



begins at conception, then the human soul must likewise be present at conception.

The soul does not grow as the body grows; it is whole and complete from the very moment of conception. There is no stage at which a human being possesses only “potential life.” From the very first moment of conception, the human person is complete in essence, even as the body continues to grow, develop, and unfold.

The Holy Bible teaches that every human is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This truth affirms that human dignity is not something that develops gradually over time, but something bestowed directly by God Himself at the very beginning of life.

Above all, the mystery of the Incarnation reveals that Jesus was fully human from the first moment of His presence in Mary’s womb. If Christ shared full humanity from the first moment of His earthly life, then every human being likewise shares full humanity from the first moment of existence.

4. DNA: Science and Christian Teaching in Harmony

Modern genetics offers Christians a striking scientific confirmation of this belief. When the sperm and egg unite, their nuclei merge to form the zygote, and at that very instant, a new and genetically unique human person comes into existence. This new person possesses a unique DNA sequence, distinguishing the individual from every other human being who has ever lived.

This DNA contains the complete genetic code that will guide the development of the body, including the formation of its organs, as well as characteristics such as eye color, biological sex, height, physical features, and various biological predispositions that together contribute to each person’s unique identity. Nothing essential is added later. The zygote already possesses the full biological identity of a human being. Development is simply the gradual unfolding of what was already present in that first living cell.

From a Christian perspective, the formation of this unique DNA—establishing a new genetic identity—mirrors the Christian conviction that a new human person begins at conception. Just as DNA provides the unique physical blueprint for bodily development, God bestows upon each person their spiritual identity and dignity. Together, body and soul form one complete human being, known and loved by God from the very beginning of existence.

5. Doctrinal Teaching Across Christianity

From the earliest centuries, the Church has taught that human life begins at conception. The Fathers of the Church clearly affirmed this truth and condemned the destruction of the unborn as the taking of human life. Modern biological and genetic science did not originate this belief, but rather confirms it, providing scientific language for what Christianity has always proclaimed.

Today, across Christian traditions, the Church stands united in affirming that conception marks the beginning of human life and personhood.

Conclusion

The Christian belief that life begins at conception rests upon the convergence of the Holy Bible, the Fathers of the Church, Christian teaching, and science:

- 1- The Holy Bible reveals God’s intimate knowledge of the human person even before birth.
- 2- The Fathers of the Church condemned abortion as the taking of human life.
- 3- Christian teaching affirms that from the very beginning of a child’s existence in the womb, the human person is a unity of body and soul, endowed with spiritual life and bearing the image of God.
- 4- The Incarnation of Christ demonstrates that full humanity begins at conception.
- 5- Modern genetics adds its own testimony: at the very moment of conception, a unique DNA code is formed, signaling the beginning of a new, unique, and unrepeatable human person.

For Christians, therefore, conception is not merely a biological event but a divine act of creation. It marks the beginning of human life—body and soul—created with spiritual faculties capable of communion with God. From the first moment of existence, each human person is fully known, fully loved, and called by God.

When Does Human Life Begin?

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When Does Human Life Begin?

From the earliest days, the Holy Bible, the Church Fathers, and Christian teaching have affirmed that a new human person—body and soul, endowed with spiritual life—begins at conception. Modern science has added a further layer of confirmation: at the very moment of conception, a new and unique strand of DNA is formed, containing the complete biological blueprint of an individual human being. This scientific reality powerfully supports the Christian conviction that life begins at conception.

This brochure brings together biblical revelation, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the living Christian *tradition*, alongside the insights of modern genetics, to explain why Christianity upholds conception as the true beginning of human life.

I. Biblical Revelation of Life in the Womb

The Holy Bible consistently affirms that the unborn child in the womb is fully human and personally known by God.

• Psalm 139:13–16 (NKJV) declares: “For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb... My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in secret... Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written; the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”

• Here, the psalmist, guided by the Holy Spirit, affirms that God is present and intimately involved in every stage of human formation in the womb. The phrase “in Your book they all were written” conveys that every part of the developing child was known, willed, and lovingly created by God before it came into being, revealing life in the womb as the unfolding of God’s divine and purposeful plan.

