



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 29”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 29

Numbers 12:1-2

1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

2 So they said, “Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?” And the LORD heard it.

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, we spent time chronicling the special ordinances that God instituted for the priests, those men who were designated as the keepers of God’s Temple. The position of priest came into existence because although God selected Moses to preside over the Nation of Israel, Moses deferred because of his poor speaking ability. **Exodus 4:13-16** records:

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.

So Aaron joined the Israelite liberation committee as the spokesperson. 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, “The Lord spoke to Moses”, actually, the Lord spoke to Moses, Moses spoke to Aaron and Aaron told the people that which Moses told him.



Not only did Aaron speak for Moses, but Moses' older sister Miriam spoke for Moses. When Moses was just a newborn, the Pharaoh commanded the Israelite women to drown their male children in the Nile River. Moses' mother decided to put Moses inside of a little boat to float him until, hopefully, an Egyptian saw the baby in the boat and took pity on him. Fortunately, that was exactly that which happened. When the Pharaoh's daughter saw Moses floating, she took pity on him and drew Moses up out of the water. Miriam had been watching the little boat to see what would happen to her little brother, and she spoke up for him, as **Exodus 2:7-10** records:

7 Then his sister [Miriam] said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother.

9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him.

10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Miriam watched over the baby Moses until he left to become the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and she resumed her watchfulness when Moses became the leader of the Nation of Israel. When Moses stretched out his rod to hold back the Red Sea so that the Israelites could cross through the sea on dry land, Miriam was watching. When the Egyptians followed the Israelites into the Red Sea, Moses stretched out his rod again to allow the sea to come back together and drown the Egyptians. Miriam was watching, and Miriam became the leader of the women who were rejoicing at seeing their tormentors killed at the bottom of the sea. **Exodus 15:20-21** records:

20 Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

21 And Miriam answered them: "Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!"

So both Aaron and Miriam are familiar with the relationship between God and Moses. Aaron, as the priest, has received the Word of God directly from Moses and given it to the people. Miriam, as a prophetess, has received inspiration from the Lord to allow her to lead the women in song to testify as to what God has done for Israel. Both Aaron and Miriam have been instrumental in Moses' leadership.

But Miriam and Aaron are causing a controversy in the camp. **Numbers 12:1** tells us:



1 Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

Apparently, just before the episode of **Numbers 12**, Moses increased the size of his harem by marrying a woman from the North African region known as Cush, which is modern day Ethiopia.

Four hundred years earlier, Joseph, the ancestor of the Israelites, was sold into Egyptian slavery, and, through a set of fortuitous circumstances, became the second in command in Egypt to save Egypt from a famine. As a result of the famine, Joseph brought the seventy members of his family, those being his parents, siblings and his siblings' immediate families to Egypt to keep them alive during the famine. Joseph's family stayed in Egypt and grew, and by the time of which we are speaking, the number of men in Joseph's family grew from the original number of less than 70 to over 600,000. The descendents of Joseph intermarried with the inhabitants of Egypt while they were there. **Exodus 12:37-38** tells us:

37 Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children.

38 A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.

The "mixed" multitude consisted of the other ethnicities that intermarried with the Israelites while they were in Egypt. There were not only Egyptians in Egypt; just as the family of Joseph migrated to Egypt during the famine, people from other lands were drawn to Egypt as the place with food to eat. Egypt became a cosmopolitan kingdom because of the famine, and people that migrated to the plentiful supplies of Joseph's storehouses in Egypt had little reason to return home to their famine stricken countries.

But, as in every cosmopolitan country, there are those in each ethnic group that thought their group should maintain their ethnic purity. The women in the ethnic group are often most threatened by the men of their group marrying someone from outside of it. This is because the men of the ethnic group can choose whom they will marry, but in order to marry, the women have to wait to be asked.

This week, I was conversing with a woman whose son is considering asking a young woman to marry him. The woman had some pictures of the young lady in whom her son was interested, and she was struck, as were those to whom she showed the pictures, by the resemblance between herself and the woman that her son was considering. In our conversation on the topic, I said, "I'm sure that you remember the old song that says, 'I want a girl just like the girl that married dear old dad.' That song is stereotypically true. A boy's mother is the first woman that the boy loves, when he looks for a wife, he is drawn to his mother's attributes, both physical and emotional, as he tries to duplicate his original home. So, it is normal for your son to pick a woman that looks like you."



Thus, it is intuitively obvious that young men are generally attracted to young women of their mother's ethnicity. And since women have to wait to be asked to marry, it is also intuitively obvious that young women expect a young man of her own ethnicity to ask her for her hand in marriage. Thus, young women feel a sense of ownership of the young men of their ethnicity.

