

# ***THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST***

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## **The Truth About Abortion**

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

Abortion—a woman’s right, or murder of the innocent? Welcome to our study of the truth about abortion. For just a few moments we are going to examine what God has to say on the subject of abortion. Is this something that society decides? Is it really a woman’s choice? Or, does the Bible describe abortion as murder of the innocent?

Let us turn our attention to Psalm 127:3 to see how God views the life of the unborn child (or, for that matter, the life of any child). The Bible says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward.” What is God’s view of children? How does God look at them? God does not see merely tissues, DNA, or an unborn fetus. God views children as a gift. Thus, we should view children as a gift as well. They are truly a gift from the Lord. Thus, we must realize what abortion truly is. Abortion, as it is commonly used, refers to the deliberate early termination of a pregnancy. That deliberate determination of the pregnancy then results in the death of the fetus. Thus, abortion is the killing or murder of an unborn child inside the mother’s womb (which should be the safest place for a child to be).

When it comes to abortion, there are certain ideas presented as justification for this act. Why do people say today that abortion is acceptable? Basically there are three reasons. First, people frequently say that the unborn child is “not alive.” It is an embryo or fetus that it is not like “a human life” on the other side of the womb. Second, some will say that the mother was not ready to have a baby. Thus, since she personally was not ready, then the baby does not need to be born. Third, some suggest that “it is the mother’s right to choose.” The idea is that it should be the mother’s choice as to whether or not to have the baby, and that it must be her decision. So, let’s examine today what the Scriptures have to say about abortion. Is a baby inside the womb a human life? How does God describe the baby in the womb?

Think back to Genesis 25:21-26. This is the example of Isaac and Rebekah. Rebekah is pregnant with Jacob and Esau, who are referred to as “children,” “two people,” and “two nations.” There is no distinction made between the children on the inside of the womb, as opposed to the children on the outside of the womb. God does not make the type of distinction that some today often try to make. Another passage is found in Jeremiah 1:5. Before Jeremiah was born, how did God view him—as a nonliving fetus, or as a living being? God said in Jeremiah 1:5, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” It is evident from this passage that God had a purpose for Jeremiah before he was even born, and that God viewed his unborn life inside his mother’s womb as being important to Him.

Another passage that strikes directly at the heart of abortion is found in Amos 1:13, where God described a certain atrocity. “Thus says the Lord, ‘For three transgressions of the people of Ammon, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment, because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead, that they might enlarge their territory.’” Their mo-

tives were not to commit abortion per se, but here were people who were ripping women open and removing their babies. In essence, they were committing an abortion. God referred to “four transgressions.” What was that fourth transgression? As I answer that, let me remind you that this was a transgression. The opening up of these women to kill their children (in order to enlarge the Ammonites’ borders) was a transgression against the will of God. It was sinful, and was not right. If it was sinful then, it is sinful today as well. How does God view abortion? He views it as a transgression against innocent life. Thus, when we consider what the Bible has to say about abortion, we can see that it does not speak well of it at all.

Or, think about the example of Mary in Matthew 1:18-25. When, exactly, did Mary become pregnant with a child? Notice verse 18—“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” Before the baby was born, she was considered to be “found with child.” Jesus, while still inside Mary’s womb, was considered as a child, and as such represented a life that was valuable to God. We need to view it this way, too—the way God views it. A child inside the womb is just as much a child as one that is outside the womb. What difference does a little bit of growth and a little bit of time make? In reality, it makes no difference. God views abortion as murder.

There is another passage that can help us understand this—Luke 1:41,44. This is the account of Elisabeth (who was carrying John the Baptist in her womb) hearing that Mary was with child. The text says, “And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” In verse 44 Elisabeth said, “For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.” The Greek word for “babe” (*brephos*) in both passages is the same word that is used to describe a baby outside the womb. Thus, in New Testament times there was no distinction. God makes no distinction between an embryo, a fetus, or a baby outside the womb. They are all viewed as life—which is valuable in God’s sight. The principle for us, then, is that we, too, must view the unborn as living and as valuable. What an atrocity it is for mankind to have various laws to prevent the slaughter of certain animals that are about to become extinct, but we do not care if the unborn child is being killed inside the mother’s womb. We need to be careful how we look at this issue.

