

# WINTERY KNIGHT

## PODCASTS

# If unborn babies don't have consciousness or don't feel pain, may we kill them?

08/11/2018 | WINTERY KNIGHT | 36 COMMENTS



([https://winteryknight.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/preg-14\\_1494400i.jpg](https://winteryknight.files.wordpress.com/2009/10/preg-14_1494400i.jpg))

*Unborn baby scheming about pro-life apologetics*

Was having a conversation by e-mail yesterday with a pro-abortion atheist, and he gave two reasons why he supported abortion in the first and second trimester. First, he said that unborn babies can't feel pain, so it's OK to kill them. Second, he said that unborn babies don't have consciousness, so it's OK to kill them. I thought it might be useful to link to something that answers both of these objections.

Frank Beckwith is the author of “Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice ([http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0521691354/ref=as\\_li\\_qf\\_sp\\_asin\\_il\\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=wintknig-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0521691354](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0521691354/ref=as_li_qf_sp_asin_il_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=wintknig-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0521691354))”. He wrote that book for Cambridge University Press, a top academic press. But before Cambridge University Press, Beckwith wrote four easy-to-understand essays for the Christian Research Journal. Part IV is the one that has the response to the two questions raised by my atheist friend.

Part I. The Appeal to Pity (<http://www.ccel.us/Beckwith.1.html>)

Part II. Arguments from Pity, Tolerance, and Ad Hominem (<http://www.ccel.us/Beckwith.2.html>)

Part III. Is The Unborn Human Less Than Human? (<http://www.ccel.us/Beckwith.3.html>)

Part IV. When Does a Human Become a Person? (<http://www.ccel.us/Beckwith.4.html>)

Excerpt:

*Some ethicists argue that the unborn becomes fully human sometime after brain development has begun, when it becomes sentient: capable of experiencing sensations such as pain. The reason for choosing sentience as the criterion is that a being that cannot experience anything (i.e., a presentient unborn entity) cannot be harmed. Of course, if this position is correct, then the unborn becomes fully human probably during the second trimester and at least by the third trimester. Therefore, one does not violate anyone's rights when one aborts a nonsentient unborn entity. [13]*

*There are several problems with this argument. First, it confuses harm with hurt and the experience of harm with the reality of harm. [14] One can be harmed without experiencing the hurt that sometimes follows from that harm, and which we often mistake for the harm itself. For example, a temporarily comatose person who is suffocated to death "experiences no harm," but he is nevertheless harmed. Hence, one does not have to experience harm, which is sometimes manifested in hurt, in order to be truly harmed.*

*Second, if sentience is the criterion of full humanness, then the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping would all have to be declared nonpersons. Like the presentient unborn, these individuals are all at the moment nonsentient though they have the natural inherent capacity to be sentient. Yet to countenance their executions would be morally reprehensible. Therefore, one cannot countenance the execution of some unborn entities simply because they are not currently sentient.*

*Someone may reply that while these objections make important points, there is a problem of false analogy in the second objection: the reversibly comatose, the momentarily unconscious, and the sleeping once functioned as sentient beings, though they are now in a temporary state of nonsentience. The presentient unborn, on the other hand, were never sentient. Hence, one is fully human if one was sentient "in the past" and will probably become sentient again in the future, but this cannot be said of the presentient unborn.*

*There are at least three problems with this response. First, to claim that a person can be sentient, become nonsentient, and then return to sentience is to assume there is some underlying personal unity to this individual that enables us to say that the person who has returned to sentience is the same person who was sentient prior to becoming nonsentient. But this would mean that sentience is not a necessary condition for personhood. (Neither is it a sufficient condition, for that matter, since nonhuman animals are sentient.) Consequently, it does not make sense to say that a person comes into existence when sentience arises, but it does make sense to say that a fully human entity is a person who has the natural inherent capacity to give rise to sentience. A presentient unborn human entity does have this capacity. Therefore, an ordinary unborn human entity is a person, and hence, fully human.*

