



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 66”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 66

2Kings 4:32–37

32 When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed.

33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD.

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 recounted the three year famine in Israel that occurred as a result of the marriage of King Ahab of Israel, to Jezebel, who persuaded her husband the King to lead Israel into the sin of Baal worship. God judged Israel's sin by sending a drought to the land that led to a famine, and after three years of suffering in Israel, Elijah went to meet with King Ahab and the Children of Israel in order to propose that the people of God return to the worship of God. **1Kings 18:20–21** records:

20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.

Because of the lack of the reaction of the Israelites to his proposal that the people of Israel worship God, Elijah proposed a contest between himself and the 450 prophets of Baal to prove whether Baal or God truly had power. The Bible records that Baal was ineffective in the contest, but that God proved Himself by sending down fire from heaven. Elijah then called upon the men of Israel to execute the prophets of Baal that were leading Israel into idolatry. When King Ahab reported the executions of Baal's prophets to his wife Jezebel, Jezebel announced her intention to retaliate against God by killing Elijah. Elijah, recognizing the seriousness of Jezebel's threat, fled Israel, went to Judah and hid in a cave. **1Kings 19:9–18** records:



9 And there [Elijah] went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and [the Lord] said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

10 So [Elijah] said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

11 Then [the Lord] said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake;

12 and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

13 So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

14 And [Elijah] said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

15 Then the LORD said to him: “Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

16 Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place.

17 It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

18 Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

God let Elijah know that He was still in control. God informed Elijah that the kingdoms of Syria and Israel were not in the hands of the kings, but that He could change kings whenever He wished to do so. And not only kings, but prophets as well, as God called Elisha to replace Elijah.

A weak king whose wicked and domineering wife persuaded him to worship the idol god of the Sidonians had come to power in Israel. The truth of that fact notwithstanding, the weak king of Israel had come to power by the permission of God, and was to be replaced at the pleasure of God.

The Apostle Paul explains God’s relationship with the weak and wicked, in **Romans 3:21–22:**

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,



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22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.

God gives us all His righteous Law, and gives us prophets to explain His Law so that we can understand it. But even though God's Law is righteous and the explanation is clear, the disobedience of mankind is universal, as **Romans 3:22–23** tells us:

22 For there is no difference;

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

There is no difference between the saved and the unsaved. God enthrones the weak and the wicked because we are all weak and wicked. Church members do not necessarily keep God's law any more comprehensively than the sinner that never darkens a church door. We Christians fall just as short of God's glory as does the most heinous sinner. **1John 1:8** says:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Now, we might tell ourselves that we Christians are better than are murderers, for at least we have not killed anyone. But Jesus tells us that when we justify ourselves, we also deceive ourselves. **Matthew 5:21–22** says:

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca!’ [a term of contempt] shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

You see, the standard of God's law is much higher than a recitation of the Ten Commandments will give us. God's law, as given to us by Jesus Christ, is not only that we should keep all of the tenets of the moral law given to Moses and behave towards one another in a publicly civil manner, but is actually much more stringent, as Jesus tells us in **John 13:34–35**:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

One of the reasons that those in the world do not have respect for the Christian church is that they cannot tell that we are actually Jesus' disciples by our actions. The fact that the divorce rate in the church mirrors that of the world tells the world that Christians, quite publicly, fail to show love to one another. Paul verifies our sin in **Romans 3:22–23**, which says:

22 For there is no difference;

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

But Paul, who himself was a murderer of Christians and thus did not hold the record as the most loving person in the world, tells us that we are saved, not



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because our actions are righteous, but because we are declared righteous by the grace of God. **Romans 3:24–26** tells us we are:

24 justified freely by [God’s] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

25 whom God set forth as a propitiation [meaning a sacrifice for sin] by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that [God] might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

We have not earned our place in Heaven, but we are saved from the penalty of our sins by God. Although we ought to reap the penalty of the sins that we have committed, God justifies our place in Heaven by taking our penalty for our sins for us. Paul clarifies, in **Titus 3:5**, that we are saved:

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to [God’s] mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

6 whom [God] poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7 that having been justified by [God’s] grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

We who are Christians ought not be free to walk the streets in Heaven, but actually should be in prison in Hell. We are free to do so, however, because Jesus Christ has served our sentence in Hell for us. It is of the utmost importance that we understand this, because if we fail to recognize that the only reason that we hold a place in God’s Kingdom is because our sins have been forgiven, we will arrogantly think that we are better than we are and feel conceitedly justified in not displaying the love that Jesus commands by forgiving others.

