

End Time Trends 2012 Footsteps of the Antichrist - 009 and 010

Psalms 66:18 If I perceive sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.

1 Cor 11:31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*

Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Antichrist 2012: Footsteps

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." - 2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

[We return to Jacob...]

Later, he became more involved in the offices more related to the direct affairs of The Intermediary, and ultimately, was asked to be The Secretary. "The Secretary" being almost a title like "The Intermediary", he had often thought, because that was how everyone referred to him as soon as he took the position.

He shook himself back to the issue at hand - the meeting with The Archons coming up in a few weeks. He didn't know why he always had that little extra feeling of anxiety about his responsibilities when a meeting with The Archons was coming up - perhaps he just hadn't overcome the fascination of who The Archons were and where they were from.

He had heard about how it all started some time ago when he was briefed on his actual duties and finally fully informed of the full identity and mission of The Intermediary, and had always been intrigued with how it all transpired - the Roswell story, the "Dancing UFO's over the White House" and, subsequently, the Eisenhower meetings at Holloman Air Force Base in 1954. That was the official beginning of the Revelation of the Archons.

[Following last week's study of the Fallen Angels, we'll continue, today, by concluding the Biblical record of Fallen Angels and the Divine Council, and follow that with a look at the Doctrine of Demonism before returning to our story.]

Perhaps the most striking scene of the Divine Council is found in I Kings 22. In that passage, the reader is privy to an actual council meeting concerning the evil king Ahab. I reproduce the whole chapter here (NRSV) for context:

1 For three years Aram and Israel continued without war. 2 But in the third year King Jehoshaphat of Judah came down to the king of Israel. 3 The king of Israel said to his servants, “Do you know that Ramoth-gilead belongs to us, yet we are doing nothing to take it out of the hand of the king of Aram?”

4 He said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to battle at Ramoth-gilead?" Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are; my people are your people, my horses are your horses."

5 But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "Inquire first for the word of the LORD." 6 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred of them, and said to them, "Shall I go to battle against Ramoth-gilead, or shall I refrain?" They said, "Go up; for the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

7 But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no other prophet of the LORD here of whom we may inquire?" 8 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one other by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies anything favorable about me, but only disaster." Jehoshaphat said, "Let the king not say such a thing." 9 Then the king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Bring quickly Micaiah son of Imlah."

10 Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah were sitting on their thrones, arrayed in their robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. 11 Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron, and he said, "Thus says the LORD: With these you shall gore the Arameans until they are destroyed." 12 All the prophets were prophesying the same and saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

13 The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, the words of the prophets with one accord are favorable to the king; let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak favorably." 14 But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

15 When he had come to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we refrain?" He answered him, "Go up and triumph; the LORD will give it into the hand of the king."

16 But the king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?” 17 Then Micaiah said, “I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, like sheep that have no shepherd; and the LORD said, ‘These have no master; let each one go home in peace.’ ” 18 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy anything favorable about me, but only disaster?”

19 Then Micaiah said, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him. 20 And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab, so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?’ Then one said one thing, and another said another, 21 until a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, saying, ‘I will entice him.’ 22 ‘How?’ the LORD asked him. He replied, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ Then the LORD said, ‘You are to entice him, and you shall succeed; go out and do it.’

23 So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; the LORD has decreed disaster for you.”

24 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up to Micaiah, slapped him on the cheek, and said, “Which way did the spirit of the LORD pass from me to speak to you?” 25 Micaiah replied, “You will find out on that day when you go in to hide in an inner chamber.” 26 The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son,

27 and say, 'Thus says the king: Put this fellow in prison, and feed him on reduced rations of bread and water until I come in peace.' "28 Micaiah said, "If you return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Hear, you peoples, all of you!"

Note from this remarkable vision of the true prophet of Yahweh that the deliberative assembly is once again in the presence of God.

There is no possibility that this is a human council. There are other references to the corrupt gods of the nations—and not idols— outside immediate divine council contexts.

They affirm that other gods were part of the worldview of Israel in the Hebrew Bible.

Demonism

We are reading a great deal in these days about “Spiritualism,” or the communication of the living with the dead.

