



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

# “The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 76”

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



### The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 76

#### Luke 1:30-31

**30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.**

**31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.**

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 examined the case a woman who was stressed beyond reason and allowed her frustration to cause her to lash out at God and her husband. She and her husband tragically and suddenly lost all of their possessions, and all of their children were killed by a tornado, which is an act of God that cannot be blamed on anyone.

Initially, the wife had only her husband as an emotional resource to help her weather the storm of their tragedy, and then the husband was struck with bleeding, itching boils all over his body, making him unavailable to physically comfort her. This situation raised the woman’s stress level to the snapping point, and she lashed out at God and her husband.

In this lesson, the first woman that will receive our attention was the victim of a more normal, long term type of tragedy. She was unable to have children.

**Luke 1:5–7** records:

**5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.**

**6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.**

**7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.**

Children were, and are, an emotional resource for the woman that brings them into the world, as we noted from the last episode when Job’s wife suffered as a result of losing her children. In an agrarian society, one in which manual



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

rather than mechanized labor was the main resource used to get things done, children were a valuable commodity in general. Children were, and are also, the way by which the prime directive of the Bible is fulfilled, as **Genesis 1:28** says: **28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

We are instructed to fruitfully multiply as part of our dominion, and every non-volitional, instinctive creature on the earth will automatically do so. God has designed the biological ecosystem of the earth to continually increase in size, and has given man the instruction to match the reproduction of creatures in order to grow in numbers sufficiently to exercise dominion. **Psalms 127:3–5** tells us: **3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward.**

**4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth.**  
**5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.**

The idea that in the United States that “zero population growth” is necessary to conserve the environment is contrary to the Word of God. God does not give any instructions for population suppression in the Bible; God’s instructions are for mankind to first grow in numbers and then have dominion over and use the resources that He put on the earth as fully as they can be used.

The greatest periods of prosperity in our nation were the times in which the people of our nation heeded God’s admonishment to be fruitful and multiply, particularly in the “Baby Boom” years after World War II, in which the population multiplied prolifically.

It is obvious that in order to have prosperous levels of economic activity, the nation needs people to buy the goods and services that it produces. It is an intuitive tautology that the larger the population, the more economic activity that the country requires. So, God instructs us to base our civilization on constant growth and development.

God has given us the unlimited resources of the earth in order to make this happen. And the resources of the earth are truly unlimited for two reasons: first, because they are constantly regenerating and second, because they are managed by God. God promised Noah and his family, in **Genesis 8:22**: **22 “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease.”**

One day, God came to earth personally and stood in front of a multitude preaching all day long. When, at dinner time, His disciples admonished Him to send the people away so that they could go into the surrounding towns and buy dinner, God put on a spread that fed five thousand men, not counting women and children, using just two fish and five loaves of bread.



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

As long as the Lord is our Savior, we never have to worry about a lack of resources. Jesus said to His disciples, in **Mark 10:27**:

**27 But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.”**

In the case of Zacharias and Elizabeth, fruitful multiplication did not seem to be an option, because although Zacharias diligently tried to impregnate Elizabeth, Elizabeth did not conceive a child. But, despite their disappointment, Zacharias and Elizabeth maintained their allegiance to God. And God instructed them, and us, in **Ecclesiastes 9:9**:

**9 Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; for that is your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.**

So, despite his disappointment in not having progeny, Zacharias did the Biblical thing; he prayed for children while remaining lovingly faithful to his barren wife.

