



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

# “The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 77”

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



### The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 77

#### John 2:1–2

**1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.**

**2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.**

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 considered the role of Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph in the miraculous births of John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ. Their common characteristic was submissiveness; Zacharias and Elizabeth submitted to God in the naming of their child, which was a small submission when compared to that of Mary and Joseph.

Mary and Joseph had to submit to scuttling their plans for their wedding celebration, as they had a shotgun wedding under the moral cloud of an unwed pregnancy. Joseph married Mary, but he was not the one that impregnated Mary. Joseph chose to submit to the angel Gabriel's instruction to marry the pregnant Mary rather than seek the remedies given by the Mosaic Law for men whose betrothed was unfaithful to them.

But there was more hardship for Mary and Joseph to endure in order for the plan of God to be fulfilled. **Luke 2:1–5** tells us:

**1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.**

**2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.**

**3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.**

**4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,**

**5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.**

So because of the Roman Governor, Joseph and Mary had to make a trip to Bethlehem. And why was this trip a great hardship? **Luke 2:6** tells us:



**6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.**

The birth of a child, especially a woman's first child, is generally a family affair involving the woman and her mother.

I can remember that, when Paul was born, Marie's mother drove to Lansing to be with her. Marie's mom wasn't in the delivery room when Paul was born, but she was in the waiting room. And once he was born, she and Marie were able to be with one another.

Now, it is certainly possible that Mary's mother accompanied her to Bethlehem. The Scripture does not specify whether or not Mary's mother did so.

But it is certainly a fact that most women desire to have their children in their own home environment; if not at home, at least, in our day, at a hospital from which she can go to her home as soon as possible after the birth, provided there are no complications. Paul was born on the 3rd of July. Marie celebrated the 4th of July at our home.

But during Mary's 9th month of pregnancy, Joseph told her that they had to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Today, the 100-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem takes two or three hours by car. But 2,000 years ago, the trip most probably took eight to ten days. Since there were no telephones, there was no way for Joseph to make reservations at any of the inns in Bethlehem to acquire accommodations for his wife, who was extremely pregnant, but not by him.

So, Mary rode to Bethlehem, almost ready to deliver, without accommodations, on a donkey, in the company of a man that had married her, but not impregnated her. And **Luke 2:7** tells us:

**7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger, which is the box in which food for the cattle was placed so that they could eat. Jesus started out in a place in which food was served, as Jesus proclaimed Himself, in **John 6:35, 53-54**:

**35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.**

**53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.**

**54 Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.**

Jesus' parents took good care of him, as we can see from our examination of that which God said about the city of Jerusalem, in **Ezekiel 16:4-5**:

**4 As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths.**



**5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born.**

No one had compassion on Jerusalem, but Jesus' parents had compassion for Him. Although Jesus' parent's economic status caused Him to be born in a place in which animals lived and ate, Jesus' parents did not deny Jesus the comfort of compassionate care. Jesus was tightly wrapped in swaddling cloths, used to simulating the womb from which the child just came, surrounding him and keeping him warm and secure, as Ezekiel tells us that ancient parents that cherished their children did. Jesus' parents were also submissive to the Law of Moses. **Luke 2:21** tells us:

**21 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.**

The name of a man's firstborn son was considered important, because that son would be the one to carry on the family line, and would traditionally have been named after one of the patriarchs of the family. John the Baptist's naming caused controversy among his relatives, who expected the child to be named Zacharias. John was not a name that had been used in Zacharias' family.

But Joseph, as did Zacharias, received instructions from the angel about the naming of the child and was obedient to them. Rather than naming the child Joseph as would have been his prerogative, Joseph named the child Jesus.

But the formalities associated with Jesus' birth were not completed. **Luke 2:22–24** records:

**22 Now when the days of [Mary's] purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord**

**23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"),**

**24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."**

Now, the Law of the Lord specifically says, in **Leviticus 12:2–4, 6-8**:

**2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean.**

**3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.**

**4 She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.**

**6 'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt**



offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

**7 Then he shall offer it before the Lord, and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female.**

**8 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.' "**

Blood, in God's economy, is shed to atone for sin. **Leviticus 17:11** says: **11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'**

And in the Mosaic Law, the birth of a child is a commemoration of the sin of the woman in the Garden, whose penalty for sin was increased pain in childbirth. The blood shed at the birth of a male child makes the woman ceremonially unclean for forty-one days, one day longer than Moses stayed on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments and one day longer than the Israelite spies took to spy out the Promised Land. After the forty-one day period of purification, the woman is considered clean once again.

But the mate to cleansing is atonement. Uncleanness is a reminder of sin, cleansing is the physical release from the consequences of sin, and atonement is the spiritual release from the consequences of sin. Because the consequence of sin is death, any atonement for sin required a death and the coincident shedding of blood.

As **Leviticus 12:6-8** tells us, one of the sacrifices associated with a birth was a sin offering, the death of an animal and the shedding of its blood to atone for sin, while the other was a burnt offering, a shared meal between the Israelites and God. God enjoyed the aroma of the cooking meat while the Israelites enjoyed the taste of the cooked meat. The meal signified the restoral of the relationship between the cleansed, atoned for sinner and God.

