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Cloning and the Biblical Concept of Creation: A Religio-Ethical Appraise

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

The advent of cloning has sparked intense debates within scientific, ethical, and theological circles. While the practice offers groundbreaking possibilities, it challenges foundational beliefs about life and creation, particularly in the context of biblical theology. This article explores the intersection of cloning and the biblical concept of creation, examining the theological implications and ethical challenges posed by cloning technologies. A critical evaluation of biblical texts and ethical principles rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition highlights the tension between human innovation and divine sovereignty in creation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Specifically addressing the point about cloning, the fast growth of biotechnology has changed human views and approach to reproduction, heredity, as well as a control over life. This general field of cloning, defined generally as the creation of organisms that are genetically indistinguishable from their source, encompass cloning, therapeutic cloning, reproductive cloning, and Genetic engineering (Davis, 2000). Yes, the scientific and medical value of cloning especially in organ generation or treatment of heredity disease cannot be refuted but the moral and religious issues cannot be ignored. Creation therefore cannot be understood outside of the context of the Bible and the action of the Christian God. Cloning raises profound questions about humanity's role in creation: Do cloning impersonates God in the manner of creation or creation of life? Does it blur the dignity of human life? This writing considers cloning through the theological and ethical viewpoint as reflected in the creation account in the scriptures (Cole-turner, 2003).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Cloning

Cloning refers to the process of producing genetically identical organisms through artificial means. The technique can be divided into therapeutic cloning, aimed at creating tissues for medical purposes, and reproductive cloning, which involves the creation of a new organism. Since the advent of Dolly the sheep in 1996, ethical and theological concerns have arisen about the implications of replicating life artificially (Wilmut *et al.*, 1997).

2.2. Biblical Views on Creation

The Biblical narrative emphasizes God as the sole Creator (Genesis 1:1-31). Humanity's unique status as beings created in the image of God (*imago Dei*) underscores the sanctity and dignity of human life (Genesis 1:27). Psalms 139:13-16 portrays creation as an intimate, divinely orchestrated process. The notion that humans are co-creators with God through procreation contrasts sharply with the mechanistic duplication of life seen in cloning (Collins, 2006).

2.3. Ethical Perspectives on Cloning

Philosophers and ethicists express concerns over cloning's potential to commodify human life, undermine individuality, and blur ethical boundaries. Kass (1997) argues that cloning risks violating human dignity and moral order, while proponents such as Harris (2004) suggest it could alleviate suffering by offering therapeutic benefits. However, the religious objection centers on the potential challenge cloning poses to divine sovereignty in creation (Gifford, 2007).

2.4. The Biblical Concept of Creation

2.4.1. Divine Sovereignty and Intentionality in Creation

According to the creation narrative in the book of Genesis, 1–2, God has ultimate control of all living things. Genesis 1:26-27 highlights human specialness inasmuch as the creatures are made in the image of God (*imago Dei*). This *imago Dei* postulates that people are unique work of the Creator, ethical beings with a status of the personalism. Furthermore, the repeated phrase "God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) The

number (10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) is internally revealed and ordered from the creation of God (Peter, 1997).

Psalm 139: Me too 13-16 also outlines; the elaborate and deliberate design of human life: "You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb." This passage supports beliefs of the theological theory that life is a divine endowment and is made specially and deliberately by Jehovah. Cloning that requires human intervention to replicate life is therefore seen to trigger questions as to whether or not intervention violates this particular divine fashion and plan of existence (Ramsey, 1970).

2.4.2. Human Dominion and Responsibility

The concept of human dominion, as outlined in Genesis 1:28, gives mankind the stewardship over creation. But this dominion is now not absolute; it has to be according to God's will and plans. Scientists state that creativity began with God and that is why humans are able to invent things like machines. However, this creativity has to occur within the frame work of moral and ethical issues recognized and sanctioned by God almighty (Rahner, 1970).

The Tower of Babel narrative in Genesis 11:1-9 is a parable teaching people a lesson not to try to be arrogant, to vie for the Lordly status which is beyond their understanding. Cloning, particularly reproductive cloning, can be seen as a modern equivalent of humanity's attempt to "make a name for themselves" (Genesis 11:4)/According to ethical principles, that is the process of playing God, which is somewhat dubious (John Paul, 1995).

