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Marriage is not just a thorny issue, it is the most difficult to be treated in both the “secular” and “religious” contexts, both between believers and unbelievers. This, however, does not mean that it does not have a “right way”, but it is a problematic matter. And, as I will discuss in the two next books (one about sin and the other about Westminster Confession of Faith) on various subjects, we believe it is necessary to have a specific book just to deal with marriage.

However, we need to say categorically that we will not respond to many questions, not because they don't need an answer, but because our goal is only and exclusively to express and explain what the biblical text says – and many of our problems (not sins) were not dealt with in the Scriptures. This is not due to a weakness in the biblical text, but to the fact that not every problem is spiritual. In this way, spiritual problems will be viewed here, non-spiritual problems will not be addressed.

So what topics will we talk about? We will introductory talk about the Law of God in the first chapter. Make no mistake, as this treatment is essential for the foundations of the rest of the book to make sense. Right away we will talk about the Marriage Contract before we talk about dating. We understand that because we think that the topic of dating is usually initial then needs to be resolved first, however, when we respond first what a marriage contract is, it will be easy for us to better understand what we call dating. And, knowing this, you should notice that the order in that this book was written is extremely important, since the following chapter will be established and based on the previous one.

Divorce will have extensive treatment, but we will also consider all biblical texts on the subject. It is important that when reading this chapter you be prepared for a somewhat desperate final answer.

After dealing with divorce, we will go into four chapters on polygamy in the bible, evaluating almost all texts for or against the subject, as we believe that, without this, you will not understand the male and female role in marriage: male polygamy in the Bible responds well to this theme which, to us Westerners, it seems like an eternal crisis. As a logical consequence, we will talk in three chapters about the wife's submission in Scriptures and then we will talk about the proverbial instructions regarding women in general.

We will close our book with the subject of clothes (which is mentioned in the Bible linked to marriage) and on Prostitution or Fornication – such subject will be the last because, as is evident, it is necessary to understand well what we will explain previously.

Noticed that there is no chapter explicitly on the treatment of husbands? The reason is simple, this subject is dispersed throughout the book, and we think it's convenient to keep it this way because treating it separately can cause some confusion regarding the movement (not so modern) called “redpill”, which seeks, through stereotypes, to establish the male pattern. Our goal is for what we will talk about below to be seen as natural and, *because of our context*, some subjects are separated for exclusive treatment may reinforce stereotypes rather than to expose the truth. The issue of Sex is exactly the same: the subject will be dispersed throughout the book, although the last chapter has a greater concentration of the theme – but don't get confused: we need to see both the masculinity and sex as normal and natural things, so we decided to leave things this way.

Does this mean that the rest of the book is about unnatural things? In no way, in fact, it is precisely because they are ignored subjects and that do not receive attention that they are detached from the rest. We hope you are introduced to these things, things that are never said out there respect for marriage in the Bible.

What is God's law?

*O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have **sinned** against thee. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his **laws** [torah], which he **set** before us by his **servants the prophets**. Yea, all Israel have **transgressed thy law**, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in **the law of Moses** the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. (Daniel 9:8-13)*

Let's start with a simple question: God's law is only in the Pentateuch or extends throughout the Bible?

We will explain what we mean by this: if the law of God is given only in pentateuch, all the rest of Scripture is an extension of this, with new revelations, but not new laws. If the pentateuch contains the law of God but it is not exhausted there, so we will need a hermeneutics or standard interpretation that instructs us on how to find these other commandments scattered throughout the Bible (wouldn't they be derivations? Or wouldn't they be general instructions? Does every imperative imply a commandment?).

This passage from Daniel above is suggestive. In verse 10 Daniel says that the Torah was set by the prophets. Now, we know that the Torah came through Moses (v. 13), for which reason does Daniel say that the law was set by the prophets (plural)?

The key word at this point is "set". God's Torah is from Moses, but the prophets explained it and exposed it to the people. This term (nāṭan) is better understood as "established", "demonstrated" in this context. And how do we know this? Look as Daniel begins the chapter:

*In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to **Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem**. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes. (Daniel 9:2,3)*

What law did Jeremiah give? None, he just showed that the people transgressed the law and would be taken into captivity as the law provided. Like this, Jeremiah only predicts that this sentence would last 70 years, not that it would come from there a new law. Right after saying this, Daniel begins his prayer. In this prayer Daniel understands that sin is a transgression of God's law (v. 11). Reason like the prophet Daniel: Israel went into captivity because they transgressed the law, and the law was exposed by the prophets to the People. Prophets are, therefore, those which expounds the Torah, while the Torah is the content of what the people must keep and do not exceed. Therefore sin is the Transgression of the Law, and nothing more (we'll get there).

It is important to realize that the Torah contains all of God's law, and God's law ends there, without essentially any new commandment (yes, I know that you are thinking of Jesus saying "a new commandment I give to you", but we will explain). Any subsequent content will align with what the Torah says, and will be submissive to it, without adding new commandments, for God gave His commandments to Moses and to no one else:

*And the Lord **said unto Moses**, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, **and a law, and commandments which** I have written; that thou mayest teach them. (Exodus 24:12)*

*As **Moses the servant** of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the **book of the law of Moses** (Joshua 8:31)*

*Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the **book of the law of Moses** (Joshua 23:6)*

But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses, wherein the Lord commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. (2 Kings 14:6)

Search anywhere for “the Law of Jeremiah” or “the Law of Ezekiel” or any other individual between Moses and Christ and will not find any other law, as there is only the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ (explained below).

