



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

# “The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 28”

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***Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.***



### The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 28

#### Leviticus 21:7

**7 [The priest] shall not take a wife who is a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God.**

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.

Aaron, Moses' brother, was a key player in the episode of the children of Israel leaving Egypt. When God charged Moses to return to tell the Pharaoh to allow the children of Israel to leave Egypt, Moses cited his inarticulate speech as a reason to decline the responsibility that God had given him. The episode is recorded in **Exodus 4:10-16**, which says:

**10 Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."**

**11 So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD?"**

**12 Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."**

**13 But [Moses] said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send."**

**14 So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.**

**15 Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do.**

**16 So [Aaron] shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God.**



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Aaron joined the Israelite liberation committee as the spokesperson, and when the Israelites left Egypt, Aaron became the High Priest, the one that spoke delivered messages to the people from Moses, who received the information from God. When the Bible says, as it does in many places, “The Lord spoke to Moses”, it does not further imply that Moses spoke to the people. Actually, the Lord spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron told the people that which Moses told him.

So Aaron, the High Priest, was an important person in God’s chain of command. Moses was more or less in charge of the secular pursuits of the Nation of Israel; wars, enforcement of the commandments and the like, which Aaron was in charge of the worship activities; the administration of the Tabernacle and the offering of sacrifices. In our text for today, Aaron and his sons, who are to succeed him in the position of priest, are set apart for God.

Now, why is this relevant to us? Well, because all of the members of the church are priests, as was Aaron. The Holy Spirit tells the church, through the pen of the Apostle Peter, in **1Peter 2:9**:

**9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of [the Lord Jesus Christ] who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.**

The laws for the priests given in **Leviticus 21** are more stringent than the laws for the regular people, because the priests are holy, set apart for God. The word “holy” literally means “dedicated or devoted to the service of God”, or “set apart for God”. Holiness is analogous to my Mom’s fine china. My mom had several sets of dishes, one of which we used for everyday meals. But Mom had a special set that she used to serve weddings and formal parties, made of fine china, that she acquired one place setting at a time because they were so expensive. I would be willing to bet that one place setting of Momma’s china was more expensive than the whole set of dishes that we used every day.

If we dropped one of the regular dishes, we just picked it up off of the floor and rewashed it, because it was made of some type of hard rubber substance that resisted breaking. But woe to the one that dropped, or even chipped, one of Mom’s formal china dishes. There were special rules for washing the fine china, and you had to focus on that which you were doing so because if anything bad happened to just one of those dishes, that entire expensive place setting could not be used for the purpose for which Momma spent all that money.

So the definition of holy is analogous to the special status of Momma’s fine china. And our reason for attending church is to be closer to God, meaning, to obtain the mind of Christ and be obedient to the Bible. So, as members of the Body of Christ that aspire to be closer to God, the laws that God gave to those that are the closest to Him are relevant to us.

Although these laws are relevant, we are not bound by them. **Galatians 3:13-14** informs us:



**13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

But if we are looking for guidelines as to how we should live, these laws tell us that which God said will please Him the most. While it is true that we are not obligated to comply to these laws, it would be better for us if we chose to obey them. God does not give us His Laws arbitrarily, just to see how tough He can be on us, but benevolently, so that by following His laws our lives will be improved. The situation is much like the eating of meat that we talked about a couple of weeks ago. While, on the one hand, it is certainly not illegal to eat meat, on the other hand, we will probably be healthier and find life more enjoyable if we can find a tasty substitute, like vegetable burgers, assuming that vegetable burgers are really as tasty as people say that they are.

The first law in the chapter pertains to the priest defiling himself for the dead, which is not really that relevant to us. **Leviticus 21:1-4** tells us:

**1 And the LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: ‘None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, 2 except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; 3 also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. 4 Otherwise he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself.**

Defilement for the dead is defined in **Numbers 19:13** which tells us:  
**13 Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; his uncleanness is still on him.**

Coming in contact with a dead body was a bad idea for a people in a nation that did not have embalming facilities or hand sanitizer available in the wilderness because the disease germ or microbe that killed the dead person could be transmitted by touch. The only cleansing available was water and time, which is the prescription for purification that God gives in the two preceding verses.

But we don’t spend a lot of time with dead bodies. Our text for today concerns marital relationships, which are of more interest to us. **Leviticus 21:7** tells us:

**7 [The priest] shall not take a wife who is a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall [the priest] take a woman divorced from her husband; for the priest is holy to his God.**



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**Leviticus 12:7** describes three types of women that it is unlawful for God's priest to marry; harlots, defiled women, and divorced women. Allow me to define them for you.

