



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 14”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 14

Genesis 27:41

41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

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.

In our last lesson, I made the point that the bond between husband and wife is sacrosanct, and that no one ought to come between a husband and a wife. In **Matthew 19:4-6**, Jesus tells us:

**4 And He answered and said to them, “Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’
5 and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’ ?
6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”**

The people responsible for cementing this bond are the husband and wife. Since we live in a sinful world, it is a given that the devil is going to try to interfere in marital relationships. God’s plan is that we be one; the devil’s plan is that we split up as often as possible. God’s plan is that we love one another; the devil’s plan is that we hate one another’s guts. And **Proverbs 6:16-19** tells us:

**16 These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans, Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies, And one who sows discord among brethren.**

This last situation that the Lord finds hateful, sowing discord among brethren, will be the topic of our discussion. In this episode of the Scripture, Isaac has reached the age that his cataracts have become so thick that he can no longer see clearly, or at all. Of course, Isaac lived before the age of cataract



medicine or surgery. In our day, Isaac's condition would probably be easily treatable, but for him, blindness was the outcome of having cataracts.

As Isaac lost his vision, his thoughts turned to his mortality. He thought, "I have two sons to whom to pass on my fortune, and Esau, my oldest and my favorite, has made some bad judgments. I need to do something to help him."

Parents often have one child that does not do as well as the others; one who fails to achieve in some way. When this is the case, parents often spend an unequal amount of time and resources on the less competent offspring in hopes of salvaging their situation. I once read about a counseling situation in which the parents were bequeathing more of their inheritance to one of their children than the others, and the ones receiving the lesser inheritance, who were more well-to-do, were complaining about the situation. The counselor tried to give the more well-to-do children the perspective that their parents didn't love them less than their less competent sibling, but that their parents were allotting extra resources to try to salvage their less competent sibling. Of course, throwing money at incompetence doesn't necessarily work very well, but the parents didn't have anything else to try.

In this situation between Esau and Jacob, Esau was the oldest, but he had traded away half of his inheritance. Normally, the oldest son received a double portion of the inheritance as a birthright. **Deuteronomy 21:15-17** tells us:

15 "If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the unloved, and if the firstborn son is of her who is unloved,

16 then it shall be, on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, that he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the true firstborn.

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

Esau, being the first twin out of the womb, was in line for the double portion of the inheritance, but Esau was prone to making rash decisions.

Genesis 25:29-30 shows this propensity:

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore [Esau's] name was called Edom.

Jacob, being the more shrewd of the twins, recognized that he had an advantage over his older brother, and made a deal that allowed him to inordinately profit from a bowl of stew. **Genesis 25:31-33** records:

31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?"



33 Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So [Esau] swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

This was a great deal for Jacob, and a rash and ignorant deal for Esau. Before the deal, Esau was in line to receive 66 of every 99 head of cattle that Isaac left when he died. But in the deal, Esau gave away 33 of the 66 he would have received. Neither Esau nor Jacob planned to inherit soon, but still, to give away half of your inheritance for a bowl of stew is clearly a bad deal. But Esau had no concept of real value. He traded his inheritance for virtually nothing, and then, **Genesis 26:34-35** records:

34 When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.

35 And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

In an earlier lesson in this series, we talked about the importance of picking a mate, as we discussed the selection of Rebekah for Isaac. Esau made a doubly bad decision here. First of all, rather than picking one wife, Esau decided to engage in polygamy. In this series, we have often read **Genesis 2:24: 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.**

The plan of God is for a man to have one wife. A polygamist is not becoming one flesh with a woman as God intended, joining with her both body and spirit to create a cooperative coalition, but is rather using women as a tool or a commodity to achieve his objective. We have discussed the oxytocin response in women which bonds women to those with whom they involve themselves intimately, and a polygamous relationship puts a woman in a position that is counter to her nature. Women experience the feeling of being cherished that God intended them to feel by having an exclusive bond with one man; polygamy damages a woman's ability to experience the emotional security that God intended in His initial design.

Secondly, rather than picking a God-fearing woman to be his wife, Esau decided to pick pagan Hittites. Now, we have also read **2Corinthians 6:14-18**, which speaks for itself, as it says:

14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

17 Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”

18 “I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty.”

So, Esau is a great disappointment to Isaac and Rebekah because he



traded away his birthright for a bowl of stew and picked wives against their counsel and the objective criteria given by the Lord our God.

And yes, people still make this marital error today, when they pick partners emotionally rather than by the objective criteria that give them the best chance to achieve longevity in marriage. The devil has won the battle of minds and hearts so thoroughly that we consider being the emotion of being “in love” to be a sufficient reason for making a spousal selection.