That's one of the main points. The entire Bible revolves around the law of Moses; there is nothing in the bible similar to natural law (with laws other than biblical ones) nor theologically deduced from another part of the scriptures. As consequently, only what the Torah (the Law) says is sin is a sin and nothing else beyond it (1 John 3:4).

How do we know that the law is only the Torah? Well, starting with the name (Torah means “Law”), every time the Bible refers to some law it always is found in the Torah. Who has to prove that the law of God is also outside the Torah are those who do not believe in this basic understanding of the name of the first 5 books and how the other books refer to them.

Still don't believe it? Now, God himself said that no new law would be added to the Torah (Dt 4:2; 12:32). If you believe that the New Testament or prophets bring with them new laws, orders and commandments, then you are creating a contradiction, which can never be occur, since God does not lie and does not contradict himself – or he will have to make you doubt the rest of the Scriptures. It is undeniable that when God determines that nothing can be added, he is dealing with commandments, for even Revelation 22, when prohibiting the addition, does so only after the brief citation of some commandments (Rev 22:15; 18 [is almost the equivalent of the Ten Commandments]). If you don't understand this, it's not worth continuing reading. If understood, but don't agree, there is still a chance for you.

The Law of Christ

We cannot ignore what we call the “Law of Christ” (1 Cor 9:21; Gal 6:2). What is this law? We can say that the Law of Moses is the entire Torah (this is how which is always referred to in the Old Testament itself, as you can see in the texts we have already cited above); the Law of Christ, then, necessarily is something distinct from the total content of the Torah, since it is clearly called “**of Christ**” and not “**of Moses**”.

However, every time Christ himself refers to commandments he says which is “love God above all things and your neighbor as yourself” (Mk 12:28–31; cf. Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18). Now, even when Christ gives a particular order it is just a repetition of the commandments contained within the Law of Moses (as you can see by comparing Mark 12:28–31 particular 1 with Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18). Christ never gave an order that was not already were in the Torah!

But let's prove the following: the law of Christ is, in fact, a cut within of the Torah, something specific, which was not understood during the period that the entire Torah was in force. We explain.

The logic is simple:

- Law of Moses = the **entire** content of the Torah;
- Law of Christ = only the commandments **contained** in the Torah;

Why do we know that this division above is true? Firstly because, as we have seen, Christ never gave a command that was not in the Torah before and, secondly, because in Christ we no longer observe the festivals established in Torah, therefore, has a distinction between the orders of Christ and Moses, *but it is not in relation to the commandments contained in the Torah, as these are reaffirmed by Christ.*

Not every order in the Torah is a commandment (1 Cor 7:19 — Paul distinguishes between circumcision and keeping God's commandments). This means that the apostle Paul himself saw that not just because an order was in imperative implied the concept of commandment. Therefore, circumcision “is nothing”, or, in the language of the author of the letter to the Hebrews: “it is a shadow”. Like this, the law has only two categories: *shadows* (or types) and *commandments*. What we have, then, is that commandments continue without the “excesses” or “shadows” present in the Torah.

This is enlightening if we notice what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:21. He says that he preaches to those who are without law, as if he were without law, but not being, in fact, without law, since he follows the law of Christ. The conclusion is logical: the Gentiles, who have no law, do not need Paul to look like a Jew, that is, following the Levitical orders, but he does not stop practicing God's commandments

What do we do, therefore, with the “new commandment I give to you”?

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (John 13:34)

The Law already required us to love each other (Lev 19:18), so what part of this commandment is new? All of it? It cannot be, therefore, as we have seen, the command for mutual love is only being repeated. Although there is something that is not in the Law of Moses: *just as I have loved you*. There is one sense in which this is new, Moses was not the Messiah, he could not give himself for the salvation of the people; Christ, on the other hand, can give his own life to save his people; in this sense, Christ gives something totally new: you will love others, but you will use me as a basic standard and not just the “as yourself”. Thus, it is not that the commandment in its entirety is new, but the basis on which it is established is new: Christ.

Note, there has been no change in the order, as it remains the same. But before the basis for me to love my neighbor was myself alone; as we see, Christ also states that we should love our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 22:37-39). However, what is new is that Christ had not incarnate at the time the Torah was given, so Moses could not say: love your neighbor like Christ. But with Christ revealed, he can say: as I loved you. This way the order remains (love your neighbor), but it was high (as Christ loved us). This means that the first order of the Torah has it stopped being true? Not at all! Now it is seen with more eyes clear, but your basic affirmation (like yourself) continues to exist, without ignore that we can transcend ourselves.

This all creates a difficulty: how can I identify a commandment?

How to Identify a Commandment?

In Genesis 1–3 we see the transgression of the first commandment (negative) that God gave to man: to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Think about it: this is the first sin, and death enters the world through him. Sin, it is clear, exists as a cause of death, and this is taught at the beginning of Genesis as if shouting in a Megaphone: *Sin causes death*. It's not an outside thing. If there is no death as punishment, then there is no sin (I know I know, you're remembering 1 John that says there is sin that does not lead to death, let's get there). The fact is that Genesis 1 – 3 begins the Torah to convey the principle that: sin generates death, or by transgressing the law of God in his negative orders or by ignoring positive orders (the tree of life). God already taught, from the beginning, how he treats his own commandments.