The definition of harlot is a prostitute, especially, a woman that commits prostitution in the furtherance of idolatry. Those who supervised idol temples used prostitution to raise funds, while the Lord commanded that His people give tithes and freewill offerings to support His Temple.

In Christianity, our ritual act of worship is the Lord's Supper, in which bread and wine, or grape juice in our case, are used in a ritual as a symbol of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on Calvary's Cross. Idolatry, on the other hand, was the worship of a fertility god, and used sexual intercourse as a ritual act of worship, considering the sex act symbolic of sewing seed in fertile ground to raise an abundant harvest.

Unmarried young women often took jobs in the idol temples as ritual harlots, as their sexual experiences were considered to be worshipping their god, and they had no husbands to object to their doing so. Thus, the Bible assumes that brides accused by the husbands of not being virgins at the consummation of their marriage have been harlots. **Deuteronomy 22:20-21** tells us:

**20 "But if the thing is true, and evidences of virginity are not found for the young woman,  
21 then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. So you shall put away the evil from among you.**

Having participated in ritual prostitution indicated that the woman was an idolater, and idolatry was grounds for execution.

A defiled woman is a woman that has had an extramarital affair. **Numbers 5** tells us the steps that a husband should take if he suspects his wife of infidelity but has no actual proof. The husband calls the priest to prepare a contained of bitter water. Then, **Numbers 5: 11-13, 19-22, 27** tells us:

**11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,  
12 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him,  
13 and a man lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed that she has defiled herself, and there was no witness against her, nor was she caught—  
19 And the priest shall put [the wife] under oath, and say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness while under your husband's authority, be free from this bitter water that brings a curse.  
20 But if you have gone astray while under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain**



with you”—

**21** then the priest shall put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman— “the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh rot and your belly swell;  
**22** and may this water that causes the curse go into your stomach, and make your belly swell and your thigh rot.” ‘Then the woman shall say, “Amen, so be it.”

**27** When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a curse will enter her and become bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman will become a curse among her people.

If the woman proves to be defiled, her husband does not even have to divorce her. She is accursed, and her husband is simply free of any obligation to her. She may eventually be able to find another husband, but anyone in the priesthood is prohibited from marrying her.

A woman does not necessarily have to be unfaithful to be divorced; she simply has to be unsuitable as a wife in some way. In the book of Ezra, the Israelites divorced their wives en masse simply because they were pagans. **Ezra 10:1-4** records:

**1** Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.

**2** And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, “We have trespassed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.

**3** Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away [meaning divorce] all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

**4** Arise, for this matter is your responsibility. We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it.”

Thus, God tells us that there are three types of women that it is unlawful for God’s priest to marry; harlots, defiled women, and divorced women.

In the public square of our society, especially in our mass media, sexual morality only exists as a matter for ridicule. Young men and women that decide to maintain their virginity until marriage are ridiculed as being lame, undesirable and missing out on life. The primary entertainment of our society is the titillation of finding out who is having an extramarital affair with whom. And marriage vows have become virtually meaningless in the public square. In 1970, California became the first state to legalize “no-fault” divorce, in which a man or woman can



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divorce their spouse for any or no reason. That law has spread across the country and now, after forty years, no-fault divorce has made a mockery of marriage, as people divorce for trivial reasons, or for no reason at all, as we saw in the case of the former vice president this week.

But God is quite serious about sexual morality. To God, sexual morality represents our choice between the worship of God and the worship of idols. We have already read this fact in the lection concerning virginity in marriage in Deuteronomy 22. **Numbers 25:1-3** tells us:

**1 Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab.**

**2 [The women of Moab] invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods.**

**3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel.**

God tells the New Testament church, in **Hebrews 13:4**:

**4 Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**

And God judged Israel harshly, as **Numbers 25:4-5** records:

**4 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the Lord, out in the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may turn away from Israel."**

**5 So Moses said to the judges of Israel, "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."**

Before the judges of Israel had the chance to strike, a plague from the Lord started among the people that were participating in idolatry. But the plague did not stop the Israelites from continuing their fornication and sin against God, as **Numbers 25:6** records:

**6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who were weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.**

Moses and the leaders were mourning because of the idolatrous activity of the people in forsaking the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and by the call of God for the death of the Israelites. But one Israelite decided to act rather than weep. **Numbers 25:7-9** records:

**7 Now when Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he rose from among the congregation and took a javelin in his hand;**

**8 and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So the plague was stopped among the children of Israel.**

**9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.**



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Phinehas acted, and saved the remainder of the Nation of Israel. God told Moses that, had it not been for Phinehas' action, the entire nation of Israel would have been destroyed by the plague. **Numbers 25:10-13** records:

**10 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**

**11 “Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal.**

**12 Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to [Phinehas] My covenant of peace; 13 and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’ ”**

And interestingly, the plague is still with us. We no longer follow the Law of Moses and stone those who participate in sexual immorality, but the plague that results from sexual immorality is still with us.

