



The Inscrutable Question: Cloning: Arguments against & for; Directive or Permissive Will of God?; Stem-Cell Therapy: Totipotent & Pluripotent Cells

In favor of human cloning.

Scientists and medical ethicists who argue in favor of human cloning claim that much of the public's concern is based on misconceptions. They note that, although many people believe that cloning would produce an instant carbon copy of an adult person, cloning would, in reality, produce what amounts to a delayed identical twin, several years or even decades younger than the person who donated the cell from which the clone was produced. Identical twins are genetic carbon copies, but they are separate individuals. They often look different because of different preferences in clothing and hairstyle. They may have different moral values, academic achievements, occupations, and tastes in music.

Another misconception that scientists suggest clouds the issue of human cloning is the question of how genes influence an individual's development. Human beings do not inherit a fixed, unchangeable genetic blueprint from their parents. Scientists believe that physical and mental traits result from complex interactions between genes and the environment in which an individual grows up and lives—including the chemical environment surrounding the fetus in the womb. Two people can inherit the same set of genes and turn out very differently, because environmental factors often determine how genes are expressed. A person might, for example, inherit genes for large body size, but those genes will not be fully expressed unless the person receives proper nutrition. Genes for musical ability may be expressed only if a person grows up in a family that loves music.

Would human clones be less human?

Some ethicists voice fears that human clones might be considered less than human and might be used for spare parts in organ transplants or for other unethical purposes. Legal experts, however, claim that clones would have all the legal rights and protections of other people. They note that society never questioned the legal rights of offspring resulting from other reproductive technologies, such as *in vitro* fertilization (the technology that produces "test-tube babies").

Perhaps the strongest argument put forth in favor of human cloning is that cloning could provide the only avenue available to some infertile couples for producing children. In cases of fertile couples in which one member carries a gene for a disease, cloning using a cell from the other member could assure that the couple has a healthy child of its own. Some U.S. legal experts claim that preventing a couple from choosing cloning as a method of reproduction could be unconstitutional. Scientists and ethicists who favor human cloning research also argue that cloning may provide a better understanding of the nature of genetic diseases and aid in the production of embryos from which cells could be obtained to grow various organs for organ transplants.

Arguments used against and in defense of human cloning:

Against

- Cloning might lead to the creation of genetically engineered groups of people for specific purposes, such as warfare or slavery.
- Cloning might lead to an attempt to improve the human race according to an arbitrary standard.
- Cloning could result in the introduction of additional defects in the human gene pool.
- Cloning is unsafe. There are too many unknown factors that could adversely affect the offspring.
- A clone might have a diminished sense of individuality.
- A clone might have fewer rights than other people.



- Doctors might use clones as sources of organs for organ transplants.
- Cloning is at odds with the traditional concept of family.
- Cloning is against God's will.
- Some aspects of human life should be off limits to science.

In defense of

- Cloning would enable infertile couples to have children of their own.
 - Cloning would give couples who are at risk of producing a child with a genetic defect the chance to produce a healthy child.
 - Cloning could shed light on how genes work and lead to the discovery of new treatments for genetic diseases.
 - A ban on cloning may be unconstitutional. It would deprive people of the right to reproduce and restrict the freedom of scientists.
 - A clone would not really be a duplicate, because environmental factors would mold him or her into a unique individual
 - A clone would have as much of a sense of individuality as do twins.
 - A clone would have the same rights as do all other people.
 - Cloning is comparable in safety to a number of other medical procedures.
 - Objections to cloning are similar to objections raised against previous scientific achievements, for example, heart transplants and test-tube babies, that later came to be widely accepted.
- 20- Now the question: Is cloning a violation of the directive will of God? I don't know. Here are some principles of doctrine that can help contribute to forming an opinion.
- 1) Man clones, God selects. If God selects the results of a clone then we know that the person is the result of either the direct or permissive will of God.
 - 2) To determine which of the two wills is the case requires reliance upon certain biblical principles regarding life. For example, the production of biological life is restricted biblically to the sexual activity of one man and one woman within the boundaries of marriage.
 - 3) Marriage is a divine institution and is not restricted to believers only but to the entire human race. Therefore, all reproduction in order to occur within the directive will of God must take place in the environment of marriage.
 - 4) That the divine institution of marriage is not subscribed to by a large number of people does not rescind the principle but rather demonstrates the fact that many people are procreating outside the directive will of God and as a result face responsibilities and obligations that cannot be fulfilled according to the directive will of God.



