



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 38”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



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Judges 11:39-40:

39 And it was so at the end of two months that [Jephthah's daughter] 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.

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.

The book of Judges is the account of the wars between Israel and the people of the Promised Land. Once the Lord allowed Israel to conquer the indigenous people of the Land, the Israelites were easily seduced by the sexual rituals connected with the idol gods of the people of the Land. God tells Israel, in **Deuteronomy 7:2-5:**

2 and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

In Deuteronomy 7:4, God does not predict that the people of the land will turn those that conquer them away from following Him, but rather that they will turn the sons of those that conquer the people of the land away from following Him.



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Each generation has to meet God for themselves. But there is a natural immaturity leading to arrogance that is part of adolescence that makes young people susceptible to idolatry. This immaturity has less to do with worship and more to do with sexual license. God's laws constrain a young man to marry to find a sexual outlet, while the law of Baal allows young men to participate sexually with ritual prostitutes for an offering to the devil.

So, make no mistake, God was aware that satan's temptation would come in a sexual package. And God told Israel to utterly destroy the people in the Land that satan could use, because the seduction of satan would be too much for adolescents to withstand.

God's Old Testament solution to the problem of sexual sin was a physical one, the eradication of those that might tempt. God's New Testament solution is a spiritual one, as **1Thessalonians 4:3-8** says:

3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.

7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Verse 4 tells us that we should possess our vessels in sanctification and honor. One part of that is maintaining fidelity to our spouse, but the other part of that is maintaining the marital relationships that we have promised to keep before God and the witnesses at our wedding, until death do us part.

Recently a former vice president of the United States and his wife made a most curious announcement, that they were separating after forty years of marriage. That in and of itself was curious, but even more curious was the fact that they appeared to be dissolving their marriage for no particular reason. Just imagine how such an event would affect the impressionable young minds of newlyweds.

It appears that now, in our society, marital vows mean next to nothing, even among those that have reached the ripe old age of sixty years and been married for forty. Certainly the part about "as long as you both shall live" is an open joke. That harmless "no fault" divorce law that was passed fifty years ago in California has wreaked havoc on our society. And the destruction of marriage is synonymous with the destruction of our society.

I read, just last week, that the new underprivileged class in America is not racial, but rather based upon marital status. Children in single parent families,



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either because of an out-of-wedlock birth or a divorce, are adversely affected by circumstances that co-occur with single-parent families (such as economic disadvantage, residential instability, and inter-parental conflict) or are the consequence of such families (such as disrupted parenting). A greater percentage of single-parent families (57.4%) than two-parent families (6.3%) live below the poverty line. The economic disadvantage that many Black families experience is due less to race and more to the single parent family configuration.

The less successful that we are in keeping our marriages together, the more we role model divorce as a viable solution for the next generation, allowing the devil to dig the hooks that he has in our society in deeper.

But the Holy Spirit is He who gives us the ability to stay on the straight and narrow path, provided that we yield our minds to Him through prayer and the study of the Word. **Galatians 5:16-26** tells us:

**16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.**

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness,

20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Verse 21 of Galatians 5 gives us the key. The verse tells us that our security in the kingdom is based upon our discipline to not practice the negative things delineated in **Galatians 5:19-21**.

Now, we live in an immoral society. The negative things delineated in **Galatians 5:19-21** are all around us. If we live casually, we cannot but help being exposed to the negative things and we will find it difficult to insulate our children from those things. Thus, we must not live casually, but intentionally. We must actively reject the negative things, and supervise our children so that they do so



as well, for if we do not, both we and our children will be seduced by the negative side.

So, preparation is essential. Since we are not able to physically eradicate those that would seduce our children, as the Lord commanded Israel to do, it is of the utmost importance for our children to develop a relationship with the Lord, based upon our role modeling.

However, as our last lesson pointed out, even the leaders in Israel did not cultivate a relationship with the Lord. The military general Barak, for instance, needed Deborah to be his intercessor with God. **Judges 4:8** records:

8 And Barak said to Deborah, “If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!”

Now, Barak had the influence in Israel to call up an army, as **Judges 4:10** tells us:

10 And Barak called [the fighting men of the tribes of] Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men under his command, and Deborah went up with him.