What is called “Spiritism” is **DEMONISM**, and is forbidden in the Scriptures. Lev. 20:6, 27. Deu. 18:10–11. Isa. 8:19 (R. V.).

The “**Familiar Spirits**” of the Old Testament are the same as the “**Demons**” and “**Seducing Spirits**” of the New Testament.

Of the revival of “Spiritism” in these days we have been fully warned in the New Testament.

The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy, says—

“Now the Spirit (Holy Spirit) speaketh expressly, that in the **‘LATTER TIMES’** (the last days of this Dispensation) some **shall depart from the Faith** (that is, give up the Christian Faith) giving heed to **‘SEDUCING SPIRITS,’** and **‘DOCTRINES OF DEVILS’** (Demons), * * * **forbidding to marry,** and commanding to **abstain from meats.**” 1 Tim. 4:1–3.

The phrase “**forbidding to marry**” does not refer to “**celibacy**,” but to the **abrogation of the marriage relation**, the practice of “**FREE LOVE**” and the doctrine of “**AFFINITIES**,” which Spiritism leads to. The phrase “**Abstain From Meats**” is not a reference to fasting, but the requirement of a “**vegetable diet.**” It is a well-known fact that a “vegetable diet” renders the body more susceptible to spiritual forces than a meat diet.

The close connection of this warning of the Apostle with the words—“Refuse profane and ‘**OLD WIVES’ FABLES,**’ ”

It is an indisputable fact that most of the “Witches” and “Mediums” of Scripture, and these “Later Days,” were and are women.

It was through Eve and not Adam that Satan sought to destroy the race.

The reason may be that the nervous and impressionable character of women is better adapted to demon influence. The revival of “**Spiritism,**” or “**DEMONISM,**” is one of the “Signs of the Times,” and should be a warning to every true child of God of the approaching end of the Age.

The “Demons” belong to the “Powers of Darkness.”

They are not few in number, but are a great “Martialled Host.” veterans in the service of Satan.

Their central camp or abode is the “Bottomless Pit” from which they “sally forth” at the command of their leader. Rev. 9:1–11.

They are not angels.
Angels have bodies.
But the fact that demons can enter in, and take possession of, and control human beings and animals (swine), is proof that they are **“Disembodied Spirits.”**
They are supposed by many to be the “spirits” of the inhabitants of the “Pre-Adamite Earth,” whose sin caused its wreck, and whose bodies were destroyed in the catastrophe that overwhelmed it, and their desire and purpose in entering human bodies is to re-embody themselves again on the earth where they once lived.

That the “Demons” have a **personality** is clear from the fact that Jesus conversed with them, asked them questions, and received answers. Luke 8:26–33. They are possessed of more than ordinary intelligence. They know that Jesus is the “**Son of God,**” and that they are finally to be confined in a place of “**Torment.**” Matt. 8:29.

The Power of Demons Over the Human Body

They can cause **DUMBNESS** (Matt. 9:32–33), and **BLINDNESS** (Matt. 12:22), and **INSANITY** (Luke 8:26–35), and the **SUICIDAL MANIA** (Mark 9:22), and **PERSONAL INJURIES** (Mark 9:18), and impart **SUPERNATURAL STRENGTH** (Luke 8:29) and inflict **PHYSICAL DEFECTS AND DEFORMITIES**. Luke 13:11–17.

Once they have got control over a human body they can come and go at will. Luke 11:24–26.

The Devilish character of “Demons” is seen in the use they make of their victims.

They use them as “**instruments of unrighteousness,**” (Rom. 6:13), for the proclamation of the “**DOCTRINES OF DEVILS,**” (1 Tim. 4:1), and the teaching of “**DAMNABLE HERESIES.**” 2 Pet. 2:1.

The effect of such use of the victim is not only **unmoral,** it is **IMMORAL.**

It leads to vicious and inhuman conduct.

