



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 71”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 71

Romans 6:22-23

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our 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 lessons, we have been looking at how both men and women contributed to Israel falling into idolatry. Solomon was the first idolatrous king, and was not so much a personal idolater, but supported idolatry because his wives worshipped idols.

God sent the prophet Ahijah to Solomon's general Jeroboam, to inform Jeroboam that after Solomon's death, God would divide the kingdom of Israel into two kingdoms and make Jeroboam king over the larger, northern division. When Jeroboam actually became king, he became insecure about having the men of the northern division return to Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple, which was in the southern division. King Jeroboam made the poor decision to create idols for the people of the north to worship just so that they would not go to the south, to Jerusalem, to worship God. The Bible does not mention that Jeroboam's wife had any input into his decision to abandon God.

Idolatry in the northern kingdom worsened when Ahab became King. Ahab married Jezebel, who was a worshipper of idol god Baal of the Sidonians, and Jezebel influenced Ahab to lead the northern kingdom from the worship of Jeroboam's idols to the worship of Baal.

Ahab's son-in-law Jehoram became the king of the southern kingdom, and his wife, Jezebel's daughter, influenced him to take the southern kingdom down the same idolatrous path as Ahab had previously taken.

But, in our day, time and location in the United States of America, idolatry is not really a big problem. Neither Baal, Ashtoreth, nor any of these idols are being worshipped here, while there are churches of all sizes in every neighborhood, all of whom worship Jesus Christ to one degree or another.



So, what is the point of spending this time on idolatry? Well, although few people in our country worship Baal, many have no allegiance to God. Biblical idolatry is analogous to our adulterous, unfaithful loss of relationship with God, who told the Israelites, in **Exodus 20:2**:

2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

God told Israel who He was and that which He did for them. God proved His power to this generation of Israelites by working great miracles to devastate Egypt and force the Egyptians to release the Israelites from slavery.

Just imagine giant hailstones falling on Lansing one Sunday morning at 11:45am, destroying all of the buildings in the city except the churches. You return home after church, and your house is a pile of rubble. Your neighbor’s house is a pile of rubble as well, and, as he is not a church going fellow, he and his family were killed in the storm. But you and your family are alive, as are the other Christians in town, because we were safe in the church buildings that were not affected by the hailstones.

Should such an event occur, no one could reasonably attribute this event to coincidence, but would logically have to come to the conclusion that only Divine wrath could destroy all of the buildings in town except the churches. And such an event would go a long way toward solidifying the idea in the minds of people that the Church’s teachings of the Gospel are correct.

Well, the Israelites lived through such a set of circumstances. The land of Egypt, in which they were slaves, was decimated by hailstones and nine other plagues. But, in the Egyptian suburb of Goshen, in which the Israelites lived, the hailstones did not fall and the other plagues did not destroy. After Egypt was decimated, the Egyptians released the Israelites from slavery.

In this event, God graciously clarified His existence, power and benevolence to Israel, God expected Israel to be faithful to Him. God told Israel, in **Exodus 20:3–6**:

3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

God required faithfulness from Israel. Worship, which is that which God was describing in **Exodus 20:5** as He says, **“you shall not bow down to them nor serve them”**, was to be the sign of the exclusive relationship between Israel



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and God. But God made it clear that He would only participate in an EXCLUSIVE worship relationship with Israel.

Verse 5 of Exodus 20 says that those that do not worship God exclusively and keep His commandments hate God, verse 6 of Exodus 20 says that those that do love God. Thus, a person can either worship, obey and love God, or fail to worship, disobey and hate God.

Those are the only two choices. Worship is our act of love for God, and worshipping any other idol or god is analogous to adultery.

Idolatry is, to some degree, a form of self-worship, ascribing the power of God to ourselves in our own imagination, as the idol god that is purported to have power does not actually exist. The devil incites us into idolatry because idolatry allows us to make up our own commandments, or take the devil's suggestions as good advice, while ignoring the commandments of God.

Our relationship to God is analogous to our relationship with our spouses. We cannot be "somewhat" faithful to God, just as we cannot be "somewhat" faithful to our spouses. The parallel between the relationship between man and God and the primary human relationship in the Bible between man and wife is the reason that the study of idolatry is relevant.

