



FAMILY LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 85”

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Informed. Insightful. Intelligent.



The Biblical Design of Gender, Part 85

John 11:1

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

Thank you for listening and thinking with me as we study God's Word so that we can 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.

At the point in history in which this episode is recorded, Jesus has recruited additional help to spread His ministry. **Luke 10:1–3** records:

1 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.

2 Then He said to them, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

3 Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.

Jesus is deputizing these eighty two men with power to spread His ministry. **Luke 10:9–12** says that Jesus tells them:

9 And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’

10 But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,

11 ‘The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.’

12 But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.

I would not want to be in the city that rejected Jesus or His men on Judgment Day.

While waiting for His men to complete their work, Jesus retired to the town of Bethany, from which he had received an invitation. Martha, one the leading



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ladies and hostesses in Bethany, asked Jesus to come stay with her and her family, even as Simon the Pharisee had invited Jesus to his home. Martha had a sister, named Mary, who was very impressed by Jesus' ministry, and was excited to have Jesus in the house so that she could pick His brain. **Luke 10:38–39** records:

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

Knowing Jesus' personal penchant for penetrating profundity while lecturing on the lessons of the Law, Mary listened to Jesus intently. **Psalm 119:105** tells us:

105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

And Mary wanted her path lit. Mary and her brother Lazarus sat at Jesus' feet and took in the edifying and energizing information imparted by Jesus. But suddenly, as their mental thirst was being quenched at Jesus' intellectual fountain, Jesus' logical and spiritual flow was obstructed as His wise sayings were interrupted.

Mary, Lazarus and Jesus were disrupted when Martha's non-spiritual problem erupted. **Luke 10:40** tells us:

40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached [Jesus] and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

Martha wanted Mary to stop scrutinizing the Scripture and help her on her way to becoming the hostess with the mostest. Martha was more concerned about the minutia of the meal than the cogent coaching of the Christ.

Now, the thing that Martha did not realize was that Jesus' visit was not about her. It was not about her preparations, it was not about her meal, it was NOT ABOUT HER.

And many people get confused about this. We all have lives, but life is not about us.

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I often mention **Psalm 90:10** in my teaching, which says:

10 The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Why do I mention this passage of Scripture? Well, some of us here are past the halfway point in life, and it is important for us to realize that God is in control of the whole universe. God is out causing worlds to twirl on their axes.



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God is God is busy putting vitamins in vegetables and proteins in meat. God is creating galaxy after galaxy and overseeing the activities of the angels.

And God tells us that our stay here on this planet is to be somewhere between seventy and eighty years. God lets us know, up front, that we are not going to be here forever.

But I still hear people, when their elderly parents hear that steady march of the chariot wheels from the sky, and their lights go out like a vessel not filled with oil, and their life is extinguished, like a flickering candle in the wind, I still hear people say, "Oh, why did God do this to ME."

God isn't doing anything to you. God gives us all dominion. God gives us a certain amount of time on this earth to exercise that dominion, and that's it. It's not personal. God isn't doing anything to you. If your parents are older than seventy, they have lived the full life that God has promised them.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that we should throw all seventy year olds off a cliff. Some people will make eighty. My uncle just died at ninety-two. But I am telling you that life past seventy is not promised to any of us, and it is not negligence on the part of God if our elderly loved ones die. God tells us that, up front, so that we will be prepared.

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It was not negligence on Jesus' or Mary's part, that Mary was not busy serving with Martha. Mary was learning from Jesus, which is more important than serving. Martha, it's not about you.

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But Jesus had been in this situation before. **Luke 4:3** tells us:
3 And the devil said to [Jesus], "If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

While Jesus was busy preparing for His ministry and consecrating Himself to God, the very devil endeavored to distract Jesus into focusing on food. But **Luke 4:4** tells us:

4 But Jesus answered [the devil], saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'"

But, as a temptation, there's something about food. Did you know that the first sin in the Bible was related...to food?

The first Biblical episode in which a birthright was lost was related... to food.

The first problem in the New Testament Church, after the ascension of the Risen Savior and the descending of the Holy Spirit was related...to food.