The conduct of “**demonized**” men and women seems to indicate that the “Demon” takes possession of them for the purpose of **physical sensual gratification**, thus letting us into the secret of the cause of the wreck of the Pre-Adamite Earth, the **SIN OF SENSUALITY**. This accounts for the desire of the victim to live in a state of nudity; to have lustful and licentious thoughts. In these days of increasing tendency to yield to “**Seducing Spirits**” it may account for the immodesty of fashionable attire, and the craze of dancing. The purpose of the “Demon” is often to alienate husband and wife, and break up homes by preaching the doctrine of “**FREE LOVE.**”

In short, the “Demon,” for personal gratification, has the power, once he is in control of his victim, to derange both mind and body, and wreck the victim’s health, and if deliverance is not obtained by turning to Christ, who alone has power to cast out the Demon, the victim will be lost soul and body.

Demon-possession must not be confounded with diseases, such as “Epilepsy,” which causes the victim to fall in convulsions, foam at the mouth and gnash the teeth, for the Scriptures make a clear distinction between them. Matt. 4:24.

In 1 Cor. 10:20–21 we read—
“But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they **SACRIFICE TO DEVILS** (Demons), and not to God; and I would not that ye should have **FELLOWSHIP WITH DEVILS** (Demons). Ye cannot drink the ‘**Cup of the Lord**’ (Communion Cup), and the ‘**CUP OF DEVILS**’; ye cannot be partakers of the ‘**Lord’s Table,**’ and of the **TABLE OF DEVILS** (Demons).”

This passage proves that behind all heathen worship there is the “Spirit of Demonism,” or “**DEVIL WORSHIP**,” and accounts for the “wild orgies” and voluptuous and licentious mode of worship of the heathen.

Satan’s angels are spoken of as “Wandering Spirits,” and “Lying,” and “Wicked Spirits.”

They are invisible, and can enter homes and hear the secrets of the family.

They can see every act of impurity.

Thus through mediums they can give information known only to the individual himself.

They can disclose the past, and to a limited extent have prescience enough to foretell the future.

The “Demons” are different.

They simply incarnate themselves in human beings, take possession of their personality, and use them for their own base and unclean purposes.

The “Wandering Spirits” do not enter in and take possession of the person, they simply exercise an outward “**control,**” as in Hypnotism.

When the “Medium” has passed into the “hypnotic state” the “**Control**” (Wandering Spirit) directs her what to say.

This is conveyed in the language of the Medium, and the character of the language is dependent on the education or mentality of the Medium, and accounts for messages purporting to come from scholarly persons being so unlike their language when alive.

The story of Saul and the “Witch of Endor” stands by itself. It was put in the Bible to show how God punishes the “Sin of Witchcraft,” and to expose the fraudulency of Spiritism. Samuel was dead, and Saul had put away those that had “Familiar Spirits,” and the “Wizards,” out of the land. 1 Sam. 28:3–25.

But when the Philistines came up as a great host and pitched in Shunem Saul was afraid and greatly troubled, and enquired of the Lord, but the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets, and so Saul decided to consult a “Medium,” that is, a woman under the “control” of a “Familiar Spirit.”

Upon inquiry he discovered that there was such a woman at Endor about seven or eight miles away. Waiting for the shelter of the night he went in disguise, accompanied by two attendants, to the Witch's cave in the recesses of the mountains.

Passing into the interior of the cave, dimly lighted, perhaps, by a fire of wood, King Saul accosted the woman in words that reveal the identity of her craft with that of the modern Medium, saying, "I pray thee, divine unto me by the 'Familiar Spirit,' and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee."

The woman was at first suspicious, fearing that it was a snare set for her, and replied, that Saul had forbidden the practice of “Witchcraft,” but being assured by Saul in a strange oath, in which he swore by the name of the Lord, that no harm should befall her for breaking the law of the Lord, she said—“Whom shall I bring up unto thee?” And he said, “Bring me up Samuel.”

The woman doubtless began to make her usual preparations, expecting to go into a trance-like condition and be used by her “Control” or “Familiar Spirit,” who would impersonate the person called for. But the usual procedure was cut short by a “Spirit” rising, like a “wraith,” out of the earth, and visible only to the woman.

So unexpected and unusual was the appearance of the “Spirit,” thus disclosing the fraudulency of Spiritism, that the woman shrieked in terror and affright and said to Saul, “Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul.”

This doubtless was made known to her by the “Familiar Spirit,” who saw through Saul’s disguise.