But Barak wanted Deborah as his security blanket, because Barak really didn't have a relationship with God. Barak's situation was analogous to that of the Jews that practiced exorcism in Acts chapter 19. These Jews decided to augment their abilities by calling on Jesus to cast out demons. **Acts 19:13-16** records:

13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.”

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?”

16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Barak did not want to get beaten up like the Jewish exorcists. So, Barak determined that it would be better to have Deborah, who actually knew the Lord, with him in the battle rather than presumptuously calling on the name of the Lord. And although God moved so that the Israelites were ultimately victorious in the battle, Barak, as a leader in Israel, should have had his own relationship with God. Because Barak did not, the leader of Barak's opposition was not captured in battle and executed by the leader of the Israelite army as was the norm, but was rather was killed in his sleep by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who shared the credit for the victory with Deborah rather than Barak.

God has a plan for the administration of the nation. God calls men to leadership, but He will change His plan when the men whom He calls refuse to do that which He asks. Jesus spoke on this topic in the parable recorded in **Matthew 21:33-44**:



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33 “Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.

35 And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.

37 Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.’

39 So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

40 “Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?”

41 They said to Him, “He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’ ?

43 “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

44 And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.”

The lesson is that leaders should have their relationship with God in place so that should the Lord decide to call them to a great work, they will be able to function and will not need to be replaced or to have someone stand in for them. When called by God, Isaiah said, in **Isaiah 6:8**:

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

When Jesus was called on by God to go to the Cross, He prayed, in **Luke 22:42**,

42 saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”

Preparation is essential. It is important to develop a relationship with the Lord. But, once saved, the Israelites decided not to continue with the worship of God. The new generation was once again seduced by the sexual license of idolatry. **Judges 10:6-7** records:

6 Then the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon,



the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him.

7 So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and into the hands of the people of Ammon.

It would seem that when the Israelites decided to worship the idol gods of the people of the land that they would be able to peacefully coexist with the people whose religion that they decided to accept. I can hardly imagine that if the Taliban decided to convert to Christianity that we would continue to suspect them of being a Muslim terrorist organization. But, although the children of Israel converted to idolatry, the other idol worshippers in the region, the Philistines and the Ammonites, still persecuted Israel. **Judges 10:8-9** records:

8 From that year [the Philistines and the Ammonites] harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, in Gilead.

9 Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.

The warfare took the form of the destruction of the Israelites' crops. There was a famine in Israel, not because of a lack of rain or crop production, but because the Ammonites would come into Israel, harvest that which they wanted and destroy the rest. Nothing gets the attention of a nation like a lack of food. Even during the recession and economic downturn that we are currently suffering, grocery stores are still full of customers and restaurants are still doing business. But the famine in Israel caused the Israelites to call on God. God, however, was not receptive, as **Judges 10:10-14** records:

10 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"

11 So the LORD said to the children of Israel, "Did I not deliver you from the Egyptians and from the Amorites and from the people of Ammon and from the Philistines?"

12 Also the Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand.

13 Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more.

14 Go and cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress."

It appears that although Israel is God's chosen, God will only put up with so much from Israel. God warned Israel previously, in **Deuteronomy 28:15-19**:

15 "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I



command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

16 “Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.

17 “Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

18 “Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

19 “Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

But the young leaders did not fear the curses until they had to suffer them themselves. **Psalm 33:12** tells us:

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

And Israel wanted to be restored to blessed status. They cried to God, in **Judges 10:15-16**:

15 And the children of Israel said to the LORD, “We have sinned! Do to us whatever seems best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray.”

16 So [the children of Israel] put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.

God, for all of the exercise of His wrath, loved Israel. **Exodus 4:22** tells us:

22 Then you, [Moses], shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the LORD: “Israel is My son, My firstborn.

The prophet Jeremiah, tells Israel, in **Jeremiah 31:3**:

3 The LORD has appeared of old to me, saying: “Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.

Once Israel repented, God decided to restore them and defeat the Ammonites. And God had a man in place, as **Judges 11:1** tells us:

1 Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valor, but he was the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah.

Deuteronomy 23:2 tells us:

2 “One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

And Jephthah’s half brothers acted on the Scripture in Deuteronomy, as **Judges 11:2-3** tells us:

2 Gilead’s wife bore sons; and when his wife’s sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, “You shall have no inheritance in our father’s house, for you are the son of another woman.”

