



“By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment” (Hebrews 11:23).

Protecting the Helpless

Central Truth: The strong must protect the weak.

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Topic: Abortion; Life: Sanctity Of; Moses.

It has been suggested that politics is “the fine art of compromise.” I'm not sure about that, but I know that successful living is the fine art of making right decisions. This series of studies [L210—L222] reviews the life of Moses, noting the decisions he made in the light of decisions we must make today. In each study note the situations Moses faced, the options he had, and the decisions he made. It will help us in making similar decisions.

One of the great tragedies of our generation is the abuse of children. Some pre-born children are abused as their lives are ended by abortion. Some young children suffer physical abuse by beatings or neglect. Some suffer sexual abuse by perverted adults. Some suffer emotional abuse by ridicule or lack of affection. They are too young and weak to defend themselves. We must become their defenders. This study develops the truth that “the strong must protect the weak.”

It may be unpopular with some to take a stand in defense of children. But Christian faith and obedience require us to do it. The need is evident in our sinful society. As the people of God, we are obligated to defend the innocent and helpless from all forms of abuse. The decision made by the parents of baby Moses is one we must make today.

Sentence of Death

Review in your mind the historical events which brought Israel to the

place of today's study. God chose Abram and called him out of Ur of the Chaldees to come into a then-unknown land. God promised him three things. (1) His descendants would become a great nation. (2) The land of Palestine would become their homeland. (3) All the nations of the earth would be blessed through them. You can read that account in Genesis 11:27—12:5.

Abraham followed the Lord's leading to Palestine. He had a son named Isaac; Isaac had a son named Jacob; Jacob had twelve sons. But things were not well in Jacob's family. The older sons hated Joseph, their younger brother. They sold him into slavery to foreigners, who took him into Egypt and sold him. Joseph's faithfulness to God in Egypt resulted in his elevation to second in command in all the land. A famine struck that area of the world, and Joseph moved his father and brothers into Egypt. They were given a place in the land of Goshen because they were herdsman, and they lived there for generations. Their number increased to an estimated three to five million. They never mixed with the Egyptians.

Then the Egyptian government changed. A pharaoh came to the throne who did not know Joseph and had no sympathy for his nation. The Egyptian leaders thought, "If we are invaded and the Hebrews join forces with our enemies, we will be conquered. We must reduce the numbers of the Hebrews." Severe measures followed.

First, they tried to stop the growth of the Hebrew population by oppression. The people were put under the harsh demands of slavery. But the more they were abused the more they multiplied. The Egyptians resorted to even more radical measures.

Next, they decided to reduce the Hebrew population by infanticide. An edict was issued, demanding that every male infant must be killed at birth. (That was just one step beyond the current custom of killing babies while they are still in the womb.) The female infants were kept alive. Only God knows how many innocent babies were slaughtered because of the Egyptians' fear of what might happen if the Hebrews continued to increase in number.

Respect for Life

Why was such an abuse of innocent children perpetrated? It was the result of the rejection of the sanctity of human life. Once a society has rejected the truth that all human life is sacred as the "breath" of God (Genesis 2:7), it is open to all forms of abuse. That was the problem then as the newborns were killed. That is the problem now as the pre-born are killed. That is the attitude that will permit the killing of the elderly or infirm as their

“quality of life” is reduced.

Respect for life is based on reverence for God, not obedience to man. Amram and Jochebed did not kill their infant son upon his birth because they were people of God. How do we know? They were of the tribe of Levi, the tribe that was chosen to serve the Lord on behalf of the entire nation. They probably looked at their newborn son and thought as Eve said many centuries before, *“I have gotten a man from the LORD”* (Genesis 4:1). How could they kill the baby (that little “miniature man”) God had given to them? Indeed, we wonder how a mother can consent to the killing of her pre-born son or daughter today. The courts may decree that such an abuse of the pre-born is permissible, but God never says that. Will Christians follow God or man?

Respect for life is an expression of faith in God. How could Moses' parents keep the baby hidden even after disobeying Pharaoh's edict and keeping him alive? They could only do the best they knew how and trust God to protect him and them. And that is just what they did. They could do no less. God-fearing parents will do the same today. The act of abortion indicates that the parent and physician have both rejected the authority of God over their lives.

One of the excuses for abortion of the pre-born and desertion of young children is that the financial obligation is too great. Where is faith in the provision of our God who is “father of the fatherless” (Psalm 68:5)? He who feeds the birds will certainly provide for His people who are made in His own image. Won't He?

