



The Kingdom Perspective

The “Unwanted” Baby Girls of Rome

Hello! This is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective!

Many are shocked to learn that infanticide, the killing of unwanted children, was considered perfectly acceptable in the ancient world. The most common means of carrying this out was the practice of “exposure”, leaving a child exposed to the elements, usually on the city dump, until they died. Since male children were considered more valuable than female, infant girls were usually the target of this practice. Generally, after a family had given birth to one girl, any further female offspring had a high likelihood of being tossed.

Archaeologists have uncovered a chilling letter sent by an otherwise “loving” husband and father to his pregnant wife. Listen to the strange callousness with which he speaks of ordering the murder of their child:

“Know that I am still in Alexandria [away on business]. And do not worry if they all come back and I remain in Alexandria. I ask and beg you to take good care of our baby son, and as soon as I receive payment I shall send it up to you. If you are delivered of a child [before I come home], if it is a boy, keep it, if a girl discard it. You have sent me word, ‘Don’t forget me.’ How can I forget you. I beg you not to worry.”

~A letter written in 1 BC, cited in Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal, Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*, 97-98

Note well, “if it is a girl, discard it”—just throw it away!

Now, Christians operated with a completely different ethos. Why? Because Holy Scripture informed them that the lives of little girls matter. All human lives matter because we are all made in the image of God.

Christians not only rejected the practice of infanticide, they would also go to the city trash heaps and rescue these discarded children. Since most of these infants were girls, historians tell us this helps explain the unusually high number of women in the early church.

The Christians of Rome valued all lives. Do you?

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

~ **Genesis 1-26-28 (ESV)**

Sources to consider:

Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal, Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (

Why You Think the Way You Do: The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home by Glenn S. Sunshine (Zondervan 2009).

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