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Did you know that the only acceptable sin in the Bible is...gluttony? If I were to come by your house after church today for dinner, the only sin that you would try to get me to commit would be to stuff myself. Yes, food. Something happens to people when you start talking about food.

In **Luke 4:4**, Jesus compared and contrasted the relative merits of taking in food versus taking in the Word of God. Jesus had just fasted for forty days and was hungry, but Jesus was so full of the Word of God that the devil could not tempt Him to use His power to turn stones into bread for His own sustenance. Jesus decided to not break His fast, giving us the example that we ought keep our commitments to God rather than indulge any appetite that we have, be it for food or anything else.

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So, although Jesus needed meals as we do, His focus was not on eating and certainly not on the preparation of lavish lunches, but on teaching the totality of the Word of God. And Jesus gently communicated that point to Martha. **Luke 10:41–42** records:

41 And Jesus answered and said to her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.”

By that “good part”, Jesus meant absorbing His teaching of the Word of God. Jesus came to teach because the activities of the learned Jewish leadership showed that, as shepherds of the people, the Jewish leaders did not exactly know how they were supposed to lead the flock.

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For example, Jesus had a run in with a lawyer while they were both in the synagogue. The lawyer was an expert in the Law of Moses. The lawyer had attended the correct schools and graduated with honors. He found himself in the presence of Jesus, who, in his opinion, was an itinerant rabbi, an informal and unlearned teacher, with no training and no degrees. So this lawyer decided to quiz this presumptuous and untrained rabbi with a general question usually reserved for first year law students. **Luke 10:25** records:

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Jesus, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus didn’t ponder the question nor did He hesitate in His response. In **Luke 10:26**:

26 [Jesus] said to [the lawyer], “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”



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Ha, thought the lawyer, this Galilean “prophet” doesn’t even know the answer to the most elementary question. I’d better do something to help this boy, since He doesn’t even know the basics of Scripture. In **Luke 10:27**:

27 So [the lawyer] answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.”

The lawyer was surprised when, in **Luke 10:28**:

28 And [Jesus] said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.”

Hmm, said the lawyer to himself, I don’t think that He got the message. I’m the one with the law degrees and the law practice. I’m the authority and the teacher of the law. I’m testing Him, and He talks like He’s testing me. He must not know who I am. Let me give Him a question that requires a legal opinion and see how He handles it. So, **Luke 10:29** tells us:

29 But [the lawyer], wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

You finally asked a real question, said Jesus to Himself. Out loud, in **Luke 10:30–32**:

30 Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side.

Jesus is pointing out that the Jewish religious leaders all left the half dead man on the side of the road because it was contrary to the Mosaic Law for a priest or Levite to touch a dead body. The man was wounded and appeared to be on the verge of death. But is this a proper application of the law, for a holy man to refuse to help someone who is alive because they might die and defile him?

Jesus came to teach because the activities of the learned Jewish leadership showed that, as shepherds of the people, the Jewish leaders did not exactly know how they were supposed to lead the flock. Jesus made it clear that this application of the law was incorrect. **Luke 10:33-35** tells us:

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.

34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.



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35 On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’

So Jesus made the point that a Samaritan, one that the Jewish leaders despised because of his background, acted in a more Godly fashion than those that administered the Temple. And then Jesus asked the lawyer, in **Luke 10:36:**

36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?”

The lawyer said to himself, ‘That story really showed the failing of those that are stuck on the minutia of the law while describing the loving function of one who is a neighbor.’ So the lawyer responded to Jesus, in **Luke 10:37:**

37 And [the lawyer] said, “He who showed mercy on him.”

And Jesus thought to the lawyer, from now on, stay off the other side of the road. Out loud, in **Luke 10:37:**

37 Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

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Similarly, in our lesson, Jesus was sitting in Martha, Mary and Lazarus’ house relating episodes like that of the Good Samaritan. Mary and Lazarus were listening with rapt attention in order to process that which Jesus said. Martha, on the other hand, was trying to impress Jesus with her preparation of an immaculate dinner. Just as with the priest and the Levite, the ladder of impressing God that Martha was trying to climb was leaning against the wrong building.

