

ABORTION AND THE BIBLE

A Fact Sheet for Christians and Anyone Interested

The prospect of creating new life is sometimes joyful, sometimes intimidating, even at times overwhelming. It brings out different emotions for different people and often different emotions within the same person. A pregnancy fulfills wishes for some and poses challenges for others. Some of those facing an unplanned pregnancy may be happy to continue the pregnancy, while others experience more negative emotions about the prospect given their life situations. If you, or someone you know, is facing this, we want to provide some information that may help you in your decision making.

Is the Bible against abortion?

You may be surprised to know that **there is no verse in the Bible that prohibits abortion**. Those who oppose abortion will quote a handful of verses: Psalms 139:13; Jeremiah 1:5; or Isaiah 44:24. All these refer to the creation of the ‘vessel,’ or body, that we all inhabit. But the story of human creation in what we call **the Old Testament** says more. It **defines ‘life’ as beginning with breath**, *nephesh* in Hebrew, **not conception or heartbeat**. In Genesis 2, God breathes into the nostrils of the fully-formed Adam bringing him to life. In an unusual story of ‘dry bones’ in Ezekiel 37, no matter how the bones are assembled into bodies, only the breath of God brings them to life.

Wait. What about “thou shalt not kill”?

In Exodus 21:22-25, there’s a disturbing story of a fight breaking out which causes a woman to miscarry. The punishment for the pregnancy loss is a fine. The story goes on to explain that if the fight causes ‘further harm,’ the punishment is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. We can read this story and disagree with the idea of punishment at that time, but how would ‘an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth’ work if someone causes a miscarriage? So, no. Abortion does not fall under ‘thou shalt not kill.’

One more surprising thing: **There’s an abortion performed in the Bible**. In Numbers 5, starting at verse 11, a priest conducts an abortion using ‘bitter waters’ to ‘empty the womb’ as a test of fidelity.

Did Jesus have anything to say about abortion?

Based on the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jesus is not quoted saying anything about ending a pregnancy or the belief of his faith’s tradition that life begins with breath. He did literally embrace children, despite the opposition of some. This was a powerful act at a time when so many children didn’t make it to adulthood and were often devalued.

If you are a Catholic, you may have the teachings of your church to consider. Catholics for Choice (CatholicsforChoice.org) provides some additional information that may be helpful.

For more information, flip this sheet over.

Want to see what a developing embryo looks like? Go to <https://myanetwork.org/the-issue-of-tissue/> to see actual embryos from pregnancy terminations. It's probably not what you expect.

What about 'crisis pregnancy' centers? Can they help?

You may have seen signs and information for different 'crisis pregnancy' centers. While some are part of religious institutions and may try to be helpful, in most cases **these organizations engage in deception**. They show models that do not accurately illustrate the stages of pregnancy. They convey the different stages of the development of the embryo (before 11 weeks) and fetus (11 weeks to birth) inaccurately or even lie about them. Women wanting to terminate a pregnancy may seek them out only to find that they use tricks to delay and coerce them. It is common to be told **"Aren't you glad your mother was pro-life?"** or **"What if your mother had chosen an abortion?"** when you contact these organizations. **As Christians, we see this as sinful manipulation** when our religion is supposed to be based on TRUTH.

If you are pregnant and decide to continue your pregnancy, you may be able to find some help with diapers and other items to assist you through various organizations. We only suggest that you call ahead and find out what any organization can offer you. Ask them what requirements they have to offer help.

We hope you find this information helpful. Go to our web site to find more information that we hope will be useful, no matter if you are Christian, a member of another faith, or do not connect at all with religion. Go to TexasChristians.org and to the *Contact Us* (TexasChristians.org/contact) page to ask any question. We are in the process of updating the site regularly.