2.5. Ethical Appraisal of Cloning

2.5.1. Sanctity of Life and the Moral Status of Embryos

One of the major ethical issues surrounding cloning especially with regard to therapeutic cloning entails the actual destruction of the embryo. Christian ethics upholds the sanctity of life from conception (Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139:13-16). Consequently, following the cloning use of human embryos one wonders whether human seeds are rated in that same manner. More on this later However the Catechism of the Catholic Church, in its 1993 edition clearly states that cloning using manipulation and destruction of embryos is prohibited because every life has to be respected and protected from the moment of conception (Beauchamp *et al.*, 2013).

2.5.2. Re-thinking DSM: Changes in the Definition of Parenthood and Family Structure

Reproductive cloning also has implications for the overthrow of conventional regimes of kinship and reproduction. In biblical theology, procreation is seen as a divine mandate (Genesis 1:28 and a coming together of two individuals that make up a family, man and woman (Genesis 2:24). Cloning eliminates this normal course of life which only resulted in identity, connection, and psychological relatedness questions, to cloned individuals (Meilaender, 1997).

2.5.3. Playing God: Theological And Moral Constraints

The most basic theological criticism one could have against cloning is the feeling one gets of "playing God." This phrase



sums the idea that cloning takes away the powers of Creator from God and vests it in people. On the one hand, IT has no conflict with faith but it must be pursued in a spirit of reverence for the Creator's authority. Para cloning, if practiced for the goals of human improvement or duplication often, is likely to transgress moral and theological thresholds.

2.6. Balancing Scientific Innovation and Theological Ethics

Prominent Christian theologians and ethicists these days embrace a moderate posturing halfway between embracing or denying science. Biotechnology, in general and cloning as a particular case, as a balancing technique must be applied to promote the well-being of people while following the laws of God. As the Apostle Paul writes, "All things are permissible, but not all things are beneficial" (1 Corinthians 10:23). This view fosters right use of knowledge in science and technology advocacy of which human life and the divine order as prescribed by God are sacred (Kilner *et al.*, 2000).

In practice, this balance can be achieved through:

1. **Strict Ethical Oversight:** Setting up of a very high ethical standard in cloning research that will help to eliminate all sorts of vices as well as ensure respect for life.
2. **Public Theology and Dialogue:** The exchange of ideas with theologians, ethicists, scientists, and policymakers in the area of moral analysis of cloning.
3. **Humility and Reverence:** Taking into consideration the time when human beings could not comprehend issues of creation and thus had to let God deal with them.

2.7. The Role of the Church in the Cloning Debate

The church therefore has an important responsibility in providing the society with direction in the right or wrong thing in creating clones. These have seen the church to act more or less as a moral herald in the controversies relating to the medical and technological frontiers, such as organ transplantation and in-vitro fertilization. Thus, in the case of cloning, the church has to preach and explicate clear prophetic principles and at the same time to pastor people who are involved in cloning, or who are directly influenced by it (Vanhoosor, 2005).

2.7.1. Prophetic Witness

The bottom line in defending the sanctity of creation therefore lies on these four ways; Theology way, Theology, Nature and time way, Theological and Scientific way and the Devotional way.

The church has to defend and promote the creational vision of the Book, where God—especially—takes preeminence, and every person is worth something. This involves deprecation of all activities, which involve sale of life as in cloning for sale or purpose of creating a flawless individual. There is great potential for the church to raise its prophetic voice when scientific research is conducted in an unethical manner or when humanity fails in its stewardship responsibility (Stott, 2006).

2.7.2. Pastoral Care: Addressing the Human Impact

Critically acclaiming, one can speak about the psychological facets of cloning, regarding the prospects of cloned individuals and their families, ethical questions regarding scientists, and

also moral questions which will arise in society. The church can provide pastoral support by:

- Counseling individuals struggling with ethical decisions about cloning.
- Offering a safe space for scientists and researchers to engage with theological questions about their work.
- Educating congregations on the theological and ethical dimensions of cloning to promote informed engagement (Sandel, 2007).

