



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 11”

February 7th, 2010
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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 11

Genesis 22:1-2:

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

We attend Church to obtain the mind of Christ, meaning, to have the Bible illuminated in our minds so that we can clearly understand the principles that Jesus taught and base our daily personal decisions on those principles.

We come to Church because we want to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner.

Our takeaway point in this series on the Biblical Design of Gender is that God has designed man as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that man can successfully achieve the objective that God has given us to exercise dominion over the earth, developing wisdom and knowledge in preparation for further responsibility in our eternal life.

Our text, **Genesis 22:1-2** tells us

1 Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

2 Then He said, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”

A burnt offering is generally an animal that is killed, its' fat is removed and burned on an altar. The consumption of the animal fat by the fire indicates that the animal is being given to God. Burnt offerings are first mentioned in the Bible in **Genesis 8:20-21:**

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, “I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

Clean animals and birds are those that God told Noah that he and his sons would eat. God saw Noah’s devotion, in that Noah had a limited number of animals on the ark and he sacrificed some to show his appreciation to God. God was soothed by the smell of cooking fat and declared to never destroy the earth again. And God instructed the Children of Israel, in **Exodus 20:24:**



24 An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you.

God gave us dominion over and ownership of the animals. Having large flocks and herds generally makes a man wealthy, and God is instructing us to show gratitude for the wealth which He has given us by our giving part of our wealth back to Him. That's the idea of an offering. But, the idea of a sacrifice is understand by reading the "A" portion of **Romans 6:23**:

23 For the wages of sin is death.

God said, in the garden, in **Genesis 2:16-17**:

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

So, even from the beginning, when man sins, his penalty was to be death. When man sinned in the Garden, God promised him that He would die, but rather than killing the man, God killed an animal as a substitute for the man. **Genesis 3:21** records:

21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Well, this skin with which God made the tunics did not come from the trees. The man and the woman clothed themselves with leaves, but God did not find that clothing sufficient. I wore a coat made of skin to church today, and I can assure you that if the animal from which the skin was taken is dead. Or if he is still alive, he's a pretty cold joker, because I have his skin. Before sin, nakedness was not a problem, but the first animal sacrifice was made by God to cover the problem of the knowledge of nakedness caused by the man's sin. So, as well as providing an offering of devotion, the death of the animal sacrificed symbolizes the covering of the nakedness of the sin of God's people.

So, offerings show God our gratitude and sacrifices cover our sins. But Abraham was called to give the unique sacrifice of a human being, one that was only offered three times in the Scripture.

When I looked at this passage of Scripture in preparation for preaching this sermon, I asked myself:

"How did Abraham get Isaac past Sarah to offer him on the altar? What did Sarah say when Abraham told her, 'God has told me to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, so I'm supposed to kill him and burn his body on the altar. What do you think I should do, obey God or not?' "

Interesting question. To begin my answer, let me tell you about the second human burnt offering. Jephthah was the judge, or leader, of Israel during the time that the Ammonites started a war with Israel. **Judges 11:30-31** records:



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**30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD, and said, “If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands,
31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.”**

And God gave Jephthah the victory over Ammon. But **Judges 11:34-37** records:

34 When Jephthah came to his house at Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she was his only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter.

35 And it came to pass, when [Jephthah] saw [his daughter], that he tore his clothes, and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I have given my word to the LORD, and I cannot go back on it.”

36 So she said to him, “My father, if you have given your word to the LORD, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon.”

37 Then she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my friends and I.”

Jephthah inadvertently promised to sacrifice his daughter as a burnt offering, and she did not shrink from losing her life, because as God gave her father the victory he sought, God reinforced her faith in Him. After the two months, Jephthah gave the sacrifice that he promised, as **Judges 11:39-40** records:

39 And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She knew no man. And it became a custom in Israel

40 that the daughters of Israel went four days each year to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

I read just the other day about the first Navy Seal killed in the Iraq war. His Seal unit was on duty clearing a neighborhood of insurgents, and he and his team entered a house to make sure that there were no terrorists inside. Unfortunately, a terrorist armed with a grenade was in one of the rooms, and he pulled the pin and threw his grenade at the Seal. The Seal blocked the grenade from going out of the room, and then he had just a few seconds to make a decision. He could yell, “grenade”, close the door and hope that he and his buddies could make it out of the house, but the shrapnel from the grenade would probably kill them all when it blew up. Or he could absorb the concussion and shrapnel from the grenade with his own body, and save his comrades. He chose the latter, and sacrificed himself for his buddies.



I wonder what his mother said when he first told her that he was going into the military, what she said when he qualified for Seal team school and completed it, and what she said when he was deployed to a combat unit. As we speak, there are thousands of young people in harms' way in the Middle East, and all of them are facing the possibility of that which Japhthah's daughter, this Seal's mother and that which Sarah had to face when Abraham told her that Isaac was to be a burnt offering.

