

A Biblical Introduction to the Shedding of Innocent Blood

Introduction: As we face the tragic milestone of more than 48 years of legalized abortion-on-demand in America, a clear Biblical worldview is needed to help the church rightly discern the nation's predicament with scriptural understanding. We must have more than just the catchphrases of the pro-life movement. The people of God must be called out of apathy on the question of abortion and inspired to respond with a conviction that comes by revelation.

I. GOD'S FAMILY AND THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

- A. God created a family that consists of beings in heaven and, later, beings on the earth.

“Where were you when I [God] laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements—surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? On what were its bases sunk, or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4-7 ESV)

- B. Human beings are unique in this created order. On the earth, human beings alone were made in the image of God.

Then God said, “Let us make man [mankind] in our image, after our likeness. And let him have dominion... on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Ge 1:26-27 ESV)

- C. There is an inherent sanctity to human life that must be observed and respected.

Sanctity- the quality or state of being holy or sacred: inviolability.¹

Regardless of ability or stage, human life is sacred precisely because we are the creatures God put on earth to represent him.² –Michael Heiser

- D. The *Incarnation* reveals conception as the defining moment of life, thereby settling, for the believer, when human life begins. The uncreated-God, who has no beginning, humbled himself to have a beginning. The Word became flesh, not at the *Nativity*, but much earlier at the *Annunciation*—the divine conception's angelic announcement. In the *Incarnation*, we see the womb as God's workshop and, therefore, the most sacred place on earth for human beings.

And he [Gabriel] came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.” (Lu 1:28-31 ESV)

- E. We are meant to cherish and protect life in the womb. Despite being designed with purpose and promise, babies in the womb are utterly vulnerable, having no way to defend themselves or speak out. They are the most marginalized, disenfranchised people group on the earth. No one is weaker, poorer, more needy, or more innocent than them.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you...” (Je 1:5 ESV)

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were

written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Ps 139:13-16 ESV)

II. THERE IS SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR PHYSICAL BLOOD.

- A. God determined that life is in the blood; therefore, it is blood that is required to atone for sin.

For the life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. (Le 17:14 ESV)

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. (Le 17:11 ESV)

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. (He 9:22 ESV)

...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Pe 1:18-19 ESV)

- B. As God's image-bearers, human life is sacred. God forbids what he calls "the shedding of innocent blood." Some may suggest, "But no one is innocent!" That would be an incorrect context of how God regards innocence. A simple way to correctly understand the concept would be to say innocent blood is "when the punishment doesn't fit the crime."

There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood... (Pr 6:16-17 ESV)

"Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man." (Ge 9:5-6 NKJV)

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- C. Many wrongly claim that abortion is not in the Bible, and therefore God has nothing to say about it. Let there be no shadow of a doubt: Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood.

III. WHEN INNOCENT BLOOD IS SHED, IT HAS A VOICE BEFORE GOD'S THRONE.

- A. In mankind's fallen state, the sanctity of human life is violated frequently. However, nothing can cover up or hide the shedding of innocent blood because it has a voice before God's throne that can't be silenced. It is a loud voice that demands his attention. It cries out for justice to be released.

And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood [Abel's] is crying to me [Hebrew: tsa'aq] from the ground." (Ge 4:10 ESV)

tsa'aq- to cry, cry out, call, cry for help³

When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Re 6:9-10 ESV)

- B. Nothing can compare to the amount of innocent blood shed by abortion. Approximately 55.9 million babies are aborted every year globally (2010–2014).⁴ There are 862,320 babies aborted in the United States each year (2017).⁵ Planned Parenthood is the largest provider of abortions in the United States, and their 2018-2019 annual report recorded 345,672 abortion procedures.⁶ Since *Roe v. Wade*, the case that legalized abortion on demand in 1973, more than 62 million babies have been murdered in the United States.
- C. What does that sound like before the throne of God on behalf of our nation?

IV. GOD DOES NOT FORGET THE SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD.

- A. The cry of innocent blood has a sound that does not diminish over time. Even though many years and decades may pass, God does not forget this injustice against those created in his image. He may delay His response in great mercy and patience, but He promises that there must be a reckoning.

Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another... (2 Ki 21:16 ESV)

Surely this came upon Judah at the command of the Lord, to remove them out of his sight, for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, and also for the innocent blood that he had shed. For he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not pardon. (2 Ki 24:3-4 ESV)

- B. If there is nothing to interrupt the stream of bloodshed—beginning with repentance— then God’s reckoning and discipline become imminent and unavoidable.

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said “the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.”⁷—Abraham Lincoln

Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed. So you are witnesses and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,’ so that the blood of all the prophets, shed from the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. (Lk 11:47-51 ESV)

For behold, the Lord is coming out from his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth will disclose the blood shed on it, and will no more cover its slain. (Is 26:21 ESV)

“Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom a desolate wilderness, Because of violence against the people of Judah, for they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall abide forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. For I will acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted; for the Lord dwells in Zion.”
(Joel 3:19-21 NKJV)

V. SHEDDING INNOCENT BLOOD PRODUCES SUPERNATURAL CONSEQUENCES.

- A. Shedding innocent blood pollutes the land in a way that invites judgment on its people.

You shall not pollute the land in which you live, for blood pollutes the land, and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of the one who shed it. (Nu 35:33 ESV)

You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord... Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.
(Le 18:21, 24-25 ESV)

That the OT sees the cult of Molech as essentially a Canaanite practice (indeed, as the archetypal Canaanite abomination) is indicated both in Deuteronomy (12:31) and in the Deuteronomistic summary of the fall of the Northern Kingdom (2 Kgs 17:17). However, with the exception of the latter verse, its practice in Israel appears to have been restricted to the environs of Jerusalem. Both Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:3) and Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:6) are explicitly accused of participation, while Josiah is credited with having “defiled the Topheth, which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might cause his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech” (2 Kgs 23:10).⁸

...therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, I will prepare you for blood, and blood shall pursue you; because you did not hate bloodshed, therefore blood shall pursue you. (Ez 35:6 ESV)

- B. It is a mystery—but true—that the demonic realm demands bloodshed. Even though the modern-day abortion industry attempts to appear normal and respectable, abortion can be understood as a spiritual sacrifice to demons. The suggestion of this reality is shocking, leading most people into denial. However, the massive flow of innocent blood through abortion fuels the demonization of the culture with our permission and strengthens the demonic sway over the nation.

...they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind... (Je 19:4-5 ESV)

They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons [shedim]; they poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood. (Ps 106:37-38 ESV)

They stirred him to jealousy with strange gods [elohim]; with abominations they provoked him to anger. They sacrificed to demons [shedim] that were no gods [“not Elowahh” (singular: God)], to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded. (Dt 32:16-17 ESV)

The verse explicitly calls the elohim that the Israelites perversely worshiped demons (shedim). This rarely used term (Deut 32:17; Psa 106:37) comes from the Akkadian shedu. In the context of Deuteronomy 32:17, shedim were elohim—spirit beings guarding foreign territory—who must not be worshiped.

The word choice (shedim) is appropriate in Deut 32:17 given the context of Deut 32:8-9 and cosmic geography: the nations are the domains of other gods who are, in turn, their guardians.⁹

VI. ANOTHER BLOOD HAS THE FATHER'S ATTENTION IN HEAVEN.

Our valuation of it [Jesus' blood] is only according to His [the Father's] valuation—neither more nor less. It cannot, of course, be more, but it must not be less.¹⁰ –Watchman Nee

- A. We believe that God the Father has accepted the blood of His son Jesus as being all-sufficient and perfectly effective to redeem, justify, and sanctify mankind. (see Re 5:9, 1 Pe 1:18-19, Rm 5:9, He 10:29)
- B. When we consider the extraordinary work accomplished for us by the blood of Christ, we are thankful, joyful people who grow in boldness. From our position of eternal security in Christ, we live life in this age for the purpose of being witnesses of a higher King and kingdom. We release this kingdom's potential power through prayer and intercession to see God's purposes fulfilled in the earth even now before Christ's return.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Re 1:5-6 ESV)

Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt 6:9-10 ESV)

