banning abortion in the first trimester but allowed to impose increasing restrictions or outright bans later in pregnancy. Therefore, where abortions were conducted illegally, the women (or girls) getting abortions and the people providing abortions were subject to prosecution. Furthermore, illegal abortions were often unsafe, causing harm or death to an unknown number of women.

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court ruled that abortion is not a constitutional right and that decisions regarding abortion rights are to be left to individual states, as it was prior to 1973. So far, many states have passed or are considering laws similar to, or more restrictive, than the laws in effect prior to 1973.

This study isn't about whether we agree or disagree with national or state laws. God has established our governing authorities—regardless of the state or country we live in (Romans 13:1-7; I Peter 2:13-17). Brethren, we are to abide by our laws as long as they don't cause or force us to disobey God (Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-32).<sup>25</sup> As a reminder, *Roe v. Wade* did not force anyone to get an abortion. Therefore, as believers, there shouldn't have been an issue with abiding by the Supreme Court decision. As laws regulating abortion return to our country, it is our responsibility to God to abide by them.

Although we are to obey our governing authorities, God has not commanded us to try to *Christianize* or moralize the country that we live in or any other country for that matter.<sup>26</sup> Why is this?

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<sup>24</sup> *Lessons from Before Roe: Will Past be Prologue?* The Guttmacher Policy Review, Volume 6, Issue 1, March 1, 2003.

<sup>25</sup> See my study **Governing Authority** that addresses what God expects of us regarding obedience to our laws.

<sup>26</sup> See my studies **Walk Worthy** and several others that address what God expects of us as His children in our daily walk, and **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** that explains why we aren't under the *Great Commission*.

- The world and its system, although within the realm and sovereign control of God, is evil (Psalm 33:8-11; 103:19; II Corinthians 4:3-4; Galatians 1:3-5; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- As children of God, we are in the world but not of it (John 17:11-14; 18:36; Romans 12:1-2; I Corinthians 3:18-23; Galatians 6:14; Philippians 2:14-16; 3:20-21).
- We are exhorted to work quietly with our own hands so as not to be considered as worldly people and bring dishonor to God (I Thessalonians 4:9-12; Ephesians 4:17-24; I Timothy 4:12).
- We are to bless those who persecute us, and even feed our enemies when they are hungry (Romans 12:14-21; I Corinthians 4:11-13).
- We are ambassadors for Christ and should walk worthy of our salvation (II Corinthians 5:20; Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12).

Jesus and His apostles (including Paul) lived during a time when Rome ruled their part of the world. Jesus used strong language to point out the sins of His people of Israel and their spiritual leaders, and Paul used strong language to point out the sins of believers and exhort them (us) to live as they (we) ought to live. Nowhere in the New Testament, however, are we instructed or encouraged to fight and try to change the sinfulness of our worldly culture or the laws of our government. Therefore, I strongly believe that God does not expect or honor political activism among His children. God, through Christ, is the Judge. Brethren, we are to live by example.

### **My Stand on Abortion**

I began this study believing that the Bible clearly teaches that life begins at conception and, therefore, all abortions are murder. I expected to find sufficient evidence in Scripture to support my beliefs regarding abortion. However, I didn't find what I expected. This study did affirm what I already knew to be true in that the Bible doesn't specifically mention abortion, but that I was conceived in sin and wonderfully made in the womb as King David attested.

The Bible is full of names of people, but does not name or consider the unborn who are miscarried as living beings. Scripture seems to indicate that God does not consider those who never breathed as being alive—they weren't people with the breath or spirit of life. Although the embryo and fetus are living organisms, I believe they are alive as part of the woman's body because neither can survive apart from the woman. In that way they are like organs that are alive as parts of a living person. In this context, I believe that an aborted fetus can be considered in the same manner as a miscarried fetus. Therefore, we can't use the Bible to say that abortion is murder.

Brethren, the subject of abortion is *extremely* complicated and should not be addressed with simple sweeping statements. Although I confirmed that I'm not pro-abortion, I came to the conclusion that I can't identify with the *pro-life* movement that is so prevalent among my fellow brethren. I am still trying to figure out exactly how I stand on the issue of abortion and confess my uncertainty on specific points. However, for your consideration and for the sake of discussion among yourselves, the following points describe at least some of my thinking at this time.