• Jeremiah 1:5 (NKJV) records God’s words: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you.”

• Here, God Himself declares that His knowledge, love, and purpose for each person precede even their physical formation in the womb. This verse reveals that life in the womb is already known, lovingly formed, and set apart by God through His own divine initiative.

• Luke 1:31–38 (NKJV) records the archangel Gabriel’s announcement to Mary: “And behold, you will conceive in

your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS... Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.”

At the close of this encounter, Mary humbly responded: “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.”

• From that very moment, although Jesus’ physical body would continue to grow in Mary’s womb, our Lord Jesus Christ was already fully God and fully human. This truth is beautifully confirmed when Mary visits Elizabeth shortly afterward, as it is recorded in:

• Luke 1:39–44 (NKJV) “And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb.”

• The unborn John the Baptist—six months in Elizabeth’s womb—recognized the presence of Jesus, who was only days old in Mary’s womb, and leaped for joy. This remarkable encounter powerfully affirms that even at the earliest stage of development, the unborn child is already a complete human life—fully personal, truly living, and spiritually responsive to the presence of Christ.

Together, these passages affirm that from the very moment the zygote is formed, the unborn child is not merely a potential person, but already a true person—cherished by God as a real and complete human being.

2. Testimony of the Early Church Fathers

Why does the testimony of the early Church Fathers matter?

1. It provides a direct link to the faith, teachings, and practices of the first generations of Christians.

2. It preserves the Apostolic Tradition, showing how the Apostles of Christ and the earliest believers understood the Holy Bible and Christian doctrine.

3. Grounded in biblical truth, the early Church Fathers unanimously condemned abortion at every stage as a grave moral wrong, an act of murder, and a violation of human life.

The Didache: The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (1st–2nd century) commands: “You shall not murder a child by abortion, nor kill that which is born.”

This ancient Christian teaching clearly affirms that abortion

is the destruction of human life at its earliest stage.

The Apostolic Constitutions, Book VII, Chapter 3 (4th century) “You shall not slay your child by causing abortion, nor kill that which is begotten.”

Athenagoras of Athens (2nd century): In *A Plea for the Christians*, Chapter 35, he writes: “Those women who use drugs to bring on abortion commit murder and will have to give an account to God for the abortion. For the fetus in the womb is a living being and therefore an object of God’s care.”

Tertullian (late 2nd–early 3rd century): In *Apology*, Chapter 9, he writes: “In our case, murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the fetus in the womb.” And in *On the Soul*, Chapter 25, he explains: “The soul is present from the beginning; life begins with conception.”

St. Basil the Great (Letter 188, Canon 2; 4th century): “A woman who intentionally ends the life of the child in her womb is guilty of taking a human life. Among us, no distinction is made between the formed and the unformed; for in both cases, the act is the destruction of a living being created by God.”

St. John Chrysostom *Homily on Romans*, 24 (4th century): St. John Chrysostom describes abortion as “murder before birth,” condemning it as a violent injustice against both the mother and the child.

St. Augustine of Hippo (late 4th–early 5th century): St. Augustine condemned abortion in all cases, teaching that it destroys a life being formed and prepared by God and violates the sanctity of human life from its earliest beginning.

Together, the Apostles of Christ and the early Church Fathers, from the very first centuries of the Church, speak with one clear and unwavering voice: abortion was never regarded as a medical procedure, but as the killing of a human child and a grave violation of the sanctity of life. For the Fathers of the Church, the unborn were already fully human persons—known by God, formed by His hand, and therefore worthy of complete moral, spiritual, and sacred protection..

3. Christian Teaching: The Unity of Body and Soul

Christian teaching offers profound insight into the value and dignity of human life. The human person is understood as a living unity of body and soul—not as two separate realities, but as one complete human person. If the human body