Now if, as most young woman postulate, the number of young men born in a particular population are roughly equivalent to the number of young women, the obvious conclusion to which a young woman would come would be that for every young man that picks a woman of a different ethnicity, a young women of her ethnicity has to do without a husband. And the young woman is defenseless against this situation; she has to wait for a marriage proposal; she cannot ask a young man of her ethnicity or any other ethnicity to marry her.

So, it is intuitively obvious that a young woman would be possessive of young men of her own ethnicity, and would be perturbed when a young man of her ethnicity marries a woman of a different ethnicity, especially if she has no personal prospects for marriage.

But, the case of Moses is interesting. Although Moses was an Israelite and the leader of the Nation of Israel, Moses was raised in the house of the Pharaoh by the Pharaoh's daughter, a Black woman. Yes, Moses' natural mother nursed him until he was weaned, but **Exodus 2:9-10** tells us:

9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to [Moses' natural mother], "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So [Moses' natural mother] took the child and nursed him.

10 And the child grew, and [Moses' natural mother] brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Although Moses was an Israelite by birth, Moses was brought up in an Egyptian home. Moses felt a political affinity for his people, but because of his upbringing, Moses was attracted to Black women. When Moses had to escape Egypt through the Sinai desert, Midian was the first country to which Moses came, and the priest of Midian gave Moses his daughter as wife as wages for his labor. After Moses returned to Egypt, rescued the Nation of Israel and had the opportunity to pick the wife he wanted from the mixed multitude of Israel, Moses picked a Black woman from Ethiopia that looked like the woman in whose house he grew up.

Miriam, for the reasons stated earlier, was incensed that Moses married outside of his race. After all, if the leader of the nation married outside of the race, why would any Israelite marry inside of the race? So Miriam sought to dethrone Moses from his leadership position because of the betrayal that she felt. **Number 12:2** tells us:

2 So [Miriam and Aaron] said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD heard it.



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And Miriam is the ringleader and Aaron is the follower. We can see Aaron's propensity for leading by following in **Exodus 32:1-4, 21-24**, which says: **1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."**

2 And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."

4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

21 And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?"

22 So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil.

23 For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'

24 And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break it off.' So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."

Aaron was the priest of God, but, as he said in verse 22, the people were set on evil and Aaron was not strong enough to restrain them. And what people wanted Aaron to make a golden calf? Well, probably not the Israelites. More likely, members of the mixed multitude demanded that Aaron make the idol god in the absence of Moses, as they were the countries that worshipped idols. Aaron was not really a leader; Aaron was really just Moses' mouthpiece, which made him a follower rather than a leader. When Moses was not available, Aaron looked for another leader to tell him that which he should do.

Miriam had two reasons to be negative about the mixed multitude, especially the women, who Miriam blamed both for taking the Jewish men as husbands and inciting Aaron to create idols. That mixed multitude was looking more and more like the real problem to Miriam, who thought that although someone needed to stop them, Aaron was colluding with them and Moses was marrying them.

So Miriam decided to rip Moses for his lack of leadership and drug Aaron along as her accomplice, much as the woman drug the man in the garden, of which **Genesis 3:12** tells us:

12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

When Miriam challenged Moses, what was Moses' response? Nothing. **Numbers 12:3** tells us:



3 (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.)

Moses was so humble that he would not tell the people what thus said the Lord, but used Aaron for a mouthpiece when transmitting the will of God. Moses did not defend himself against Miriam when she confronted him, because of his meekness. But Moses told the people of Israel, in **Exodus 14:14**:

14 The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”

2Chronicles 20:15 tells us:

15 Thus says the LORD to you: ‘Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s.

Isaiah 30:15 tells us:

15 For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: “In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

So Moses accepted Miriam’s rebuke without retort, because Moses was the man that God chose to establish the nation. But the real test for any man that God chooses to lead his people is whether or not he remembers that the real leader is God; the actual job of any Christian leader is simply to transmit the Word of God to the people. And this is even true for Jesus Christ. During His earthly ministry, someone asked Jesus about the Plan of Salvation. **Matthew 19:16** records:

16 Now behold, one came and said to [Jesus], “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

But Jesus Himself would not even accept the accolade of being called good. Jesus responded, in **Matthew 19:17**:

17 So [Jesus] said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

Even Jesus, the Son of God, deferred to the goodness and the commandments of God rather than accepting accolades or preaching salvation by belief in Himself. When the questioner asked Jesus to which commandments did He refer, Jesus pointed the questioner to God, in **Matthew 19:18-19**:

18 Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’

19 ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Jesus quoted the Scripture that God gave to Moses and that the questioner had been exposed to from his youth. But the questioner was like King Herod, who wanted to see Jesus perform a miracle for him personally. The questioner wanted a personal answer rather than a Scriptural or generic answer, so he brushed aside the Scripture and continued questioning Jesus. **Matthew 19:20** records:



