

Is Abortion Just a Choice?

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Statistics

According to the statistics, the number of reported abortions performed in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s was approximately 1.5 million annually. It has also been determined that about 10% of known abortion providers did not report.

There has been some decrease in the number of abortions in recent years, but it appears that there are still close to 1 million abortions performed every year in the US. More than 63 million babies have been aborted since the original Roe v. Wade case in 1973.

Following the Supreme Court decision in June 2022 denying a constitutional right to abortion, 62% of adults still think it should be legal.

Embryo or Baby?

Many terms have been invented, perhaps to lessen the emotional response to the destruction of such: zygote, embryo, blastula or blastocyst, fetus, etc. The main question to consider regarding the issue of abortion is: Is an embryo or fetus just a thing or is it a real, living human being? And if it is a living human, at what point in time does it become such? When can we rightly call it a baby?

If the embryo or fetus is just a non-living thing, a cluster of inhuman cells, then destroying them for whatever purpose is of no consequence or concern. However, if indeed that embryo or fetus is a real, living human being, then we ought to think seriously about the appropriateness of doing anything that would end that life.

One woman who favors abortion said, “No one supports infanticide!” Therefore, those who advocate abortion appear to generally view that which is in the womb as something other than a baby:

- “...an embryo or pre-viable fetus.”
- “...a non-sentient life incapable of thought or feeling.”
- “...an unfeeling agglomeration of cells [that] is more important than a living, breathing, feeling grown woman.”
- “...a clusters of cells that hasn't even developed a brain or heart.”
- “...an embryo is many levels of complexity and differentiation lower than a baby.”
- “Cells. Whoop dee do. Hard to get worked up over 'em. You can ask 'em questions, they won't answer, they can't talk. Like fish heads. But with no scales.”
- “A fetus is a FETUS no matter what AND NOT a baby no MATTER what you say.”
- “A fetus is not a human being... a fetus is nothing more then a live organism, whatever happens to it will not be known to it, a human becomes human at the first sign of its awareness to being alive, then it can be considered human, it still has a long way to be called life.” A few more quotes from those who approve of abortion:

- “A first term abortion is ending the life of non-differentiated cells which yes will possibly one day be a human being, but at this point aren't recognizably human, and undeniably not sentient. We as humans kill non-sentient life all the time. When we are ill, we take medicine that kills bacterial life. When we are hungry we eat animal or plant life. There is typically not a general problem with this type of killing, as the life we have ended is neither human nor sentient. Abortion is the same way. It is killing a non-sentient life, and is very different than Murder.”
- “Most abortions occur before it's even a fetus - it's an embryo... doesn't feel pain, can't survive outside the womb, etc... So MY point is, the rights of a woman to control her reproduction and her life are far more significant than those of the developing *potential* human that she supports. It's her womb, her responsibility. No humans are being killed here. To say so is over-romanticizing a process that happens naturally, and has been happening by choice, since humans existed.”
- “Abortion is a woman's right to choose.. unborn children have no rights, their rights are granted to them the moment they come into this world, then nobody can take that away.. and it should be that way.. a fetus should not take precedence over a full grown human being. There may be alternatives, but those alternatives represent a choice just like abortion does.“
- “The law is not here to promote ethics, it is here to protect rights. And only the born have rights.”
- “The unborn HAVE no right to live. If the woman so decides that she doesn't want to be pregnant then so be it. She is NOT required to carry to term.”
- “It is deceiving to call abortion murder! Murder is the ILLEGAL killing of a PERSON. Abortion is the legal killing of a non-person.”

While those who choose to have abortion appear to justify it by dehumanizing that which they choose to kill, those who have performed abortions often portray a different perspective:

- "It is when I am holding a plastic uterus in one hand, a suction tube in the other, moving them together in imitation of the scrubbing to come, that woman ask the most secret question. I am speaking in a matter-offact voice about 'the tissue' and 'the contents' when the woman suddenly catches my eye and says 'How big is the baby now?' These words suggest a quiet need for definition of the boundaries being drawn. It isn't so odd, after all, that she feels relief when I describe the growing buds bulbous shape, its miniature nature. Again, I gauge, and sometimes lie a little, weaseling around its infantile features until its clinging power slackens." - abortion worker Sallie Tisdale "We Do Abortions Here" Oct 1987 Harpers Magazine p 68
- “Every woman has these same two questions: First, ‘Is it a baby?’ ‘No,’ the counselor assures her. ‘It is a product of conception (or a blood clot, or a piece of tissue).’ How many women would have an abortion, if they told them the truth?” –Carol Everett, former owner of two clinics and director of four "A Walk Through an Abortion Clinic" by Carol Everett ALL About Issues magazine Aug-Sept 1991, p 117
- "We tried to avoid the women seeing them [the fetuses] They always wanted to know the sex, but we lied and said it was too early to tell. It's better for the women to think of the fetus as an 'it'." –Abortion clinic worker Norma Eidelman quoted in Rachel Weeping p 34
- "Sometimes we lied. A girl might ask what her baby was like at a certain point in the pregnancy: Was it a baby yet? Even as early as 12 weeks a baby is totally formed, he has fingerprints, turns his head, fans his toes, feels pain. But we would say 'It's not a baby yet. It's just tissue, like a clot.'" --Kathy Sparks told in "The Conversion of Kathy Sparks" by Gloria Williamson, Christian Herald Jan 1986 p 28