God showed Himself to be a faithful spouse to Israel, but Israel was unfaithful to God. Paul tells us to not repeat this behavior, either in marriage or worship, but to be faithful to our wives, the Lord our God and His Son Jesus Christ. Paul draws the parallel between marriage and our relationship with God in **Ephesians 5:25-27**:

**25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,
26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,
27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.**

Jesus Christ, by giving Himself, demonstrated the key to both marriage and Christianity. Jesus demonstrated that anyone that enters into a relationship, be it marital or spiritual, with the intent of "getting their needs met" has the wrong perspective. The correct perspective is to enter the marital relationship with the intent of meeting the needs your partner, each of us giving ourselves for the other.

Jesus came to earth without any needs; He was the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords before He left heaven. But Jesus Christ came down from heaven to meet our need to have a Savior that could provide us with the forgiveness of our sins to worship. Jesus knew that He could only receive our worship, submission and obedience by FIRST giving Himself to meet our need for forgiveness. And the key word in that last sentence is FIRST.



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Jesus met our needs; the hallmark of Jesus' earthly life was that He healed all manners of sicknesses and diseases, cast out demons and cleansed lepers. But Jesus did not impress the descendents of the idolatrous kings, the Israel religious establishment of the day. **Matthew 9:27–34** records:

27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, “Son of David, have mercy on us!”

28 And when [Jesus] had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.”

29 Then [Jesus] touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith let it be to you.”

30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, “See that no one knows it.”

31 But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to [Jesus] a man, mute and demon-possessed.

33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, “It was never seen like this in Israel!”

34 But the Pharisees said, “[Jesus] casts out demons by the ruler of the demons.”

Jesus' miracles were the proof of His relationship with God and His benevolence toward mankind. But Jesus' power and benevolence frustrated the Jewish leaders because they could neither control Jesus nor duplicate His power. And the more the Jewish leaders investigated Jesus, examined His miracles and argued with His teachings, the more frustrated they became. The Jewish leaders were completely frustrated when Jesus Christ came to the tomb in which Lazarus had been buried three days before and raised Lazarus from the dead. **John 11:41–53** records:

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where [Lazarus], the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

42 And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me.”

43 Now when [Jesus] had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!”

44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Loose him, and let him go.”

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him.



46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did.

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, “What shall we do? For this Man [Jesus] works many signs.

48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in [Jesus], and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.”

49 And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all,

50 nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.”

51 Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,

52 and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to put [Jesus] to death.

The High Priest was able to prophesy that Jesus would die for the people because for Jesus to do so was the predetermined plan of God. Peripherally, Jesus' was executed because of the envy of the Jewish leaders for Jesus and the cowardice of the Roman procurator that executed Jesus to appease them, but in God's greater plan, Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty that you owe and that I owe for the sins that we have committed. **Romans 6:20–21** tells us:

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.

21 What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

Our relationship with God is a love or hate relationship; there is no middle ground between man and God. According to God, a person can either obey and love Him or disobey and hate Him, and those are the only two choices. That there is no middle ground is difficult for us to understand, because, although we have all sinned, we don't want to think of ourselves as bad people. But once we disobey God for the very first time, we become sinners that are slaves to sin, and even if we sinners occasionally perform an innocent act, God still sees it as sin. God tells us, in **Proverbs 21:4**:

4 A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin.

Regardless of that which we sinners do, even simply providing food for ourselves, God sees our action as sin. Since we are sinful slaves to sin, the result of everything that we sinners do, however innocent as the individual act may seem, will eventually lead to sin.

For example, the person that goes to the restaurant and buys lunch for the abortion doctor so that he will have the strength to abort babies is just as much of a sinner as is the doctor himself. And even if the abortion doctor does something that seems benevolent, like giving money to a church, God sees his contribution



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as sin. Once we sin against God, we are free from righteousness, we become a slave to sin, and everything that we do contributes to the sinfulness in the world.

But God tells us that we sinners can choose to believe in Jesus Christ and obtain a new master; by believing in Jesus, we are set free from the slavery of sin and become slaves of God. **Romans 6:22-23** says:

22 But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God, even today, even right now as I am speaking, wants to be in a relationship, a saving relationship, a personal relationship with each of us, just as a man seeking a wife wants to be in a personal relationship with her. God knows that we sinners are unworthy of that relationship, but God also knows that the only way that He can have a relationship with us is if He gives Himself, as He tells a husband to give himself for his wife, to make us worthy of Him. And God accepts those that respond to the gift that He offers and enters a relationship with them to save them from the penalty of their sins.