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20 The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

“I can see your holiness and I want to duplicate it”, replied the young man, “I’ve kept all of the general commandments, but what special activity can I perform that will put me on a plane with you?” So Jesus answered his question, in **Matthew 19:21**:

21 Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

There is only one thing that will put you on a plane with Jesus. You have follow Jesus, meaning, that you have to do that which Jesus did. **Philippians 2:5-8** tells us:

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus was equal with God, but God sent Jesus to give all that He had to us, and then give Himself to God’s ministry of salvation to the point of His own death, even the death of the Cross. That, my friend, is following Jesus. In order to be like Jesus, you have to first divest yourself of all your assets, and then divest yourself of yourself. That’s what Jesus did, and that is that which Jesus meant by **“come, follow Me.”** And **Isaiah 53:7** tells us:

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Just as Moses did not answer Miriam, Jesus did not answer those that crucified Him. Jesus did not defend Himself at either His Jewish or Roman trial. Jesus testified to the truth that He is the Son of God, but said nothing to persuade either the Jews or the Romans to let Him go.

So, to follow Jesus is a sacrifice. A follower of Jesus cannot defend him or herself at the cost of contradicting the Scripture. A follower of Jesus cannot use the wisdom of man, but must justify his position with the wisdom of God, given to us by the Scripture as inspired by Holy Spirit. And Paul teaches us, in **1Corinthians 2:13**:

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Then in **2Timothy 3:16-17**, Paul also says:

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,



17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

When asked a question, Jesus quoted the Scripture. When faced with those that rejected the Scripture, Jesus answered them nothing. Jesus instructs us, in **Matthew 10:14-15**:

14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

So, once the man of God has given you the Scripture, he has nothing more of substance to say. And Moses did not debate Miriam, because when it is foolish to speak, the wise say nothing. As God told the children of Israel, in **2Chronicles 20:17**:

17 You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!

But the battle was fought. **Numbers 12:4-10** records:

4 Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!” So the three came out.

5 Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward.

6 Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.

7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house.

8 I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?”

9 So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed.

10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.

What did Moses do about Miriam? Nothing. He stood still, and saw His vindication in the eyes of God. Miriam didn't like Moses' choice in a wife, but the Lord did not object to it. Miriam decided to rebuke Moses based upon her personal preference, but there was nothing in the Scripture as it was given that denied Moses his choice of a wife. Miriam's personal preference was not binding on Moses, and for her to rebuke the man of God for doing something which the Scripture does not call sin was foolish, and as **Ecclesiastes 5:4** tells us, God has no pleasure in fools. Aaron, who stood with Miriam as she rebuked Moses, was horrified, and asked Moses to intercede for her, as **Numbers 12:11-12** records:

11 So Aaron said to Moses, “Oh, my lord! Please do not lay this sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned.



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12 Please do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

So Moses prayed for his sister, and God concluded the matter in **Numbers 12:14-15:**

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received again."

15 So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in again.

2Timothy 3:16-17 tells us:

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Before you decide to rebuke someone, it is good to find their particular sin in the Scripture, and then read them the Scripture as a rebuke. According to Paul, that is the reason that we have the Scripture. I'm not supposed to tell you to live according to that which I think, but it is my job to tell you that which the Scripture says. The record is that God allows the devil to try to deceive us, as the devil deceived the man and woman in the Garden, because once God gives us His Word, He expects us to choose to follow Him over that which the devil tells us. God instructs us, in **Ephesians 6:11-18:**

11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

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.

13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

And the mystery of the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, is much like the mystery of Moses, who allowed God to defend him. The good news is that Jesus Christ allowed God to defend Him as well. Jesus gave his back to the



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smelters, his cheeks to those that plucked off the hair, and did not hide his face from shame and spitting. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice, as His bones were pulled out of joint, He was nailed to the Old Rugged Cross, His Body was broken and His Blood was shed as a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. And then, when the very last sin on earth was paid for, Jesus Christ hung His head in the locks on His shoulder, and He died.

They buried Jesus in Joseph's new tomb, and He stayed there, all night Friday night, all day Saturday, and all night Saturday night. Jesus vindication did not come until early on Sunday Morning, when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, physically, on that first Easter Sunday morning.

And that's the gospel. It does not matter that which the world can do to a believer; there is a power greater than the world that will support us if we are obedient, as Paul says of Jesus, in **Philippians 2:8-13**:

8 And being found in appearance as a man, [Jesus] humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Even as Moses did with Miriam, God tells us, in **Philippians 2:14-16**:

14 Do all things without complaining and disputing,

15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

So let us remember this example, and let us run this race with patience, as **Hebrews 12:1-2** tells us:

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



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