And all women don't react so well. In the book of Job, God allowed the devil to destroy all of Job's possessions and kill all ten of Job's children. Afterward, in **Job 1:21**:

21 And [Job] said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

When Job's wife heard Job blessing God, she was angry at him because of all of the tragedy that she suffered. **Job 2:9** records:
9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

But Job's answer to her gives us the perspective that we need to have. **Job 2:10** records:

10 But [Job] said to [his wife], "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

Job had the correct perspective. Remember that which I said earlier about an offering. God gave us dominion over and ownership of the animals. Having large flocks and herds generally makes a man wealthy, and God is instructing us to show gratitude for the wealth which He has given us by our giving part of our wealth back to Him. That's the idea of an offering.

Who gives us dominion and ownership over the things of the world? God. Who owns the things that we are we giving back to God? In the Methodist church, we sang a chant before the offering was consecrated to God, which was:

All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine own, have we given Thee.

When you take possession of things or people, be they your car, your money, your house, your children or your spouse, don't forget that that which you have is that which God has given you. Job was correct in **Job 1:21**

21 And [Job] said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

You came into the world naked, and you will leave whatever possessions and people that God allows you to acquire right here for someone else to use.

And knowing this fact gives us perspective. God intends us to be bonded to each other, but this episode of Biblical history shows us that God intends that we be more tightly bonded to Him than to any person on earth. I don't know of



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anyone that missed another person as much as my Dad missed my Mom. Dad took care of Mom personally throughout her illness; during the days of her illness, Dad had the chance to do all of the things for her that she used to do for him during her days of being a good wife, and some besides. Mom was a professional cook and Dad used to love to eat Mom's great cooking; eventually, Dad had the opportunity to cook for Mom. Mom was a professional beautician and Dad used to enjoy Mom's ministrations to him; I can remember watching Dad relaxing with his head in Mom's lap as she put some beauty treatment on the razor bumps on his face to soften them so that she could gently pluck out the hairs and make his face smooth. But Dad had the chance to take care of Mom's body in the same way that she used to take care of his; he bathed her and took care of her skin when she lost the intellectual capacity to take care of him and herself.

But one day, Mom heard the steady march of the chariot wheels from the sky. Her lamp went out, like a vessel not filled with oil. And her light died out like a flickering candle in the wind.

Dad mourned and missed Mom. And he lived, for years, on Mom's memories. But time and faith in God eventually heals all wounds. One day, one of Dad's old friends from the neighborhood lost her mate as well, and although she missed her husband, she recognized, within herself, that she was here on planet earth because, as God said, in **Genesis 2:18**:

18 And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

By design, God tells us that men should not be alone. By design, God tells us that women are to be helpers for men. That's God's design. I don't care what Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem or their followers in this generation have to say.

Mark 7:7 says:

7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

Contrary to the myth that women are better off doing bad all by themselves, God's teaching in **Genesis 2:18** is that women are meant to be men's helpers. And, intuitively obvious from the verse is that assertion that God's purpose for creating women is to help men to not be lonely. Well, if God wants women to help men to not be lonely, guess the identity of the inciter of battle of the sexes? Yes, your guess is correct. It's the devil. Whenever someone says anything to drive a wedge between men and women or to imply that one does not need the other, their utterances are from satan, and should be treated as such. Now, while there are some bad men with whom women ought not associate, but by the same token, there are some bad women with whom men ought not associate. As we can see from the episode in the garden, sin is not a gender specific activity.



But Dad's friend was not one the bad individuals. She had faithfully been married to her husband for over fifty years, and she wanted another man whom she could help. And although Dad could live without help, not having help was like the scene in Crocodile Dundee in which Dundee and the girl were trying to escape the bad guys by hiding in the outback. While they were sitting around the fire, the girl said that she was hungry, and Dundee started describing the indigenous grubs, beetles and wild yams that they could eat. Dundee took a dried grub out of his backpack and gave it to her. The girl tried biting into the grub, found the taste repulsive, made a face, and said to Dundee, "Do you eat this stuff?"

Dundee reached in his backpack again, pulled out a pot and put it on the fire, and then pulled out a can of beef stew. He stuck his knife in the can to open it. "Well, you can live on it", he replied, as he poured the beef stew into the pot, "but it tastes like dung."

That's the way Dad felt about being alone after a few years. You can live on it, but it tastes like dung, because it's not good for a man to be alone. So Dad married his friend.

Men need companionship, especially in their darkest days, and my guess is that Sarah was a good wife; she was like the daughter that met Jephthah, not like Job's wife. My guess is that Sarah comforted Abraham as Jephthah's daughter comforted him, because she understood that which Abraham had to do.

Sarah knew God. God spoke to Sarah when she laughed at His declaration that she was going to have a child at ninety. And Sarah knew that God told her the truth; she bore the child of the promise. My guess is that Sarah knew that a God that could cause the pregnancy of a ninety-year-old woman is a God that should be trusted and obeyed.

But as hard as it was on Sarah, think of how hard it was on Abraham. His first beloved son, Ishmael, was gone because of the overprotective jealousy of Sarah and the admonition of God for Abraham to cater to her. And after God instructed Abraham to send Ishmael away, God then instructed Abraham to kill Isaac and burn his body on the altar. My question to you is, what kind of God do you serve that would require Jephthah to kill his virgin daughter and Abraham to kill his son of the promise?