This is Paul's understanding in Romans 6:23, and this is not just an eschatological pay for sin or that the first sin in the world generated death. Theology of Paul is consistent: the wages of sin (whatever it may be) is death. There is not a sin that does not generate death. But what the hell does that mean? 1 John 3:4 says that sin is the transgression of the Law, so it is clear that sin is only found in the Law, and the law says which orders, if broken, generate death (Rom 6:23). The conclusion is simple:

Sin = Law Transgression (1 Jo 3:4)

The Law = Torah

In the Law sin = Death (Rm 6:23)

Because where there is death penalty = sin

Commandments generate death when broken, if there is no death there is no breaking of a commandment, and without breaking a commandment there is no sin. So when we read, for example, in Leviticus, that whoever ate unclean meat was not killed nor did he need to offer a sacrifice, it is clear that we are not faced with a sin, but only with filth, that is, something that prevents me from touching what is holy, but is not sin. It is evident that the Torah itself distinguishes between sin (commandment) and filth (*orders that may come to an end*).

Then you will say: "but theft did not lead to death! Gotcha!" Well, I don't never said that sin leads to the death of the transgressor simply. Both Paul (Rom 6:23) and John and the author of Hebrews understand that death is a direct thing and that it works alone, that is, without being applied to a human being, but also to animals (Heb 9:21, 22). You see, without the shedding of blood there is no remission (of sin), as clearly Hebrews 9 argues, and there the text clearly relates this to animals.

The remission of sin can only occur because a commandment has been transgressed, and the death penalty will fall on you or something that represent and replace you criminally. How is this established in the Law? Simple: Leviticus 6:1–7 shows that the thief must offer an animal sacrifice after returning what was stolen. Now, what ignorant person will deny that even was there the death penalty for theft? However, for there to be justice, God did not order the thief to be killed, but that he offer an animal sacrifice to atone for his sin, taking away his guilt, which would generate personal death. Thus, neither death ceased to be applied nor the sinner ceased to be transgressor.

Note: Leviticus 6, different from Exodus 22, is dealing with the sacrificial need for theft/robbery. Additionally, there are a few more distinctions in both texts, such as the amount of the refund. However, the problem that arises and that cannot be ignored is that, if theft is a sin, then there is some death in it (Rom 6:23) and therefore bloodshed (Heb 9:21, 22). So when Leviticus establishes the sacrifice, it is saying that there is sin in theft, even if the cases differ from each Other.

Search the law for such deathless sins and you will not find them. Being whipped, for example, was disciplinary, and did not involve animal or human sacrifices. It is not about sin, but about theological direction and meaning - the law has this meaning: to put everything under sin, showing what generates death (through which God imposes the death penalty). The theological meaning is clear: sin generates death, if it does not generate death, it is not sin.

Note: it is important that you understand that only the sin of murder could not be negotiated into the Law, that is, all other sins accepted monetary compensation and animal sacrifice (Nm 35:31). So, even that the individual did not die personally, there was a clear certainty that sin.

1 John 5:16

*If any man see his brother sin a sin which **is not unto death**, he shall ask, **and he [God] shall give him life** for them that sin not unto death. **There is a sin unto death**: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*

Here is where the proud man stands up against all the other texts that clearly teach that sin *always* leads to death to try to prove that there is sin that does not lead to death. However, we will deal with the truth. Let's look at the text on three levels: the direct meaning, the original text and the context.

Even in English it is clear that the text says that every sin leads to death. See what the verse says: "he shall ask, and God *shall give life to him* who has sinned". John is saying that spiritually this brother has died, but the pray for him causes God to give him life. Now, God only gives life to that which is dead, and not to what is already alive! Immediately in the first half of the verse it is proven that what John is saying is not that there is no sin in absolute to death, but that there is a particular sin for which one should not pray if committed. John's point is not to distinguish between a sin and another, but for which sin is it not necessary for you to pray. Look: "God shall give life" implies that "this brother died".

But what about Greek? John is very clear, as he says that in the first case he is a brother openly, while in the second case, that is, the individual who sins for the death, is not even mentioned as a brother in the strict sense, and therefore we should not pray for. The Greek heads towards a departure (something like: it came from our midst, but is not ours). Furthermore, life mentioned in the passage is a generic term for a type of “spiritual life” (ζωή), meaning that God gives back not physical life, but the spiritual life of the individual; while the other dies spiritually from undefined mode.

And the context? John says that everything he wrote in his letter is to confirm that those who believe in Christ have eternal life (v. 13), so his teaching in the letter is about how to identify someone who is righteous and does not live in sin, and someone who lives in sin (1 John 1). The sins that John condemns in the letter are things like hating one's brother (1 John 2:9) and denying that Christ has come in the flesh (1 John 4). This last case is the most interesting and focal in the letter, since he begins chapter 5 by saying that Christ was born of God and became incarnate (passing through water and blood), so that believing in this is believing in the Son (1 John 5: 10). To deny that Christ came in the flesh is to have the spirit of the antichrist. And the antichrist is the one who leaves the church (1 John 2:19), denying that Christ came in the flesh. This is the subject taken up by John in chapter 5 and which he wants believers to understand, because it is only by having the [incarnate] Son that we have life (1 John 5:12). What is that?