*Second, Ray points out that this attempt to exclude many of the unborn from the class of the fully human is "ad hoc and counterintuitive." He asks us to "consider the treatment of comatose patients. We would not discriminate against one merely for rarely or never having been sentient in the past while another otherwise comparable patient had been sentient...In such cases, potential counts for everything." [15]*

*Third, why should sentience "in the past" be the decisive factor in deciding whether an entity is fully human when the presentient human being "is one with a natural, inherent capacity for performing personal acts?" [16] Since we have already seen that one does not have to experience harm in order to be harmed, it seems more consistent with our moral sensibilities to assert that what makes it wrong to kill the reversibly comatose, the sleeping, the momentarily unconscious, and the presentient unborn is that they all possess the natural inherent capacity to perform personal acts. And what makes it morally right to kill plants and to pull the plug on the respirator-dependent brain dead, who were sentient "in the past," is that their deaths cannot deprive them of their natural inherent capacity to function as persons, since they do not possess such a capacity.*

These four essays are a very good introduction to common responses to pro-abortion arguments. I recommend that people get familiar with this, as once you look into it, you will see that the abortion issue can be debated with as much confidence as William Lane Craig defends Christian theism. You will have the same access to scientific evidence and rational arguments on this topic, and so you will have the upper hand. And that's fun.

The best introductory book on the abortion / right to life issue is "The Case for Life (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1433503204/ref=as\_li\_qf\_sp\_asin\_il\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=1433503204&linkCode=as2&tag=wintknig-20&linkId=DJPXULLNK52FLCCM)" by pro-life debater Scott Klusendorf. The best comprehensive book is a tie between "The Ethics of Abortion (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/041573293X/ref=as\_li\_qf\_sp\_asin\_il\_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=041573293X&linkCode=as2&tag=wintknig-20&linkId=54VXJSEGHGRD3FWY)" by Christopher Kaczor, and Frank Beckwith's "Defending Life: A Moral and Legal Case Against Abortion Choice (http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0521691354/ref=as\_li\_qf\_sp\_asin\_il\_tl?ie=UTF8&tag=wintknig-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0521691354)".

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## 36 thoughts on "If unborn babies don't have consciousness or don't feel pain, may we kill them?"

### 1. **Greg** says:

08/11/2018 AT 1:10 PM

If I discuss abortion I take the view that as a minimum status value a fetus should have all rights of an animal.

So if someone tries to tell me we can kill a fetus then don't try to shame me doe eating meat, or say we should save every poor animal in the world despite the cost.

I am personally a big animal lover by the way, but I recognize their value is far lower than any human. But much like so many other topics people lack the ability to equate like ideas

All ideas are randomly made up in their head as truth. They won't say a fetus is more or less than an animal. And that goes though all the many random beliefs they have they are rarely based on thought or reality

### 2. **earl** says:

08/11/2018 AT 2:16 PM

The only way anyone justifies abortion is by dehumanizing the child in the womb.

#### 1. **Chris Morris** says:

08/11/2018 AT 5:32 PM

Earl, this is factually incorrect. The justification for killing any human being, whether it is unborn or an adult, is that their death can be a benefit to other people. No one can deny that this is a decision that we should avoid if at all possible but clearly there are events where this decision has to be made including problems with pregnancies in which case doctor are obliged to choose between killing one person or two people. What choice would you make in those circumstances?

1. ★ **Wintery Knight** says:

08/11/2018 AT 5:49 PM

We're not interested in making policy based on hard cases. Right now, in Canada and the USA, there is abortion on demand, without needing any reason for it, through all 9 months of pregnancy. This policy is only possible by dehumanizing the child in the womb. This has resulted in over 60 million unborn children being killed in the USA alone.

We should not allow people to kill other people because the victims are "inconvenient".

1. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/11/2018 AT 6:23 PM

I agree. But also consider the case of extreme debilitating conditions or birth defects. I personally wish we lived in a world where all abortion would be wrong, cut and dried, but unfortunately this issue is fraught with many ethical dilemmas depending on the circumstances. It's not all black and white, unfortunately. I will add though, I do feel many pro-choicers are wrong in creating a straw-man argument demonizing pro-lifers as misogynists who seek to oppress women! I think many only want to hold a human life as sacrosanct, but draw the lines at different places (such as when personhood starts) than many pro-choicers. The whole "my body my rules" thing is complete selfishness and callousness from the radical feminists though. Any decision ought to be made in the interest of the unborn, not the mother's "convenience".