- 5) Nevertheless, the pregnancies and deliveries occur under permissive will. However, the children are selected under the directive will of God. Every Clone would have equal privilege and equal opportunity to make his own decision regarding Jesus as Savior and then whether or not he desires to become a serious student of the Word of God.
- 6) Those who argue for cloning insist that married couples who are childless could become parents by using this method of reproduction.
- 7) However, the divinely ordained system of chance fertilization of a fertile ovum by a random sperm is eliminated. The randomness of the process leaves many things in the hands of God and His plan for the human race.
- 8) Remember, there are no accidents in the plan of God. The sperm that penetrates a given ovum is understood and known to God in eternity past and is a part of His plan under His directive will.
- 9) If a married couple cannot have children this may be because the plan of God does not intend for them to have children. His plan, for example, may intend instead for these people to become parents of children who are orphans, or are abandoned, or are mistreated, or are given up for adoption. Or have no children at all.
- 10) Some of the arguments against cloning have to do with the potential for highly selective matching of certain individuals to achieve a desired objective. This, in my opinion, is a clear case of playing God.
- 11) Another strong argument against the idea is the principle of unintended consequences. There are a host of ramifications that cannot be foreseen and are unknown to those who promote this procedure.
- 12) Cloning has all the makings for the development of “made to order” children based on arbitrary standards. Whenever manipulation of human life has occurred in history, evil and corruption has always intruded on the intended result.
- 13) This is a fallen environment, it is the devil’s world, and fallen men can be depended upon to make the wrong choices even when the right one is obvious.
- 14) Nevertheless, volition remains free. My guess is that eventually there will be attempts at human cloning and that the biological life produced will be selected.
- 15) The selection of the individual will be the directive will of God. The process that brought that individual to the point of selection I believe will be the permissive will of God.
- 16) The Clone population will be given the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ as savior and to grow in grace as a believer.
- 17) The ramifications of inserting tailor-made, hand-crafted, DNA-specific children into the angelic conflict could very well be a violation of the rules of engagement. It is wrought with danger regarding unintended consequences. It is open to manipulation by unscrupulous people who will communicate a believable rhetorical veil while promoting a hidden agenda. And it will invite involvement by those who have a lust to play God.
- 18) As with the *Nephilim* in the antediluvian civilization, Clones will have the same potential to insert an illegitimate element into the precarious balance that always exists between the human race and the fallen angels in the appeal trial.



- 19) Just as the *Nephilim* rejected truth and then opted for corruption and violence so also might Clones do the same, or conceivably even their very existence could cause conflict among competing forces in religion, politics, and society.
- 20) Thus the conclusion is that cloning could very well be a violation of the rules of engagement for the appeal trial. If God selects Clones it will be his directive will. But if it is a rules violation the results will be His permissive will.
- 21) Consequently, at some point the overruling will of God will intrude into the affairs of human history and correct the problem.
- 22) And what should your opinion be on the matter? First of all you are free to draw your own conclusions. I personally am opposed to the idea for reasons stated. But whether or not the effort moves forward to consummation is not a concern of mine.
- 23) If God directly wills to select Clones, and permissively allows them to function in the appeal trial, He will ultimately manage any problems by means of His overruling will.
- 24) If God directly wills to select Clones and directly allows them to function in the appeal trial, then they will be legitimate participants in the Invisible War and will be dealt with justly as with every other participant.
- 25) And it could be that cloning simply just won't work on the human level which would be an obvious expression of the overruling will of God vetoing the entire idea.
- 26) But however it plays out it will be the will of God.
- 21- The next question: Is it moral to use even potential human life for research? This question was submitted in the context of stem cell research. To understand the question requires background on the subject of stem cells. For that I go the Web site of the National Institutes of Health where it provides a primer on the subject with definitions of terms:

Stem Cells: A Primer. (Bethesda: National Institutes of Health, 2000), 1-6:
<http://www.nih.gov/news/stemcell/primer.htm>

What is a stem cell?

Stem cells have the ability to divide for indefinite periods in culture and to give rise to specialized cells. They are best described in the context of normal human development. Human development begins when a sperm fertilizes an egg and creates a single cell that has the potential to form an entire organism. This fertilized egg is **totipotent**, meaning that its potential is total. In the first hours after fertilization, this cell divides into identical totipotent cells. **(Figure 1)** This means that either one of these cells, if placed into a woman's uterus, has the potential to develop into a fetus.

Approximately four days after fertilization and after several cycles of cell division, these totipotent cells begin to specialize, forming a hollow sphere of cells, called a blastocyst. The blastocyst has an outer layer of cells and inside the hollow sphere, there is a cluster of cells called the inner cell mass.

The inner cell mass cells will go on to form virtually all of the tissues of the human body. Although the inner cell mass cells can form virtually every type of cell found in the human body, they cannot form an organism because they are unable to give rise to the placenta and supporting tissues necessary for development in the human uterus. These inner cell mass cells are **pluripotent** — they can give rise to many types of cells but not all types of cells necessary for fetal development. Because their potential is not total, they are not totipotent and they are not embryos. In fact, if an inner cell mass cell were placed into a woman's uterus, it would not develop into a fetus.



The pluripotent stem cells undergo further specialization into stem cells that are committed to give rise to cells that have a particular function. Examples of this include blood stem cells ... and skin stem cells. ([Figure II](#))