The king said unto her, “Be not afraid: for what sawest thou?”

And the woman said, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth.”

To her terrified vision there were many, but when Saul asked, “What form is he of?” she replied, “An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle.”

At once Saul perceived it was Samuel, and bowing himself waited for Samuel to speak, which Samuel did, saying in a reproachful way—“Why hast thou **disquieted me, to bring me up**”?

The woman's "Familiar Spirit" was not a factor in the bringing up of Samuel.

God took the matter out of his hands. "Familiar" or "Evil Spirits" may impersonate the dead, but they cannot produce them.

Only God can do that.

And Samuel is the only one mentioned in the Scriptures that God so produced.

The case of Samuel then is no proof that a "Medium," or her "Control," can produce the "spirit" of the dead.

The fact is that as soon as the "Spirit" of Samuel appeared the woman and her "Familiar Spirit" were sidetracked.

They had nothing more to do with the proceedings. The conversation that followed was not between Saul and the “Familiar Spirit,” but between Saul and Samuel. From Genesis to Revelation this is the only instance in the Scriptures where God permitted the dead to come back and hold communication with the living. While there are other cases where the “spirit” of the dead came back, as in the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the widow of Nain’s son, and Lazarus, their mind was blank as to their experience while in the other world, it having faded away as a dream when the body awakes. They came not back as “spirits” but as raised persons.

They did not receive their Resurrection bodies.

They afterward died again.

But Samuel's "spirit" was not re-embodied, and therefore he was not disqualified from telling what he knew of the other world.

But you ask how about those of whom it is said in Matt. 27:52–53, "That many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves **after His Resurrection**, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many," was not that Spiritism?

No.

Those were resurrected persons.

They had their Resurrection bodies.

With Jesus they made up the “First Fruits” of the “Resurrection Harvest,” and ascended with Him to Heaven, and are now there, like Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, in their bodies.

Their appearance in Jerusalem to those who were alive in the flesh, reveals not only the possibility, but the manner of communication between the risen saints and the people of the Millennial Earth, during the Millennium.

The appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration is no proof of Spiritism. They were present not as “spirits” but in their **GLORIFIED BODIES.**

If it be urged that God broke His own law against “Spiritism” by permitting the “Spirit” of Samuel to come back from the other world, the answer is that Samuel was sent back to rebuke those who resort to “Familiar Spirits,” and to pronounce sentence on King Saul for breaking that law, for we read in 1 Chron. 10:13, that Saul died for his transgression in asking counsel of one who had a “Familiar Spirit.”

There are some who stumble at the words of Samuel —“Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons **be with me**” (1 Sam. 28:19), and say, how could that be?

If Samuel was in Paradise, Saul and his sons being wicked could not go there.

Therefore they reason it could not have been the “Spirit” of Samuel that appeared to Saul, but an “evil spirit” from the “Underworld.”

But we must not forget that in the time of Samuel Paradise was in the “Underworld,” and was separated from the Hell section by an impassable Gulf, so that when Saul and his sons were slain their souls went to the “Hell” [Torments] section of the “Underworld,” and they were with Samuel in the sense that both they and Samuel were in the “Underworld,” though one was in the “Paradise” section while the others were in the “Hell” [Torments] section separated only by a gulf.

This accounts for why Samuel's "spirit" came **up out of the earth**, and not down from Heaven.

As further confirmation that it was really Samuel who appeared we have his **stinging** rebuke to Saul.

Most so-called communications from the dead are vague, cryptic, and couched in language intended to leave a favorable impression.

But it was not so with Samuel. He spoke in the severest terms to Saul, and told him that the Lord had rent the Kingdom from him and given it to his neighbor, David, and was about to deliver Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and that tomorrow Saul and his sons would die. 1 Sam. 28:16–19.

Samuel disclosed nothing as to the state of those in the “Underworld,” except as to the state of the Righteous dead, which he declared to be a state of rest and quietness, and that Saul had disturbed him by calling for him.

In this statement we have a revelation of the state of the Righteous dead in Paradise between the death and resurrection of the body.

If the persuasive pleading of the Rich Man in Hell could not secure the sending back of the “spirit” of Lazarus to the earth to warn his brethren, how can a “Medium” with the help of a “Familiar Spirit” prevail on the “spirits” of the dead to return?