And these ceremonies existed because God wanted the Israelites to be preoccupied with their sins. It is only by the knowledge of the law and a preoccupation with sin that sin can be avoided. When Joshua succeeded Moses as the leader of the Israelites, God told him, in **Joshua 1:8**:

**8 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.**

From the Garden, the tempter has been on earth trying to persuade men to disobey God, either accidentally or deliberately.



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The sacrifice of an animal as a periodic reminder of the wages of sin was intended to be a visible demonstration that provided an intellectual antidote to the wiles of the devil. Even as our communion ceremony commemorates the broken body and the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary as an atonement for our sins, the offering for Jesus at His birth commemorated the death of the firstborn of Egypt for the sins of the Pharaoh, while the offering for Mary commemorated the sin of the woman in the Garden.

God went so far as to designate one of the twelve tribes, the tribe of Levi, to be responsible for doing the physical work required to maintain this sacrificial system while the other eleven tribes were to work to support them.

And since Jesus came to earth to be the sacrifice that would end the sacrificial system, Joseph and Mary were required to offering the required sacrifices perfectly, as it was not lawful to have a sacrifice with spot or blemish. So they submitted to the law of man and the Law of God in every particular; they paid the required taxes, and offered all of the prescribed sacrifices. And God was pleased with their sacrifice. **Luke 2:25, 27–35** tells us:

**25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.**

**27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,**

**28 [Simeon] took [Jesus] up in his arms and blessed God and said:**

**29 “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;**

**30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation**

**31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,**

**32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”**

**33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.**

**34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against**

**35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”**

Joseph and Mary received confirmation from Simeon that the Child was whom the Holy Spirit told both of them that He was.

It is interesting that Simeon spoke to Mary and not Joseph, who was ostensibly the child's father. You may remember that when Elizabeth announced that her son's name was to be John, the family turned to Zacharias to override Elizabeth's unconventional choice. Elizabeth only spoke to name the child



because Zacharias was mute at the time. Generally speaking, the interaction between the outside world and the family was through the father.

From the time that the angel instructed Joseph to marry Mary, God treated Joseph as Jesus' father. God gave Joseph the command to name the Child Jesus. The family traveled to Bethlehem because of Joseph, not Mary. As the wise men left, God told Joseph to take his family to Egypt, and then, after Herod died, God instructed Joseph to bring his family to Galilee rather than Judea.

But Mary was actually Jesus' biological parent.

Simeon spoke to Mary, and when the wise men came to see Jesus, their interaction was with Mary as well. In Jesus' last recorded childhood episode, at the Passover during Jesus' twelfth year, Mary was once again the focus.

Jesus accompanied his parents and relatives to the Passover ceremonies held in Jerusalem to commemorate the liberation of the Jews from Egyptian slavery by the supernatural death of each of the firstborn of Egypt. Jesus celebrated the sacrifices, and then His twelve year old mind decided that it would be interesting to question the scholars in the Temple about the Law. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, when Jesus' parents began making the trip back to Galilee, Jesus' mind was still among the scholars, correcting their doctrine.

Jesus' parents began the trip home without Him, thinking that Jesus was somewhere in the caravan amongst the friends and relatives. But when Jesus did not respond to His parent's attempts to contact Him, they recognized that Jesus was not with them, so they returned to Jerusalem to find him. When they reached Jesus in the Temple, Joseph did not attempt to discipline Jesus; rather, Jesus' mother Mary appealed to Him. **Luke 2:48** records:

**48 So when they saw [Jesus], they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."**

And Jesus' reply is instructive. **Luke 2:49** records:

**49 And [Jesus] said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"**

Mary said that she and Jesus' father Joseph had been looking for Him, but Jesus contradicted her, specifying that His Father's business was the Law in the Temple. Joseph was the carpenter, and had no business in the Temple, other than bringing his sacrifice to the Temple. Joseph was not a priest or a Levite, and thus could not participate in offering a sacrifice. Joseph was not a teacher of the Law, and thus would not be the one with whom Jesus chose to debate the meaning of the Scripture. Thus, when Jesus said "**My Father**", Jesus was not referring to Joseph.

Luke, the historian that records this episode, gives us a genealogy of Jesus that deviates from the genealogy given in Matthew, which says, in **Matthew 1:16**:



**16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.**

Matthew designated Jacob as Joseph's father, but Luke tells us, in **Luke 3:23**:

**23 Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,**

Luke's genealogy mentions Joseph parenthetically, but reckons Jesus' lineage through Heli, who, ostensibly, is Mary's father. So Luke reinforced the fact that Joseph was not Jesus' biological father.

But Jesus and Mary were able to resolve the issue. This Passover episode begins with **Luke 2:41-42**:

**41 [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.**

**42 And when [Jesus] was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.**

While the provenance for the practice is not in the Bible, Jewish males traditionally became 'bar mitzah', bar in Hebrew meaning sons and 'mitzvot' meaning the Commandments, or sons of the commandments, at thirteen years of age, not twelve. Prior to thirteen years of age, Jewish males were not responsible to obey the law, but the responsibility was on their parents to supervise them. So, technically, when Jesus came to the Temple, He was not old enough to be a son of the commandments and independent from His parents. Thus, **Luke 2:51-52** tells us that Jesus left the Temple, as it says:

**51 Then [Jesus] went down with [Joseph and Mary] and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.**

**52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

Interestingly, this is the last mention of any action that Joseph took as Jesus' father in the Gospels.