Sometimes God immediately answers our prayer in the affirmative, other times God tells us to wait until the time is correct for our prayer to be answered, and still other times God tells us that He has a better provision for us than the one for which we petitioned Him coming at the appointed time. So, as

**2 Corinthians 1:20** tells us:

**20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.**

Zacharias and Elizabeth enjoyed one another in marriage but remained unfruitful until the day that the lot fell on Zacharias to minister in the Temple of God in Jerusalem. When Zacharias went into the Holy Place to burn incense and offer prayers and sacrifices to God, Zacharias witnessed quite an extraordinary event. **Luke 1:11–17** records:

**11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to [Zacharias], standing on the right side of the altar of incense.**

**12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.**

**13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.**

**14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.**

**15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.**

**16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.**

**17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”**



The angel's announcement to Zacharias was that he and Elizabeth would play a principle part in the plan leading to the salvation of all mankind. The angel quoted **Malachi 4:5-6** to Zacharias so that Zacharias would understand that God's plan was that he would father a son in the fulfillment of the Scripture.

But Zacharias did not recognize that all of the promises of God are Yes and Amen, did not focus on the fact that all things are possible with God, and failed to recognize that God's resources are unlimited. God is, as the Old Preacher used to say, the only One who can take a crooked stick and hit a straight lick; the One who can stand flatfooted and tiptoe at the same time.

Zacharias, like those in our current culture that postulate that we need to conserve the earth's resources because those resources are running out, doubted God's ability to fulfill the angel's prophecy because of his own physical limitations. So Zacharias questioned the angel, in **Luke 1:18**:

**18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."**

Zacharias, you are in the Temple of God speaking to an angel of God. Even if you have doubts in your heart, why do you let them come out of your mouth? At the very least, you should go with that which the angel says, because you have everything to gain and nothing to lose. But, Zacharias let the angel know that he was a doubter.

So when God speaks to us of abundant blessing and we speak to God of our doubts of His ability to provide, God does not appreciate our conversation. And the angel replied sternly to Zacharias, in **Luke 1:19-20**:

**19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.**

**20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."**

Zacharias was a good man, but since he allowed the limitations of his mind to cloud his judgment and spoke incorrectly, the angel took away Zacharias' ability to speak at all. But a mute Zacharias was not totally useless; he was still able to do some things, because, as **Luke 1:23-25** tells us:

**23 So it was, as soon as the days of [Zacharias'] service were completed, that he departed to his own house.**

**24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying,**

**25 "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."**

The prime directive is to be fruitful and multiply. Despite the trials and tribulations involved, there is no greater joy in life than raising children, because that is the reason that we are put here. The entire earthly paradigm is that of



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

fruitful multiplication. God obviously wants the earth populated in abundance, as God keeps sending children here, even to people that don't want them.

A woman visited her gynecologist for an examination with her baby in her arms. The gynecologist announced to the woman that she was, once again, pregnant.

"Doctor", the woman replied, "you can see that I just had this baby, and I'm overwhelmed. My husband and I are struggling with our relationship, and it will just put too much stress on us to have another baby so soon after the first one. Is there anything that you can do for me to help me in this situation?"

The doctor understood the woman's request, as he had received similar requests from other women.

The doctor replied, "For right now, you only want one child, and you have two. You want me to help you get rid of one of your children and I can do that.

Then the doctor continued, "It would make the most sense for you to kill the baby in your arms so that you not to have to take care of two babies at the same time. If I try to kill the one in your body, something might go wrong and you could be at some risk, but if you kill the one in your arms, there would be no risk for your body, and you could get some rest before the other one is born. If we're going to kill one of your children, what does it matter which one it is?"

The lady was horrified and said, "No, doctor! How terrible! It's a crime to kill a child!"

"I agree", the doctor replied, "but you seemed to be okay with it, and since you wanted to kill one anyway, I thought that was the best solution."

The doctor made his point. He convinced the woman that there is no difference in killing a child that's already been born and one that's still in the womb.

Abortion doesn't solve your problem...abortion just makes you the parent of a dead child.