Human papillomavirus (also called HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection. There are more than 40 HPV types that can infect the genital areas of males and females. Most people who become infected with HPV do not even know they have it. Certain types of HPV can cause genital warts in males and females. Other HPV types can cause cervical cancer. There is no way to know which people who get HPV will go on to develop cancer or other health problems.

And then there's AIDS. HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the immune system, the body's natural defense system. Without a strong immune system, the body has trouble fighting off disease. Both the virus and the infection it causes are called HIV.

White blood cells are an important part of the immune system. HIV invades and destroys certain white blood cells called CD4+ cells. If too many CD4+ cells are destroyed, the body can no longer defend itself against infection.

The last stage of HIV infection is AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). People with AIDS have a low number of CD4+ cells and get infections or cancers that rarely occur in healthy people. These are deadly.

And there are numerous other sexually transmitted infections that can range from inconvenient and painful to deadly. But they all share the common distinction of being sexually transmitted. However sexually transmitted infections are virtually impossible to get if we follow the simple command of God and forsake the idolatry of fornication and adultery. And God tells us to teach those in this generation with whom we come into contact about the error of their ways. He gives His word to the Prophet Ezekiel, who passes it on to us, in **Ezekiel 18:26-32**:

**26 When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that**



he dies.

**27 Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive.**

**28 Because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.**

**29 Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?**

**30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord God. "Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.**

**31 Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?**

**32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord God. "Therefore turn and live!"**

The question is: why should you die, O house of Israel?' A lifetime of misery and a certain death for a few minutes of pleasure that you can obtain just as easily by following the commandments of God? Why would you choose this? Why would you choose idolatry? Why would you not choose the Word of God?

The answer to these questions is: sin. We have a nature that makes sin irresistible to us. We have a spirit that can be easily seduced by the wiles of the devil. **Ephesians 6:12** tells us:

**12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

Idolatry and sexual immorality are the worship of the devil. The devil takes on different names and different forms in different places, but he is God's enemy in every place in which God allows him to go. And the devil's main method of combating God is seducing us, mankind, God's creation that God loves, into sin and rebellion against the One that loves us. God does not give us His Word to make us miserable or to curtail us, but to give us the best and most pure enjoyment of this world. But the devil seduces us into forsaking God with the temporary pleasure of the sins of the flesh that lead to the inevitable wages of sin, as the "a" portion of **Romans 6:23** tells us:

**23 For the wages of sin is death.**

Twenty four thousand Israelites died in the plague caused by their sexual immorality. The episode is recorded in the Scripture. Ezekiel asks us, "Why will you die, O house of Israel?" But the disobedience and death continues. The encroachment of sin in the lives of man is complete, as Paul tells us, in **Romans 3:23**:

**23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

God's warnings have failed. Israel failed to heed God's warning, and was



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taken captive and deported from the Land that God promised them. As we speak, our great nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, has become the land of sexual license. Fornication and adultery are now acceptable, divorce is celebrated, and here we stand on the same path upon which Israel went down to deportation.

But God recognized our human inability to do that which He tells us to do, and decided to remedy our situation. **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.**

Salvation is in Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God that came into the world, suffered, bled and died that our sins might be forgiven, and then dispatched the Holy Spirit from Heaven to give us a new nature, one that can overpower the old nature of sin and help us decide to follow the admonitions of God to do that which He tells us will bring us the abundant life in the earth realm and then eternal life in the Kingdom of God. God tells us, in **Ezekiel 18:32**:  
**32 For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord God. “Therefore turn and live!”**

And Jesus tells us, in **John 10:10**:

**10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.**

So, God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, has made us His Priests, and God has given us the everlasting covenant that He gave to Phinehas, who was zealous for Him, in **Numbers 25:12-13**:

**12 Therefore say, ‘Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace;  
13 and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.’ ”**

So let us aspire to the priesthood of Christ, and let us obtain it, as we continue 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. Let us be zealous to be obedient to the Bible, which is the doctrine of Jesus Christ, in an informed, insightful and intelligent manner. And let us maintain the fidelity and sexual purity of our marital relationships, as the cooperative coalition of husband and wife so that we 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, as **1John 5:11-13** tells us:

**11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son [the Lord Jesus Christ].**



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**12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.**

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis  
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