<https://aladyofreason.wordpress.com/>

1. **Greg** says:

08/11/2018 AT 10:55 PM

The reasons allowed for justifying can get scary in our current society. Killing a down syndrome baby is horrible in my view because I know many of them and other special needs people. Often they are some of the best people you could ever know.

I also think there is gov't push to kill them off if they could as a money save to the tax system.

As far as I know few are trying to stop abortion right on most disabilities. It is the abortion as a contraceptive option I have an issue with the most.

2. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/12/2018 AT 7:25 AM

I agree with your last statement. Prevention is the best cure, and people ought to think of things like pregnancy before doing the nasty! I hate our society has normalized children born out of wedlock and casual sex. Abortions for "oops babies" are a way to get out of your own mistake in a culture that hates accountability. I'd say put it up for adoption if you can't care for it properly. Plenty of families want children but can't conceive.

3. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:08/12/2018 AT 3:13 PM

The solution for birth defects OUTSIDE of the womb is never to intentionally and deliberately kill the child. Can you tell me why this is the case inside of the womb?

As for life-of-the mother "exceptions," see my other post here.

I've probably heard a couple of thousand of excuses for abortion by now, and not one of them holds up with basic science or a modicum of morality.

Of course, if one is willing to accept moral relativism in ALL cases, then truly "all things are permissible," including abortion, tossing gays off of buildings, wiping out Jews, etc.

Finally, if I am mistaken (I'm not), and there really ARE extremely rare cases where deliberately killing the child in the womb was necessary, that would not justify abortion on demand, partial birth abortion (now defeated by one political party only), and the lack of protections that were embraced by the other political party in our country.

4. **A Lady of Reason** says:08/12/2018 AT 5:39 PM

I agree a human life is of deep worth and ought not to be disposed of wantonly, and for another's convenience. I do think though, the QUALITY of that precious life adds to its worth, not just life in itself. If a baby is born living in pain and suffering, what sort of life is that? If we can detect such conditions very early on, why bring a baby to term that will only know a life of debilitation, pain and suffering? We'd never think it moral to allow even an animal to be brought into the world in pain, why on Earth do we find it permissible to force a human to live such a life? Life IS precious, but it's quality that matters in whether that life will serve its owner. Bringing a human being into this world in disadvantage, pain, suffering and no hope of a fruitful fulfilling life is just as evil as killing a perfectly healthy child. Abortion should be wrong and evil in all cases, but this world is not perfect, and enforcing life at all costs is not always the right thing. No one owes another person a life of suffering so others can feel comfortable. Make no mistakes. I DO NOT think abortion for other's convenience on demand is moral like the radical liberals.

5. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:08/12/2018 AT 10:08 PM

"If a baby is born living in pain and suffering, what sort of life is that?"

If pain and suffering were sufficient conditions for killing innocents, our planet would be mostly without human life, since the overwhelming majority of us experience pain and suffering.

"If we can detect such conditions very early on, why bring a baby to term"

Cut the euphemisms. Rewrite this as:

"If we can detect such conditions very early on, why not kill the defective baby?" That is more accurate.

"We'd never think it moral to allow even an animal to be brought into the world in pain, why on Earth do we find it permissible to force a human to live such a life?"

We do not FORCE someone to live such a life by not “putting him or her down” like a dog.

“Life IS precious, but it’s quality that matters ”

And history is replete with those who decided that others didn’t have sufficient “quality of life.”

Your eugenics side is showing tonight.

“Bringing a human being into this world in disadvantage, pain, suffering and no hope of a fruitful fulfilling life is just as evil as killing a perfectly healthy child.”

I shall let my friends with Down Syndrome know this – they might be surprised by your “compassion.”

“No one owes another person a life of suffering so others can feel comfortable.”