There is no need for us to resort to “Spiritism” to find out about the state of the dead, for we have a full revelation of the state of both the Christian and Christless dead given us in the Holy Scriptures. We have Moses and the Prophets, let us hear them. Luke 16:29–31,

“When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have ‘Familiar Spirits,’ and unto ‘Wizards’ that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the ‘Law’ and to the ‘Testimony’: if they speak not according to the ‘Word,’ it is because there is no light in them.” Isa. 8:19–20.

To tamper with “Spiritism” is to put one’s-self on Satan’s ground, and to throw one’s-self open to invasion by a Demon, or to the “control” of an “Evil Spirit” from the “Dark Zone,” whose power it may be impossible to break.

[End Larkin]

Jacob opened his computer and entered his security codes to reach his Committee of 300 data. His eyes scanned the folders... the main folder of the 12 Domains which constitute the realms for each of the 12 Exousia. The Exousia, he had learned early on, were the Archons' "Delegated Authorities" who work closely with the "Apostolate", usually referred to as "The 12" - the top tier of the The 300. The 12, then, have their various subcommittees who coordinate activities of all the hundreds of groups, organizations, quasi-government and government agencies and international corporations who have expertise in the various 12 Domains.

He looked over the 12 individual folders for each of the Domains, to pick those that were to be discussed at the next Archon Council meeting in May...

The Arts
Economics
Education
Environment
Governance
Health
Infrastructure
Justice
Media
Relations
Science
Spirituality

He clicked on the tab for Health - one of their current emphases in the push for Population Control, and therefore, an important part of the Sustainable Development program of the UN, Climate Change and, a critical issue in the United States' move towards redirecting healthcare with the recently passed but much argued Affordable Care Act. Current discussion had been directed toward Birth Control/ Contraception by one of their Media representatives, who, rather adroitly, inserted it into the Republican Candidates Presidential Debate. It was followed by a Presidential order that all Faith Based groups must provide these services to their employees, which had the desired effect of "Religious Outrage", so they might continue to marginalize all Christian groups and radicalize them in the public's mind. Next, they orchestrated the release of another important step in their plan...

Killing babies no different from abortion, experts say

Parents should be allowed to have their newborn babies killed because they are “morally irrelevant” and ending their lives is no different to abortion, a group of medical ethicists linked to Oxford University has argued.

The article, After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?

Giubilini A, Minerva F. J Med Ethics (2012). published in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, says newborn babies are not “actual persons” and do not have a “moral right to life”. The academics also argue that parents should be able to have their baby killed if it turns out to be disabled when it is born.

The journal's editor, Prof Julian Savulescu, director of the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, said the article's authors had received death threats since publishing the article. He said those who made abusive and threatening posts about the study were "fanatics opposed to the very values of a liberal society". The article, entitled "After-birth abortion: Why should the baby live?", was written by two of Prof Savulescu's former associates, Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva.

They argued: “The moral status of an infant is equivalent to that of a fetus in the sense that both lack those properties that justify the attribution of a right to life to an individual.”

Rather than being “actual persons”, newborns were “potential persons”. They explained: “Both a fetus and a newborn certainly are human beings and potential persons, but neither is a ‘person’ in the sense of ‘subject of a moral right to life’.

“We take ‘person’ to mean an individual who is capable of attributing to her own existence some (at least) basic value such that being deprived of this existence represents a loss to her.”

As such they argued it was “not possible to damage a newborn by preventing her from developing the potentiality to become a person in the morally relevant sense”.

The authors therefore concluded that “what we call ‘after-birth abortion’ (killing a newborn) should be permissible in all the cases where abortion is, including cases where the newborn is not disabled”.

They also argued that parents should be able to have the baby killed if it turned out to be disabled without their knowing before birth, for example citing that “only the 64 per cent of Down’s syndrome cases” in Europe are diagnosed by prenatal testing.

Once such children were born there was “no choice for the parents but to keep the child”, they wrote.

“To bring up such children might be an unbearable burden on the family and on society as a whole, when the state economically provides for their care.”