John is in the whole context saying that the sin he denounces is the denial of the coming of Christ. Whoever says this has no solution, because they denied the Son and do not have life (1 John 5:11), as there is life only in the Son. What's clearer than that? The sin leading to death is the belief in Gnosticism, a doctrine that denies the Son, as it denies his incarnation, and no Gnostic has the Son, and therefore does not have eternal life, and if he does not have life, there is no point in praying for him. He who was born of God does not commit this sin (1 John 5:18).

As you can see the text clearly points to the single truth that every sin leads to death, but there is a sin that denies the Son himself, and one never had life because only those who were born of God do not sin like that. One Son of God sins, but his sin does not lead to inevitable death, it is enough that intercede for him so that God can give him back the life he lost in sin (read the entire 1st letter of John, and pay attention to the fact that the antichrist **was** essentially this type of sinner: who denies that Christ came in flesh).

Romans 5:12-17

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

The verses above are enlightening. See Paul's logic: if we die (and death only exists because of the transgression of the Law), then all have sinned (Rm 3:23), because all men die (in other words, only sin is what generates death). In fact, even the men who lived between Adam and Moses, who lived without the given Law, died. Without Law, sin is not imputed, there is no reason for men to die if God left the world “without law” all this time. This makes Paul backtrack on the argument, as he notices a problem (“but sin is not...”), causing him to highlight the fact: even those who did not break any order like Adam died (which is why Paul is talking about the period between Adam and Moses, as did not there was “law”). Then, to prove the point, he says: everyone dies (“judgment was by one”) because of **one** offense – not because of what men did between Adam and Moses.

See a direct example: Adam's children married each other, however, in the Law, later, any relationship between relatives is prohibited (Lev 18:6, 9). Now, the children of Adam, therefore, did not sin in the likeness

of Adam, since there was no law that prohibited brothers from marrying. Therefore, why was there death even among the children of Adam, if God did not give them any particular law as he did to Adam? The answer is quite simple: this death existed because men sinned in Adam (they committed sin in Adam's act and inherited the sin from him) and, as Adam is a figure of Christ, death passed on to all men, as did the life of Christ pass to those who are justified in Jesus. Do you want greater proof than that the non-existence of the Law proves that sin cannot be imputed? See right there, Paul saying in so many words: "sin is not imputed, there being no law" – men transgressed a law: the one given in the Garden of Eden.

The reasoning works like this:

1 – Sin is what leads to death > the men who lived between Adam and Moses died > Therefore, they somehow sinned.

2 – But God had not given the Law > so these men only died because they sinned in Adam > Even men who have no record of sin in their lives.

3 – Thus: (a) only those who have sinned die, (b) everyone dies, therefore, (c) everyone has sinned.

This is Paul's conclusion in Romans 3 and 5 and proves by all means that what the Law prohibits is what can in fact be accused of sin, because where there is no law there is no sin!

For this, however, some questions may be raised: what to do with the men who died in the Flood, if there was no law? The answer is simple: they died even without the law, and that is why they needed a later announcement: 1 Pet 3:18-20 (note that the text deals precisely with the case of the flood, as these men died "without the law"). Remember that it was evident that murder (the cause of the flood – Gn 6:11, 13) was a sin, but it was not imputed, precisely for the reasons given by Paul; and even without this imputation, God sent the Flood, which created a dispute, resolved in the New Testament (1 Pet 3:18-20). Note also that in Cain God informs that murder is a sin, and violence was the main cause of the Flood.

Romans 14:21, 23

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. [...] And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

The obvious question in this text is: what does it mean to not "come from faith"? Well, the meaning is clear: unbelief. If I do not believe that what I eat is pure, then I sin by doing it in unbelief. It is not merely a circumstantial uncertainty. Paul's focus is to show that we should not confuse our faith in what we eat, as the kingdom of God is not about food or drink. On the other hand, the better parallel with Romans 14 is 1 Corinthians 8:7. We know that wine and food in general were not a problem for almost anyone in Paul's time, and the connection of these things with "impurity" leads us to believe that the issue is more significant than mere ritual impurity (since in the Law, wine was not an impure drink). What would that be? Believers associating the drink with idols and treating them as impure. The contrast to this is eating without exposing these things – that is why the subject of faith and love enters this passage, as only with the faith that it is pure can one eat something dedicated to an idol (1 Cor 8:4, 9 [cf. the entire chapter]).

Therefore, the statement "everything that does not come from faith is sin" means that everything done without certainty in God, as opposed to the idol, is sin. It's not about uncertainty; it's about believing that the idol is something.

1 Corinthians 10:5-11

*But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play [1]. Neither let us commit **fornication**, as some of them*

committed, and fell in one day three and twenty Thousand [2]. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpentes [3]. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer [4]. Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

Paul points us again to his theology of sin, demonstrating that what displeases God ultimately leads to death. This is why it is stated that the Israelites, for the most part, were 'prostrated' (killed) in the desert. As evidence, he cites four circumstances that all resulted in the same outcome: death.

[1] - Idolatry in Exodus 32:4-28: In this situation, the people ate and drank in honor of the image made of God (or gods), committing the sin that in our Bibles appears as revelry and gluttony (which is essentially eating and drinking in honor of another deity). The result of this action is found in verses 10, 27, and 28 - death. In this first example, sin is what leads to death.

