

## The Innocents

Texts: Leviticus 20:1-5; Deuteronomy 12:31; Psalm 106: 34-38; Proverbs 6:16, 17; Proverbs 24:10-12

This is Sanctity of Life Sunday. On the now infamous date of January 22, 1973, by a Supreme Court vote of 7-2, abortion became legal in The United States of America. Now for 49 years sinful Americans have not only allowed, but defended and demanded that this illegal and unconstitutional law be upheld.

As we ponder the verses of our texts, we see that much more is at stake than a mere political ideology. We see that murder, idolatry, immorality and the abdication of parental and governmental negligence is involved.

How does the ancient appalling act of child sacrifice as an act of worship parallel to the modern promotion of abortion?

The actual rite of child sacrifice at Carthage has been graphically described by Diodorus Siculus: "There was in their city a bronze image of Cronus extending its hands, palms up and sloping toward the ground, so that each of the children when placed thereon rolled down and fell into a sort of gaping pit filled with fire."

Plutarch, a first and second century A.D. Greek author adds to the description that, "the whole area before the statue was filled with a loud noise of flutes and drums so that the cries of wailing should not reach the ears of the people."

Fulfillment of a vow was a reason an infant or child was sacrificed as witnessed by the third century B.C. Greek author Kleitarchos (paraphrased by a later writer): "Out of reverence for Kronos (the Greek equivalent of Ba'al Hammon), the Phoenicians, and especially the Carthaginians, whenever they seek to obtain some great favor, vow one of their children, burning it as a sacrifice to the deity if they are especially eager to gain success."

I Timothy 6:10: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

In the first century B.C. Greek historian Diodorus Siculus reported the response of the Carthaginians to their army's defeat by Agathocles in 310 B.C.: "Therefore the Carthaginians, believing that the misfortune had come to them from the gods, betook themselves to every manner of supplication of the divine powers . . . . In their zeal to make amends for their omission, they selected two hundred of the noblest children and sacrificed them publicly."

Dr. Carl Henry said, "It is no secret that in American society extramarital fornication and adultery is the cause of most pregnancies that end in abortion. Pregnancy is a risk many are willing to take knowing that any undesired consequences could be eliminated by abortion." The theologian Carl Henry recognizes this fact in calling abortion, "the horrendous modern immolation of millions of fetuses on the altar of sex gratification." As suggested earlier, child sacrifice in Canaan may have been a convenient way to dispose of the consequences of the illicit sexual practice of temple prostitution associated with

the cult of Molech. If so, the modern practice of men irresponsibly engaging in fornication and adultery with women to whom they do not intend to commit themselves and provide for parallels the wayward Israelite man engaging in extramarital relations with a temple prostitute. In both cases the men leave the women to bear the consequences of their aberrant sexual practices. New England Christian Action Council executive director John Rankin rightly calls this irresponsible behavior of men towards women as "the ultimate male chauvinism."

#### 1. TO TAKE A CHILD'S LIFE IS A DIRECT ASSAULT ON GOD'S AUTHORITY OVER THE LIFE OF A CHILD.

Ezekiel 16:20, 21; 23:36, 37

In the first chapter of the Bible it says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). We see this creation in God's image continued, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth" (Genesis 5:3). "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Thirty-two times in the first chapter of Genesis, we discover that God spoke the creation into existence such as the sun, moon, stars, earth and animals, but when He made man, He placed His loving hand into His creation and formed him. The Hebrew word for "form" is *yatsar*, which means to mold into a form, especially as a potter molds, shapes and makes something out of the pliable clay. When God made man and woman, it was unique only in that they were the first to experience this creation. Listen to what Jeremiah said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah was as intricately "formed" as Adam and it is to be noted this life-giving formation took place in His mother's womb. The Psalmist cried, "I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly" (Psalm 22:10). David said, "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). The word "cover" in Hebrew is *sakak* and is defined as to fence in, cover over, hedge in, join together, and to weave. You may ask how can that which means to "cover over" also mean, "to weave"? Here is the beauty of God's creative ability; it means that every man and woman after Adam and Eve, created in their mother's womb, is a person before there is any shape or definable substance. Man, like his Creator is three in one. We are body, soul and spirit. We are not a body that has a soul; we are a soul and spirit that has a body. This is so very beautiful! God breathes life in the womb, weaving together his soul and spirit, then He weaves together a baby's body covering the real person. This truth is illustrated in the oldest book in the Bible, Job 10:8-12.

Understanding and believing life begins at conception brings us to the heart of the issue. Our final authority again is the precious Word of God, "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son" (Ruth 4:13). Boaz and Ruth came together as husband and wife, but God gave conception. God gives life! Men and

women do not “make babies” as modern slang suggests - God makes babies. The Bible records, “And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing...” (Genesis 16:2). Five chapters later we read, “For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him” (Genesis 21:2). We see this principle repeated in the Bible; God withholds life, then He grants life. Where? In the mother’s womb. When? At the point of conception. We therefore concede with the Psalmist: “Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture” (Psalm 100:3).

## 2. EVERY CHILD IS VALUABLE TO GOD AND EVERY CHILD IS A WANTED CHILD.

Psalm 139:14 : “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

There are not mistakes with God. Exodus 4:11 “And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?” The Lord wants that child here, otherwise He would never have given conception.

If you as a mother or father decide you don’t want your baby, please go full term and give it to another through adoption.

Deuteronomy 30:19: “I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

-Pastor Pope-