

Open Forum

Anti-abortionists distort biblical precepts to fit rhetoric

To the editor:

Betty Childers and Pat Slattery are correct, Exodus 22 doesn't speak to God's belief that a born woman's life is paramount to human life in her womb; it's Exodus 21 verses 22-24. However, Slattery is wrong. Those verses aren't speaking about a premature birth.

Exodus 21:22-24 says, "When men strive together and hurt a woman with child so that there's a miscarriage, (Revised Standard Version) her fruit depart from her (King James Version) and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her, shall be fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him and he'll pay as the judges determine. If any harm follows then you shall give eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life."

Most significantly, no particular time in pregnancy was specified in these verses. If the woman miscarried, regardless of whether the zygote, embryo or fetus survived, but the woman didn't suffer other harm or death, the punishment was a fine for causing the miscarriage. However, if any harm to the woman followed, then the punishment was an eye for eye, life for life. The law considered the miscarriage or death of the fetus or any harm or death of the woman as a loss or damage to property that belonged to the husband. That's very different than the fetus having independent intrinsic value, what anti-abortionists desperately try to extrapolate from these verses and others, including Psalms 139 and Luke 1, verses that when interpreted with anti-abortion extremism cannot be reckoned with Gen. 2:7. Exodus 21 is unambiguous. For God, a born woman has a right to life over the live human being in her womb at any stage of development. For anti-abortionists the opposite is true. But Roe v. Wade correctly and morally balances the right to life and liberty of both.

God, nor Life and Liberty for Women has ever argued that the fetus isn't alive in the womb, but that fact doesn't speak to the official recognition by God of the beginning of human life; breathing the breath of life through the nostrils, Gen. 2:7. By God's own desire and design, live human beings in the womb don't do that until they're born.

Peggy Loonan
executive director
Life and Liberty for Women
Fort Collins

Liveland Reporter Herald 3-30-02