Those whose respect for life moves them by faith to protect the innocent will certainly find God's provision sufficient. For three months Amram and Jochebed hid their little son. But soon his presence became evident and they could no longer conceal him. They prepared a little waterproof basket, put the baby in it, and placed it in the reeds by the edge of the Nile River.

Pharaoh's daughter came with her maids to bathe in what they considered the “sacred” waters of the Nile. They found the basket and the baby inside. The Egyptian princess recognized that the baby was a Hebrew. She knew he was hidden there because her father, the pharaoh, had decreed that he must die. But the Lord touched her heart with compassion for the baby. She took him up out of the basket, in spite of her father's decree, and adopted him as her own son.

The baby's parents had stationed their older daughter nearby to see that no harm came to the child. She was commissioned by the Egyptian princess to find a woman who could nurse the child for her. The baby's own mother

was brought. Her son was placed in her arms to rear under the protection of Pharaoh's own daughter! That is God's sovereign provision. You can trust Him to take care of you and your family. He always provides on time and in a sufficient manner.

Challenge for Today

The loss of respect for human life reaches much further than abortion and child abuse, as abominable as those practices are. It results in murder of people of any age, without compunctions of conscience. It results in euthanasia — killing the elderly, terminally ill, and those who are physically or mentally impaired because their “quality of life” is diminished. God sets the highest of values on the life of every person. Those who reverence God will do the same.

The pre-born should be protected. Today in America the most dangerous place for an infant is in his mother's womb because of the prevalence of abortion. Abortion is the ultimate abuse of the innocent. It is strictly condemned of God, and the severest judgment is pronounced upon it.

Exodus 21:22-25 has this teaching. Suppose two men fight and hit a pregnant woman so that the baby is born prematurely. If there is no harm to the woman or to the newborn child, the guilty part will pay a fine as the judges determine. However, if the child or the woman is injured, God decrees, “*Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe*” (Exodus 21:23-25). Did you realize the “*eye for eye, tooth for tooth,*” which is so often mentioned, had to do with abortion where the child or mother suffered injury? What if that was practiced today? All of the abortion clinics would go out of business because there would be no physicians or nurses to operate them. The innocent pre-born must be protected.

The killing of an infant is the taking of a human life; it is murder. It is to be punished by the death of the killer, as God has decreed to be the sentence on one who kills an adult (Genesis 9:6). Observe how far our society has moved from the biblical respect for human life. Judgment is coming upon our nation because of this.

The protection of the helpless applies in other areas, also. God decrees that the homeless should be protected. Care for those who are in need is decreed in Leviticus 25:35-38. Money is to be lent to them without interest. They are to be fed and clothed and protected until they can recover. Proverbs 11:25 promises blessings to the person who gives liberally under God's direction. And Proverbs 19:17 says, “*He that hath pity upon the poor*

lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.” What have you done to help people who are in need because of flood, fire, death, business reverses, etc.? That is a way you can participate in defending the helpless.

The handicapped should be protected. Do you remember a man named Mephibosheth, grandson of King Saul of Israel (II Samuel 4:4; 9:1-13)? He was crippled at the age of five, as refugees were fleeing from the war that was raging in the land. For years he was cared for by loving relatives and friends. Then David came to the throne of Israel. He sought out Mephibosheth, brought him to live in the palace, restored to him all the family fortune, and adopted him as his own son. That is a picture of how Christians should treat the handicapped today.

The aged should be protected. Leviticus 19:32 requires us to (1) respect the aged, (2) yield with courtesy to them, and (3) reverence God. Read Job 32:6 and I Timothy 5:1; then put them into practice. Respect for the aged is an act of reverence.

The only way to change abuses of the helpless in our society is for God-fearing people to take a stand and correct them. Use your influence in voting, speaking on issues, and making your influence felt. Remember that “the strong must protect the weak.”

Questions for Discussion

1. What do we mean by “the sanctity of human life”?
2. How do you show your respect for human life?
3. How can you help protect the pre-born?
4. How can you help protect abused children?
5. How can you help protect the homeless?
6. How can you help protect the handicapped?
7. How can you help protect the aged?
8. What other helpless people can you help to protect?
9. How does your faith in God make you a protector of the helpless?
10. How can you put this study into practice this week?