- The Bible does not mention any instance of abortion or perspective regarding abortion. We shouldn't, therefore, judge those who decide to get abortions.
- We should not force our beliefs on the world because it does not understand the things of God and can't conform to the righteousness or will of God. Instead, we should love our neighbors as

ourselves and be good ambassadors for Christ, sharing the gospel of salvation and the gospel of the grace of God as opportunities arise.

- God is sovereign in all things, and abortion does not thwart His plan or purpose.
- I believe that abortion isn't the correct decision for married believers when it is done merely as a form of birth control. To me, such an abortion would be in response to selfish desires or lack in trust that God will provide for our needs in raising a child. Besides, there are a number of safe and effective means of contraception available to us to help us responsibly plan the size of our family.<sup>27</sup>
- I believe that abortion isn't the correct decision for believers when it is done in response to acts of fornication or adultery. However, I confess my ignorance in understanding all situations and that I'm in no position to judge.
- If the woman finds out that her unborn child (fetus) is not physically perfect but would viably live after birth (e.g., has Down's Syndrome), I believe it isn't the correct decision to undergo an abortion because it is not up to us to choose the condition of our babies. As believers, we are to depend on God to give us the strength and wisdom to raise our children, for as long as He has granted them to us, regardless of their physical or mental condition.
- I believe that abortion isn't wrong in cases of rape, incest, or when the woman's life is in danger because of the pregnancy.
- I believe that abortion isn't wrong if the fetus has died in the womb or is expected to die before or shortly after birth (e.g., due to missing or fatally deformed organs).
- If a loved one or friend is considering an abortion, we should be willing to help (actually help!) and provide reasonable encouragement for bearing the child. Share the love of God (beginning with the gospel of salvation if her salvation is uncertain), show compassion, and, *if possible*, offer to help her deal with the pregnancy and birth or to raise the child in some way (e.g., assisting with adoption, providing shelter or financial assistance, etc.).
- I believe that it is wrong to have an abortion if it entails breaking a state or federal law because believers are to obey those in authority. Personally, however, if my daughter was raped or my wife's life was at risk and either of them desired to undergo an abortion, I likely would do what is necessary to provide for a legal and safe abortion, even if that meant moving to another state or country.<sup>28</sup>
- Before a woman who is a child of God decides to have an abortion, she should humbly take her concerns to God in prayer and depend on His grace to help her with her decision.
- We unjustly place all blame on the woman for getting pregnant and having an abortion. The man who is responsible for getting the girl or woman pregnant should bear full responsibility. If an abortion was performed against the law, then the man should be punished under the law. If he does not want to take on the responsibility of being a husband or father, then he should be required to provide the financial resources to enable the woman to bear and raise the child. I doubt such laws will ever be passed, however, or that many men (including Christian men) would have the integrity to do such things without laws requiring them to do so.

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<sup>27</sup> Not only doesn't the Bible instruct us on abortion, it provides no guidance on contraception, which has been practiced by various means over the ages. We're in no position to say that God is against contraception.

<sup>28</sup> Granted, I'm a senior man who has adult married daughters and whose wife is well beyond the point of getting pregnant. However, I believe I would support these decisions by younger people.

Brethren, these are my thoughts based on my understanding of Scripture. You may disagree with some, most, or even all of my points. I leave that between you and God.

**Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard [keep] your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.** (Philippians 4:6-7)

## Moving on from Abortion

As mentioned earlier, many women who have had one or more abortions suffer emotional scars for the remainder of their lives. This saddens me for several reasons. Although I'm saddened for all women who feel this way, the following reasons directly concern my sisters in Christ (fellow believers) who are suffering. If you are such a woman, or you know a woman who is experiencing such trauma, please prayerfully consider the following points that come to my mind.