2.8. The Future of Cloning and Theological Reflection

There will always be new problems calling for theological analysis when cloning technologies are advancing and getting enhanced over time. In light of these developments, theologians cannot afford to be complacent showcasing that the Christian response to these phenomena is relevant and scriptural. Key areas for future reflection include:

- **Artificial Intelligence and Bioethics:** That's why when cloning will combine with AI important questions on the scale of freedom, consciousness, and personhood will emerge.
- **Global Disparities in Biotechnology:** Cloning technologies can extend the chasm between developed and developing countries. The church has a responsibility to fight for justice in the provision or the use of bio technologies.
- **Ecological Implications:** The process of cloning animals and plants has practical importance in genetics, which influence the issues of diversity and the care for the environment, topics that needs theological and ethic analysis.

2.9. A Call to Action

Cloning presents not just a scientific or an ethical dilemma but a fundamentally theological question that go to the foundations of how many people view the world and our place in it. The church has no option than to wake up to the challenge and ensure that its members are well informed and have the right moral standing to tackle the issues that surround these challenges. These are of humility and reverence of the Creator as well as embracing science and its pull as the savior of human beings in a manner that is within the divine word (Waters, 2007). Therefore, cloning is one of the challenges that will define stewardship of creation in human hands. It provides a chance to meditate on the rather weighty duties which stem from scientific work, and, once again, to emphasize the Divine plans at creating life and the world. Of course, as Christians, we must pursue this conversation responsibly and with understanding as well as with determination to uphold the truth (Walsh *et al.*, 1984).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Theological Framework Analysis

The study employs a theological framework grounded in scriptural hermeneutics to analyze the alignment of cloning practices with Biblical teachings. Key texts, including Genesis, Psalms, and Pauline letters, are examined to discern principles applicable to human creativity and divine prerogatives.

3.2. Ethical Evaluation

A qualitative ethical analysis draws from bioethics literature and



religious doctrines. The study assesses cloning's implications for human dignity, identity, and relationality within the context of Christian ethics.

3.3. Case Studies

Specific instances of cloning technologies, such as therapeutic cloning for organ regeneration and experiments involving primates, are evaluated to illustrate real-world ethical dilemmas.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Theological Challenges of Cloning

The mechanistic replication of life inherent in cloning contradicts the Biblical depiction of creation as an act of divine intention and love. Cloning bypasses natural procreation, raising questions about its legitimacy in a worldview that regards life as a sacred gift (Psalm 24:1). Furthermore, the act of "playing God" through cloning technologies undermines divine sovereignty, as seen in scriptural warnings against human hubris (Isaiah 14:12-14).

4.2. Ethical Concerns in Cloning

From a Christian ethical perspective, cloning raises concerns about identity and the unique value of individuals. Cloned individuals might struggle with psychological challenges related to their origins. Moreover, the utilitarian exploitation of embryos in therapeutic cloning conflicts with the Christian belief in the inherent sanctity of all stages of human life (Jeremiah 1:5).

4.3. Potential Areas of Compatibility

Despite concerns, some theologians argue that cloning, when used responsibly, may align with Christian stewardship. Therapeutic cloning, aimed at alleviating suffering, could be viewed as an expression of humanity's God-given creativity and compassion (Luke 10:33-37).

5. CONCLUSION

Cloning raises very significant moral and theological issues that should engross both scientist and the religious persons. According to the Christian faith, there is creation which is provision of life by God, and any interference with the provision of life must therefore acknowledge this action of God. As the noble aims of cloning exploration reveal, cloning will go a long way to revolutionary's human health as well as the expansion of knowledge, but it must be done with much respect, ethnic sensitivity and from a recognition of the greatness of the Creator. As society tries to come to terms with cloning a biblically informed ethic sensitizes society, on right and wrong in cloning because it is God-ordained to do so with the purpose of serving humanity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote Ethical Oversight: Governments and religious institutions should collaborate to establish bioethical guidelines that respect the sanctity of life and ensure cloning technologies are used responsibly.

2. Encourage Public Theology: Churches and theologians must engage in informed discussions about biotechnological

advancements to provide guidance rooted in scripture.

3. Focus on Therapeutic Cloning: Research should prioritize therapeutic cloning applications that align with the Christian mandate to care for the sick and vulnerable.

4. Educate Scientists and Religious Leaders: Cross-disciplinary training programs can foster mutual understanding and respect between the scientific and religious communities.

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