



Minutes With Messiah

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The Real Sin of Abortion

There is a sin in abortion. Let's not argue "life or no life." Let's not argue whether abortion should be allowed in cases of rape or incest (less than 1% of all abortions performed). There is still a sin in abortion.

Abortion activists claimed (and based their landmark case on) "a woman's right to her own body." Surprisingly, this defense has not been caught up by attorneys across the country to justify drug use, prostitution, gambling, and all the other so-called "victimless" crimes. Interestingly, the only other group that clings to the "own body" banner is the "gay rights" movement. Unfortunately, perhaps, for both the "pro-choice" and homosexual communities, their basic premise is wrong. "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit..., **and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price:** therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (1Co 6:20) If they don't fall under that scripture, not being Christians, then perhaps another one applies—"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity." (Ps 53:1)

The real sin in abortion is as basic as sin itself. It encourages a lack of a sense of personal responsibility. Adam started it. "And the man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (Ge 3:12) Freud and the psychoanalysts continued the trend, saying its our upbringing or a childhood trauma, or "society's fault." Is it any wonder that many people shift blame for what they do, since even our courts tell women, "you don't have to suffer the consequences of your own sexual activity." If she doesn't have to suffer the consequences, why shouldn't I avoid the consequences of my actions by blaming someone or something else? Hence "the Twinkie defense," (the sugar made me do it).

When I was working for Navy Recruiting's Inspector General's Office, we interviewed recruits who had omitted things on their application for enlistment. When I would ask why they lied it was extremely rare

for one to say, "I did it on my own. I was wrong." Occasionally the response was, "I didn't lie. I just didn't tell the whole truth." Most often I heard, "My recruiter [or parents or spouse or friends] told me to." I can picture them standing by Adam at the judgement, saying "the parents that you gave me told me to sin, so I did it." And I can see God quoting scripture back to them, saying "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the

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father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." (Ezek 18:20)

God's law is that sin has consequences. The blood of the Christ may cover the sin, but some of the physical consequences may still be required of one (like having a baby).

Abortion is a sin because it tries to violate God's law of consequence. Interestingly, that law is proven by the abortion and irresponsibility rampant in this country today. God says, whether it be truth, sex, or psychobabble, "whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." (Gal 6:7)

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What Would Peter Say?

Everywhere you look today it seems someone has something, a key chain/necklace/bracelet/bumper sticker, with “WWJD” (What Would Jesus Do?) on it. Since a large portion of the Western world looks to a man who is supposed to be speaking with the authority of Peter the Apostle, I thought it might be appropriate to also ask, “What would Peter say?” Would Peter agree with the things that are being said in his name?

Why should anyone speak in Peter’s name in the first place? In matters of religion would Peter hold himself up as the authority, or would he speak in the name of the Christ? In both his epistles, Peter starts by identifying himself as an apostle (and in 2 Peter as a servant) of Jesus Christ. The meaning in English of the Greek word transliterated “apostle” is primarily an ambassador. The idea is one who speaks on behalf of a ruler. When Madam Secretary of State Albright is busy negotiating with the North Korean government, she is never understood to be speaking in her own name. Instead the implication is “the President of the United States says” In the same way Peter starts his letters emphasizing that it is not he that writes, but his Master, Jesus Christ. He has no authority of his own.

Those who claim a particular man, or at one time in history three separate men in different places speaking contradictory doctrines, speaks as God’s particular ambassador on earth today claim he has that authority because he sits in Peter’s seat, as

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Bishop of Rome. Peter does lay claim to the title of bishop (elder), in 1 Peter 5:1. In that context, however, it is almost as if he is embarrassed to mention his position. He is saying he can say something to other elders because he is one himself. He doesn’t claim any superiority over other elders, but an equality with them. In contrast, the man who historically sits in Peter’s seat does so because he is in a higher post than other elders.

”Upon this rock, I will build my church.”

The usual expression of why Peter had more authority than others is based on Matt 16:18. The argument is that Jesus built his church upon Peter, and gave specifically him the keys of the kingdom. Peter alone, by this argument, is the foundation of the church. “Through this foundation (Peter) the Kingdom of Christ would be unconquerable.” (“Saint Peter, Prince of the Apostles” The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol XI) Also, the symbol of the man who fills the “shoes of the fisherman” includes keys because of this passage. But is that what Jesus was saying in this passage?

What did Jesus say in verse 18 of the passage? “And I also say to you, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Is Jesus saying that He will build His church on a mere man? Later in the same passage, Jesus says to this man “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me.” (Matt 16:23) This is an interesting thing to say to someone whom “the gates of hell shall not prevail against.”

Some opponents of the papacy have tried to contrast the phrases “You are Peter” and “On this rock,” claiming that Peter’s name indicates a small pebble or rock, while the word used in the second phrase implies a cliff or bedrock. If this is true, then Jesus was making a pun on the name he had given Peter. This may be a false distinction, however. In the Aramaic language Jesus spoke daily the words would be the same. Even in the Greek Peter’s name is the masculine name based on the feminine word used for rock in the second phrase. That word can also mean a small rock as well as a bedrock, so those who would make this distinction may end up losing their footing on the pebbles of their argument.