[2] - "Fornication" in Numbers 25:1-11: Clearly here, "fornication" is not referring to premarital sex but to sexual acts in honor of some false deity. Now, Paul is instructing the Corinthians that, seeing these men died, they should not engage in the same actions, as only what leads to death is considered sin.

[3] - "Temptation" in Numbers 21:5-7: Now the people test God, saying they would prefer to return to Egypt than to die in the desert, and in doing so, they sinned by putting God to the test, expecting Him to do better than He had. The result? The death of many bitten by snakes. As they began to die in pain, the Israelites admitted, "We have sinned!" (v. 7), realizing that sin leads to death. Therefore, only what causes death in the law can be considered a sin.

[4] - "Murmur" in Numbers 16:41-48: The people started to grumble against Moses and God, but this displeased the Lord. What did He do? He killed the Israelites with a plague because speaking against Christ and God is a sin. Now, everyone could be certain that sin is only what leads to death because only what displeases God leads to death. This is the way the law defines sin.

Paul says that these things happened this way to teach those believers in the first century about what sin is. So, what should believers avoid? Only those things that carry the penalty of death in the Law—this is Paul's reasoning, not mine. If it seems legalistic on one hand or liberal on the other (after all, the law does not label many things as sin that we do), take it up with God and make the mistake of the unbelievers in Numbers 16.

Galatians 5:18-23

*But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: **against such there is no law.***

Many men use this text to claim that in the New Testament, there is no more sin, only works of the flesh. The problem is that anyone familiar with the Law knows that what Paul refers to as "works of the flesh" are nothing more than broken commandments. For instance, what he calls "Idolatry" is condemned in the First and Second Commandments. All the carnal things mentioned in this passage from Galatians are, in one way or another, prohibited in God's Law. However, a detailed exposition of this text is not suitable at the moment, as our focus is on the final part of the text.

Paul, in stating the positive aspects (and also to prove that the works of the flesh are violations of the law), concludes by saying, "against such there is no law." And here, two things are being affirmed:

First, that the mentioned things are contrary to the Law, and the fact that they are works of the flesh only demonstrates that they are things we naturally desire or that flow from our fallen nature, not from the Spirit of God. Thus, the contrast is that what is done without breaking the Law is the result of the action of the Spirit of God. Therefore, we must understand that in Scripture, everything that is condemned is a work of the flesh, and everything that is encouraged or at least permitted is a result of the Holy Spirit.

Second, the fact that the Law does not prohibit is evidence that what is not prohibited is allowed. We have said that anything the law does not condemn can be practiced, from male polygamy to not working for an extended period. Therefore, as much as something may bother us, we cannot condemn it if God's Law does not prohibit it. Paul is clearly providing the fundamental tool here to know how far we can go in the Law: if the law does not condemn it, we can practice it, period. Of course, in the specific case Paul is addressing, he wants to highlight things that prevent us from sinning, such as if I do not want to commit adultery, have sexual relations with relatives, or engage in unnatural relations, then I should love. Love and kindness, for example, contrast with violations (and not with the commandments) of the law.

Natural Law

It will be a brief consideration to think about the "Natural Law." It is the trump card of Puritanism and Roman Catholicism, but it is nothing more than mere philosophical speculation. So, we will raise some quick questions:

1 — Is the content of Natural Law the same or different from the Torah? If it is the same, then it is the same law, just expressed in a different place (which is what we defend); if it is different, what is this content? Explaining this is a stumbling block for those trying to extract laws "from nature."

2 — Did the transgression of this law also result in death? If yes, which text presumes this?

If not, then it is not a law; it is just custom and culture, and therefore, its transgression is not sin. Does natural law come with its own sanctions? By what standard should it be judged whether it is just or not if natural law comes with sanctions? Here we know that what is attempted to be presumed from natural law can only be tested by Scripture, but if it can be tested by it, then it alone can establish what is right and wrong without natural law.

3 — How will I know that natural law is an actual law and not my legalism or philosophical invention?

If I know from the scriptures, why not use them as the standard, since they are the standard for evaluating natural law? If I do not know from the scriptures, then natural law has everything to be a despotic and legalistic tool – an addition to God's Law.

4 — From where are the principles of natural law derived?

Here, we are asking for a philosophical principle that generates such laws. We know that Pythagoras attempted through mathematical means, and Sophocles said that the laws of the government needed to be judged by Natural Law; thus, it cannot be the law of the State and perhaps is of mathematical deduction. How do we know if it is so or not? (In practice, "natural law" only establishes Greek and Roman customs).

5 — Who can interpret and expose natural law?

It is usually argued that the interpretation of scriptures is done by a "magisterium" (Roman Catholics) or by standards of faith (Reformed and Protestants); who identifies and systematizes natural law? Politicians? And if an individual disagrees, can he point to what as proof of being right or wrong?

6 — Is Natural Law an addition to Biblical Law?

If it is not, where is it in the Biblical Law? But if it is, it violates the very biblical law that requires nothing to be added to it (Deuteronomy 4:2; Deuteronomy 12:32).

We have no problems with any particular law of any state because if a state orders its citizens to wear only white and black clothes, it will not violate any biblical law; but this order will not be based on anything other than human interests and senses of control — no one should give it any biblical foundation, except that one

must obey the authorities and nothing more. Our question is simple: what must the believer practice as law/commandments before God?

