

THE DESACRALIZATION OF LIFE IN THE MOTHER'S WOMB

GOLDEN TEXT

“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus”.
(Luke 1:31)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Jesus Christ's divine conception makes life sacred in the mother's womb and is opposed to the culture of the present century of killing babies in the womb.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:26-33, 39-45

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

28 The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,

40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!

43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

LESSON OBJECTIVES

I) To reflect on Jesus' conception and birth, demonstrating the miracle of life and the ability to procreate;

II) To identify the traces of the culture of death present in our days and their consequences;

III) To understand the sacredness of life and the importance of the Church of Christ to combat any culture that violates the principles of the Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

God is the supreme author of life (Gen. 2:7). Therefore, the Scriptures value it from its conception in the mother's womb (Ps. 139:13-16). Thus, every ideology that aims to change the concept of life disqualifies biblical authority and makes an apology for the culture of killing babies in the womb. The Progressive idea claiming human autonomy over life affronts God's sovereignty. In this lesson, we will study the supernatural conception

of Jesus Christ, the ideological apology for the culture of death and the concept of the sacredness of life in the mother's womb.

I - THE CONCEPTION OF CHRIST

1. The birth announcement. A virgin, named Mary, pledged to be married to Joseph, is visited by the angel Gabriel in Nazareth (Luke 1:26, 27). The angelic being makes a revelation to her: "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus." (Luke 1:31). Faced with the unusual reality, Mary asks, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). The question demonstrates how perplexed the virgin was as to how she would conceive without the participation of a man. In the Gospel, the mention of the city of Nazareth is prophetic (Luke 1:26), for the Christ would be called a "Nazarene" (Matt. 2:23). Luke further emphasizes the maiden's virginity and Joseph's descent "of the house of David" (Luke 1:27b/NKJV). This information is part of messianic prophecies and makes the biblical account reliable (Isa. 7:14; Ps. 89:3, 4).

2. The miraculous conception. The angel Gabriel explains to Mary that the conception would be unique and miraculous: "The Holy Spirit will come on you" (Luke 1:35a) and, therefore, declares that the child, "the Holy One, [...] will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35b). The young woman did not ask for any sign, but the angel let her know Elizabeth's pregnancy as an encouragement to her faith: "your relative is going to have a child in her old age" (Luke 1:36a). The scriptural testimony of barren women who became pregnant prepared the world to believe and receive the miracle of Jesus' conception by a virgin. Regarding this reality, the angel confirms it when referring to Elizabeth's pregnancy: "she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month" (Luke 1:36b). At the end of the message, Gabriel completes, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:37/NKJV).

3. The blessing of birth. Life conceived in a woman's womb is a miracle (Ecclesiastes 11:5), for God endowed human beings with the gift of procreation (Genesis 1:28). Therefore, the birth of children is a divine reward (Ps. 127:3). However, without the gift of fertility, a barren womb becomes an obstacle to the experience of motherhood (Gen. 30:1, 2). Thus, the importance of pregnancy and the sacredness of life in the mother's womb are endorsed when the Bible records the miraculous pregnancy of Mary and that of Elizabeth; a virgin and another advanced in age (Luke 1:34, 36). Elizabeth was carrying John in her womb, who was born with the purpose of making ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:15-17). Mary carried in her womb the Son of the Most High, the eternal

King (Luke 1:32, 33), who was born to be the Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11).

II - THE CULTURE OF DEATH

1. The ideological project. The culture of death is a set of ideas that aims to modify the biblical concept of life. Among its agendas are the legalization of abortion and euthanasia, the defense of suicide and birth control. Through cultural, intellectual and political strategies, an agenda of deconstruction of the sacredness of life is imposed, something held dear by Christian culture, as we saw in the previous topic (cf. Luke 1:31). In this sense, “eugenics” is encouraged: the elimination of human beings with some malformation still in the mother's womb; motherhood is depreciated in order to discourage women from becoming mothers; the concept of reproductive health is modified to justify abortion as a measure of female health; the right to life in the womb is replaced by the woman's unconditional right over her own body, which through abortion decrees the death of the fruit of her womb.

2. The right over the body. Postmodern culture insists that it is the right of human beings to exercise autonomy over their own bodies. This idea is one of total freedom to individual control over physical constitution and human behavior. The slogan “my body, my rules” is used in defense of sexual and reproductive freedoms, as well as for choosing between life and death. In this perception are the “rights” to prostitution, abortion, euthanasia, suicide and others. Any contrary opinion is considered a violation of human freedom. In this regard, the Scriptures assert that the body must be nourished and respected (Eph. 5:28, 29); that though free, human beings do not have the right to desecrate their body (1 Cor. 6:13); and that life only has meaning when it is under the dominion of Christ (Gal. 2:20).

3. The practice of abortion. Abortion is the interruption of birth through the death of the embryo or fetus; it is the act of ending the gestation of a living being. The term gestation comes from Latin “*gestacione*” and refers to the time the embryo stays in the uterus, from conception to birth. In this case, an abortion may be unintentional or provoked during pregnancy. In the Mosaic Law, causing the termination of a woman's pregnancy was a criminal act (Exod. 21:22, 23).

In the sixth commandment, man is forbidden to kill, which literally means, “You shall not murder” (Ex. 20:13). Interpreters of the Decalogue agree that the prohibition of abortion is included in this commandment. Thus, whoever kills an embryo or fetus violates human dignity and the sacredness of life in the mother's womb.

III - THE SACREDNESS OF LIFE

1. Life is inviolable. Human life is sacred, for it is a creative act of God, the author and original source of the breath of life (Gen. 2:7; Job 12:10). In this perspective, the principle of sacredness ensures the dignity of the human person and the inviolability of the right to life (Ps. 36:9; 90:12). Therefore, the value of life is absolute and must take precedence over any other right or interest (John 10:10). In this respect, the principle of defense of human life, from conception in the mother's womb, cannot contain exceptions. Only God has power over life and death (1 Samuel 2:6). In a secularized society, Christians need to be careful about relativism, not making concessions and being alert to actions that manipulate their conscience and disrespect human life (2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Tim. 4:1, 2).

2. The beginning of life. The Scriptures are emphatic when they confirm the beginning of life from conception: the prophet Jeremiah affirms that life begins at fertilization (Jer. 1:5); King David corroborates that the person is known and cared for by the Lord from conception (Ps. 139:13); God is the one who forms the living being inside the mother's womb (Ps. 139:14). Still, the psalmist states that God sees the embryo still formless and loves it in all the formative processes of life in the womb, from fertilization to birth and throughout its life (Ps. 139:15, 16). Therefore, according to the Scriptures, life begins when the union of the male and female gametes takes place. This new cell is a human being and has its own identity and, therefore, its right to be born is not to be interrupted by human will, desires or whims (Deut. 32:39; Rom. 9:20).

3. The Christian position. The church that maintains the theological principle of biblical authority (2 Tim. 3:16) defends human dignity and the inviolability of life from its conception. It teaches that human life is sacred at all stages of life's development and that it is not to be violated by any kind of culture (1 Samuel 2:6). It ratifies that every ideology that secularizes biblical principles must be fought (2 Tim. 3:8).

CONCLUSION

The gestation and procreation of human beings are divine blessings (Gen. 9:7). The conception of Christ in the womb of a virgin certifies the sacredness of life in the womb. The interruption of life at any stage of pregnancy is an aggression against the inviolable right to be born. The appreciation of human dignity, the right to life and care for vulnerable people are immutable principles of biblical Christianity (John 10:10). On the

subject, the Bible assures that God is the author and holder of human life (Job 12:10).