Elizabeth, however, was not going to give up her baby. She intentionally stayed away from everyone except her husband so that she would not even accidentally catch a communicable disease which might cause a complication during her gestation process. And she remained in protective seclusion, safeguarding the precious life of her unborn child, for five months, until, in the sixth month, another miraculous event occurred. **Luke 1:26-33 records:**

**26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,**

**27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.**

**28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"**

**30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.**



**31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.**

**32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.**

**33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”**

The Angel Gabriel was not sent to Zacharias to instruct Zacharias to have marital relations with his wife, but rather to instruct Zacharias to give the child a name that Zacharias would not think to give the child if not specifically instructed to do so. Elizabeth could have conceived seed as the function of a normal course of marital interaction, since she and Zacharias were in fact married, but they would not have named the child John.

But Mary was not married. Mary was betrothed, meaning engaged to be married, but the wedding had not been performed and the marriage had not been consummated. Thus, Mary retained her virgin status. So, Mary questioned the angel, as **Luke 1:34–35** says:

**34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”**

**35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.**

Ladies, just imagine this circumstance.

Your beloved childhood sweetheart has asked you to marry him. Your beloved is a skilled tradesman in your town and owns an independent business, with a sufficient clientele to give him the resources to support you in the style to which you are accustomed.

Your parents approve of your sweetheart becoming your spouse, and they and your sweetheart are preparing for the ceremony that will memorialize your nuptials. You are preparing your bridal ensemble, putting together your bridesmaid lists, and generally getting ready for your day, the one in which you will be the focus of attention as you celebrate becoming your beloved’s wife and consummate your marriage.

Even as you are in the midst of your nuptial preparations, you receive a visit from the angel Gabriel, who informs you to forget about all of the nuptial festivities celebrating the end of your period of virginity. Gabriel tells you that your preparations are unnecessary because you are about to become pregnant out of wedlock. The fact that you have saved yourself for marriage all these years is irrelevant, because your pregnancy will make it impossible for you to convince anyone, including your intended, that you are still a virgin worthy of marriage.

Let me ask you, when the angel conveys this news to you, what would your response be? And leave out the swear words...



A few years ago, the We channel produced a television show entitled “Bridezillas”. The show was so successful in chronicling the exploits of engaged young women that wrecked many of their familial relationships by self-centeredly attempting to put together that which they considered to be the “perfect” wedding that the title term has become a colloquial standard. Can you imagine how religious that a “bridezilla” would be if an angel appeared to her after she began planning “her day” and told her to forget about her preparations and her day because God had a different plan for her life?

Mary, fortunately, was not a “bridezilla”. Mary was a devout believer in God, who, despite being told to throw plans for a virginal nuptial out of the window, recognized, as we quoted last week from **Psalm 24:1** and **Psalm 100:3**:  
**1 The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.**

**3 Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.**

When we find our plans in conflict with the plans of God, we ought make the conscious choice to follow God, as Mary did. **Luke 1:38** tells us:

**38 Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.**

And as we plan, we should always be prepared to change our plans to follow those of God, as the admonition of **Isaiah 55:8–11** tells us:

**8 “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.**

**9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.**

**10 “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, But water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,**

**11 So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.**

But the Lord did not allow Mary to suffer harm because of her submission to His plan. Gabriel informed Mary of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, and Mary immediately went to see the gestating Elizabeth to obtain emotional support in her situation. As Mary approached Elizabeth, **Luke 1:41–45** tells us:

**41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.**

**42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!**

**43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?**





**44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.**

**45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”**

Two women with miraculous pregnancies come together to support one another. Both of them are blessed because of their ability to see past their circumstances to their faith in God. **2Corinthians 1:20** tells us:

**20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.**

And Mary has redirected her anticipation from her wedding to the birth of the child of the Holy Spirit, as **Luke 1:46–48** tells us:

**46 And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord,**

**47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.**

**48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.**

The nuptials are no longer important to Mary, because Mary is playing on a much larger stage. Mary is cooperating with God to bring salvation to Israel, which is infinitely more important than a party. Mary recognized that her old situation was insignificant as compared to her new situation, the situation that takes her off of the personal stage and puts her on the eternal stage. Mary remained with Elizabeth for three months, until Elizabeth was about to give birth, and then returned home to Galilee.