But is Peter specifically the foundation of the church? Paul didn’t seem to think so when he wrote:

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy

temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph 2:19-22)

If the authority as the “foundation of the church” is to be passed on, why was it not passed on to a group of men, specific successors to the apostles and prophets? Why one apostle, rather than one prophet? Since the authority to give the ability to perform spiritual gifts was not able to be passed on by the apostles, why should the authority to speak for a specific one of the apostles be handed down?

Peter himself had the perfect opportunity to lay claim to being the foundation of the church, and he passed it by, emphasizing instead the Messiah’s position in the foundation. He may have been part of the foundation, but laid no claim to being the sum total of it. What did Peter say?

To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (1Pe 2:4-5)

He went on to quote the Old Testament scriptures which say that the Messiah would be the “chief cornerstone” upon which the foundation would be built. If the foundation was built on one rock, Peter, what need would there be for a chief cornerstone?

The keys of the kingdom

Who was given the keys of the kingdom? Were these figurative keys given only to Peter, as this passage could imply? If it were not for other scriptures we might agree that one man can hold those keys. However, two chapters later (Matt 18:18-19) Jesus said to the disciples in general:

Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

This is the same phrase that was used in conjunction with the keys mentioned in Matthew 16. If it is the binding and loosing that is the function of the keys, it is not Peter alone who held the power of binding and loosing, but all of the disciples. This

puts Peter again on a par with others, not over them.

Even assuming the keys are not for binding and loosing but were specifically handed to Peter, their purpose would have been for opening the door to the kingdom. Peter (and the other apostles) preached the first gospel sermon to the Jews on Pentecost. Peter preached to Cornelius, opening the door to the Gentiles. The door has been opened to Jews and non-Jews. Who else is there for someone to be holding the keys for? The door is wide open already, never to be locked again. Why should anyone keep the keys Peter already used.

But what would Peter say about his elevation to a higher status, symbolized by possession of the

If Peter was granted special status, that same status must also be granted to Cornelius.

keys? Even if you could argue that Jesus called him Satan at one point, but that he was to be exalted later, you have to deal with Peter’s own words approximately ten years after the foundation of the church. In Acts 10, Peter is going to the house of Cornelius to preach the gospel to the Gentiles for the first time. As he walks in, the scripture says “Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.” (verses 25-26) By saying “I am also a man,” Peter was saying that his status was equal to that of Cornelius, not superior. If Peter was conferred special status, which is what is usually meant by giving one the keys, that same status must be also granted to Cornelius. Peter understood that he was no better and no worse than any other man. Contrast this with all those religious leaders who have their followers bow down before them and kiss their ring or toe, or do some other obeisance.

What would Peter say? Instead of glorifying himself, in 1 Pet 5:11 he says, “To him [Jesus Christ] be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

Please notice the new address for my web site as shown on page 1. For a while it may still be accessed from the old address, but that will soon be phased out.

The Real Question

When talking to unbelievers about salvation, it is not uncommon to hear the question, “what about those who never had a chance to hear the gospel; is God going to punish them?” This question can be asked in one of two attitudes.

The first view is that God is either going to save everyone or else he is a cruel God. Usually this is the attitude of someone who wants to justify doing things their own way, regardless of what the Bible says. It really doesn't matter how you answer them, they are not going to change anyway. The best answer I can give to that sort of person is to turn the question back on them. I won't speak where God has not spoken, as to someone else's situation, but since you aren't in that condition what are you going to do about your own salvation?

If you can no longer plead ignorance before the judgement bar, what will your plea be? Don't worry about others you don't know until you worry about yourself. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.” (Ac 17:30)

The second attitude is one of true concern for the lost. The speaker is already a believer, and is concerned about those who may not be. But they may also be concerned that God will condemn a person arbitrarily, and they aren't sure they believe in that kind of God. Perhaps such a person can be comforted by reading Acts 8 and 10. In the former chapter a servant of the Kandake (a title not a personal name) of Ethiopia, a Jewish convert, is earnestly studying the scriptures to know the will of God. A preacher is miraculously sent

to him and he hears the gospel of the Christ. In the latter chapter Cornelius the Centurion, a Gentile, is told in a vision where he can learn about the will of God for him. He sends for Peter and becomes the first Gentile convert to Christianity. While today it probably isn't done through miracles, we see that God ensures those who want the truth will get it. Does this apply to the lost but seeking soul in “darkest Africa?” I think it does. God will see that he learns the truth (and if he doesn't, who am I to judge God?).

The real question then, is not what about those souls who never heard the gospel. The real question is: If I am the one God calls to tell a lost soul about the gospel, am I listening to Him, like Philip and Peter?

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Ro 10:14-15)

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. (Mt 28:20)

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