- In the eyes of God, your abortion was not murder.
- Your abortion may have been a sinful act to remedy a sinful act (fornication or adultery). However, everyone sins, and Christ died for your sins. God has forgiven you (Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:13-14). Please also forgive yourself; that is, remember that you are forgiven, learn what you can from it, and move on in your life (e.g., Jesus instructed the adulterous woman to stop being sexually immoral—John 8:1-11). Dwelling on or continually judging yourself for past sins—any past sins—essentially demonstrates that you don't really believe that you are forgiven (this is a common problem among most, or perhaps all, believers). In effect, doing so is denying the grace of God.<sup>29</sup>
- Although you may not be certain in our own mind, your abortion may have been the right decision. Again, learn what you can from the experience and move on.
- Please remember that everything happens for a reason and, if you are His child, God has promised that He will finish the good work (your salvation in Christ) that He started in you (Philippians 1:6). Whether you realize it or not, God is working out His will through you (Philippians 2:12-13).
- Please also remember that there is nothing that can separate you from God's love for you through Christ (Romans 8:31-39).

If you haven't experienced an abortion but know a fellow believer who has and is struggling because of it (e.g., wife, relative, friend), please consider these points and try to help her emotionally and spiritually. Furthermore, do so without arrogance or judgment, but in unselfish love. If you don't know or don't think that the woman is saved, then share the gospel of salvation and the love of God with her.

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<sup>29</sup> We must be careful to not knowingly continue in sin (John 8:10-11; Romans 6:1-2, 12-14). Instead, we are to flee from sin (I Corinthians 6:18-20; I Timothy 6:9-11). Continuing in sinful behavior, including sexual sin, is also denying the grace of God and will prevent us from knowing and experiencing His grace and peace in our daily lives (Philippians 4:8-9; Romans 12:1-2).

## Christian Hypocrisy

Finally, I want to address a serious concern I have had for many years regarding the subject of abortion. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, I've struggled with what I perceive to be hypocrisy among many Christian organizations and fellow brethren regarding the abortion issue. Efforts are not so much about opposing abortions among Christians, but ending abortions within the United States and the world in general. I believe that the underlying motivations for such efforts include:

- Abortions are government-sponsored murder.
- Abortions are killing babies that could have become Christians.
- We need to stop abortions to save America (literally and spiritually).
- We need to stop abortions to prepare the world for Christ's return.

At the beginning of this study, I revealed that I definitely believed that abortion, for any reason, is murder in the eyes of God. Through this study, however, I have discovered, and tried to systematically and satisfactorily demonstrate, that abortion is not in the Bible and that Scripture doesn't include abortion as a form of murder. Brethren, I am not a pro-abortion person; however, I know now that I can't say that the Bible says that abortion is murder and that it is always wrong.

Regarding the first of the four motivations listed above, contrary to prevailing teaching, it is not widely understood among Christians that since the *Hyde Amendment* took effect in 1980, the only time federal tax dollars were available to cover the costs of an abortion were in cases of rape, incest, and when the woman's life was at risk. This is no consolation for those who are opposed to abortions for any reason, but it reveals how false information can motivate people.

I've already addressed the second motivation by discussing the sovereignty of God and that nothing we could possibly do will thwart His purpose and plan. If we think abortions are reducing the pool of believers in this world, then we are saying that God is subject to our will. That has never been the case.

Ending abortion will not save America. As presented earlier in this study, if Israel had obeyed the commandments of God (the *entire* Law of Moses, including the *Ten Commandments*) when they entered their promised land, they would have experienced no miscarriages, no sicknesses, and full (long) lives (Exodus 23:20-26). Israel disobeyed almost immediately and *never* experienced these blessings. Brethren, we are individual members of the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace, where there is no difference between Jew or Gentile, male or female, or slave or free person (I Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-28). The United States is not spiritual Israel, and no country can claim the scriptural promises to Israel. Not even the State of Israel today can claim those promises, for God temporarily set aside Israel and its promises until *after* this dispensation comes to a close at the rapture (Romans 11:25-32).<sup>30</sup> Only when God changes the hearts of His people of Israel and cause them to be obedient will they experience the blessings that were promised so long ago (Ezekiel 36:22-28; Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Ending abortion will not prepare the earth for Christ's return to establish His kingdom. Although I consider most abortions to be the wrong decision, the terrible tribulation judgments by God prior to the return of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on earth never list abortion as a reason for God's

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<sup>30</sup> See my studies **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** and **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** that address the setting aside of Israel and their future blessings.

judgments. The judgments against the world will be because of its rejection of Christ and its worship of Satan and his representatives.<sup>31</sup> When it is wrong, abortion is just one of the multitude of sins against God.

