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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Ki Tetze – Is Abortion After Rape Morally Justified?

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Ki Tetze, which is Hebrew for “When you go forth,” and it goes from Deuteronomy 21:10 to Deuteronomy 25:19.

This Torah portion consists of a series of miscellaneous laws governing war captives, inheritance, wayward sons, found property, rooftop safety, prohibited mixtures, vows, treatment of animals, levirate marriage, the fair treatment of workers, etc.

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to address a common challenge to the pro-life position.

When it comes to the issue of abortion, people, particularly on the pro-abortion side, often try to muddy the waters. Curiously, many defenders of abortion never actually seem to want to defend abortion. It’s made into an issue of “reproductive rights” or “women’s healthcare,” which are quite obviously just deceptive euphemisms intended to distract from the actual debate.

So what is the debate? It comes down to this: Is it wrong to intentionally end the life of a human baby in the womb? Those of us on the pro-life side would say yes. Intentionally ending the life of an innocent and defenseless human being is consistent with the definition of murder.

Those on the other side think that the mother ought to have the right to have her unborn baby killed. That’s what the debate comes down to. And so it’s no wonder that defenders of what some misconstrue as a “right” often try to distract themselves and others from the reality of what they’re actually defending. Because nobody wants to defend a baby-murderer.

For example, another way pro-abortion advocates try to avoid defending their position is by making a distinction between the entity in the womb and a human being. But such a distinction is obviously artificial. Everyone agrees that the entity in the woman’s womb is alive, and all living entities belong to a species. A human fetus, for example, belongs to the human species. Whether this entity is an embryo,

fetus, or whatever, that does not change the fact that it's a human being. "Embryo" and "fetus" are merely stages in human development; no different than "infant" and "teenager" are stages in human development. There is no way around the fact that ending the life of the entity in the womb is ending the life of an innocent and defenseless human being.

Having said all of that, there are some difficult questions surrounding the issue of abortion on an emotional level. For instance, what if the child is conceived as a result of a rape? Pro-abortion advocates, and even those who would consider themselves pro-life in most other respects, argue that a woman should not be "forced" to give birth to the baby of the person who raped her.

Since rape is such a horrific and evil act, which leaves long-lasting emotional scars, everyone on all sides of the debate are inclined to have deep sympathy for the victim. That's what makes this question so challenging on an emotional level. But let's take a step back and really consider the question. A few things can be said here.

First, when pro-abortion advocates appeal to cases of conception after rape, they are being intellectually dishonest. Less than 1% of all abortions are performed on women who have been raped. So, when pro-abortion advocates argue that abortion should be legal on the basis of these exceptional cases, they are pulling a bait and switch. They are using these difficult and exceptional cases to try to guilt people into opposing abortion restrictions more broadly. It's just another incident of the pro-abortion side being unwilling to defend their position—that abortion shouldn't have any restrictions.

But let's discuss the issue itself. Is abortion after rape morally justified? Should pro-lifers take it as an exception to the rule? What does Scripture say?

The first thing worth noting is that God considers rape to be a grave moral evil, and it's punishable by death. We actually see this in this week's Torah Portion (Deuteronomy 22:25-26). For more information on this issue, we recommend our teaching, [Answering Atheists: Marrying a Rapist](#).

So, there's no question that rape is evil, and victims of rape are just that—victims. Rapists have committed an evil act, even worthy of execution in some cases. The woman who is a victim of this evil act ought to be supported as much as possible. But if this evil act results in the woman becoming pregnant, there's a third person to consider—the unborn baby. Does the Torah give any insight into how the unborn baby ought to be treated in such a scenario? Indeed it does. Let's consider another passage from our Torah Portion:

Deuteronomy 24:16

Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin.

It appears that the Torah gives no warrant for putting a child to death for the sins of their father—even if their father was a rapist. The bottom line is that a child is not responsible for the circumstances of their conception. They do not deserve to be put to death because their father committed an evil act. Killing a child on the basis that they were conceived through rape only creates another victim in the midst of a horrible situation.

The prophet Ezekiel likely had this passage from our Torah Portion in mind when he wrote this:

Ezekiel 18:20

The soul who sins shall die. **The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father**, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

If you read the entirety of chapter 18 of Ezekiel, it is all about how we are responsible for our own choices. Thank God, we aren't judged for the sins of our parents or the sins of anyone else. A person is judged on the basis of his or her own choices and actions.

No matter what you've gone through, or even how you've been abused or violated by evil men, you are responsible for your own choices. There is no justification for taking an innocent life. There are other options—adoption, for instance. There are a lot of pro-life organizations that will help you in this difficult situation. You are not alone. Do not put an innocent child to death for the sins of their father.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.

Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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