

## **THE ISSUES OF LIFE**

Life is cheap. It is a phrase we often hear today. It is a philosophy that has infiltrated society to its very core. Current morality and modern medicine lean heavily on this principle, a principle which, if adopted, largely permits man to do what he wants without fear of censure. As a result this world runs red with the blood of the innocent, but under the guise of politically correct terms such as abortion, termination, fetal reduction, gender selection, stem cell therapy, euthanasia -the list seems endless.

We must get back to the unchangeable principles of the Word of God. They, and they alone, must be the foundation of morality and medicine. God's Law is absolute. It is not a basis for discussion. It is unalterable. But modern man believes he can cherry-pick the parts he likes and disregard those he is averse to, rather than accepting the Word of God in its totality. In the days of the Judges in Israel, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6) The folly of such a life principle is described by Solomon in Proverbs 12:15 as, "the way of the fool."

Too often God's people look into the world, they see something new, they form an opinion about it, and only then go to the Word of God for instruction. With such a practice there is great danger in trying to stretch or squeeze Scripture to support their view. The child of God ought to first acquaint himself with the principles of the Word of God, hold them as unalterable and absolute, and then discern whether this or that new development in medicine or any other field accords with God's Word. If it does, fine, if not, it must be firmly rejected.

In this short work it is therefore our intention to set out the principles of Scripture with regard to life, and then deal with several issues of morality and medicine. We are not in the business of trying to Biblically accommodate modern views or practices, but simply examine them against the standards of the Word of God.

## **THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN LIFE**

In a society where the theory of evolution is taught as fact, it is vital that we reaffirm the Biblical truth on the origin of life. The Bible clearly declares that human life was created by God in the six literal days of creation. Before that there was no human life. It was created, and therefore, by definition, from nothing. It was created instantaneously, not by a process of evolution, governed solely by chance, over a period of billions of years. The time scale for the creation of the earth and indeed the whole universe was six, 24-hour days. The evolutionist has neither witnesses nor evidence to support his theory. He who holds a literal 6-day creation has both -the written record of the Creator, and the earth itself, evidence, which accords, completely with that record.

In Genesis 2:7 we read "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."

No mention of a long drawn out process of evolution, propelled by chance, but created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of this world's existence, and brought to life by a single breath from the Almighty.

In this study we must not miss the point that human life had a different origin from other forms of life. Plants and trees were created on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of creation, fish and birds on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and although land animals and man were both created on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, their creation was separate and different. All the land animals were simply created from nothing by a single divine command, whereas man was formed

form the dust of the ground, (created on the 1<sup>st</sup> day) and then energized by the breath of God. Man's creation was different from other forms of life. Unlike them he was created in the image of God, and received the breath of God. This sets him apart from all other forms of life. The Apostle Paul in the first letter to the Corinthians also makes a distinction between the flesh of men and other animals, "All flesh is not the same flesh: but *there is one kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds." (1 Corinthians 15:39)

## THE QUESTION OF THE SOUL

The origin of the soul has been the ground of theological controversy and debate down through the centuries. What is not in doubt is the fact that man, unlike animals does have a soul -a spirit which will live on throughout eternity. This we know because man was created in the image of God, who is spirit. But as to how each individual receives the soul there are some differing opinions.

A full scale theological treatment in this present work would not be helpful, but very simply there are two main views.

**Creationist.** God creates a new soul for every new individual at conception.

**Traducian.** As man has the God-given ability to procreate physically, so too in like manner the soul or spirit is reproduced in the individual at conception.

Either way man has a soul, and ultimately that soul comes from God, Ecclesiastes 12 v 7 addresses this point regarding the soul after physical death.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

## WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

This is a most important question. The legitimacy or otherwise of the moral and medical issues we will presently deal with, will be determined by the answer.

The key portion of Scripture on the subject of the unborn child is Psalm 139, verses 14 –16.

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them."