In this, natural law does not interfere at all and does not contribute at all — it only hinders. And call us presuppositionalists if you want, it doesn't matter. The point is that natural law has no basis, no foundation, and cannot itself be judged, for it is ultimately placed above the law of God or on par with it. The truth is that "Natural Law" can only be what God condemns in the Law and that is universally known, nothing more.

LAW INTERPRETATION

Principiological Interpretation

Knowing what the Law of God is does not guarantee its correct interpretation, and we begin to discuss what is right in its statements. That's why many annoying men here start saying that the law is actually read in a principiological way, that is, that it provides principles and from them, we develop the rest of the orders. Despite the fact that this was exactly the same thought as the Pharisees, I won't treat them properly as Pharisees because the truth is that there are some distinct points because the Pharisees did not have the New Testament.

However, let's test the principiological interpretation with three orders in the law to see if it solves and allows such justification:

The first example is extracted from a history in the Law: Jacob, Rachel, and Leah. In Genesis 29, we are told that there was an intense dispute between Leah and Rachel, so that fights, confusion, stress, and similar things were present. From this — say those who read with "principiological" eyes — it is deduced that polygamous marriages (one man, several women) lead to greater conflict at home, and that in this particular text, we have a sign of disapproval of it (polygamous marriage, in this case). That is the principiological proposal.

On the other hand, we (the authors of this text) argue that the text, especially the commandments, **needs to be read as conceived and in the structure it establishes. In other words, it does not come from principles but establishes principles and stops at this establishment without further developments.** For example, in the case of Jacob, he joins two women who are sisters; from our reading, this only shows that polygamous marriages with sisters produce problems and disputes, so this would be the only possible interpretation of the text.

To our delight, later both the Law and the prophets explain Jacob's relationship: Leviticus 18:18 says that one should not marry two sisters because one becomes a rival to the other (and isn't that exactly what happens between Leah and Rachel?). The text is clear and straightforward (and it does not have any external penalty). Two sisters should never be taken within the same marriage. Ironically, some people come to this Leviticus text and presume the same thing: "the text prohibits marriages with more than one woman." If it did, it would suffice to say, "you shall not take two women, for God does not approve."

Note: Some people hide from their children the story of Jacob with his two wives. These people are ashamed of the Law of God. It is not a matter of the right time to be shown; it is a matter of thinking that they are wiser than God, who recorded the text for everyone to hear its public reading every seven years (Dt 31:9-13). God Himself wanted the entire law (including Jacob with his wives) to be heard by men, women, and children (v. 12).

But we don't stop here. In Ezekiel (the prophets are interpreters of the Law who bring specific revelations about the people's neglect of it), in chapter 23, we are told that God married Israel and Judah (therefore, a polygamous marriage — see Jeremiah 3). The way the text divides Israel and Judah is interesting because we know that there were disputes between both parts, just look from 1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17 to notice that it is not without reason that God divides Israel into two wives, to make it clear that the established law (that two sisters as wives is problematic) is in effect. And as there is no death penalty for this, God is not in sin for marrying two sisters. Israel and Judah lived in disputes, they were quarrelsome, and even to accept David as king, initially the south accepted him, and only after 7 years did the north elect him (1 Kings 2:11; 2 Samuel

2:10, 11; 5:5; 1 Chronicles 3:4, 5)! Don't we have here the dispute of two sisters (Israel and Judah) with one husband (God)? (read Ezekiel 23, Jeremiah 3, and 2 Samuel 19:40-43).

From this, we can reverse the process that is usually taken in principiologically interpretation. In principiologically, it is said that the text has principles, in ours, we say that the text is the principle; that is, there is no principle below the text, in between lines, subliminal, etc., but the text itself as it is explicitly expressed is the principle from which the order is seen. But let's continue with two more examples:

"You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15). What is this order? You must not take or withhold anything from someone with or without the person's knowledge (Lv 6). How does the principiologically view this order?

1 — It is an order to work; 2 — it is an order to work well; 3 — it is an order to share; 4 — it is an order not to be lazy (see, for example, Jean-Marc Berthoud's book on the eighth commandment).

Note that, if we rely on this principle, doing any of these things above is equivalent to breaking the commandment. But let's go to the first case:

It is an order to work. If it is exactly that, why was the order written as "do not steal" instead of "work" (positively)? Some, like Rushdoony, will say it is to avoid tyranny, but if this is true, and I deduce from the command exactly the positive order as equally ordered, it results in exactly the same tyranny they say the command is trying to avoid (and fall into what they condemn).

Furthermore, considering this, the positive order, unlike the commandment, has no "edge." For example, if I take a one-month vacation and don't work at all during this time, am I stealing? Worse, if I get rich young and decide to stop working, being able to support myself and my family (as well as help other people), am I stealing? Some, to be consistent, will affirm that yes, there is theft in these situations (after all, they don't want to let go of legalism).

If we go further, we have more questions: when can I start considering that not working is theft? Or, how much idleness is theft? Of course, the "opposite" of stealing is working, but that does not mean that this is the focus or objective of the commandment. Naturally, we conceive the commandment as it was written: regardless of whether you are rich, poor, work or do not work, you only break the commandment if you take something from someone. That's all the commandment says and nothing more. Even when Paul speaks of believers who did not work in Thessalonica, he does not address them as thieves, nor does he command that they be excluded from the church as he does to the incestuous young man in Corinth. Well, that can only be the case because in Corinth there is a transgression of the commandment, and in Thessalonica there is not. Beyond that, just read our other text on "The Sin of Piracy," in which we further explain this commandment.