First off, not killing someone is NOT equivalent to forcing someone into a life of suffering.

Second off, we ALL suffer, some more than others.

Third, do you know how frequently wrong in utero diagnoses are?

NONE of these are good arguments for deliberately killing an innocent child in the womb, and so far there has been nothing but emotion in not responding to the basic science involved and the fact that we do not execute innocents OUTSIDE of the womb in our country, but do so at the rate of 15,000 plus each and every week INSIDE of the womb.

6. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/13/2018 AT 7:53 AM

I’m not going to come after you ad-nauseum on this subject and don’t expect you to agree. I just want to clarify my point was to PHYSICAL pain and suffering. Not just temporary pain, or something treatable, but intense physical pain that’s part of an irreversible condition in which the baby, once born will live out its last days or hours in the hospital hooked up to machines never to grow up or live any life past that one of bright hospital lights, sounds and PAIN. Such a dire circumstance may be few and far between, but as long as there are cases, it must be considered. It sounds incredibly harsh and callous to me, to insist someone live for a few hours in intense pain to never grow up and live the life you’re trying to defend for them. We’re not talking about life long manageable chronic conditions here...

That’s all I have to say on the matter. My other points were already made. I’ve given your arguments my genuine consideration as I’m open to changing my mind on many parts of the issue. Don’t mistake me for treating this lightly though. This isn’t just about what’s convenient “just because I can” mentality of many pro-choicers. Abortion should be the LAST thing anyone considers. Being honest, the more I read pro-choice material on abortion, the whole “her body her rules” mentality, the more pro-life I end up thinking...

7. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:

08/13/2018 AT 4:23 PM

"I'm not going to come after you ad-nauseum on this subject"

Good! Because I have heard EVERY excuse, and exactly zero are even remotely rational.

"don't expect you to agree"

That's good because I knew, even as an atheist, that ripping the arms, legs, and heads off of innocent defenseless babies in the womb was (objectively) wrong. Outside of pure moral nihilism (which I know, from your posts, you do NOT adhere to), this should be obvious and a properly warranted basic belief. In fact, given your rejection of 2nd Wave Faux-men-ism versus noble 1st Wave Feminism (largely anti-abortion), you should be even more solidly against abortion.

"PHYSICAL pain and suffering"

But, again, the abortion-minded Mom can wiggle into any form of suffering you lay out there as an excuse for knocking off her child in the womb. "My baby is gonna be raised poor with no father around, and if he has health problems, he will suffer physically." (We ALL suffer physically BTW.)

"once born will live out its last days or hours in the hospital"

And, yet, I hear another story almost every day of wrong diagnoses in this area.

Furthermore, that can be true outside of the womb too, right, but we don't go around knocking off dying people because they are going to die – well, actually we do, but most of us still do not believe that is moral.

"It sounds incredibly harsh and callous to me, to insist someone live for a few hours in intense pain to never grow up and live the life you're trying to defend for them."

Almost as harsh and callous as ripping off their arms, legs, and heads inside of the womb? Would it be OK if we had terminal patients drawn and quartered to prevent them from a terrible future of suffering?

BTW, the children who are aborted in the womb SUFFER total loss of life. That is a form of suffering we should all consider. How arrogant of us to assume WE know better than THEY do how much suffering THEY are willing to endure in order to enjoy life. How easy it is for US to be pro-choice when WE are not the ones in danger of being aborted!

"Abortion should be the LAST thing anyone considers."

Agreed, but we are well past "safe, legal, and rare." Now, pro-aborts are literally shouting their abortion "pride."

8. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/13/2018 AT 4:27 PM

Now, pro-aborts are literally shouting their abortion "pride."

That I think we can agree on is appalling...

2. **earl** says:



08/11/2018 AT 6:13 PM

'The justification for killing any human being, whether it is unborn or an adult, is that their death can be a benefit to other people.'

Well I was only talking abortion but lets expand it to justifying killing anyone.

Think about it harder...it often starts with dehumanization. When you see your fellow man as less than a man or you see a human in the womb as a clump of cells...once you start not seeing them made in the image and likeness of God it starts getting easier to rationalize their dehumanization.

3. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:

08/12/2018 AT 3:05 PM

"clearly there are events where this decision has to be made including problems with pregnancies in which case doctor are obliged to choose between killing one person or two people. "

That is fundamentally false. There are no cases where a choice must be made between actively and deliberately killing the preborn child or the mother. They simply do not exist, and the proof of this is that ambulances do not take women INTO abortion mills. (OUT of abortion mills, because of botched abortions, yes, rather frequently.)

When the mother's life is TRULY in danger, the woman is taken to the hospital and undergoes an emergency C-Section, followed by attempts to save BOTH the mother and child. There actually is no time to prep the womb for an abortion when the mother's life is TRULY in danger.

1. ★ **Wintery Knight** says:

08/12/2018 AT 3:06 PM

What about ectopic pregnancies?

1. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:

08/12/2018 AT 3:15 PM

Some have been saved – did you know that?

Also, removing the child from a tube is different from the direct and intentional killing of that child. If the tube could be removed and the child saved – possible with future technology – this would NOT be an abortion.

And just to anticipate, fetal demise removals are NOT the "abortions" we are discussing – those were legal prior to Roe.

3. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/11/2018 AT 4:16 PM

I feel this is an issue that is important and ethically fraught, but not black and white. I do feel in extreme circumstances, such as grossly debilitating birth defects and other debilitating conditions that cannot be cured or alleviated, then abortion can be a merciful end to a potential life of pain and suffering. Abortions done simply for convenience and not wanting to take responsibility are unethical in my mind, although a child born into this world unloved, abused and unwanted without it's basic needs met at the least, may be better off not being born into such horrific circumstances. It sounds incredibly brutal, but this world is far from perfect, and systems like foster care are fraught with abuse of their own. I do feel though, more parents should put up unwanted children for adoption to families directly, rather than immediately choose abortion if there's a chance at a good life in a loving home. In a perfect world, abortion would be unheard of and every child would be loved and wanted, but every circumstance and factor in why people choose abortion must be judged case by case in determining how ethical such a drastic decision is. As for physically painful and debilitating conditions

in utero, I feel, if it is immoral for an animal to suffer through, and we would put it down out of mercy, it's immoral to force an unborn baby to suffer through just because it's "human" and supposedly worth more than the animal who gets to have its pain stopped.

What I don't feel there is a grey area in is pro-choice people demonizing pro-life people and making straw man arguments that they're only out to oppress women, and that a woman has absolute free reign to do as she pleases with another entity such as a fetus in her body just because it's in her body. With that logic, they ought to not be outraged by drinking or doing drugs during pregnancy since "her body her choice" too! Any decision as weighty as an abortion must be done for the best interests in alleviating suffering for the unborn child, not the mother's convenience! I don't believe there is absolutely zero circumstances abortion is warranted, but I do believe they are very few, and all possible options must be pursued to go through and give the child the best chance at living a fruitful life. In a perfect world, as I said, abortion wouldn't exist, and every child would be conceived into loving families who want it, but this world is not perfect, and there are many grey areas ethically in each case of choosing abortion. I'd say the earlier the more humane, as I think there IS a point (and so does the law of no late term abortions) where I do believe it should be considered infanticide in all but the most extreme cases of painful, debilitating, incurable conditions. I deeply respect those who are more pro-life than I am, as the human right to life must be valued deeply. My question that holds me back from saying it's NEVER justified, is what about the QUALITY of that life? Never the less, I can't make any black and white conclusions for my own opinion, as the matter is deeply fraught with ethical dilemmas.

Feel free to disagree though, a matter this serious must be thought about with one's own personal convictions in addition to scientific facts. After all, it's YOU who has to reconcile your decision with your own conscience in the end.

<https://aladyofreason.wordpress.com/>

4. **Madelyn Lang** says:

08/11/2018 AT 4:25 PM

Interesting that sentience in the past is a criterion for validity but sentience in the future is sometimes not. I say a developing life which will certainly, if not terminated, attain sentience ought to be even more carefully protected.