However, they did not argue that some baby killings were more justifiable than others – their fundamental point was that, morally, there was no difference to abortion as already practised.

They preferred to use the phrase “after-birth abortion” rather than “infanticide” to “emphasise that the moral status of the individual killed is comparable with that of a fetus”.

Both Minerva and Giubilini know Prof Savulescu through Oxford. Minerva was a research associate at the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics until last June, when she moved to the Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics at Melbourne University.

Giubilini, a former visiting student at Cambridge University, gave a talk in January at the Oxford Martin School – where Prof Savulescu is also a director – titled 'What is the problem with euthanasia?' He too has gone on to Melbourne, although to the city's Monash University. Prof Savulescu worked at both universities before moving to Oxford in 2002.

Defending the decision to publish in a *British Medical Journal* blog, Prof Savulescu, said that arguments in favour of killing newborns were “largely not new”. What Minerva and Giubilini did was apply these arguments “in consideration of maternal and family interests”.

While accepting that many people would disagree with their arguments, he wrote: “The goal of the Journal of Medical Ethics is not to present the Truth or promote some one moral view. It is to present well reasoned argument based on widely accepted premises.”

Speaking to *The Daily Telegraph*, he added: “This “debate” has been an example of “witch ethics” - a group of people know who the witch is and seek to burn her.

It is one of the most dangerous human tendencies we have. It leads to lynching and genocide. Rather than argue and engage, there is a drive to silence and, in the extreme, kill, based on their own moral certainty. That is not the sort of society we should live in.”

He said the journal would consider publishing an article positing that, if there was no moral difference between abortion and killing newborns, then abortion too should be illegal.

Dr Trevor Stammers, director of medical ethics at St Mary's University College, said: "If a mother does smother her child with a blanket, we say 'it's doesn't matter, she can get another one,' is that what we want to happen?"

"What these young colleagues are spelling out is what we would be the inevitable end point of a road that ethical philosophers in the States and Australia have all been treading for a long time and there is certainly nothing new."

Referring to the term "after-birth abortion", Dr Stammers added: "This is just verbal manipulation that is not philosophy. I might refer to abortion henceforth as antenatal infanticide."

Quotes from the article:

"Nonetheless, to bring up such children might be an unbearable burden on the family and on society as a whole, when the state economically provides for their care. On these grounds, the fact that a fetus has the potential to become a person who will have an (at least) acceptable life is no reason for prohibiting abortion. Therefore, we argue that, when circumstances occur after birth such that they would have justified abortion, what we call after-birth abortion should be permissible."

"In spite of the oxymoron in the expression, we propose to call this practice 'after-birth abortion', rather than 'infanticide', to emphasise that the moral status of the individual killed is comparable with that of a fetus (on which 'abortions' in the traditional sense are performed) rather than to that of a child. Therefore, we claim that killing a newborn could be ethically permissible in all the circumstances where abortion would be."

Such circumstances include cases where the newborn has the potential to have an (at least) acceptable life, but the well-being of the family is at risk. Accordingly, a second terminological specification is that we call such a practice 'after-birth abortion' rather than 'euthanasia' because the best interest of the one who dies is not necessarily the primary criterion for the choice, contrary to what happens in the case of euthanasia.

Failing to bring a new person into existence cannot be compared with the wrong caused by procuring the death of an existing person. The reason is that, unlike the case of death of an existing person, failing to bring a new person into existence does not prevent anyone from accomplishing any of her future aims.

However, this consideration entails a much stronger idea than the one according to which severely handicapped children should be euthanised. If the death of a newborn is not wrongful to her on the grounds that she cannot have formed any aim that she is prevented from accomplishing, then it should also be permissible to practise an after-birth abortion on a healthy newborn too, given that she has not formed any aim yet.

There are two reasons which, taken together, justify this claim:

1. The moral status of an infant is equivalent to that of a fetus, that is, neither can be considered a 'person' in a morally relevant sense.

2. It is not possible to damage a newborn by preventing her from developing the potentiality to become a person in the morally relevant sense.

We are going to justify these two points in the following two sections.