It is an unparalleled folly that we would place burdens beyond those that God gives us, and from here, the second point for our "hermeneutics of the law" needs to be noted: if the first point clearly states that we should read the text itself as a principle, the second affirms **that we should not deduce from it the opposite as an order equivalent to what is prohibited**. To this, we add that there must be caution because the first commandment requires the opposite of it concerning its negation, but the commandment itself explains, saying to have only one God, the true one.

The third case is that of deduction based on perfection. We could say that this is the most Greek argument of those who say that the Torah has underlying principles. But let's see to make it clearer:

Usually, the idea is appealed that the ideal is how God created the world, that is, the way God made Adam. Thus, the ideal is for a man to have only one woman, for there not to be prostitutes, (only eat) vegetables [Adventist and other sects' deduction]...

But according to this same principle, we should also: walk naked, not eat barbecue [for those who defend this but are not vegetarians], live in some forest or garden without a house or tent (after all, the tent was the invention of a wicked man in Genesis chapter 4), etc., etc.

Of course, they do not want to accept all the implications, and that is why we will go further. In 1 Corinthians 15:45–50, Paul establishes the principle of perfection: it is not to be of flesh and blood because flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (this means that Christ, at this moment, no longer has "flesh and

blood," but another type of body, although it is physical and not just a spirit). He clearly says that ultimately Adam did not possess perfection because his flesh was corruptible (v. 47, 50).

Thus, the first Adam had everything for failure because his flesh was subject to the Fall, and what we will have after death is not subject to any kind of fall or sin. Now we are like Adam in the body; after death, we will be like Christ. Note that Paul goes against the "ideal" and says that the first Adam is precisely not the "ideal." This logic of the "ideal" is used to interpret various biblical texts and to blame individuals who just cannot be "as intellectual, wise, strong, etc." as those who defend such things. On the other hand, we say differently: first, **no 'ideal' can be equivalent to a commandment**, and second, **no ideal can be deduced from a text that clearly does not say that**.

These three things above lead us to the following conclusion: if biblical law does not prohibit, it cannot be a sin because only what it prohibits is a sin. Clearly see this as follows:

- 0 — There is no Natural Law outside the orders given in the Torah;
- 1 — The text establishes principles and does not rely on other principles;
- 2 — We cannot deduce the opposite of the commandments from them in an equivalent way;
- 3 — No ideal can be equivalent to a commandment;

C — Therefore, only what biblical law [commandments] prohibits is a sin.

C(a) — Sin is only what the law ties to death;

C(b) — Therefore, only what has the death penalty as a consequence is a commandment.

C(c) – Festivals and worship were regulated; common life has no regulations, only limits.

You could take point 2 and say, "But the first commandment of the ten says that we cannot have any other god before the true God, so the opposite of that is to have only the true God! Aha! Gotcha!" Sad mistake.

The first commandment clearly states that we must worship only one God when it says, "You shall have no other gods before me." Now, what is this if not clearly stating that there is only the living and true God? Furthermore, there are more commandments that positively and clearly order us to love only God (You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength — Dt 6:5). Only a fool forgets that God's commandments are not only the ten given (in Leviticus 18 and 20, for example, the text clearly states that the sexual prohibitions expressed there are God's command, the difference being that the Ten Commandments are the foundation and the most direct on what we should practice). It is so foolish to think otherwise that it is absurd that we still believe in men who constantly invent laws that the Torah never gave.

Quadruple Interpretation – Positive Way of Understanding the Law

What interpretative principle (not beneath the law, but on how to understand it) should we employ? Below, we will suggest what we call quadruple interpretation because it is based on four points that guide the understanding and mental organization of what the biblical text condemns and how it condemns.

This interpretation is based on how the authors of the New Testament perceive the biblical text, in addition to the subdivisions of the text in the Law and the Prophets. It is important to note that this way of reading is contrasting with the Puritan method of the tripartite division of the law. In other words, both methods do not work well together, so either the quadruple interpretation or the tripartite division (which divides the law into Moral, Civil, and Ceremonial Law) must be discarded. Although it may not seem so initially, by the end of the reading, you yourself will be able to observe this disagreement between the methods.

So, what are the categories? We divide the moral understanding of the law into four categories:

Sin

Impurity/Uncleanness

Dishonor

Foolishness or Lack of Wisdom

The first category, to some extent, we have already covered above in our text, but a brief summary is in order:

Sin is that which is linked to death in God's Law, meaning it is the violation of commandments. As Apostle Paul states, without law, there is no transgression (Romans 4:15), and John positively states that sin is the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4). The consequence of sin is death (Romans 6:23) or the shedding of animal blood (Hebrews 9:21, 22). Therefore, the method to identify what the Law condemns as sin is to observe death as the penalty. It's interesting that sin does not inherently result in death but supernaturally, as there is nothing, for example, in adultery that explains death as a penalty, just like there was nothing in the tree in the middle of the garden. Sin is only so because God says it is. If God does not say it, there is no transgression, and thus no sin. Therefore, the connection between sin and death is only perceptible to those who see spiritually because they see how God establishes it, not how culture or the consequences of individual actions resonate. The opposite of sin is righteousness and piety.