5. **Chris Morris** says:

08/11/2018 AT 6:39 PM

WK, making policy on any sort of basis is neither here nor there, my reply was in answer to Earl's post and Earl's reply ("...it OFTEN starts with dehumanization.") indicates some agreement with my initial point. Both you and Earl are missing the point that, in reality, doctors are obliged to make the decision all the time no matter what legislation tells them and they are not in any way open to the accusation that they are 'dehumanising' anyone when they do. My question remains: would you choose to kill on person or two people?

1. ★ **Wintery Knight** says:

08/11/2018 AT 7:53 PM

Well, my view in reading pro-abortionists is that they either deny the humanity of the unborn, or that the unborn is a person. They identify some characteristic that the unborn do not have and use that as the basis for the abortion being permissible, e.g. – too small, not developed enough, it's dependent on the mother, it's in the womb and not out yet, it's not viable, it's not conscious, it doesn't feel pain, etc. It's on that basis that I agree with Earl that the first step taken by people who argue for the policy itself is to dehumanize.

1. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/11/2018 AT 10:21 PM

To be clear here: I've heard many pro-life arguments involving personhood and the inherent value of all humans, but what confuses me is the arguments with criteria for personhood and sapience that separates us from animals in the early stages of development. A zygote of a few cells obviously is not conscious, does not feel pain, and has no more "personhood" in the sense of a sapient being as any isolated cell in the human body! However, pro-life people believe one is a full person endowed with the same rights as a fully formed one at conception. Would it be fair then to say the criteria for personhood and the rights that come with it according to what the pro-life position states involves nothing more essentially than those cells possessing human DNA? The cells do not differentiate until they form the germ layers anyways into uniquely human cells except they all contain human DNA. I'm not trying to set up some loaded question or anything, but I do want that clarification, as it gets jumbled under dense philosophical arguments about the essence of "humanity" and personhood. One cannot argue against another's deep personal conviction and moral opinion about the worth of anything, as a measure of inherent worth of anything, humans, animals, objects, etc... is subjective, however I want to form my opinion further on the topic using the objective facts we know about physiology, biology and such to make up my own ethical judgement.

1. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:

08/12/2018 AT 3:23 PM

Please prove to us that WE, as persons, were not ALL once zygotes, embryos, and fetuses. It is fine if you want to believe that we inhabit the human in the womb at some magical time, but please do not confuse your religion with science – or your burden of proof.

I, as a pro-lifer, do not have the burden of proof on personhood. The pro-choicer (except for the human in the womb) has that burden because if he or she is wrong, he or she is on the wrong side of the worst human rights atrocity in history – killing between 1.5 and 2 billion people worldwide in the last half century.

1. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/12/2018 AT 5:31 PM

The burden of proof is on the one making the claim and asserting it on others. The claim personhood starts at conception, and the exact criteria for personhood have been purported by the pro-life side. Pro-choice people have made their arguments for why they draw the lines where they do. I believe you and every other pro-life person has the right to believe in ascribing the same inherent worth in an embryo as a full term baby, because we can argue and nit-pick ad-nauseum the science behind it all, but one's opinion of what something is worth is subjective. We can tally up the facts for either side, but a measure of worth is a qualitative thing, not a quantitative one. I can't argue that you're "wrong" for believing that an embryo has the same worth as both of us, or a full term baby, because such an assertion is up to the moral compass of the person making it. Science can, and does persuade my own moral opinion on the matter, but science itself cannot decide for us the worth of an embryo. The claim of "personhood" as a criteria for worth begs the question of the exact criteria defining personhood. Judging from many pro-life arguments, I'd conclude it has to do with human DNA alone. Literally nothing more than human DNA. Other animal species were embryos, zygotes and fetuses too, and are no different in terms of when they feel pain and have no more conscious awareness as a human fetus. Pro-lifers have made it clear they feel pain doesn't factor into it, nor certain levels of awareness and intelligence. The only thing left be-