THE NEWBORN AND THE FETUS ARE MORALLY EQUIVALENT

The moral status of an infant is equivalent to that of a fetus in the sense that both lack those properties that justify the attribution of a right to life to an individual. Both a fetus and a newborn certainly are human beings and potential persons, but neither is a 'person' in the sense of 'subject of a moral right to life'. We take 'person' to mean an individual who is capable of attributing to her own existence some (at least) basic value such that being deprived of this existence represents a loss to her.

This means that many non-human animals and mentally retarded human individuals are persons, but that all the individuals who are not in the condition of attributing any value to their own existence are not persons. Merely being human is not in itself a reason for ascribing someone a right to life. Indeed, many humans are not considered subjects of a right to life: spare embryos where research on embryo stem cells is permitted, fetuses where abortion is permitted, criminals where capital punishment is legal.

Our point here is that, although it is hard to exactly determine when a subject starts or ceases to be a 'person', a necessary condition for a subject to have a right to X is that she is harmed by a decision to deprive her of X. There are many ways in which an individual can be harmed, and not all of them require that she values or is even aware of what she is deprived of. A person might be 'harmed' when someone steals from her the winning lottery ticket even if she will never find out that her ticket was the winning one.

Or a person might be 'harmed' if something were done to her at the stage of fetus which affects for the worse her quality of life as a person (eg, her mother took drugs during pregnancy), even if she is not aware of it. However, in such cases we are talking about a person who is at least in the condition to value the different situation she would have found herself in if she had not been harmed. And such a condition depends on the level of her mental development,⁶ which in turn determines whether or not she is a 'person'.

Those who are only capable of experiencing pain and pleasure (like perhaps fetuses and certainly newborns) have a right not to be inflicted pain. If, in addition to experiencing pain and pleasure, an individual is capable of making any aims (like actual human and non-human persons), she is harmed if she is prevented from accomplishing her aims by being killed. Now, hardly can a newborn be said to have aims, as the future we imagine for it is merely a projection of our minds on its potential lives.

It might start having expectations and develop a minimum level of self-awareness at a very early stage, but not in the first days or few weeks after birth. On the other hand, not only aims but also well-developed plans are concepts that certainly apply to those people (parents, siblings, society) who could be negatively or positively affected by the birth of that child. Therefore, the rights and interests of the actual people involved should represent the prevailing consideration in a decision about abortion and after-birth abortion.

It is true that a particular moral status can be attached to a non-person by virtue of the value an actual person (eg, the mother) attributes to it. However, this 'subjective' account of the moral status of a newborn does not debunk our previous argument. Let us imagine that a woman is pregnant with two identical twins who are affected by genetic disorders. In order to cure one of the embryos the woman is given the option to use the other twin to develop a therapy. If she agrees, she attributes to the first embryo the status of 'future child' and to the other one the status of a mere means to cure the 'future child'.

However, the different moral status does not spring from the fact that the first one is a 'person' and the other is not, which would be nonsense, given that they are identical. Rather, the different moral statuses only depends on the particular value the woman projects on them. However, such a projection is exactly what does not occur when a newborn becomes a burden to its family.

THE FETUS AND THE NEWBORN ARE POTENTIAL PERSONS

Although fetuses and newborns are not persons, they are potential persons because they can develop, thanks to their own biological mechanisms, those properties which will make them 'persons' in the sense of 'subjects of a moral right to life': that is, the point at which they will be able to make aims and appreciate their own life.

It might be claimed that someone is harmed because she is prevented from becoming a person capable of appreciating her own being alive. Thus, for example, one might say that we would have been harmed if our mothers had chosen to have an abortion while they were pregnant with us⁷ or if they had killed us as soon as we were born. However, whereas you can benefit someone by bringing her into existence (if her life is worth living), it makes no sense to say that someone is harmed by being prevented from becoming an actual person.

The reason is that, by virtue of our definition of the concept of 'harm' in the previous section, in order for a harm to occur, it is necessary that someone is in the condition of experiencing that harm.

If a potential person, like a fetus and a newborn, does not become an actual person, like you and us, then there is neither an actual nor a future person who can be harmed, which means that there is no harm at all. So, if you ask one of us if we would have been harmed, had our parents decided to kill us when we were fetuses or newborns, our answer is 'no', because they would have harmed someone who does not exist (the 'us' whom you are asking the question), which means no one. And if no one is harmed, then no harm occurred.