To be a Christian requires us to understand that we have been forgiven. In **Matthew 18:21–22**:

21 Then Peter came to [Jesus] and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Jesus’ answer was hyperbole. He did not mean for us to keep score and count our brother’s sins up to 490 and then put him down, but to simply forgive our brother into perpetuity. Jesus clarified, in **Luke 17:3–4**:

3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”



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We should forgive our brother as often as we want God to forgive us. Jesus gives us a parabolic illustration to show us why we should forgive and love one another, as **Matthew 18:23–27** records:

23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents [which is equivalent to millions of dollars].

25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross for the forgiveness of our sins is analogous to the master’s forgiveness of his servant’s enormous debt. But the episode continues, in **Matthew 18:28–30**:

28 “But that servant [that was forgiven] went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; [which is equivalent to a few thousand dollars] and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

29 So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ [which was the same plea that the servant made to his master]

30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

Since God has forgiven us all of our many sins against Him, how can we be so ungrateful as to decide to not forgive the sins that our brother commits against us, even though his sins against us are only a fraction of that which God has forgiven us? As the episode records, the master does not let the ungrateful lack of forgiveness of his servant pass. **Matthew 18:31–34** says:

31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’

34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

And then comes the most chilling verse in the Bible. **Matthew 18:35** tells us:

35 “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”



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Jesus makes the point that we will not receive His forgiveness unless we forgive those that owe us. The servant that did not emulate his master was tortured until he paid his debt, which he could never pay. So, that unforgiving servant ended up eternally in hell. Jesus tells us, in **John 13:34–35**:

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

And this is a commandment, not a suggestion. To love as Jesus loves means that we must forgive others as He forgives us. But Jesus’ love and forgiveness is not a license to sin, as **Luke 17:3–4** tells us:

3 Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”

Even Jesus Himself only forgives those that repent, acknowledge their sinfulness, develop a relationship with Him, and, as a function for that relationship, forsake their sinfulness. And as we acknowledge our own sinfulness, we should be led to rebuke and forgive our repentant brother. And we have no greater chance to forgive, and thus to love, than we have with those that are closest to us. Thus, the pervasive theme of my presentation is that if we fail to love the one that we have intentionally chosen to be the closest to us, how can the love of God possibly be in us? And how can we demonstrate our discipleship to the world if we cannot even love the one with whom we sleep in the bed at night?

So Jesus makes the paradigm for Christianity clear. The sins for which we repent will be forgiven as we meet the requirement to acknowledge the love of God, forgive the sins of others that repent of their sins against us, and to show love to one another.

But Israel rejected the love of God, so God gave Israel the wicked leadership that they wanted, allowing their situation to deteriorate in order to bring them back to our senses and back to Him.

God called Elisha to replace Elijah as prophet in Israel. Elisha emulated the relationship of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath with a Shunammite woman that decided to show charity to the prophet, as **2Kings 4:8–10** tells us:

8 Now it happened one day that Elisha went to Shunem, where there was a notable woman, and she persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, [Elisha] would turn in there to eat some food.

9 And she said to her husband, “Look now, I know that [Elisha] is a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly.



10 Please, let us make a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for [Elisha] there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there.”

And since the Shunammite provided for the needs of the prophet without his asking, Elisha felt obliged to show his gratitude. **2Kings 4:12–16** records:

12 Then [Elisha] said to Gehazi his servant, “Call this Shunammite woman.” When [Gehazi] had called her, she stood before him.

13 And [Elisha] said to [Gehazi], “Say now to her, ‘Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What can I do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?’ ” She answered, “I dwell among my own people.”

14 So [Elisha] said, “What then is to be done for her?” And Gehazi answered, “Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old.”

