

Note: A good resource on the issue of rape and incest is *Victims and Victors*. David C. Reardon, Julie Makimaa, Amy Sobie, editors; Acorn Books, Springfield, IL; available from the Elliot Institute: www.afterabortion.org. In this book, those who have experienced sexual assault speak out about their pregnancies, abortions, and children. Some quotes from the book that may be helpful to you or someone you know:

"I, having lived through rape and also having raised a child 'conceived in rape,' feel personally assaulted and insulted every time I hear that abortion should be legal because of rape and incest. I feel that we're being used to further the abortion issue, even though we've not been asked to tell our side of the story."

"After my daughter was born, it was love at first sight ... I know I made the right decision in having her."

"Often I cry. Cry because I could not stop the attacks. Cry because my daughter is dead. And I cry because it still hurts."

"They say abortion is the easy way out, the best thing for everyone, but they are wrong. It has been over fifteen years, and I still suffer."

"Abortion does not help or solve a problem—it only compounds and creates another trauma for the already grieving victim by taking away the one thing that can bring joy."

"The effects of the abortion are much more far-reaching than the effects of the rape in my life."

"I thank God for the strength He gave me to go through the bad times and for all of the joy in the good times. I will never regret that I chose to give life to my daughter."

To read more about the work of God's hands, see "The Hands of God and the Value of Human Life" commentary on page 840a of the *GOD'S WORD for Life* Bible, available from Lutherans For Life.

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Is Abortion Allowed in Cases of Rape or Incest?

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The Child of Rape

Place two newborn babies side by side on a table. Call together medical specialists, scientific professionals, social engineers, and leading theologians. Have technicians measure the size of the babies, examine their bodies, observe their behavior, draw blood, and perform reaction tests of all sorts. Then let the experts tell us which baby is the product of rape. They can't!

The child of rape, as every child, is a work of art created by God. Isaiah 64:8 speaks of God as the potter who fashions clay into something beautiful. In Psalm 139 the comparison is even more exact: It is God himself who weaves our bodies together in our mother's womb.

The Godless Act of Rape

Rape, long considered a sexual act, is now recognized as an act of violence, control, and rage. Those emotions are all exhibited in the rape of Tamar by her half-brother, Amnon, and the ravished Tamar rightly calls the rape a **"godless act"** (2 Samuel 13:12).

The outrage of society today against such a "godless act" is to demand vengeance. Someone ought to pay! Ironically, it is often the innocent child who, through abortion, receives a sentence of death. Abortion may serve the emotional needs of a society repelled by rape, but it doesn't serve the needs of the two human beings most affected—the mother and her unborn child.

Abortion vs. Love

Abortion, as a supposed "solution," is usually offered out of pity for the violated victim. Pity, of course, is a good thing in that it is the feeling through which a person shares in the suffering and wounded condition of another. Yet, love is greater than pity! Pity sees the raped woman in her desolation and shame. Love sees her desolation and shame but also sees the woman in relation to the God who redeemed her through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus. Love sees the value God places on unborn life and knows that He has a plan for both mother and child.

In 2 Kings 14:6 we are reminded of the Lord's command, **"Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. But each one shall die for his own sin."** To impose capital punishment, in the form of abortion, on the innocent child is to do what God expressly forbids. It is to repeat the "godlessness" inherent in rape. Unlike the rape in which the woman is an innocent victim, in abortion she becomes an accomplice in an act that destroys an innocent, defenseless child.

The fact that the mother was in no way responsible for the act that led to the child's conception does not remove the child's right to life. The truly compassionate, loving solution is one that is both non-violent and life-giving. Positive, sensitive, and caring counseling that encourages the nurture and protection of the other innocent victim of rape or incest—the unborn child—can be part of the healing process.

Incest

Incest involves a complex family situation that will not be cured or stopped by abortion. Abortion promises silence and makes it possible

for the incest to continue. The more effective response to pregnancies resulting from incest is to deal with the environment in which the girl is being victimized. Aborting the girl's baby and then returning her to the family situation that caused the problem in the first place is no solution.

Years after incest has stopped, victimized women report lingering pain and scars, but many cling to the promise in Psalm 147:3 that God heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. Victims of rape and incest often struggle for a long time with self-esteem, but many claim that what has helped them with the sense of degradation is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

"He loves me just the way I am," said one victim. "I don't have to be perfect or have to earn His love!" said another. "I am absolutely complete in Christ," wrote a third.

When Love Begins

If the value of human life is to have any meaning, then its value cannot depend on, or be diminished by, the circumstances that brought about that new human life. God maps out the tapestry of life for each child, whether a child is the product of love and marriage or the product of rape and incest. It is not a question of when life begins. It is a question of when love begins, and God's love for each child begins in His mind and heart before they are even conceived.

Dr. Jean Garton