In this passage the Psalmist David, praises God for his own life and development with a special emphasis on the days *before* he was born. In verse 14 he says he is "wonderfully made." The word translated "wonderfully made," is interesting. It is not the usual word for made. The word here means *to be marked out, or to be set apart*. In dealing with the important subject of the origin of human life and the unborn child the Lord is pointing out that we are not simply made, but we are marked out, and set apart by the Almighty as individuals. There is no suggestion that the moral status of the unborn child is any lower than adults. The unborn child is set apart as special by God.

The word for "works," means *a product, or a thing made*, so the Lord is owning this unborn child as His product, something He has personally made. In verse 15 the Psalmist proceeds to speak of his body during its development in the womb. The word "substance," can be translated, *bones or body*. So we can read verse 15 as follows, "My body was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." Notice that this body, though unborn is not a non-entity, it has ownership "my body" (substance). It is not a piece of human tissue with the potential for life; it is the body of the person David, though as yet unborn. This theme continues into the next verse, "Thine eyes did see my substance." To God this was a body, more than this, to God this was His servant David "-my substance." Now we must notice the point at which the Lord is recognising

this unborn child as an individual -as David. One word in the Hebrew is translated “my substance, yet being unperfect”. The word can also be rendered *embryo* or *fetus* -literally this word means *wrapped, or unformed mass*. What a good description of an embryo! In the early stages of an embryo, under the microscope it is just a mass of identical cells -*an unformed mass*. So the Lord’s recognition of this individual as David, occurs at the embryo stage, even at the latest, within *hours* of conception, and long before implantation in the womb which occurs several *days* later. This point is further strengthened in the next part of the verse, “and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.” The word “book” refers to *a register, a record book or a legal document*. So the Lord has a book or a blueprint for every life, and in it details of the members (organs or body parts) making up that individual body. It should be pointed out that the words “*my members*” occur in italics, signifying that there is no direct equivalent in the original manuscript, but the words were inserted by the translators to make the sense clear. However the words are there by implication of the previous word “all.” The words, “*which* in continuance were fashioned,” may also be rendered *what days they should be fashioned*. So even the specific timing of the development of the organs within the embryo is contained in this book. One final note, we are expressly told that the Lord has an individual blueprint for embryonic development, and notice that this blueprint exists for each individual as it did here for David, but furthermore it exists prior to the formation or development of any organs or body parts, “when as yet there was none of them.” Those who carry out research on the human embryo, and those who destroy it try to justify their position by saying that, at the stage which they deal with the embryo, (before the 14<sup>th</sup> day of development) the embryo is not human, it is only a clump of human cells or tissue. God says, even at that stage, “when as yet there was none of them,” referring to organs or body parts, He has an interest in that unformed mass of cells, having a written record of the ongoing development and most significantly recognising it as an individual.

In the prophesy of Jeremiah the Lord makes a reference to the prophet at the point where he is unformed, or as we have seen at the early embryo stage. “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) Therefore the embryo, in God’s eyes has both significance and identity.

In several instances in Scripture where the unborn child is referred to, the same word for child is used for the unborn child as is applied to a newborn, e.g. In Luke 1:41 “And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.” and Luke 2:12, “And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger,” the word translated “babe” is the same in both verses, one referring to an unborn child and the other to a newborn.

There is absolutely no doubt, from a biblical perspective that life begins at conception. Medical science supports this position. Every individual is unique. What makes us unique is the fact that our genes, (the blueprint in DNA, contained in all cells of the body) are different from everyone else. That combination of genes is determined at conception. Such a combination did not exist prior to conception, but at this point, though only consisting of one cell, it contains all the unique information to determine all the individual characteristics of that person through childhood to adult life. It is at conception that we first exist as unique individuals. Before conception that individuality did not exist. At conception it does, and the only difference between that one cell and an adult is growth and development. We don’t look on a toddler as not having life because they are not fully grown and developed. Why then should we treat that early child in the womb as not having life when the only difference is growth and development?

It is clear that life begins at conception, and therefore all the Scriptural principles regarding the sanctity of life and man’s duty to preserve it, must equally apply to the unborn child, from the moment of conception. No one has the right to take life except in the specific circumstances detailed below.