- "I can remember...the resident doctor sitting down, putting the tube in, and removing the contents. I saw the bloody material coming down the plastic tube, and it went into a big jar. My job afterwards was to go and undo the jar, and to see what was inside. I didn't have any views on abortion; I was in a training program, and this was a brand new experience. I was going to get to see a new procedure and learn. I opened the jar and took the little piece of stocking and opened the little bag. The resident doctor said "Now put it on the blue towel and check it out. We want to see if we got it all.' I thought, "that'll be exciting-hands on experience looking at tissue.' I opened the sock up and put it on the towel, and there were parts of a person in there. I had taken anatomy, I was a medical student. I knew what I was looking at. There was a little scapula and an arm, I saw some ribs and a chest, and a little tiny head. I saw a piece of a leg, and a tiny hand and an arm, and you know, it was like somebody put a hot poker into me. I had a conscience, and it hurt. Well, I checked it out and there were two arms and two legs and one head and so forth, and I turned and said
 "I guess you got it all.' That was a very hard experience to go through emotionally." --Former abortionist "I want the general public to know what the doctors know- that this is a person, this is a baby. That this is not some kind of blob of tissue." –Dr. Anthony Levantino

God's Perspective

Several passages show God perceives that which is in the womb as a living human child, known and loved by Him:

- In Luke 1:36, the angel Gabriel told Mary: “And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age.” Notice that she had conceived a son, not a thing, not an unfeeling cluster of inhuman, nonliving cells. In Luke 1:41, the Bible states (regarding Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist) that when Mary spoke to Elizabeth, “the baby leaped in her womb.” Again, the inspired writer of Scripture declared that it was a baby, not just a thing. The word “baby” in these passages is from the Greek word *brephos*, and is used here in reference to that which is still in the womb. But the same word is also used elsewhere to in reference to newborn children (Luke 2:12, 16; 18:15; Acts 17:19), indicating a commonness between the born and the unborn.
- Isaiah 49:1, 5 (may refer to Isaiah the prophet or to Christ the Messiah) says, “The Lord called Me from the womb; from the body of My mother He named Me... the Lord, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant.” Whether Christ or Isaiah, it is clear that the child in the womb is already a living human.
- In Jeremiah 1:5, the prophet was told by God: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” God knew the prophet even as he was still in the womb. Further, God already had “sanctified” Jeremiah. If Jeremiah’s mother had aborted the baby, she would have killed one whom God recognized as a living soul. The Lord viewed Jeremiah as a living human being even while he was in the womb.
- Psalm 139:13-16 is one of the clearest biblical passages on this matter. David speaks of himself as a living human being, known by God, even while he still existed in his mother’s womb. It likewise is interesting to note that in Psalm 51:5, David even talks about himself as a human being from the moment of conception!
- Under the old Law, Exodus 21:22-23 says, ”And if men struggle with each other, and strike a woman with child so that she has a miscarriage [NKJV, NIV: “gives birth prematurely”], yet there is no further injury [child born alive and well], 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 be any further injury [if the child dies], then you shall appoint as a penalty life for life.” God acknowledged that the unborn are important and just as valuable as those already born.

When Does a New Life Actually Begin?

The answer, quite simply (even scientifically), is that it begins at conception...

- When the male and female gametes join to form the zygote that eventually will grow into the fetus, it is at that very moment that the formation of a new body begins.
- Day 1 – the genetic material doubles, matching copies of the chromosomes move to opposite poles, and the cell cleaves into two daughter cells. Shortly afterwards, each of these cells divides again, forming the embryo.
- Day 2 – the embryo undergoes a process known as gastrulation in which the single-layer blastula turns into a three-layered gastrula consisting of ectoderm, mesoderm, and endoderm. Each of these layers will give rise to very specific structures. For example, the ectoderm will form the outermost layer of the skin and other structures, including the sense organs, parts of the skeleton, and the nervous system. The mesoderm will form tissues associated with support, movement, transport, reproduction, and excretion (i.e., muscle, bone, cartilage, blood, heart, blood vessels, gonads, and kidneys). The endoderm will produce structures associated with breathing and digestion (including the lungs, liver, pancreas, and other digestive glands).

Day 3 – the embryo will have divided a total of four times, and will now consist of sixteen cells (by the end of the first month, the embryo will already consist of millions of cells).

- 18 days – the heart starts beating
- 21 days – heart pumps own blood through a separate closed circulatory system with own blood type
- 28 days – eyes, ears and respiratory system begin to form
- 42 days – brain waves recorded, skeleton complete, reflexes present
- 7 weeks – baby can suck its thumb
- 8 weeks – all body systems present; there are feet, hands, head, organs, etc. Upon close examination, fingerprints are evident. Although less than an inch long, the baby has a head with eyes and ears, a simple digestive system, kidneys, liver, a heart that beats, a bloodstream of its own, and the beginning of a brain.
- 9 weeks – baby can squint, swallow, move its tongue, make a fist
- 11 weeks – spontaneous breathing movements, has fingernails, all body systems working
- 16 weeks – genital organs clearly differentiated, grasps with hands, swims, kicks, turns, somersaults
- 18 weeks – vocal cords work; the baby can cry

Consider this statement by Paul E. Rockwell, M.D., an anesthesiologist: "Eleven years ago while giving an anesthetic for a ruptured ectopic pregnancy (at 8 weeks after conception), I was handed what I believe was the smallest living human ever seen. The embryonic sac was intact and transparent. Within the sac was a tiny human male swimming extremely vigorously in the amniotic fluid, while attached to the wall by the umbilical cord. This tiny human was perfectly developed, with long, tapering fingers, feet and toes. It was almost transparent, as regards the skin, and the delicate arteries and veins were prominent to the ends of the fingers."

For more on this and other lessons, see [The Doctrines That Divide Us](#), available on Amazon.com.