Exodus 21 is another passage that deals with those who harm an unborn child. In Exodus 21:22-25, we find the account where two men are fighting in the presence of a pregnant woman, and one of the men hurts the innocent child. Do you remember the passage that refers to “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for life”? That passage is found in Exodus 21:22-25, and applies to a grown man. If he harms an unborn child, then his life is to be taken as well. “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for life.” How does God view the unborn child? He views the child as being just as important as a full-grown man. The baby’s life is considered to be of the same value. In Proverbs 6:17, in a list of things that God hates, we find “those who shed innocent blood.” What could be more innocent, holy, or pure than a baby who cannot defend itself, protect itself, or provide for itself? God wants that baby taken care of. The Bible says that it is the shedding of innocent blood to take the life of an unborn child.

Thus, we ask, “When does life begin? A new human life begins at fertilization—when the sperm and ovum meet to form the zygote that eventually will become the newborn baby. Life begins at conception. Let’s look at some passages that teach us this. Psalm 139:14-16 helps us understand exactly when life begins:

“I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in

secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”

Here, before the psalmist was even completely fashioned, God saw him as a person. At the earliest states, God views life as being very important. In Jeremiah 1:5 God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” Jeremiah possessed life at the earliest stages as well.

There is another example found in the New Testament. Luke 1:13-15 helps us understand that life does indeed begin at the very earliest stages. This passage says,

“But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And 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 shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.’”

John was considered to be living in his mother’s womb. Even at the earliest stages he was considered to be something valuable and full of the Holy Spirit. God considered John, even at this early stage in his life, to be valuable and important. Life thus can be seen to begin at this early stage.

When abortions occur, and we are tempted to view them as acceptable, there are certain things that we are overlooking. One of these is that the person who believes in abortion is overlooking something whenever he or she takes such a stand—the importance of life itself. Ecclesiastes 12:7 and 2 Corinthians 4:16 both teach us that life is important. The abortionist overlooks the importance of the soul of man. Notice what the Scriptures say in Ecclesiastes 12:7—“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.” God gave us our spirit. He is the One Who instilled it in man. The person who takes life (such as the life of an unborn child) does not look at the spirit of man as being important.

Think, too, about 2 Corinthians 4:16—another passage that deals with the soul (or spirit) of man. Paul wrote, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” The person who believes in abortion does not believe in the inward man. Nor does the abortionist consider the harm that is done to the mother (as well as the child). The child has a soul, which is overlooked by those who believe in abortion. What distinguishes the lives of humans from the lives of animals is the presence of the soul. In Genesis 1:26-27 the Bible says that God created man in His own image—male and female. Thus, when God created man, He instilled him with a spirit or soul. In Genesis 9:1-6, and in Ecclesiastes 12, we learn that animals have a spirit that “goes downward,” but man has a spirit that “goes upward” as it returns to God. Thus, it is the spirit or soul of man that separates us from animals.

Now let us turn our attention to some practical solutions to abortion today. How can we deal with this problem? What can we do about abortion? There are certain things that we can do to stop abortion, and that will help the problem. Why not use adoption as an alternative to abortion? Let’s say that a mother is not ready to give birth to a child (perhaps because she is unmarried, having gotten into a situation that caused her to become pregnant out of wedlock). That woman needs to consider adoption instead of abortion. She needs to stop and consider the emotional scars she will carry for the rest of her life as she thinks to herself, “I took the life of a young child—out of selfishness and my own lusts.” Why not choose adoption instead? There are multitudes of people waiting in line who would love to adopt a child. Thus, adoption is an alternative to abortion.

In preventing abortion, there are several things we need to understand. To prevent abortion, we really need to get to the heart and core of the matter—by preventing sexual promiscuity. Many abortions come about because a girl has been promiscuous, has become pregnant, and does not want to have to deal with that situation. Instead of killing the child, why don't we urge people to get to the root of the problem and act in a sexually moral manner? The Bible says in Hebrews 13:4, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Among the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, one is fornication. Young men and women need to ask themselves if they are ready to enter into sexual relationships, and if they are mature enough to have children. If not, they need to abstain from sex until marriage, just as the Bible says to do.

