

Trends

Consider some sobering U.S. abortion statistics:

- ☛ >5,000 the number of women considering abortion today.
- ☛ 1 in 4 women have at least one abortion.
- ☛ Less than 1.5% of abortions are due to rape or incest.
- ☛ In New York City 35% of all pregnancies end in abortion.
- ☛ There are about 1 million reported abortions per year.
- ☛ A child's heart begins beating on day 21 of pregnancy.
- ☛ A fetus can begin feeling pain by 8 weeks.

- via Life Choices

Luke 1:41: "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."

Sentence Sermons

"Abortion is: One more heart that will never beat again. Two more eyes that will never see light. Two more hands that will never touch or feel. Two more legs that will never run for miles. Two more lips that will never speak a word. One more mouth that will never know a smile."

—The Gentle's Friend

Isaiah 49:1: "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name."

News & Notes

Please pray for Zachary Wallace. He is not faithfully attending services as he should (Heb. 10:24-25). "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (Jas. 5:16)

Please keep sister Wilma Cardwell in your prayers. She is an encouragement to all of us!

Pray for all our members who do not attend regularly. Try to encourage them!

Pray for all the lost souls, especially those in the greater Bloomington area. Pray that Westside might be an influence for good in this community.

Pray for the all of our students: elementary, secondary and college. Our young people face many trials and temptations at school.

There are many needy saints, including preachers! Can you help?! Let me know.

Anyone need prayers? Let us know so we can announce it and post it.

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"Lord, to whom shall we go? You
have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68

Did God Order the Killing of Babies?

Dave Miller, Ph.D.
Apologetics Press

Skeptics and atheists have been critical of the Bible's portrayal of God ordering the death of entire populations—including women and children. For example, God instructed Saul through the prophet Samuel to "go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey" (1 Samuel 15:3-4, emp. added). Other examples include the period of the Israelite conquest of Canaan in which God instructed the people to exterminate the Canaanite populations that occupied Palestine at the time. However, if one cares to examine the circumstances and assess the rationale, the Bible consistently exonerates itself by offering legitimate clarification and explanation to satisfy the honest searcher of truth.

The Hebrew term *herem* found, for instance, in Joshua 6:17, refers to the total dedication or giving over of the enemy to God as a sacrifice involving the extermination of the populace. It is alleged that the God of the Bible is as barbaric and cruel as any of the pagan gods. But this assessment is simply not true.

If the critic would take the time to study the Bible and make an honest evaluation of the principles of God's justice, wrath, and love, he would see the perfect and harmonious interplay between them. God's vengeance is not like the impulsive, irrational, emotional outbursts of pagan deities or human beings. He is infinite in all His attributes and thus perfect in justice, love, and anger. Just as God's ultimate and final condemnation of sinners to eternal punishment will be just and appropriate, so the temporal judgment of wicked people in the Old Testament was ethical and fair. We human beings do not have an accurate handle on the gravity of sin and the deplorable nature of evil and wickedness. Human sentimentality is hardly a qualified measuring stick for divine truth and spiritual reality.

How incredibly ironic that the atheist, the agnostic, the skeptic, and the liberal all attempt to stand in judgment upon the ethical behavior of God when, if one embraces their position, there is no such thing as an absolute, objective, authoritative standard by which to pronounce anything right or wrong. As the French existentialist philosopher, Sartre, admitted: "Everything is indeed permitted if God

does not exist.... Nor...are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimize our behavior" (1961, p. 485). The atheist and agnostic have absolutely no platform on which to stand to make moral or ethical distinctions—except as the result of purely *personal taste*. The mere fact that they concede the existence of *objective* evil is an unwitting concession there is a God Who has established an *absolute* framework of moral judgments.

The facts of the matter are that the Canaanites, whom God's people were to destroy, were destroyed for their wickedness (Deuteronomy 9:4; 18:9-12; Leviticus 18:24-25,27-28). Canaanite culture and religion in the second millennium B.C. were polluted, corrupt, and perverted. No doubt the people were physically diseased from their illicit behavior. There simply was no viable solution to their condition except destruction. Their moral depravity was "full" (Genesis 15:16). They had slumped to such an immoral, depraved state, with no hope of recovery, that their existence on this Earth had to be terminated—just like in Noah's day when God waited while Noah preached for years, but was unable to turn the world's population from its wickedness (Genesis 6:3,5-7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:5-9). Including the children in the destruction of such populations actually spared them from a worse condition—that of being reared to be as wicked as their parents and thus face eternal punishment. All persons who die in childhood, according to the Bible, are ushered to Paradise and will ultimately reside in Heaven. Children who have parents who are evil must naturally suffer innocently while on Earth (e.g., Numbers 14:33).