But even Martha, who did not sit and listen to Jesus, was impressed by Jesus’ presentation. Once a person experiences Jesus’ teaching their old thought and habits tend to change.

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And it was a good thing that Jesus made such an impression on the sisters, because soon, they would find themselves in a desperate situation, and had they not known to call on Jesus, desperation would have turned into catastrophe. Our text, **John 11:1** tells us:

1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

In our church, we spend time on our individual concerns because the hymnologist tells us, “What a friend we have in Jesus; all our sins and griefs to bear; what a privilege to carry; everything to God in prayer. “Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear; all because we do not carry; everything to God in prayer...”



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So, when Lazarus fell ill, Martha and Mary sent for Jesus. **John 11:3** tells us:

3 Therefore the sisters sent to [Jesus], saying, “Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick.”

The sisters had every expectation that Jesus would come immediately, but Jesus did not. **John 11:4** records:

4 When Jesus heard that, He said, “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Jesus assured His disciples that Lazarus was not going to die, and stayed where He was with His disciples. The disciples thought that Jesus was avoiding Judea because of the death threats against Him by the Jewish leaders. But actually, Jesus was simply waiting for a certain event to happen before He went to see about Lazarus. **John 11:11** records:

11 These things [Jesus] said, and after that He said to them, “Our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up.”

But the disciples did not understand. Generally speaking, the ability to rest is a sign that the body is recuperating from an illness. But Lazarus was not resting. **John 11:14–15** records:

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him.”

And when Jesus reached the sisters’ home, those that were there were mourning. **John 11:17–19** says:

17 So when Jesus came, He found that [Lazarus] had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away.

19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

From the Scripture, the Jews inferred that a person should be buried within 24 hours of their death. **Deuteronomy 21:23** tells us about the burial of a man who was executed by hanging:

23 his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God.

So Jesus intentionally did not return to Bethany until Lazarus was buried and the mourners from Jerusalem could make the journey to Bethany to comfort Martha and Mary. Jesus arrived while the mourning was in full swing, and when Martha heard that Jesus was on His way to her home, she ran out to meet Him. **John 11:20–21** tells us

20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.



21 Now Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

Martha knew that Jesus healed the sick, which is why she sent for Jesus when Lazarus fell ill. But Martha also knew that Jesus raised the dead. The widow of Nain’s son and Jairus’ daughter were two examples of dead people that Jesus raised.

But neither the widow of Nain’s son nor Jairus’ daughter had been buried. Jesus did not have to open a grave, but raised them before they could be buried. Lazarus, however, was a different case. Lazarus was dead and buried, and had been so for four days. But Martha, nonetheless, was hopeful that Jesus might still be able to do something. So, Martha, very tentatively and indirectly, asked Jesus for help. **John 11:22** records that Martha said:

22 But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.”

And Jesus did not hesitate, but told Martha that her faith in calling on Him would be rewarded. **John 11:23** tells us:

23 Jesus said to [Martha], “Your brother will rise again.”

Lazarus will rise again? That sounded like a straightforward statement, but since Lazarus had been dead and decomposing for four days, you can understand Martha’s hesitation in thinking that Jesus was talking about a physical resurrection of Lazarus’ body. So Martha responded, in **John 11:24**:

24 Martha said to [Jesus], “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

And Jesus did not hesitate, but responded, in **John 11:25–26**:

25 Jesus said to [Martha], “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”

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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.

The truth of the matter is that people never actually die. However, people do leave this world to go to live in a different environment. And Jesus has come to earth to demonstrate this truth. Lazarus’ death gave Jesus the opportunity to make an ocular demonstration of His power over death so that those of us that can read history and believe in Jesus can also receive the mind of Christ and lose our fear of death.



