

What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?

The Bible's answer

The Bible does not use the word "abortion" in the sense of an induced expulsion of a human fetus. However, many Bible verses provide God's view of human life, including that of an unborn child.

Life is a gift from God. (Genesis 9:6; Psalm 36:9) He considers all life to be precious, including the life of a child in the womb. So if someone intentionally kills an unborn child, that amounts to murder.

God's Law to the Israelites stated: "If men should struggle with each other and they hurt a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but no fatality results, the offender must pay the damages imposed on him by the husband of the woman; and he must pay it through the judges. But if a fatality does occur, then you must give life for life."—Exodus 21:22, 23. *

When does human life begin?

Will God forgive someone who has had an abortion?

Is abortion wrong if the life of the mother or the child is in danger?

When does human life begin?

God views human life as beginning at conception. In his Word, the Bible, God consistently portrays an unborn child as a distinct person. Consider some examples indicating that God does not draw a distinction between the life of a baby in the womb and one that has been born.

Under divine inspiration, King David said to God: "Your eyes even saw me as an embryo." (Psalm 139:16) God considered David to be a person even before he was born.

Additionally, God knew that he would have a special purpose for the prophet Jeremiah before Jeremiah's birth. God said to him: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I sanctified you. I made you a prophet to the nations."—Jeremiah 1:5.

The Bible writer Luke, a physician, used the same Greek word to describe an unborn baby as he did to describe a newborn baby.—Luke 1:41; 2:12, 16.

Will God forgive someone who has had an abortion?

Those who have had an abortion can receive God's forgiveness. If they now accept God's view of life, they do not need to be overwhelmed with guilt. "Jehovah is merciful and compassionate . . . As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us, he has put our transgressions." * (Psalm 103:8-12) Jehovah will forgive all who sincerely repent of their past sins, including abortion.—Psalm 86:5.

Is abortion wrong if the life of the mother or the child is in danger?

Given what the Bible says about the life of an unborn child, a person would not be justified in having an abortion because of a potential health risk to the mother or child.

What about the rare situation where at the time of childbirth an emergency forces the choice between saving the life of the mother or saving the baby? In such a case, those involved would have to make a personal decision about which life to try to save.