The sinful Jewish leaders that plotted to kill Jesus refused to recognize the relationship that God was offering them through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ's words and actions were in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, which the religious leaders should have recognized, and Jesus Christ's actions pointed to Jesus' relationship with God as uniquely as the plagues that God sent to Egypt pointed to God's relationship with Moses.

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of the Messiah so clearly that even the blind could see it, but no one is so blind as one who will not see. Since the Jewish leaders were voluntarily blind, God used the High Priests' unreasonable and sinful hatred of Jesus Christ to complete His plan to save mankind.

Jesus continued to frustrate the Jews when He entered the city of Jerusalem, as we can see in a harmonized version of the event, from **Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-44** and **John 12:12-19**:

When they approached Jerusalem the next day and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent out two of His disciples. "Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a donkey tied up. Tied with her will be a colt which no one has ever ridden. Untie them and bring them to Me. If anyone says anything or asks, 'What are you doing?' say to him, 'The Lord needs them,' and he'll immediately send them here."

Those who were sent left and did what Jesus told them. They found a young donkey tied outside the door in the street just as He had described, and they untied it.

The owners were standing there and said, "What are you doing? Why are you untying the colt?"



“The Lord needs it,” they said, repeating what Jesus had told them to say.

Then the owners let them go. So they brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus, threw their clothing on them, and sat Jesus on the colt.

As Jesus rode along, they began to spread their articles of clothing on the road. When He came to the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, a large crowd of disciples began to shout for joy and to praise God loudly for all the miracles they had seen. “Blessed is the King who is coming in the name of the Lord!” they shouted. “Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest!”

A huge crowd had come to the feast. When they heard that Jesus was entering Jerusalem, they cut down palm branches, went out to meet Him, and spread the branches on the road. The crowds who followed Jesus as well as those who went ahead of Him kept shouting, “Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!” “Blessed is He who is coming in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!” “Blessed is the kingdom of our father David!” “Hosanna in the highest!”

All this happened to fulfill what the prophet said:

Tell the daughter of Zion, “Don’t be afraid! Look, your King is coming to you, humble, and riding a donkey, even a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The disciples didn’t understand these things at first. But after Jesus was glorified, they remembered these predictions about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

The people who were with Jesus when He raised Lazarus from the dead and called him from the tomb were telling others all about it. That is why the people went out to meet Him; they heard that He had performed this great miracle.

Some Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, restrain Your disciples.”

But Jesus answered them, **“I’m telling you, if they were to keep quiet, the very stones would cry out!”**

When Jesus came near and saw the city, He wept over it. **“If only you—yes, you—had known on this special day the things that would bring you peace! But now they are hidden from you. The days are coming when your enemies will build a siege ramp around you and encircle you and hem you in on all sides. They will level you to the ground—with your children inside you—and will not leave one stone upon another. This will happen because you didn’t recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”**

The whole city was aroused when Jesus entered Jerusalem. “Who is this?” they asked.

The crowds answered, “This is Jesus the Prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee.”



Then the Pharisees said to each other, “See, we are accomplishing nothing. Look at how the whole world has gone after Him!”

Anyone who was reasonable, anyone was aware of the facts, and/or anyone who did not previously have an ax to grind with Jesus because they thought more highly of themselves than they ought to have thought, would not have been frustrated by Jesus’ obvious power, but rather would have joined in with the crowd to extol Jesus’ coming into Jerusalem and rejoice in the power of the great miracle that Jesus performed at the tomb of Lazarus.

However, the Jewish leaders were neither reasonable nor would they allow themselves to recognize the holiness of Jesus Christ. They were blinded by envy and unreasonably maintained that the power that Jesus Christ wielded to heal the sick, raise the dead and cast out demons came from the devil rather than from God.

Jesus Christ was not able to reach these Jewish leaders because their hearts were hardened even as was the heart of the Pharaoh in Egypt that refused to free the Israelites from slavery. God hardened the Pharaoh’s heart so that God could decimate the resources of Egypt and kill the firstborn of Egypt. Jesus Christ represents the Passover lamb that was sacrificed to save the Jewish firstborn from the Death Angel that killed the Egyptians. Listen to that which God told Moses, in **Exodus 12:3–13**:

3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

11 And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD’s Passover.

12 ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

Had the Pharaoh relented and let the Israelites go, God would not have had the opportunity to destroy the firstborn of Egypt. But understand, the Bible does not say that the firstborn of Israel were any less sinners and any less worthy of death than were the firstborn of Egypt. If you read **Exodus 12:3-13**, you will see that the firstborn of Israel were not saved because of their good



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works or their righteousness, but because the Death Angel passed over all of the houses with the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.