tween human and other animal embryos, zygotes and fetuses is the fact one has human DNA and the other's don't. (If you saw them in the early stages side by side, you wouldn't be able to tell apart many animal species from one another including ourselves!) You never elaborated on what you believe this personhood is that is worthy of such deep worth. I'm not disputing that anything with "personhood" is not of the upmost worth and should have a right to life. Just, what exactly defines it, and what is the criteria for owning it? The most broad answer that applies to all stages of development is human DNA. My other opinions on this issue are elaborated in other comments. One of them is though, is not advocating for "abortion on demand", believing one can just throw away a life wantonly. I am pro-choice, but not to the extreme of the radical liberal feminists. It's not as cut and dry as we wish it is. It should be wrong in all cases, but some I believe are ethically permissible if the unborn will suffer in utero and in life. Since your side wishes to impose your particular moral judgement of the matter on all of us, the case is on you to argue if you feel strongly enough to want change.

2. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:

08/12/2018 AT 9:55 PM

"The burden of proof is on the one making the claim and asserting it on others."

Right, and since YOUR side is asserting death on large numbers of humans (scientifically proven), YOU have the burden of proof to show that there are certain humans who are NOT persons. Otherwise, YOU are on the wrong side of the worst human rights atrocity in history.

If I am wrong, then I am causing mostly inconvenience to women and needlessly shaming them – which is NOTHING close to the asymmetry in YOUR being wrong.

"but one's opinion of what something is worth is subjective."

What is NOT subjective is the settled science that "at human conception, a new human organism comes into existence." Again, if you wish to say that certain humans are not persons, that is on YOU, not me. If you wish to establish some sort of religious test for when the human in the womb becomes a person, that is also on you.

"We can tally up the facts for either side, but a measure of worth is a qualitative thing, not a quantitative one."

60 million dead humans in 45 years – quantitative enough for you? Will you grant that, at some point, the preborn human is 3/5 of a person? (sarc)

"Science can, and does persuade my own moral opinion on the matter, but science itself cannot decide for us the worth of an embryo."

Right, so this is why YOU have to prove that the embryo is not a person. Otherwise, the worth of a person SHOULD be uniform. For Blacks and Jews, it once was not.

"Since your side wishes to impose your particular moral judgement of the matter on all of us"

VERY poor reasoning, as your side has already "imposed its particular 'moral judgement' on 60 million humans."

So lacking any evidence to the contrary, do you concede that WE were all once zygotes, embryos, and fetuses?

6. **Chris Morris** says:

08/11/2018 AT 8:22 PM

WK, yes, I'm sure there are pro-abortionists making those arguments but I'm neither a pro-abortionist nor making those arguments. As usual, I agree with much of what Lady of Reason writes: no one should be demonised for opposing the killing of innocents but the reality in which we live is imperfect and there are inevitably times when an abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother. While you may believe that legislators should ignore such events, unfortunately doctors cannot.

1. ★ **Wintery Knight** says:

08/11/2018 AT 9:12 PM

Yes, I see what you're saying. By the way, no pro-life person opposes abortion in the case of life of the mother.

1. **A Lady of Reason** says:

08/11/2018 AT 10:09 PM

I think that's a moot point to even bring up by people on either side. The mother doesn't live, neither does the baby... So it's either 2 lives lost or 1. :( I've heard pro-lifers say though, many pro-choice people overemphasize that possibility and conflate it with health issues vs. something genuinely life threatening.

2. **Derek Ramsey** says:

08/11/2018 AT 10:11 PM

There are a few conditions that increase the risk (e.g. pre-eclampsia), and these could justify an abortion to save the mother. However, the life of the mother exception is often extended to mean "if she didn't get an abortion for any reason, she'd die in an illegal back-alley abortion so we better legalize all abortion to save her life". We've all heard this argument. It implies that any risk to the mother, no matter how insignificant or optional, is justification for abortion.

All pregnancy involves risk of death. Many that support abortion will claim that the pregnancy itself is sufficient reason to allow abortion to save the life of the mother. You can easily see this in the arguments made. The death rate for mothers in life birth situations is < 0.02%. That number is so small that you'd have to abort hundreds of babies as a preventative just to save one mother's life. Taking hundreds of lives to save one is not a rational, ethical choice.