When God interacted with Jesus' parents, He spoke to Joseph, but when Simeon and the wise men interacted with Jesus' parents, they spoke to Mary. And it appears that in the one case in the Scripture which Jesus needed discipline, His mother was the one that spoke to Him. Jesus did not challenge His mother, but submitted to her, as we read in **Luke 2:51-52**.

Jesus' mother also precipitated the inauguration of Jesus' miraculous ministry.

Jesus prepared for His ministry by going to His cousin John, who was preaching repentance down by the Jordan River. Now, John's ministry of repentance was different than the ministry that was being offered in Jerusalem, which was a ministry of sacrifice. To offer a sacrifice doesn't necessarily require repentance, but only the ability to bring an animal to the altar. And since the





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sacrifices had to be offered periodically, the impetus of the sacrificial system was not to turn men away from sin, but to continually atone for sin.

John's gospel changed the paradigm. John did not preach that the Israelites should bring him sacrifices to pay for their sinfulness, but rather that they should stop sinning. **Luke 3:10–14** gives us the essence of John's preaching:

**10 So the people asked [John], saying, "What shall we do then?"**

**11 He answered and said to them, "He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."**

**12 Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"**

**13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than what is appointed for you."**

**14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?" So he said to them, "Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."**

John's teaching was a departure from the teaching of the rabbis, as John focused on doing the morally correct thing while the rabbis focused on offering the ceremonially correct sacrifice in the correct way at the appointed time. To the teachers of the law, the law was focused on the ceremonies at the Temple. To John, the law was focused on morality; how people treated one another.

And Jesus Christ also came to change the focus of worship. Jesus came to change the focus of worship from ceremonial legalism to practical love. Jesus Christ came to change the focus of worship from ceremonial law to practical grace. But in order for Jesus Christ to initiate the change that His Ministry required, Jesus Christ had to show His relationship to the God that gave the Law.

And that relationship could not just be preached.

That relationship had to be demonstrated.

And so, after His baptism, Jesus Christ spent forty days in the wilderness fasting and preparing for ministry, and finally, withstanding the temptation of the devil, who tried to persuade Jesus, as he had persuaded the man and the woman in the Garden, to avoid the problems of ministry by disobeying God.

Once Jesus withstood the temptation, He went back home to recover from His fast and prepare for His ministry. Jesus spent his first two days calling disciples, and then, He and His mother were invited to a wedding feast. **John 2:1–2** records:

**1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.**

**2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.**

But the couple being married were of modest means, and were not able to properly prepare for the size of the celebration. **John 2:3** tells us the problem:

**3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."**



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Jesus responded to His mother that her appeal was inappropriate. **John 2:4** records:

**4 Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.”**

But Mary was concerned about this celebration which commemorated the formation of the primary relationship in the Bible. And Mary remembered the episode at the Temple when Jesus was twelve years old, in which she spoke to Jesus, Jesus gave her an argument, but then He lovingly submitted to her and did that which she wanted. So Mary once again counted on Jesus’ submission.

**John 2:5** records:

**5 [Jesus] mother said to the servants, “Whatever [Jesus] says to you, do it.”**

And, once again, Jesus submitted to His mother. **John 2:6–10** records:  
**6 Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece.**  
**7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the waterpots with water.”** And they filled them up to the brim.

**8 And [Jesus] said to them, “Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.”** And they took it.

**9 When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom.**

**10 And he said to him, “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!”**

So Jesus began His miraculous ministry by saving the day at a wedding, celebrating of the love between a husband and wife at the behest of the mother whom He loved. And in His first miracle, Jesus reinforced our takeaway point, 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.

Jesus’ ministry is not about ceremonial laws or sacrifices, but is about love. Jesus’ ministry is a change in the system, and Jesus demonstrated that the change is from God by displaying the power of God in His miraculous ministry. And Jesus’ demonstration was effective, as **John 2:11** tells us:

**11 This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.**

And Jesus reinforced the loving nature of His ministry, in the very next chapter of the book of John, 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.**



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**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's death on the Cross was a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice of the sins of the whole world. We have no further need for the blood of bulls and goats at atone for our sins; our focus is no longer on ceremonial sacrifice but on loving relationships.

Atonement for sin is no longer our focus, as our sins have been atoned for, once for all, by Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross, but our focus is now on following the moral law of God to spread the love that Christ displayed for us on Calvary's Cross, as He suffered, bled and died that our sins might be forgiven.

The moral law is still our schoolmaster, and we show one another love by treating one another morally, but the ceremonial sacrifices of the law have given way to obeying it's tenets And Jesus give us the new law, 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."**

So let us live according to the love of Jesus Christ, giving ourselves for one another, as Paul tells us, in **Ephesians 5:20–21**:

**20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.**

Pastor Darryl R. Curtis  
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