

# Humanizing the Most Vulnerable Promotes Life for All

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More than a decade ago, I was doing IT support work at a local Jewish Community Center. The Jewish librarian, knowing I was a Christian, asked me a question regarding what I thought of the abortion issue. She was in favor of keeping this practice legal. I think I gave her an answer that she did not expect, because it was not really a political one.

I told her that 150 years ago people that looked like me were considered less than fully human. Therefore, it was permissible to enslave people like me and dispose of us when we were no longer considered useful or convenient. More than 65 years ago in much of Europe, people like her were declared to be less than human, the cause of the ills of society, and inconvenient to be allowed to exist. Therefore, it was permissible and mandated that they be exterminated. Today, there is another group that has been similarly dehumanized because they were not considered useful or convenient. Tens of millions of this group have been killed already. They are babies in the womb.

I went on to say that when a society dehumanizes and exterminates the weakest and most vulnerable among them, no one is safe from being similarly treated. Where there is no

sanctity of human life, when society deems us to be inconvenient, then we will likewise be dehumanized and eliminated.

I do not know if she ever changed her mind regarding abortion, but I could tell that what was said gave her something to seriously consider.

One of the reasons God found so many of the inhabitants of Canaan so detestable that He sent the children of Israel to utterly destroy them was because they practiced, among other evil things, passing their children through the fire. That is, they sacrificed children as burnt offerings to their false pagan gods (such as Molech). They were able to do this because they adopted a view of human life that allowed them to see their own children as a sacrificial commodity by which they could "purchase" benefits from their gods.

As Israel prepared to enter the Promised Land, the Lord through Moses gave strict warnings not to imitate the detestable things of the nations they were commanded to drive out.

"When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you." (Deuteronomy 18:9-12)

If the Lord so judged those nations that were engaged in child sacrifice, I wonder what will become of nations today that do so on a far greater scale through abortion?

Much of Western society, however imperfect, previously had a

strong Judeo-Christian foundation. It held to a belief in God and our accountability to Him. There was a general belief in the Biblical view of humanity. In addition to being God's special creation made in His image, human beings were more than physical bodies plus breath. There was an immaterial aspect to each person formed from the womb that made human life unique and sacred, consistent with being made in the image of God (Genesis 9:6). But when Western society centuries later adopted Darwinian evolution and rejected God, materialism became the prevailing view. Human beings were no longer made in God's image but were just body plus breath with no spirit formed by random chance. In time this view has contributed to the idea that a person is not alive until birth. Children in the womb could be sacrificed when deemed inconvenient or profitable. Today, there are even some in society openly promoting and working to pass laws to kill babies after they are born.

Of all the kings of Judah and Israel, Manasseh of Judah was probably the vilest one of all. His story can be found in 2 Kings 21 and 2 Chronicles 33. He engaged in the kind of evil that characterized the abominations of the nations that God had driven out before Israel. He erected altars to pagan gods, worshiped the host of heaven and built altars for them in the temple courts, shed much innocent blood from one end of Jerusalem to the other, practiced witchcraft and divination, and took part in sorcery and consulted mediums. He even made his own sons pass through the fire. His reign of evil misled the people of Judah to sin more than the nations that the Lord destroyed before Israel.

Even though God spoke to Manasseh and the residents of Judah, they refused to listen and turn back from their downward spiral into depravity. In response, the Lord sent the nation of Assyria against Judah. Manasseh was captured, bound, and carried off in humiliation to Babylon.

But in Manasseh's affliction, something wonderful happened.

“When he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.” (2 Chronicles 33:12-13)

The rich grace and forgiveness of God led Manasseh to genuine repentance (Romans 2:4). For the remainder of his reign he worked to undo all the evil he had done. He destroyed the pagan idols and altars and called upon the people of Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel (2 Chronicles 33:15-16). This return to the Lord set the stage for the great national revival that took place under his grandson King Josiah.

“Josiah removed all the abominations from all the lands belonging to the sons of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel to serve the LORD their God. Throughout his lifetime they did not turn from following the LORD God of their fathers.” (2 Chronicles 34:33)

“Then the king commanded all the people saying, ‘Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God as it is written in this book of the covenant.’ Surely such a Passover had not been celebrated from the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and of the kings of Judah. But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem. Moreover, Josiah removed the mediums and the spiritists and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might confirm the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him.” (2 Kings 23:21-25)

Many of us may have previously in life held to false religious

or philosophical worldviews that over time developed into acceptance of, or participation in, some very evil things. But thanks be to God for the grace and forgiveness that is found in Jesus Christ. Just how big is God's forgiveness? It is big enough to forgive the worst of sins and the worst of sinners. How great is the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus' blood? It can make the most deeply embedded crimson stain of sin whiter than snow. (Isaiah 1:18)

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” (Romans 5:6-1)

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