Consider that the death rate includes causes that couldn't be preemptively considered as reasons to abort the baby. The real rate of death of a mother when excluding these causes is much, much smaller.

So as a pro-life person, I do oppose abortion to "save the life of the mother" unless it can be shown that harm to the mother is likely. If abortion were only legal in these situations, abortion would be a rarity.

As an aside, where is the outrage for all the unnecessary C-sections that increase the risk of harm to the mother?

7. **Chris Morris** says:

08/11/2018 AT 9:16 PM

That's good to know – thanks for clarifying that point.

1. ★ **Wintery Knight** says:08/12/2018 AT 5:14 PM

Would this be an example of the non-dehumanizing justification for abortion, where the needs of the mother outweigh the right to life of the child?

<https://www.firstthings.com/blogs/firstthoughts/2009/05/no-girls-allowed-sweden-okays-gender-eugenic-abortion-1>

I understand that this sort of sex-withholding abortion practice is widespread in India and China. Are these ok?

8. **Mark** says:08/11/2018 AT 11:20 PM

I was driving around late last night on a narrow road when I saw a blanket up ahead with something underneath it making it move. Couldn't tell what it was (baby? small animal?), but I was in a hurry and it would have really inconvenienced me to have stopped the car and checked, so I just sped up and ran over it.

When I looked in the rear view mirror, the blanket had stopped moving, so presumably it was now dead, whatever it was.

I just hope it didn't feel any pain when I killed it.

9. **A Lady of Reason** says:08/12/2018 AT 6:49 PM

Look, as hard to believe as it sounds, I think pro-lifers and I have more common ground than not compared to other pro-choice people. I do not stand with the "abortion on demand" crowd, and hate that I feel there are some circumstances where I can't honestly just say "no" as mentioned. I also have deep respect for many pro-life people in their beliefs in valuing human life. The pro-choice people who cry "misogyny" and hold to the "her body her choice" propaganda are deeply flawed, selfish and wrong for attacking pro-lifers based on those grounds. Know while I disagree in the feeling abortion is never justified no matter what the circumstance such as pain and suffering to the fetus, and an embryo has the same exact moral status as a full term baby, I will defend the right of any pro-lifer who feels that way to voice their side without vitriol, radical feminist straw man arguments about misogyny, and shouting down by liberals. A human life is precious, and must be considered morally and not tossed wantonly "on demand". I actually don't like to call myself pro-"choice", as many pro-choicers go too far and morally disgust me in their radical "I can do whatever I want" stance, but I can't be pro-life either since I do accept some circumstances for abortion. I wish there were a middle ground I could identify with that agreed with points on both sides. This topic for me is deadly serious and very ugly.

10. **Greg** says:08/12/2018 AT 9:50 PM

An abortion should still present risks like any procedure to the client and access to numbers for post abortion depression if it is needed. Pay for clinics and those that run them sound more like a grocery store system than a true medical alternative practise that cares about the patient.

I disagree with abortion as a Christian and find few reasons worthy of having one. And the number of procedures performed that meet the criteria claimed for a justified abortion are so low in the total I see then as no more than a distraction from the topic.

1. **WorldGoneCrazy** says:

08/13/2018 AT 5:06 PM

Not directed at you, obviously, but you brought these thoughts to my mind.

It's weird, because I knew that ripping the arms, legs, and heads off of innocent defenseless babies in the womb was (objectively) wrong even as an atheist. Unless one is a complete moral nihilist, this should be obvious and a properly warranted basic belief.

I'm always surprised when Christians (not yourself) don't know that executing the most innocent, defenseless, and vulnerable among us is wrong. I completely understand a confused Christian who is seeking truth in this matter – but I see a fair number claim Christ while being onboard with abortion on demand without apology. It makes me wonder if they even know that Jesus Christ Himself began His earthy sojourn in the womb – or maybe they know, but they just don't care.

11. Pingback: [Why I Don't Vote – Derek L. Ramsey](#)