

## Building Holy Families: Lessons from Genesis

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Today we're going to follow the *pedagogy* of marriage and family in the first and foundational book of the Bible, *Genesis*.

### I. Marriage in God's Cosmic Plan: Genesis 1-2

#### *The First Statement on Marriage:*

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Gen 1:27-28)

#### *The Second Statement on Marriage*

Gen. 2:18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." 19 So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 ... but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; 22 and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said,

*"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

1. Adam's words are \_\_\_\_\_-making terminology
2. The marriage forms the final \_\_\_\_\_ in the narrative of creation
3. Marriage is part of the meaning of being in God's "image and likeness"
4. Marriage images God in these ways:
  - a. A multi-personal \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. A bond of love between two persons whose love becomes a \_\_\_\_\_: the Trinitarian meaning of marriage, which is the deep ground for openness to life.
  - c. Marriage is the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Trinity that God plants in the natural world.
5. Marriage is *not* a human \_\_\_\_\_

It's written into the natural order: our bodies and our psyches.

6. Marriage is also the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's covenant relationship between Himself and his people.

7. Because *marriage* is an image, indeed, a *sacrament* of the Trinity and the covenant, *wrong views of God and his covenant lead to wrong views of marriage, and vice-versa*. Examples: Atheism, Islam, non-Catholic Christianity

## II. Early Offenses Against Marriage and Family

The invention of \_\_\_\_\_:

19 And Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ... Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say: I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. 24 If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold." (Gen 4:19-23)

The proliferation of polygamy and marriage outside the \_\_\_\_\_:

When men began to multiply on the face of the ground, and daughters were born to them, 2 the *sons of God* saw that the *daughters of men* were fair; and they took to wife such of them as they chose ... 5 The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the ground ...

## III. The Patriarchs and the P\_\_\_\_\_ Role of the Father

Gen. 12:7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 Thence he removed to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there *he built an altar* to the LORD and *called on the name of the LORD*.

Gen. 13:3 And he journeyed ... as far as Bethel, 4 to the place where he had made an altar at the first; and there Abram *called on the name of the LORD*.

Gen. 13:18 So Abram moved his tent, and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there *he built an altar* to the LORD.

The building of altars and leadership in worship and prayer ("calling on the name of the LORD") are priestly duties. Before the Levitical priesthood was established, the duty of priest was performed by the father and passed to the firstborn son:

*“The Hebrews affirm ... that every firstborn, from Noah to Aaron, was a priest,”  
Glossa Ordinaria on Genesis 14 (Patrologia Latina 198. 1094-95).*

The priestly duty of the father:

(1) Offering \_\_\_\_\_: *He built an altar*

(2) L\_\_\_\_\_ in worship/prayer: *He called on the name of the LORD*

(3) I\_\_\_\_\_ for his children: *He would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of [his children]; for Job said, “It may be that my sons have sinned” (Job 1:5)*

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ his children: *Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, ... God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples. May he give the blessing of Abraham to you and to your descendants with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings which God gave to Abraham!” (Gen 28:1-5)*

#### IV. Preparing the Next Generation for Marriage

Gen. 24:1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his house, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh, 3 and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, 4 but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

Gen. 28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, “You shall not marry one of the Canaanite women. 2 Arise, go to Paddan-aram to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and take as wife from there one of the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother.

The issue with the Canaanite women was not E\_\_\_\_\_ but

R\_\_\_\_\_ and moral! See Leviticus 18

These patriarchs were not leaving the transition to the next generation to

C\_\_\_\_\_ but were P\_\_\_\_\_.

Need to stress with our children the importance of marrying within the

F\_\_\_\_\_, and consider how we can put them in a position to do so.

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**Jesus as the “Fulfillment” of the Law  
and His Teaching on Marriage in the Gospel of Matthew<sup>1</sup>**  
Michael Patrick Barber, Ph.D. / John Paul the Great Catholic University © 2015  
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### Jesus’ “Fulfillment” of the Law in the Sermon on the Mount

Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; *I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.*<sup>18</sup> For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, *not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.* (Matthew 5:17–18)

It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ [Deut 24:1–4]<sup>32</sup> But I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and *whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.* (Matthew 5:31–32)

### God’s Pedagogy and Condescension in the Divine Economy

The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture... ‘Even though they contain matters imperfect and provisional,’ the books of the Old Testament bear witness to the whole divine *pedagogy* of God’s saving love. . . in them, too, *the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way*” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 121–122; citing and quoting Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*, nos. 14–15).

### The Law as a Pedagogue

... the law was our *custodian* [Gk. *paidagōgos*] until Christ came...<sup>25</sup> But now that faith has come, *we are no longer under a custodian*;<sup>26</sup> for in Christ Jesus *you are all sons of God*, through faith. (Galatians 3:24–26)

### The Church Fathers and God’s Fatherly Pedagogy

“[God] condescends and accommodates Himself to our weakness, like schoolmaster talking a ‘little language’ to his children, like a father caring for his own children and adopting their ways” —Origen, d. A.D. 254 (*Frag. on Deut.* 1, 21).

“Just as when we are talking to very small children we do not assume as the object of our instruction any strong understanding in them, but say what we have to say accommodating it to the small understanding of those whom we have before us, and even do what seems to us useful for the education and upbringing of children, realizing that they are children: so the Word of God seems to have disposed the things which were written, adapting the suitable parts of his message to the capacity of his hearers and to their ultimate profit”—Origen (*Contra Celsum*, 4, 71).