Another way to prevent abortion is to examine our own attitudes toward the act of abortion itself. If we want to prevent abortion, we need to see it as an atrocity that represents a serious crime against both God and man. Galatians 6:7 clearly teaches us that if we sow to the flesh, then we will of the flesh reap corruption. If we continue in a life of sin and do things that are not right, we will eventually be lost because of such actions. Since God views the life of a child as important, then we, too, must view that life as being important. When harm is done to a young child inside the womb, we ought to be the first to stand up and speak out against such ungodly things. When it comes to abortion, there are several things that we can do in this life to deal with the problem. We need to be careful that we act according to the Scriptures. And we must realize that God does indeed view life as important.

If you look throughout the span of Bible history, you will see that God has always hated murder. Go back to Genesis 4 and the murder of Abel by Cain. Cain murdered his brother because Abel's works were righteous and Cain's were not. That murder greatly angered God. Cain was marked because of his action, and was labeled as one who did not love his brother (1 Jn. 3). His whole family reaped the consequences of his actions. Think about the consequences people reap, and the burden they have to carry, when they get involved in things like abortion. Throughout time, God has hated murder. It has never been something that was pleasing in His sight. This is especially true when it comes to children. Those children ought to be in the safest place of all—the mother's womb. But that womb had now become one of the most dangerous places. One of the things that God hates is the shedding of innocent blood.

For a moment, let's consider a woman who, at an earlier time in her life, had an abortion. Can she be forgiven of that sin? Absolutely! There is not a sin of which we cannot be forgiven, if we are willing to repent of that sin. But our repentance must be true. We must be sorrowful for the things we have done. Godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10) produces repentance. Our repentance must be genuine. We must say to ourselves, "That was wrong." And we need to understand that God did not approve of our actions. We then need to ask God through prayer to forgive us. In Acts 8, when Simon sinned, Peter said to him,

"You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

If someone has committed a sin such as abortion, yes, they can be forgiven. And they can overcome such a sin. But there may be long-lasting ramifications.

What is the key to overcoming abortion? It is valuing the purity of marriage and the relationships that God has established between man and woman. God did not expect us to live in adulterous ways, and then when someone turned up pregnant, to get rid of the baby via abortion. That is not how God set up things. That is not how He set up the home. In

Genesis 2, we learn that it was not good for Adam to be alone. So, God gave him Eve, who was comparable to him. God told them to be fruitful and multiply. They were given to one another, and produced a family. What a wonderful family it was. Yes, there were problems. But they valued life. We, too, must value life today.

Can a person overcome the problem of a past abortion? Certainly! But it is only through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the answer to every problem that arises in our lives. How can the problems related to abortion be prevented? They can be prevented by our possessing the spirit of Christ. Paul said in Philippians 2:5-8,

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

Jesus gives us the mindset of sacrifice and service. Jesus was the great servant. In Mark 10:45 the Bible says that “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus loved each of us so much that He gave His life on the cross for us. In 1 Peter 2:24 we read that Jesus “bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness.” Jesus is an example of both sacrifice and service. That is the attitude that we as Christians need to have. We do not need a selfish attitude where we are more concerned about ourselves than we are about the life of another. Jesus was the exact opposite of that. He came to “seek and save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). If we have sinned, we can be forgiven.

And, if you have sinned and you are not a Christian, you can be forgiven by obeying the Gospel. If anyone needs the grace and mercy of God, surely it is a person who is carrying around the burden of something like having had an abortion in the past. In Psalm 38:4 the Bible says, “My iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.” Sin is a burden that we cannot bear alone. In Matthew 11:28-30 Jesus said, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” We must let Christ help us carry our burdens. Can we be forgiven of sins, and rid ourselves of the guilt that is so often associated with such sin? Yes, over time we can. But it will take faithful adherence to the teachings of Christ. If you are not a Christian, you need to become one today by obeying the Gospel and the Lord’s will just as people did in the first century.