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The Church was born out of death. Jesus Christ died on the Cross, followed by all of the apostles and an estimated 1.5 million martyrs who were executed in the first 400 years of church history. If we learn nothing else from our belief in Jesus Christ, we should be assured that we have everlasting life. Jesus says, in **John 5:24**:

24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

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And Jesus has the opportunity, in this historical episode, to prove his mastery over death. Martha affirmed her confidence in the Lordship of Jesus, and having received hope from Jesus, called for Mary to come. **John 11:27–28: 27 [Martha] said to [Jesus], “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”**

28 And when [Martha] had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.”

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.”

The Jews that had come to mourn noticed when Martha left the house, but when Mary left as well, they decided to follow her. The Bible tells us that Jesus was affected by Mary’s grief, but when the Jews saw Jesus, they had the same recrimination for Jesus that Martha and Mary expressed, that Jesus could have kept Lazarus from dying. **John 11:35–37** says:

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

37 And some of them said, “Could not this Man, [Jesus], who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man [Lazarus] from dying?”

The answer to this question is yes, but Jesus chose to not do so. Jesus knew when Lazarus became ill, when he died, when he was buried. Jesus tarried until the burial was over before travelling to Bethany. Jesus could have healed Lazarus, but Jesus arrived in Bethany four days after Lazarus died intentionally. When the message of Lazarus’ illness sent by the sisters’ reached Jesus, Jesus said, in **John 11:4**:

4 “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Now the Lazarus is dead and buried, the Son of God is about to be glorified. Jesus, Martha, Mary and the disciples proceeded to the tomb in which Lazarus was laid. And, of course, the Jewish contingent mourning along with the



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sisters followed them to the tomb. When everyone reached the burial place, which was a cave sealed shut by a stone, the stage was set. **John 11:39** records:

39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

Martha, bless her heart, is still about the business of arranging a ceremony. Of course there is a stench, Martha. Bodies decay, and rotting flesh stinks. No question. But Jesus did not ask Martha about the condition of the body; Jesus instructed them to remove the stone from the door.

Jesus had to remind Martha that He had not come to the tomb to mourn or to commemorate Lazarus in some way, but to prove that He, Jesus, was the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus did not need the stone moved to raise Lazarus; Lazarus needed the stone moved so that he could walk out of the tomb. So Jesus told Martha to have faith. **John 11:40** says:

40 Jesus said to [Martha], "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?"

So they moved the stone and watched the Lord work. **John 11:41–44** records:

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where 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."

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In **John 11:25–26**:

25 Jesus said to [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.

And Jesus was not just talking to Martha. Jesus was talking to everyone that believes in His name. **Colossians 2:13–15**: speaks to us about death, as it says:

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, [Jesus] has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,



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14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And [Jesus] has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Do you know what death is? Death is the cessation of earthly life, but since life is everlasting, more importantly, death is the wages of sin. Death began in the Garden and in the Flood because of sin, and will end when all sinners are cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

But there is a Book of Life, in which is recorded the names of those that have taken their opportunity to do as Martha and Mary did when their brother died. They called on Jesus and rolled away the stone so that Lazarus could leave the tomb after Jesus raised him, changed him from dead to alive and released him from the death debt that they owe for the sins that they have committed. And we all owe that death debt of sin, as **Romans 3:23** tells us:

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

But, praises be to God, **Romans 6:23** tells us:

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

And all we have to do is call on Him, on Jesus Christ.

A criminal, who testified against himself that he was being executed justly while dying on the cross next to Jesus, called on Jesus while they were both on the Cross. And Jesus responded, in **Luke 23:43**:

43 And Jesus said to [the criminal], **“Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”**

Jesus can and will save any sinner, from the guttermost to the uttermost. Jesus tells us, in **John 5:24**:

24 **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.**

So let us open up our hearts today, roll away the stone that covers our hearts and causes us to disobey God, so that Jesus can send His Holy Spirit into our heart, save us from judgment, and allow us to pass from death unto life. And when we do so, all of our sins fall away from us, as **Romans 13:9–10** tells us:

9 For the commandments, **“You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,”** and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, **“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”**

10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

And having received that new heart and new Spirit, let us fulfill God’s Law as we keep Jesus’ new commandment. **John 13:34–35** tells us:



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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.”

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