The problem with using the word “love” for the emotional rush that we feel when we come in contact with an attractive person is that calling an emotion “love” is inaccurate and causes us to make unintelligent choices. In the New Century version of the Bible, **1Corinthians 13:4-7** says:

4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud.

5 Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not get upset with others. Love does not count up wrongs that have been done.

7 Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always endures.

Love, in the godly sense, is not an emotion, but a set of actions.

The proper way to pick a spouse is to make sure that the person meets the objective criteria for a spouse, and then treat them in the objective loving way that the Bible requires. This will promote the development of the emotional feeling that we desire.

A married man and his wife both lost their jobs at the same time, and viability of their economic situation was in some doubt. This financial stress led them to experience marital stress, as the two began blaming one another for their situation, although objectively, neither of them was really responsible for it. Rather than turning to one another in their trouble, they turned on one another, and allowed their mutual disappointment about a situation that was outside of their control to divide them emotionally.

Fortunately, they sought the advice of a wise counselor, who convinced them to recognize that their disappointment was not with one another, but rather with the situation that they were in, and they would have a better chance of overcoming their situation if they supported, rather than attacked, one another. They chose to change their perspectives, and immediately found that they had ignored obvious options to overcome their situation. When calmness and cooperation in their relationship replaced panic over their situation, the fellow found that he could make a career change that would be more lucrative than his initial job, and he did so.

And their working together defines love. Love does not exist in a vacuum; infatuation may, but not love. Love is developed in the crucible of adversity. Love develops by a shared experience of overcoming the circumstances of life, which



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is why God is so opposed to divorce, except for acts that destroy trust, as does infidelity. Jesus tells us, in **Matthew 19:9**:

9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.”

If we divorce for any reason other than adultery, we are not free to remarry, because Jesus wants us to reconcile.

But, back to our episode. Esau has shown his ungodly propensities, but Isaac was still trying to salvage him. **Genesis 27:1-4** tells us:

1 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.” And he answered him, “Here I am.”

2 Then he said, “Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death.

3 Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me.

4 And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

Esau has traded away his birthright, and has shown himself outside of the plan of God by marrying foreign women, but Esau is still Isaac's favorite. They still have the bond based upon their shared experience in the field, and Isaac wants to do all that he can for Esau.

Unfortunately for Isaac, his wife disagreed with him. **Genesis 27:5-10** records:

5 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it.

6 So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, “Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying,

7 ‘Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.’

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you.

9 Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves.

10 Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death.”

The way that the Bible describes this gives us the crux of the problem. Verse 5 tells us that Isaac spoke to his son Esau, and verse 6 tells us that Rebekah spoke to her son Jacob. So, although their sons were twins, each parent had his own son. This is, of course, not the plan of God. Rebekah loved Jacob and was clearly disenchanted with Esau, with cause, but the decision of whom Isaac would bless was not hers to make. However, Rebekah chose to



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disregard her husband's prerogatives and deceive him into doing that which she thought was best.

Just as we have previously repeated **Matthew 19:4-6**, **2Corinthians 6:14-18** and **1Corinthians 13:4-7**, let me repeat **Ephesians 5:22-24**, which says:

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

For Rebekah to try to interfere with her husband's instruction to Esau and substitute Jacob as the recipient of Isaac's blessing is certainly an action that violated both the letter and the spirit of this admonition from the Lord. The plan of God for husbands and wives is that they have such a relationship with one another that they can share their plans for their children and come to some agreement, but Esau and Jacob are over 40 years of age, neither of them is a child, and Isaac's blessing would not invalidate Jacob's position as the owner of the inheritance of the older brother. Isaac wanted to bless Esau to even up the situation to some degree, but for Isaac to do so would not have invalidated Jacob's birthright.

But Rebekah thought that Isaac's death was immanent, and she did not want to live in a camp in which Esau was a major player. In the first place, Esau was not Rebekah's favorite, secondly, Esau married two women that Rebekah didn't like, and thirdly, Esau was known for making bad financial decisions. So Rebekah chose to deceive her husband by substituting Jacob for Esau.

Rebekah's deception was initially successful. She disguised Jacob by dressing him in Esau's clothes and putting the skins of the goats from which she prepared the spicy food on his hands and neck, so that if blind Isaac decided to smell and feel the smooth skinned Jacob to ascertain that he was the hairy Esau, Isaac would be fooled. Jacob's impersonation worked, and Jacob received the blessing from Isaac. But **Genesis 27:30-35** records:

30 Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me."

32 And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."

33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him— and indeed he shall be blessed."



34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me—me also, O my father!”

35 But [Isaac] said, “Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing.”

When Jacob negotiated with Esau for the birthright, Esau made a bad decision, but at least it was Esau’s decision. As much as Jacob took advantage of Esau, Esau realized that he made the deal, and generally, if a man makes a bad deal, he lives with the consequences of the deal and learns from it.