What must a person do to be forgiven of sin? What must a person do to overcome the sin problem in his or her life? The Bible makes it clear that sin separates us from God. We are told in 1 John 5:17 that “all unrighteousness is sin.” Sin is a “missing of the mark.” It is when we miss God’s holy mark. And we are separated from God because of that sin. Sin lies at the door, and its desire is to have us. But we can master it (Gen. 4:7). So, if you realize that you have sin in your life, then you need to look to Jesus as the answer to that sin problem. Jesus came to help us with the sin problem. He is the only answer. In John 14:6 Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus is the propitiation (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins (1 Jn. 2:1-2). So a person who is willing to obey Christ and be forgiven of sin must first be willing to hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We need to be careful what we hear (Mk. 4:24). We need to be careful how we hear (Lk. 8:18). And, yes, we need to be careful that we hear the words of Christ. In Matthew 17, God’s voice boomed from Heaven saying, “This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!” Thus, we must hear the message of Christ.

But once we have heard that message, then we must be willing to believe that Jesus is the Son of God. We must be willing to put our faith and trust in Christ. In John 8:24, Jesus said, "If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." We must have the faith to believe that Christ is the only solution to the sin problem. Then a person must be willing to repent, which is the pivotal part in God's plan of salvation. If we are not willing to change our lives, then nothing else will matter. We must be willing to change. If a person does change, then he can know that as he obeys the Gospel, he is entering into a relationship with the Lord. In Luke 13 certain people had come to Jesus, wanting to know about God's justice and vengeance. So they asked about some people who had blood mingled with their sacrifices, or people who had been killed as the Tower of Siloam on them. They wanted to know if these people were worse sinners than anyone else. Jesus said, "No; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." Thus, we must hear God's Word, believe in Jesus, and repent of our sins. We also, however, must confess that Jesus is the Son of God. We must make "the good confession" (1 Tim. 6:13). The Bible says in Romans 10:10, "With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Like the Ethiopian nobleman, we must say, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Then, a person must also be baptized for the remission of sins. I am reminded of the example in Acts 2. Peter had just preached that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. The Jews realized that they were in sin, and they cried out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter told them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." In Galatians 3:27 we are told, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." That is how we come into contact with the soul-saving blood of Christ. That is where we are washed and redeemed from our sins. So, if a person has done things that are not right, even committing a sin such as abortion, that person can be forgiven. That person can have hope, and can find grace and mercy. But such grace and mercy are available only if a person bends his or her will to God's will. Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord," is going to go to Heaven, but those who do the will of the Father in Heaven. May we always consider that there are alternatives to abortion. Why not choose someone who would be a good parent to adopt the child? May we always have the spirit of Christ—the spirit that puts others before ourselves as we try to live according to the Gospel of Christ.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE TRUTH ABOUT ABORTION”

1. According to Psalm 127:3, how does God view children?
2. In Genesis 25:22, what one word is used to refer to Jacob and Esau while they were still in their mother’s womb?
3. What did God say to Jeremiah, even before the prophet was born (Jer. 1:5)?
4. According to Amos 1:13, what atrocity did the Ammonites commit that caused them to draw God’s condemnation?
5. What two-word phrase is found in Matthew 1:18 to show that Mary was carrying a living being in her womb?
6. In Luke 1:41, what two-word phrase is used to describe John the Baptist while he was still in his mother’s womb?
7. Exodus 21:22-25 describes a situation in which a pregnant woman loses her unborn child as the result of a fight between two men. What was the punishment for the man who caused the death of the child?
8. When does human life begin?
9. What important point is contained in Ecclesiastes 12:7 that applies to all humans—in or out of the womb?
10. What does Genesis 1:26-27 tell us about humankind?
11. According to the teaching found in Hebrews 13:4, what is one way to prevent abortion in the first place?
12. What are the first two items in the list of the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:19) that, if avoided, would help make abortions a thing of the past?
13. What important point is contained in Galatians 6:7?
14. If a woman who is not a Christian has had an abortion in the past, but comes to understand that her action was sinful, what must she do to be forgiven of that sin?
15. What does Mark 10:45 tell us about Christ (that also applies to us today)?
16. According to 1 John 5:17, what is sin?
17. According to Luke 19:19, why did Jesus come to Earth?
18. What is a good alternative to abortion that would benefit everyone involved?
19. To what, according to 2 Corinthians 7:10, does godly sorrow lead?