### The Divine Pedagogy and Marriage

1. God’s plan for marriage in Genesis 1–2
2. Polygamy first mentioned with Lamech, son of Cain (Genesis 4:23–24)  
“Lamech said to his *wives*: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say: *I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me.*”<sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.” (Genesis 4:23–24)
3. In Old Testament: God never endorses polygamy but also never forbids it
4. Often portrayed as having disastrous consequences (e.g., Sarah’s advice to Abraham regarding Hagar)
5. No explicit legislation on divorce until Deuteronomy

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<sup>1</sup> For a more thorough presentation of the material covered in this presentation, see Michael Patrick Barber, “Jesus as the ‘Fulfillment’ of the Law and His Teaching on Divorce in Matthew,” *Letter & Spirit* 9 (2014): 135–54; idem, “The ‘Yoke of Servitude’: Christian Non-Observance of the Law’s Cultic Precepts in Patristic Sources,” *Letter & Spirit* 7 (2011): 67–90.

## Concessions of Deuteronomy

1. “Deuteronomy”: “Second Law” (cf. Deuteronomy 29:1)
2. Given after the rebellion of Second Generation in Numbers 25
3. Deuteronomy as a “lower law”, allows what had been forbidden<sup>2</sup>
4. Moses’ allowance of divorce for “your hardness of heart” (Deut 24:1–4)  
“*I gave them laws that were not good and statutes by which they could not have life...*” (Ezekiel 20:25)<sup>3</sup>
5. Allowance of divorce aimed at preventing a worse evil  
“... the bill of divorce was permitted in the Law, not indeed for the sake of obtaining a greater good, as was the dispensation to have several wives, but for the sake of preventing a greater evil, namely wife-murder.”  
—Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae*, Supplement, q. 67, art. 3)

## The Holiness of the New Covenant

<sup>31</sup>“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup>*not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke*, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup>But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: *I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:31–33)

<sup>25</sup>*I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.* <sup>26</sup>*A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you;* and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>*And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances.* (Ezekiel 36:25–27)

## Jesus’ Fulfillment of the Law and True Holiness

For all the prophets and the law *prophesied* [*eprophēteusan*] until John... (Matthew 11:13–14)

<sup>17</sup>“Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; *I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them.* <sup>18</sup>For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, *not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished...* <sup>20</sup>For I tell you, *unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 5:17–18, 20)

## Jesus’ Teaching on Marriage and Divorce (Matt 19:1–12)

<sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered *the region of Judea beyond the Jordan* [*peran tou Iordanou*]; <sup>2</sup> and large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. <sup>3</sup> And Pharisees came up to him and *tested* him by asking, “*Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?*” (Matthew 19:1–3)

These are the words that Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan [LXX: *peran tou Iordanou*] in the wilderness, in the Arabah over against Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab... <sup>5</sup>*Beyond the Jordan* [*peran tou Iordanou*] in the land of Moab, Moses undertook to explain this law, saying... (Deuteronomy 1:1, 5)

The School of Shammai say: “A man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her, for it is written, ‘Because he has found in her *indecent* in anything’ [Deut 24:1]. And the School of Hillel say: “[He may divorce her] even if she spoiled a dish for him, for it is written, ‘Because he has found in her indecent in *anything*’” [Deut 24:1]. Rabbi Akiba says: ‘Even if he found another fairer than she, for it is written: “And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes” [Deut 24:1] (Mishnah, *Gittin* [‘Bills of Divorce’] 9:10).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Scott Hahn, *Kinship by Covenant* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 76–77.

<sup>3</sup> Scott Hahn and John Sietze Bergsma, “What Laws Were ‘Not Good? A Canonical Approach to the Theological Problem of Ezekiel 20:25-26,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 123/2 (2004): 201–218.

<sup>4</sup> Translation Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 321.

He answered, “Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female,<sup>5</sup> and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? [Gen 1:27; 2:24]<sup>6</sup> *So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.*”<sup>7</sup> They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” [Deut 24:1–4]<sup>8</sup> He said to them, “*For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.*”<sup>9</sup> And I say to you: *whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity [Gk. porneia], and marries another, commits adultery.*”<sup>10</sup> The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.”<sup>11</sup> But he said to them, “*Not all men can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given.* (Matthew 19:4–12)

... every one who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and *whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.* (Matthew 5:32)

To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband<sup>11</sup> (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:10–11)

“The prohibition against marrying a divorced woman expands the OT prohibition against remarrying one’s own divorced wife (Deut 24:4) to include all divorced women. Here there is no exception.... In my judgment no ecclesiastical legal solution is as close to the Matthean solution as is the Catholic.”—Ulrich Luz<sup>5</sup>

### **The Sacrament of Marriage and the Supernatural Love of Spouses**

“Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony.” Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another’s burdens, to “be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,” and *to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love.*—*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1642 (quoting Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, 48 § 2; Ephesians 5:21; cf. Galatians 6:2).

“... with a renewed sense of responsibility, the Church continues to propose marriage in its essential elements ... not as an ideal for a few, despite modern models centered on the ephemeral and the transitory, but as *a reality that, with the grace of Christ, can be lived by all the baptized faithful.*”—Pope Francis<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1–7: A Commentary on Matthew 1–7*, ed. Helmut Koester (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 256, 257.

<sup>6</sup> Pope Francis, Address to the Roman Rota (January 22, 2016). <http://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-tribunal-of-roman-rota/> (accessed January 25, 2016).

**Seven Habits of Holy, Effective Catholic Families**

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<p>1. M _____</p> <p>2. C _____</p> <p>3. R _____</p> <p>4. F _____ D _____</p>	<p>5. S _____ R _____ &amp; P _____</p> <p>6. O _____ - _____ -O _____ time</p> <p>7. C _____ !</p>
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