Let me give you an analogy. Just before a chick hatches, its’ lungs are filled with fluid from the egg white. The chick pecks a hole in its shell, and then struggles through the hole. In the process, the fluid is squeezed out of the chick’s lungs so that the chick can breathe air. If a person happens to be there and helps the chick get out of the shell without struggling, the chick dies because his lungs are not clear. The chick needs the struggle to clear out its’ lungs. Men are like chicks. We mature by struggling. Unless we go through our struggles, we never learn to make good decisions.

But Esau found himself in a situation that was quite different than struggling. Esau lost his blessing, not because he made a bad decision and failed to produce that which his father required him to produce in order to receive the blessing, but because his mother instructed and facilitated his brother’s cheating him out of his blessing. And since neither Isaac nor Esau were aware of Rebekah’s involvement in the episode, the rift that developed in the family developed between Esau and Jacob. Our text, **Genesis 27:41** tells us:

41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

Rebekah’s plan was to have Jacob take over leadership of the compound when Isaac died. But to make that decision was not Rebekah’s purview. We cause ourselves problems when we overstep our boundaries.

We may arrogantly think that we know best, but God has chosen each of us to play the role that we are given to play. We are not born with adult capacities; we learn them as we struggle. God navigates our circumstances so that we can learn the lessons that we need learn to play the roles that He gives us to play, and He does not want us to overstep our boundaries. **Proverbs 16:9** tells us:

9 A man’s heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

Yes, you may have a plan that you think is good, but, as **Proverbs 19:21** tells us:

21 There are many plans in a man’s heart, Nevertheless the LORD’s counsel—that will stand.

And, in order for Rebekah’s plan to succeed, she had to misuse Esau.



She deceived herself that the outcome would be better for the family if Jacob misused Esau so that Jacob could take over, but, as she found to her sorrow, her thinking did not rule the universe. **Zechariah 7:10c-12** tells us:

10 Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.'

11 But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear.

12 Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.

Zechariah tells us that planning evil against others is not a good idea. Now, when most people plan to go against the admonitions of God, they are able to deceive themselves that they know better, as did Rebekah, but such thoughts are both self-deceptive and self-centered. Usually, however, we just want that which we want when we want it, and so we make our hearts like flint, refusing to hear that which the Lord says. But God tells us, in **Isaiah 55:6-11**:

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

The things that we read in the Scriptures are the truth whether we like the implications of them or not. I can try to teach the Scripture in such a way as to make it as palatable as possible, but the truth remains that God is in charge, His ways are not our ways, and if we decide to be Christian, we might just as well recognize that we are not going to always get our way and prepare to do God's revealed will. There is no point in arguing or reinterpreting the Word of God to meet our desires, because God's will is going to be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Esau is going to take over the camp. Rebekah didn't like it, but she finally figured out that she couldn't have her way. **Genesis 27:42-45** records:

42 And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you.



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43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.

**44 And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away,
45 until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"**

The few days of which Rebekah spoke turned into a prolonged period of time. I don't know exactly how long it was, but I do know that it was at least 26 years. All of her scheming was for naught; in fact, it actually backfired because not only did Jacob not take over the camp, but Jacob actually had to leave the camp. Because of her scheming, Rebekah missed her favorite son's wedding and the birth of each of his thirteen children. Her scheming took Jacob away from her, and she had to watch as Esau brought children into the world with Hittite women with whom she probably had daughter-in-law problems.

Our best bet is to recognize the wisdom and the power of God. Even if we don't like God's plan, we should go along with it, because God can change any condition for which we can plan. Just as Rebekah had a solution for the problem of Esau, the Jewish leaders in Jesus' day had a solution for Jesus, when He came healing the sick, raising the dead while calling them hypocrites and pointing out their sins. The Jewish leaders chose to ignore Jesus' demonstration of the plan and the power of God, rather deciding to put the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords to death on the Old Rugged Cross. They figured that if they could kill Jesus, they would stop His ministry and regain control of the situation.

And they were absolutely correct.

For three days.

But then, God changed the conditions of the situation. Just as Rebekah did not anticipate that Esau would threaten to kill Jacob, the Jewish leaders did not anticipate that Jesus would come back to life. But early, on that first Easter Sunday morning, Jesus did just that. Jesus' ministry was reborn as He appeared alive after His Resurrection to those that were to spread His Gospel, in one case, over five hundred men at once. The Jewish leaders were confounded, and they persecuted those that preached the Resurrection, but we are here in this church today because the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. God is not stopped by our unbelief, as **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.

So, the moral of the episode today is that we ought not endeavor to thwart the will of God in order to achieve an objective of our own, because God is in control. We would be better off to just believe that which God tells us. And, at the



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same time, all of us need to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ, because He is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, whether we acknowledge Him or not.

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