3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of Tob; and worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out raiding with him.



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But although Jephthah was illegitimate, God chose to once against violate the statutes that defined ceremonial cleanness to use someone outside of their ceremonial position. And God can do that. As the old preacher used to say, God is the only one that can take a crooked stick and hit a straight lick. So God sent the Israelites to Jephthah, as **Judges 11:5-11**:

5 And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.

6 Then they said to Jephthah, “Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon.”

7 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father’s house? Why have you come to me now when you are in distress?”

8 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “That is why we have turned again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

9 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, “If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?”

10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, “The LORD will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words.”

11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.

Before beginning a war, Jephthah tried to reason with the king of Ammon. Jephthah asked the king to consider that Israel did not attack Ammon as they progressed into the Promised Land, but rather detoured around Ammon, so Ammon had no reason to attack Israel. But the king of Ammon, having the military upper hand, saw no reason to credit Jephthah’s history lesson. And just as the Holy Spirit is He who keeps us on the straight and narrow provided that we yield our minds to Him through prayer and the study of the Word, the Holy Spirit operated in the life of Jephthah. **Judges 11:29-31** tells us:

29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced toward the people of Ammon.

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.”

I mentioned that the marriage vow specifies that marriage is “until death do us part”. God admonishes us about vows, in **Ecclesiastes 5:2, 4-7**:



2 Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

6 Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?

7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words there is also vanity. But fear God.

God listened to Jephthah's vow, and gave Jephthah a great victory over twenty Ammonite cities. As Jephthah returned home victoriously, **Judges 11:34-35** 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 he saw her, 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."

If ever there was a vow that a man would go back on, it was this one. Jephthah inadvertently promised to sacrifice his daughter on the altar as a burnt offering to God. God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering, but at the last minute as Abraham was in the process of killing his son, God intervened and allowed Abraham to substitute a ram for Isaac. But there was no such reprieve for Jephthah's daughter. **Judges 11:36-38** records:

36 So [Jephthah's daughter] 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."

38 So he said, "Go." And he sent her away for two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains.

At the end of the two months, Jephthah sacrificed his daughter on the altar as a burnt offering. **Ecclesiastes 5:4-5** says:

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

And even though Jephthah let his daughter go, she returned at the



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appointed time, knowing that she would be sacrificed. But she chose to give her life for the security of the nation of Israel. **Judges 11:39-40** records:

39 And it was so at the end of two months that [Jephthah's daughter] 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.

A daughter that makes the ultimate sacrifice is worthy of commemoration. **Psalm 116:15** says:

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints.

Death is inevitable, but **Psalm 116:15** lets us know that people don't really die; they just go somewhere else to live with the Lord. **2Corinthians 5:1-8** assures us:

1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.

8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

And Jephthah's daughter is present with the Lord. Paul anticipates death, in **2Timothy 4:6-8**:

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

And why are we Christians so confident about our life after death? We know that Jephthah's daughter was not the only child sacrificed. **John 3:16** 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.

God sacrificed His Own Son, on the Cross of Calvary, but then raised Him



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from the dead, physically, on that first Easter Sunday morning. Jesus' disciples handled His Resurrected body, they spoke and ate with Him, and then they stood on Mount Olivet and watched Him go back into heaven on a cloud. John wrote, in **John 20:30-31**:

30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book;

31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

The historical testimony of the Apostles, particularly John, is the empirical evidence that we need to recognize that there is life after death, and to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. And the Apostles all gave their lives, even as did Jephthah's daughter, that the gospel might be preached. There were an estimated million and a half Christians that gave their lives for the testimony of Jesus Christ in the first three centuries that the church was in existence. And, as **Revelation 12:11** tells us:

11 And they overcame [satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 says:

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—

5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

We have passed the point in the church age in the United States of America in which our lives are in danger because of our participation in the preaching of the gospel, but we still must deal with the wiles of the devil in our society, even as did the Israelites. So let us recognize the value of keeping our vows, and let us keep our most precious vows, our marital vows, to God, as we endeavor to live lives worthy of our calling as Christians and pass on the heritage of the Christian commitment of keeping our vows to our children. God tells us, in **Malachi 2:16**:

16 "For the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

So let us keep our vows to God, and to one another.

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis
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