A consequence of this position is that the interests of actual people over-ride the interest of merely potential people to become actual ones. This does not mean that the interests of actual people always over-ride any right of future generations, as we should certainly consider the well-being of people who will inhabit the planet in the future. Our focus is on the right to become a particular person, and not on the right to have a good life once someone will have started to be a person.

In other words, we are talking about particular individuals who might or might not become particular persons depending on our choice, and not about those who will certainly exist in the future but whose identity does not depend on what we choose now.

The alleged right of individuals (such as fetuses and newborns) to develop their potentiality, which someone defends,⁸ is over-ridden by the interests of actual people (parents, family, society) to pursue their own well-being because, as we have just argued, merely potential people cannot be harmed by not being brought into existence.

Actual people's well-being could be threatened by the new (even if healthy) child requiring energy, money and care which the family might happen to be in short supply of. Sometimes this situation can be prevented through an abortion, but in some other cases this is not possible. In these cases, since non-persons have no moral rights to life, there are no reasons for banning after-birth abortions. We might still have moral duties towards future generations in spite of these future people not existing yet.

But because we take it for granted that such people will exist (whoever they will be), we must treat them as actual persons of the future. This argument, however, does not apply to this particular newborn or infant, because we are not justified in taking it for granted that she will exist as a person in the future. Whether she will exist is exactly what our choice is about.

ADOPTION AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO AFTER-BIRTH ABORTION?

A possible objection to our argument is that after-birth abortion should be practised just on potential people who could never have a life worth living.⁹ Accordingly, healthy and potentially happy people should be given up for adoption if the family cannot raise them up. Why should we kill a healthy newborn when giving it up for adoption would not breach anyone's right but possibly increase the happiness of people involved (adopters and adoptee)?

Our reply is the following. We have previously discussed the argument from potentiality, showing that it is not strong enough to outweigh the consideration of the interests of actual people. Indeed, however weak the interests of actual people can be, they will always trump the alleged interest of potential people to become actual ones, because this latter interest amounts to zero. On this perspective, the interests of the actual people involved matter, and among these interests, we also need to consider the interests of the mother who might suffer psychological distress from giving her child up for adoption.

Birthmothers are often reported to experience serious psychological problems due to the inability to elaborate their loss and to cope with their grief.¹⁰ It is true that grief and sense of loss may accompany both abortion and after-birth abortion as well as adoption, but we cannot assume that for the birthmother the latter is the least traumatic. For example, 'those who grieve a death must accept the irreversibility of the loss, but natural mothers often dream that their child will return to them.

This makes it difficult to accept the reality of the loss because they can never be quite sure whether or not it is irreversible'.¹¹

We are not suggesting that these are definitive reasons against adoption as a valid alternative to after-birth abortion. Much depends on circumstances and psychological reactions. What we are suggesting is that, if interests of actual people should prevail, then after-birth abortion should be considered a permissible option for women who would be damaged by giving up their newborns for adoption.

CONCLUSIONS

If criteria such as the costs (social, psychological, economic) for the potential parents are good enough reasons for having an abortion even when the fetus is healthy, if the moral status of the newborn is the same as that of the infant and if neither has any moral value by virtue of being a potential person, then the same reasons which justify abortion should also justify the killing of the potential person when it is at the stage of a newborn.

Two considerations need to be added. First, we do not put forward any claim about the moment at which after-birth abortion would no longer be permissible, and we do not think that in fact more than a few days would be necessary for doctors to detect any abnormality in the child. In cases where the after-birth abortion were requested for non- medical reasons, we do not suggest any threshold, as it depends on the neurological development of newborns, which is something neurologists and psychologists would be able to assess.

Second, we do not claim that after-birth abortions are good alternatives to abortion. Abortions at an early stage are the best option, for both psychological and physical reasons. However, if a disease has not been detected during the pregnancy, if something went wrong during the delivery, or if economical, social or psychological circumstances change such that taking care of the offspring becomes an unbearable burden on someone, then people should be given the chance of not being forced to do something they cannot afford.