15 So [Elisha] said, “Call her.” When [Gehazi] had called her, she stood in the doorway.

16 Then [Elisha] said [to her], “About this time next year you shall embrace a son.”

Elisha found the perfect compensation for the woman, and the woman could not believe the prophecy of her good fortune. **2Kings 4:16** tells us:

16 And she said, “No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your maidservant!”

But even as the virgin Mary’s cousin Elizabeth bore a son in her old age, God blessed the woman that looked after His prophet in her old age, as **2Kings 4:17** tells us:

17 But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

But even as did the son of the widow of Zarephath that took care of Elijah, the son of the Shunammite that took care of Elisha died prematurely. **2Kings 4:18–21** records:

18 And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers.

19 And he said to his father, “My head, my head!” So he said to a servant, “Carry him to his mother.”

20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut the door upon him, and went out.

And the woman, who had not asked Elisha to provide her a son, went to see Elisha to register her grief because her son died prematurely. **2Kings 4:24–28** records:

24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, “Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you.”



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25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, the Shunammite woman!

27 Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, “Let her alone; for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me, and has not told me.”

28 So she said, “Did I ask a son of my lord? Did I not say, ‘Do not deceive me’?”

And Elisha understood that the woman’s son was prematurely dead. Elisha sent Gehazi with instructions to raise the woman’s son from the dead, but Gehazi’s efforts were ineffective. When Gehazi reported back to Elisha, Elisha went to raise the woman’s son himself. **2Kings 4:32–37** records:

32 When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed.

33 He went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD.

34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm.

35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up and stretched himself out on him; then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi and said, “Call this Shunammite woman.” So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, “Pick up your son.”

37 So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she picked up her son and went out.

This episode, as well as the episode of the raising of the son of the widow of Zarephath after his untimely death, shows us a pattern in the Scripture of sons prematurely dying and then being raised from the dead. But these things happened in Israel because God was setting the stage for an even greater Son to die and rise from the dead. **Luke 24:13–27** tells us:

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17 And [Jesus] said to them, **“What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”**



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18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

19 And [Jesus] said to them, **“What things?”** So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,

20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

25 Then [Jesus] said to them, **“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 **Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”**

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Jesus reminded them of the various episodes in the Old Testament in which God used the prophets to raise sons from the dead. Sons rising from the dead were not an uncommon Old Testament experience, which Jesus emulated. And then Jesus met with His disciples, in **Luke 24:36–45**:

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, **“Peace to you.”**

37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

38 And [Jesus] said to them, **“Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?”**

39 **Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”**

40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, [Jesus] said to them, **“Have you any food here?”**

42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

43 And He took it and ate in their presence.

44 Then [Jesus] said to them, **“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”**



45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

Sons rising from the dead were not an uncommon Old Testament experience. Even as the widow of Zarephath's son prematurely died and rose from the dead, and the Shunammite woman's son prematurely died and rose from the dead,

Jesus Christ, God's Son, prematurely died on the Old Rugged Cross at the hands of sinful men. But early, on that Sunday morning, He too, rose from the dead. The disciples were able to preach the report, in part, because they and their Jewish brethren had the common knowledge of the precedent of sons rising from the dead from their study of the Scripture. God planned the physical Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead from the foundation of the world, and pointed to this pivotal event in human history throughout the Old Testament, that we all might understand that although the wages of sin is death, that the gift of God is eternal life. Even as Elijah and Elisha gifted the various women with the return of the lives of their sons, God has so gifted us, as **John 3:16–17:**

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.

And as the prophet says in **Hebrews 11:32–35:**

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:

33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35 Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

The theme of Resurrection is a common Old Testament theme, and Jesus Christ verified and fulfilled Old Testament precedent and prophecy by His Resurrection from the dead. The Jews were convinced of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and the reason that the New Testament Church was able to become the dominant religious organization in the Roman Empire is because the New Testament Church was based upon the disciples' eyewitness testimony of the physical fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Peter tells us, in **2Peter 1:16:**

16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.



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This Bible that we have is neither myth nor fairy tale, and we can be assured of God's forgiveness of our sins and our eternal salvation because of the actual, physical, bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus Christ died on the Cross of Calvary to pay our penalty that our sins might be forgiven, Jesus Christ rose from the dead that we might understand His love for us and the forgiveness that we have received, and Jesus Christ instructs us to emulate Him and love one another, as He has loved us. Jesus' love, His sacrifice and His forgiveness of us and our sins is the crux of our Christianity. Let us follow His example and so love one another, as He has loved us.

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