And the situation in Egypt is our situation today. Every person in the world commits sin, and if we look at the social statistics in the world, we see that Christians do not necessarily act any better than do those that are not Christians. And, even if it could be proven, somehow, that Christians are better than non-Christians, it could NOT be proven that Christians are sinless.

So even granting that Christians commit fewer sins than non-Christians, the fact of the matter is that Christians are sinners, just as those that are not Christians are sinners. But our personal conduct is not the reason for our salvation, just as the personal conduct of the Israelites was not the reason that the firstborn of Israel were not condemned to death when the Death Angel killed the other firstborn in Egypt.

The reason that the Israelite firstborn were not condemned to death is that the Death Angel saw the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts and passed over their houses when he came through Egypt. And the reason that we will not be condemned is that, at the judgment, God will see the blood of our Passover lamb, Jesus Christ, on us, and will pass over our sins.

At the beginning of Holy week, the crowds were cheering Jesus Christ. They spread palm branches before his donkey to pay homage to Jesus Christ and called Him the King of Israel. But Jesus Christ did not come to be King. Jesus Christ came to die on the Cross as a sacrifice for our sins.

Intentionally.

The Harmonized Bible records, in **Matthew 27:39–44**, **Mark 15:29–32**, **Luke 23:35–37**, **39–44**, and **John 19:25–27**, that while Jesus was on the Cross:

Meanwhile the people stood watching. Those who passed by kept jeering Jesus, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would ‘destroy the temple and build it in three days,’ save Yourself! If You’re the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders mocked Jesus.

“He ‘saved’ others,” they said, “yet He can’t save Himself.”

“Let Him save Himself, if He’s the Christ, the chosen One of God!”

“If He’s the King of Israel, let the Messiah come down now from the cross so we may see and believe!”

“He trusted in God; let God deliver Him now if He wants Him—since He said, ‘I’m the Son of God.’ ”

The soldiers also kept mocking Him. They came to Him offering sour wine and said to Him, “If You’re the King of the Jews, save Yourself.”

But Jesus Christ did not come down from the Cross. Jesus Christ did not come to earth to save Himself; Jesus lived in sinless perfection before He left heaven and had no need to be saved. Jesus Christ came to earth to give Himself



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to save others, to save sinners that could not save themselves. And Jesus stuck to the program, as the lection continues:

Matthew 27:39–44, Mark 15:29–32, Luke 23:35–37, 39-44, John 19:25–27

The robbers who had been crucified with Him started to reproach Him in the same manner. One of the criminals continued to bitterly scorn Him. “Aren’t You the Messiah?” he said. “Then save Yourself and us!”

But the other [criminal] rebuked [the first] and said, “Don’t you even fear God since you’re under the same punishment this Man is? We’ve been punished justly—we’re receiving only what our actions deserve. But this Man did nothing wrong!”

“Jesus,” he said, “remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

Jesus Christ saved a sinner, a criminal, from the penalty of his crimes and gave the criminal entrance into Paradise, even as Jesus Christ was hanging, dying on the Cross. And the fact of the matter is that Jesus Christ did not just save this one sinner on the Cross, but Jesus Christ saved every sinner that chooses to believe in Him, as **John 3:16–17** tells us:

16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

And Paul makes the point of Palm Sunday and Holy Week clear, as he tells us, in **Titus 3:3–7**:

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

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

6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace, [the grace of Jesus Christ, in His sacrifice on the Cross] we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This Holy Week is about perspective. Our perspective should become that we have no righteousness of which to boast. We are no better than the sinners, just as the Israelites were no better than the Egyptians when the Death Angel came to destroy the firstborn. And our only claim to Christianity and to eternal life is that we are covered, not by our righteousness or our good works, but by the



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Blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the Cross of Calvary that our sins might be forgiven.

So, let us not be blind as were the Jewish leaders, who thought more highly of themselves than they ought to have thought, but let us recognize that we have the gift of salvation because of the love that Jesus Christ has for us, and that Jesus Christ recognized that He had to first love us before we could love Him. And then, with that understanding, let us emulate His example, sacrifice ourselves and spread love to others, first of all and most especially to those in our most intimate relationships, 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.”

Don't let your spouse beat you loving. Love first, as Jesus did.

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