As I see it, therefore, the motivations for fighting abortion within our society are not scripturally based. More importantly, however, I am convinced that our focus on abortion masks the other problems among believers, thus revealing our hypocrisy. We are being extremely arrogant in our efforts to perfect the world by abolishing abortion.

One of our problems is situation ethics. We don't want anyone to have an abortion (because we believe it is murder), until we are faced with the possibility in our own home. What about the case in a Christian home when an unmarried daughter (underage or adult) is pregnant? If the parents recommend an abortion, it can be simply justified: "Just wait until it's your daughter." This is not a hypothetical situation because I have personally witnessed it. The adult daughter's child would have been an embarrassment to the parents (they were very active and respected in their church) as well as a possible financial burden to them; an abortion was the result. This is just one example of our hypocrisy.

Jesus had much to say about the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees—the spiritual leaders of Israel at that time. It was not good (Matthew 23). They had interpreted and changed the Law of Moses to suit their desires and led the people of Israel astray. Christian denominations and many pastors and teachers today are doing the same thing—we are misusing or changing Scripture on many subjects all in the name of God.<sup>32</sup> The example most relevant to this study is the pervasive false teaching that the Bible says that abortion is murder and, therefore, needs to be abolished in this country and throughout the world.

Christians often say that we are to obey the teachings of Jesus in the so-called *Sermon on the Mount* (Matthew 5 – 7). Brethren, we can't fully obey them because He was speaking directly to His disciples regarding kingdom requirements applicable to His people of Israel (Matthew 5:1-2), and because we are no longer under the Law of Moses but under the dispensation of the grace of God (Galatians 3:10-14; Ephesians 3:1-12; Colossians 2:13-14).<sup>33</sup> However, His discourse included many principles of God that are applicable to all believers of all ages—principles that many of us disobey or ignore. One of those principles regards judging others.

**“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”** (Matthew 7:1-5).

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<sup>31</sup> See my studies **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** and **Our Lord Jesus Christ** that include information on the tribulation judgments.

<sup>32</sup> See my studies **Christian Hypocrisy**, **Christian Suffering**, and others that demonstrate the magnitude of hypocrisy among believers today.

<sup>33</sup> See my studies **The Two Messages of Our Lord Jesus Christ** and **The Mystery (God's Secret Plan)** that describe the differences between the gospel of the kingdom and the gospel of the grace of God.

This passage comes to mind when I see fellow believers demonstrating against abortion. Such situations usually get very passionate and heated, and often include verbal (and sometimes physical) attacks against those who support and provide abortions. The Bible is used as a hammer to pound them into submission or guilt, and we cry *Persecution!* when the world disagrees or fights back.<sup>34</sup> Is this how God wants us to behave toward the world? Are we so perfect and righteous that we have the right to cast the first stone (John 8:7)?

**Conduct yourselves [walk] with wisdom toward outsiders [nonbelievers—the world], making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. (Colossians 4:5-6)**

**Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29)**

**Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. (I Timothy 4:12)**

**Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your [own] hands, just as we commanded you, so that you will behave properly [walk honestly] toward outsiders [nonbelievers] and not be in any need. (I Thessalonians 4:9-12)**

**Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith [believers]. (Galatians 6:9-10)**

**Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. (Romans 15:1-2)**

Brethren, we are exhorted to love our neighbors as ourselves (Romans 13:8-10; I Corinthians 10:23-24; Galatians 5:13-14) and to walk worthy of our salvation as ambassadors for Christ (Colossians 1:9-12).<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, generally speaking, we are just as arrogant and disobedient as the Corinthian and Galatian believers were (I Corinthians 3:1-3, 18-23; Galatians 3:1-3).

**Therefore I [Paul], the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,<sup>36</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)**

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<sup>34</sup> See my study **Christian Suffering** that examines the scriptural perspective of persecution.