- C. Far more important than a single vote on election day is the vote that the people of God get in heaven through prayer. The Lord has given us a simple yet powerful prayer to pray for the ending of abortion in the nation: "Jesus, I plead your blood over my sins and the sins of my nation. God, end abortion and send revival to America."
- D. As intercessors, we must plead the blood of Jesus, which speaks a better word than the blood of more than 62 million babies.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. (He 12:22-24 ESV)

Plead- verb 1: to argue a case or cause in a court of law 2: to make an allegation in an action or other legal proceeding; especially: to answer the previous pleading of the other party by denying facts therein stated or by alleging new facts 3: to make a plea of a specified nature 4 a: to argue for or against a claim b: to entreat or appeal earnestly.¹¹

- E. When we pray, “Jesus, I plead your blood over my sins,” we are entering into heaven’s proceedings and directing the Court’s attention to the blood of Jesus. We are invoking the testimony of a powerful living witness that speaks on our behalf and is in perfect agreement with the Father.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
(He 10:19-22 NIV)

- F. From this place of confidence before the throne, we boldly add to this prayer, “Jesus, I plead your blood over my sins AND the sins of my nation.” As Daniel did, we stand before God’s throne with a clean conscience and actively intercede for the entire nation.

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.” (Da 9:3-6 ESV)

- G. Pleading the blood of Christ over the sins of the nation is an act of intercession. Obviously, no one can make another involuntarily receive the atoning work of Christ’s blood. Instead, it is an act of “identificational repentance” that has great value before God. It is intercessors in the earth coming into agreement with the Great Intercessor in heaven, God’s desire for mercy and patience, and the desire that all men might be saved.

VII. GOD STILL HAS A MERCY STRATEGY FOR THE NATION THAT LEGALIZES THE SHEDDING OF INNOCENT BLOOD.

- A. One of God’s great mercy strategies is to raise up intercessors who will stand before Him on behalf of the nation. We do not need people who call down judgment in anger. Instead, we need those who will voice a cry for mercy and justice. God’s judgment will automatically come if we do nothing. We want to be God’s friends who call him to remember mercy and delay judgment so that the people can respond with repentance.

So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it... (Ez 22:30 NKJV)

Lord, I have heard of your fame; I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord. Repeat them in our day, in our time make them known; in wrath remember mercy. (Ha 3:2 NIV)

- B. Our mercy cry has great value and weight before God’s throne. Our intercession is in agreement with His desire for all men to be saved, including the governing leaders. It is implied that prayer for “the knowledge of the truth” can lead not only to revival in the culture but also governmental reform for the overturning of unjust laws.

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a

quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Ti 2:1-3 NKJV)

- C. This leads us to pray earnestly, “Jesus, I plead your blood over my sins and the sins of my nation. God, end abortion and send revival to America.”
- D. What consequences do we face as a nation if we fail to end abortion? What reality are we condemning our children to if we continue in arrogance, self-indulgence, and apathy?

*I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. **Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land...** (Dt 30:19-20 ESV)*

¹ “Definition of SANCTITY.” *Merriam-Webster.com*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sanctity. Accessed 28 Jan. 2021.

² Heiser, Michael S. *Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. S.L., Lexham Pr, 2015. p. 59.

³ “H6817 - Tsa`aq - Strong’s Hebrew Lexicon (KJV).” *Blue Letter Bible*, www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H6817&t=KJV. Accessed 28 Jan. 2021.

⁴ Singh, Susheela, et al. *Abortion Worldwide 2017: Uneven Progress and Unequal Access*. Guttmacher Institute, p. 8.

⁵ Jones, Rachel K., et al. *Abortion Incidence and Service Availability in the United States, 2017*. Guttmacher Institute, 2019, p. 7.

⁶ *Planned Parenthood 2018-2019 Annual Report*. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 2019, p. 24.

⁷ Lincoln, Abraham. “Second Inaugural Address.” Washington, DC. 4 Mar 1865. Speech.

⁸ Van Der Toorn, Karel, et al. *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible DDD*. Grand Rapids, MI, Brill, 1999.

⁹ Heiser, p. 33, 280.

¹⁰ Watchman Nee. *The Normal Christian Life*. Radford, VA, Wilder Publications, 2008. p. 11.

¹¹ “Definition of PLEAD.” *Merriam-Webster.com*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plead. Accessed 28 Jan. 2021.