But, I come here every week to build up my trust in God and prepare myself. What day am I going to have the same challenge as Abraham and Sarah? What day am I going to have the same challenge as Dad? What day am I going to have a challenge that is even more difficult? What day is a tragedy going to strike and I'm going to find myself having to say, as did Job, "the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord"? No, I am not studying Bible history just because I like history; I am studying Bible history to prepare myself for the future.



Just this week, I sold a company my services to backup their computers. They called me about some trouble that they had, and when I went in to look for a fix for the trouble, I found out that they hadn't backed up their critical data since 2008. I was able to repair the trouble without needing a backup, but I may not be able to do so the next time, so I sold them a backup service. I hope they never have to use the backups created by the service, just as I hope that I never need to use the wisdom in the face of tragedy that I have learned from studying the trouble of Job, the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter and the sacrifice of Abraham's son. But I need the wisdom, because the finite possibility exists that I will find myself in a situation in which I have to contain my feelings and follow the examples that I have studied.

So, the next morning, Abraham, Isaac and two of Abraham's bodyguards started out for Mount Moriah to offer sacrifice. It took the four of them three days to travel to Mount Moriah, and when they arrived, Abraham told his bodyguards to stay at the base of the mountain while he and Isaac went up on the mountain to worship. As Abraham and Isaac climbed the mountain, **Genesis 22:7-8** records:

7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

Isaac knew how to offer an offering. You have to prepare the animal to be killed, and, once you kill the animal, you have to cut the fat from the animal and put it on the fire to produce the sweet smelling aroma that pleases God. Momma used to cook chitterlings, and I doubt that burning uncleaned chitterlings would produce the same sweet aroma as burning fat; so offering a burnt offering requires a certain amount of skill as a butcher. But Abraham did not bring an animal for the sacrifice, and Isaac couldn't figure out the deal. But Isaac soon found out, as **Genesis 22:9** records:

9 Then [Abraham and Isaac] came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.

I can't imagine the conversation between a father and his son just before the father kills his son as an offering to God. As a matter of fact, the Bible omits any conversation that Abraham and Isaac may have had, which makes me think that there was no conversation. There was just a lot of faith. Abraham had faith in God, and Isaac had faith in his father Abraham, especially, as **Genesis 22:10** records:

10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

Abraham was seriously obedient to God. But Abraham had a history with God. God spoke to Abraham and told him to leave the land of his fathers, and



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Abraham obeyed and became a rich chief with both a fortune and a large army. God told Abraham that Isaac was going to be born, and Abraham fathered Isaac when he was one hundred years old and his wife Sarah was ninety. God told Abraham that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, and the fire and brimstone fell from heaven and turned the two cities into piles of ashes the next day.

Abraham's history with God taught him that God has all power in heaven and earth in His hands. God is the only one that can take a crooked stick and hit a straight lick; the only one I have ever heard of that can stand flatfooted and tiptoe and the same time. The Lord is Almighty. God is our creator and sustainer. He gave us the sun by day and the moon by night, and is the one that causes worlds to twirl on their axes. God gives us day and night, winter and summer, nutrients in the soil for the crops to grow, rain and snow to water the earth, to make it bring forth and bud. God gives seed for the sower and bread for the eater. He puts vitamins and vegetables and proteins in meat, and if the God who is our Maker and Sustainer tells us to give us that which we have, we should prepare to do so, because, as He tells us, in **Malachi 3:10-12**:

10 And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts;

12 And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts.

So Abraham is giving his all to God, even to the point of giving his son of the promise, his son of his old age, his only begotten son. And God was watching Abraham, just as He is watching us. **Genesis 22:11-18** records:

11 But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

15 Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven,

16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—



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17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

John 3:16-17 tells us:

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

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, God found Himself facing the sacrifice of His Son as did Abraham. Jesus asked God for a substitute, just as Isaac asked Abraham about the lamb for the sacrifice, but there was no ram in the bush for Jesus. Jesus suffered, bled and died on the Old Rugged Cross as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and **Romans 6:23** tells us the rest of the story:

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Just as God gave the blessing to the seed of Abraham, He gives us the blessing through our relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus did not die on an altar, but on a cross. And unlike the sacrifices offered to God on the altar, early on Sunday Morning, Jesus Christ rose from the grave. Jesus Christ is not the dead sacrifice as are the bulls and goats sacrificed on the altar, but is the living sacrifice that has not only paid the penalty for the sins that we have committed, but also gives us the power to overcome sin, as **Hebrews 10:11-18** tells us:

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same [animal] sacrifices, which can never take away sins.

12 But this Man, [Jesus Christ], after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

16 “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,”

17 then He adds, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

So we no longer sacrifice to atone for our sins, because our sins have been forgiven and God has written His laws in our minds. When we hear the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Bible, the Holy



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Spirit convicts us of our sin from the inside, and we repent. And we continue to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as **Ephesians 4:13** tells us: **13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**

Let us learn the lessons of Abraham, Sarah and Isaac, of Job and his wife, and of Jephthah and his daughter, and let us grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, the one who sacrificed Himself for us, Jesus Christ.

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