<sup>35</sup> See my study **Walk Worthy** that addresses God's expectations for our daily walk as His children.

<sup>36</sup> This calling is referring to our salvation and not to whatever job we may have (Ephesians 1:3-6, 18; 4:4; Romans 1:6-7; 8:28-30; I Corinthians 1:2; Colossians 3:15; II Timothy 1:8-9; etc.).

**Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He [God] made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him [Christ].**

(II Corinthians 5:20-21)

Most of us are in no position to judge fellow brethren, let alone the ungodly world, because of the *logs* in our eyes—we tend to overlook, hide, or justify our own sinful behavior (e.g., sexual immorality, pride, jealousy, greed/gambling, drunkenness, anger, hatefulness, irresponsibility, lying, etc.). We also tend to overlook or justify the sinful behavior of those who champion our supposed *Christian causes*; for example, we don't care about the many overtly displayed faults, even blaspheming rhetoric and actions, of a person as long as he or she is against abortion.

Furthermore, as explained earlier, it is not up to us to try to *Christianize* or save the world. All of the attempts to do so in the last couple of thousand years have failed miserably because God is only changing individuals in this dispensation of grace. Besides, our brand of *Christianity* is often contrary to the word of God, which makes us like the blind leading the blind (Matthew 15:12-14). The world will remain ungodly and evil until God's kingdom is established on earth with Christ as King after the terrible tribulation judgments.

I could go on and on about Christian hypocrisy, but I'll close this section with one more thought. I find that many fellow believers (including those who actively support efforts to end all abortions) are publicly insistent on the people of this nation adhering to the Constitution of the United States, as if that document was inspired by God. That is, if we follow the Constitution then we will become a righteous nation—a nation without abortion. This greatly disturbs me. Brethren, we are not under the Law of Moses and its consequences in this dispensation of God's grace, but the principles of nine of the ten commandments apply to believers of all dispensations (ages). The exception is keeping the Sabbath day holy (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17; Galatians 4:8-11; Colossians 2:16-17). Of the nine commandments whose principles do apply, we have laws against only three of them: murder, stealing, and bearing false witness (only in some cases); otherwise, our constitutional rights allow us to break the other six commandments (see Exodus 20:1-17). Please think about this.

## Summary

Abortion is a very complex subject. The recent decision by the Supreme Court of the United States to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, saying that women do not have a constitutional right to an abortion, was unsettling to me for reasons I could not explain in my own mind. I quickly became motivated to truly know and understand what the Bible—God—says about abortion and not rely on what other Christians believe what the Bible says.

Through this study I have found that the subject of abortion still presents many uncertainties to me, as I hope you have seen. Because the Bible lacks definitive instructions regarding abortion, I have used the phrase *I believe* quite often, but I have used it based on my understanding of the many verses and passages that I have included and referenced.

I will not restate the many points that I have made in this study other than this overarching summary as I understand Scripture:

- Everyone *who has ever lived* was conceived, formed in the womb, born, and survived birth.
- Although God knew His children *before* conception (actually, before the foundation of the earth), He does not consider us as a person—a living being—until we have breathed and survived birth.
- Although I believe that abortion is the wrong decision in many cases, the Bible doesn't say or imply that abortion is murder.

I ask that you take the time to prayerfully study the passages that have been typed out and read the additional verses and passages that I have provided to support my statements. I have also included references to several of my studies (available on my website provided below) that will help explain and support some of my statements. Like all spiritual matters, we should depend on what God says in and through His word and not on traditional Christian teaching or thinking, which may or may not be in accordance with Scripture. If after that you disagree with some (or many) of my points, that is Ok with me—your conclusions need to be based on your understanding of Scripture.

**All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching [doctrine], for reproof, for correction, for training [instruction] in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped [thoroughly furnished] for every good work.** (II Timothy 3:16-17)

### **Acknowledgement**

I could not have completed this study without the support of my wife, Linda. We've had many discussions on most aspects of abortion during this time. I often interrupted her activities to share a scriptural discovery, to test my thoughts, to glean her understanding, or just to try to figure something out. It became clear that I only have a man's perspective—Linda expanded that perspective greatly. I am truly blessed!

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