Those who disagree with God's annihilation of the wicked in the Old Testament have the same liberal attitude that has come to prevail in America just in the last half century. That attitude has typically opposed capital punishment, as well as the corporal punishment of children. Such people simply cannot see the rightness of evildoers being punished by execution or physical pain. Nevertheless, their view is skewed—and the rest of us are being forced to live with the results of their warped thinking: undisciplined, out-of-control children are wreaking havoc on our society by perpetrating crime to historically, all-time high levels.

Those who reject the ethics of God's destructive activity in the Old Testament, to be consistent, must reject Jesus and the New Testament. Over and over again, Jesus and the New Testament writers endorsed and defended such activity (e.g., Luke 13:1-9; 12:5; 17:29-32; 10:12; Hebrews 10:26-31). The Bible provides the only logical, sensible, meaningful, consistent explanation regarding the principles of retribution, punishment, and the conditions under which physical life may be extinguished.

Reference

Sartre, Jean Paul, (1961), "Existentialism and Humanism," *French Philosophers from Descartes to Sartre*, ed. Leonard M. Marsak (New York: Meridian).

When It Was a Crime to Read the Bible

Greg Gwin

By the start of the third decade of the 16th century, William Tyndale had already been on the run for five years. The king of England, Henry

VIII, had declared him a felon. Fleeing Roman Catholic authorities in London (never to return to England), he went first to Cologne, France, and then Worms, Germany. What crime had this "evil" man committed? Of what rebellious act of treason was he guilty? He dared to translate and then print the New Testament in the English language!

In England in the 1520's (indeed, throughout Europe during the middle ages), unless you were literate in Hebrew, Greek or Latin, reading the Bible for yourself was impossible. You had to rely upon what the Roman Catholic clergy said the Bible contained. You would not have been able to study the Bible for yourself to discern the truth for yourself - much less be free to practice what you learned therein. Rome ruled with an iron hand.

The Catholic Church did not want nor permit a wide transmission of the Bible and its contents. When Tyndale's NT was published in Worms, 6,000 copies were shipped back to England. Medieval historian William Manchester reports:

"To the bishop of London this was an intolerable, metastasizing heresy. He bought up all that were for sale and publicly burned them at St. Paul's Cross. But the archbishop of Canterbury was dissatisfied; his spies told him that many remained in private hands. Protestant peers with country houses were loaning them out, like public libraries. Assembling his bishops, the archbishop declared that tracking them down was essential - each was placing souls in jeopardy - and so, on his instructions, dioceses organized posses, searching the homes of known literates, and offered rewards to informers - sending out the alarm to keep Christ's revealed word from those who worshiped him." (*A World Lit Only by Fire*, 204-205)

Tyndale was eventually arrested and imprisoned for sixteen months in the castle of Vilvorde, near Brussels. In 1536, after being tried and convicted for heresy he was publicly executed, being tied to a stake, strangled to death, and then his corpse burned.

As we consider Tyndale's struggle and sacrifice to provide the common Englishman with readable, discernable scriptures, we are made to thank God for the daily ease and convenience with which we can open the Bible and study it for ourselves. We are made to cherish the privilege that is ours to pour over the divine text, understand it, reflection upon it, think over it so as to bring our hearts and lives into harmony with it, as well as also teach it to others (Eph. 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:2).

If you have been neglecting to read, learn and live God's word, please remember the good fortune you have: education and access - the abundant opportunity to read and know God's word. To not drink deeply from its well is to squander a precious blessing (cf. Jas. 4:17).

The next time you pick up your Bible and read it, remember the sacrifices of countless others who have made that simple act possible. But above all, remember the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life on the cross and was then resurrected from the dead so that you know the truth, abide in His word and thus be freed from your sin (Jno. 8:31-36; 1:1-3, 14-18).