Although Mary's conception was out of the ordinary, the Scripture indicates that her pregnancy was normal, so after three months of gestation, her pregnancy would be obvious. Of course, if a man is affianced to a virginal young woman living with her parents, who leaves her parents' home, travels to a different town, stays there for three months and then returns obviously pregnant, the man would certainly have some second thoughts about the faithfulness of his intended.

And her story about becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit might not cut it. There are several Old Testament episodes in which a barren woman suddenly and miraculously became pregnant, but in each case, the Old Testament specified that the Lord opened the womb of the woman and she became pregnant via the standard method of conception. The concept of a spontaneous pregnancy is prophesied in the Old Testament, but the interpretation is questionable. **Isaiah 7:14** says:

**14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.**

But in the Hebrew, the word for virgin can also mean “young woman”. The Hebrew Dictionary of Semantic Domains defines the word “almah”, which is the word translated as virgin, thusly: Young woman, i.e. sexually mature female of marriageable age, which may or may not be sexually active.



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

And while I study the morphology of the word “almah” academically, Joseph had to make the actual, practical choice as to that which he should do with his pregnant betrothed. **Deuteronomy 22:23-24** instructs a man to have his betrothed stoned if she was unfaithful to him after their betrothal. Mary told Joseph that she had not been unfaithful to him, but the pregnancy with which she presented said otherwise.

After some soul searching, Joseph decided that he did not want Mary's blood on his hands, but he could not accept her testimony about the Holy Spirit. Thus, Joseph's recourse was to release Mary from her betrothal, divorcing her privately without requesting the justice that Deuteronomy demanded.

But that was not God's plan.

Although Jesus' mother was pregnant out of wedlock, God recognized the essential fact of raising children, that children benefit the most from the polarity of the male and the female parent.

A single parent family is a defective format in which to raise children, because children need both the nurturing, emotionally protective input of their mother and the disciplined, more adventurous input from their father to develop as balanced human beings. If a male child is excessively sheltered by his mother with no input from his father, the child will generally hypermasculinize as he has to separate from his mother to develop his male secondary sex characteristics without a father to set his limits.

As our takeaway point tells us, 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 the normative case, it takes two parents to conceive a child, and it takes two parents to raise a child properly. While there may be some examples of women successfully raising male children to chronological maturity without the assistance of a man, those examples are the exception, not the rule.

So God did not want His Son to come into the world without a human male to fill the father role. Joseph was prepared to abdicate the responsibility, but God sent Gabriel to speak to Joseph, just as Gabriel spoke to Elizabeth and Mary.

**Matthew 1:20–25** records:

**20** But while [Joseph] thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

**21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

**22** So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:



## FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

**23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”**

**24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,**

**25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.**

It is important for us to recognize that although the angel spoke to Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, in all three cases, the angel quoted the Scripture to them as verification of that which he said. And we have the Scripture today to verify that which God says to us, in **2Corinthians 1:20:**

**20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.**

And the key promise in the Scripture is found in **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.**

Jesus Christ, who entered the world miraculously through the virgin womb of Mary, grew into manhood to become the Savior of the World. After a miraculous ministry, Jesus Christ was crucified on Calvary’s Cross and buried in Joseph’s new tomb. Then Jesus Christ rose physically from the dead, appeared to the women that followed him, and, as the Apostle Paul testifies, in **1Corinthians 15:3–8:**

**3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,**

**4 and that [Christ] was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,**

**5 and that [Christ] was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.**

**6 After that [Christ] was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.**

**7 After that [Christ] was seen by James, then by all the apostles.**

**8 Then last of all [Christ] was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.**

The Bible gives us the testimony of the appearances of Christ after His resurrection, and we are called upon to believe in Him just as Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph were called upon to believe that which the Angel told them and that which the Scripture says. And if we believe that which the Scripture says as they did, Jesus Christ promises us everlasting life. So, let us recognize the miraculous works of God as did Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, and trust in that which He tells us about His Son, Jesus Christ.



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