Note: Sometimes sin is categorized as "abomination" or "wickedness" in texts such as Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 (the Hebrew term is different from that used in Leviticus 11, which is also translated as "abomination," so one text has a moral emphasis while the other is merely about separation). We know that, by default, an abomination results in the death penalty, although it is sometimes categorized this way because there is no means of proving it (how will I prove that two men slept together?). This also leads us to sins that only God punished, such as breaking the first commandment, that is, not believing in Him (someone could, "civilly," not believe in God, but evidently, they would suffer the penalties for not believing, directly from God – not giving thanks when receiving food, some sexual sins, etc. would be other examples [we call this "subjective sin," when an authority other than God cannot punish]).

Impurity has two forms of being seen, two in the OT and one in the NT. In the OT, there are impurities that are sins, and in the NT, every impurity is a sin. However, we notice that not every impurity in the OT results in death, and since not every impurity results in death, it may not always be a sin. The book of Leviticus is full of examples of this. Eating the meat of unclean animals did not result in death, as it was not a sin (Leviticus 11:1-24). Having sexual relations with your own wife resulted in impurity (Leviticus 15:18), but it was not a sin (after all, both the OT and the NT strongly recommend it). The theology of impurity is interested in teaching how sin took the naturalness out of all these things, broke the standards, and made man dirty even what was previously clean – ultimately, impurity also signals the mixing of interests or hypocrisy (it is not a word primarily related to sex as many think). And what does impurity keep man away from Worshiping God? In Leviticus, it is clear that anyone who is impure cannot offer anything to God, so they are distant from Him. If an impure person touched something holy, then they would die. In the NT, it is clearer what God intended to convey with impurity because when a man lies with another (Romans 1), we see impurity, for it is confusion. Thus, anything in the OT that prevented the worship of God was impurity by default, and anything that confuses the classes that God divided (like man and woman, or the anus being used in place of the vagina), then there is impurity. The opposite of impurity is holiness or purity.

Dishonor is generally a process of family problems; it is a stain on personal honor or one's name, but it is not, in itself, a sin or impurity because it does not result in death, nor does it separate one from worshiping God (except in the case of the priest, where separation occurs in this way). For example, when Paul says that the lack of a veil in a married woman brings disgrace to her husband, he is not saying that the husband is sinning or impure, but that she will be improperly desired by other men in worship, contradicting the authority given by God to have the wife under the husband's headship (cf. 1 Corinthians 11). In the Old Testament, the failure to fulfill the levirate marriage was a dishonor (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), as it merely resulted in the humiliation of the brother who did not want to give offspring to the other and announced it without marrying the widow (unlike the case of Onan, who marries but refuses to give offspring to the brother, resulting in a broken promise and sin, so God killed him). The penalties are usually intrafamily, with no penalties applied by external authority (see who punishes the man in the levirate marriage break). So when there is no directly related consequence, there is no death, and there is no separation from holy things, we are dealing with an act of dishonor. The opposite of dishonor is honor or respect.

Note: honor is the only thing that could have a cultural factor, but Scripture itself shows that, in truth, it is related to the general roles expected in Scripture. For example, ideally, a daughter should marry a virgin; otherwise, there is "bad fame" (Deuteronomy 22:14; see Exodus 22:16, 17). If this is known to everyone, the woman only has her honor undone, but she does not die because of it; in Scripture, her sin would be lying about her virginity (Deuteronomy 22:14ss), not necessarily having lost it (Exodus 22:16, 17). This is perhaps one of the best examples of what lack of honor is or possessing it (in the rest of the book, we will explain these texts better). God also commands Isaiah to walk naked (Isaiah 20 – or almost naked), which is a dishonor, but since there is no sin, God is not contradicting Himself, just breaking and humiliating the prophet.

Lastly, there is **Foolishness** or lack of wisdom. Unlike the previous things, foolishness has clear cause-and-effect consequences. If you drank too much, you did not sin, but you will suffer the consequences of the pain and fatigue that comes from it; if you are lazy, you are not sinning, but you will become poor and dependent. You can be a foolish believer in this sense, and it is something that Isaiah even foresees for the New Covenant (Isaiah 58:8), but you will still be a believer. Perhaps you think that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom," however, when this appears in Proverbs, the context is always moral, meaning that the fear you have of God is what teaches you the difference between right and wrong (cf. Deuteronomy 4:5, 6, where wisdom is knowing God's Law and practicing it). The lack of "educational" wisdom is not a problem for God's Law since the Law is for everyone. No one will be less holy for not knowing how to read, not knowing a calculation, or not knowing philosophy – although knowing these things can help you earn good money or even better help someone. The opposite of Foolishness is Wisdom or Intelligence.

So, if your concern is to know what the Law says is right, wrong, discouraged, or has already passed, this comprehensive division can be of great help and a useful tool.

CONCLUSION

Sin = death;

Impurity = Temporary Separation (or sin, depending on the context);

Dishonor = Tarnishing the family name or oneself;

Foolishness = Not knowing how to organize life coherently.

Having seen the principles upon which we built the subject of marriage, we can now explore each topic separately.

Marriage Contract

The foundation that is usually accepted regarding the New Testament and is almost always ignored in the Old is that God relates to His people through covenants (not just for periods, but for contracts). But not just any covenant, not a covenant of king and servant: on the contrary, a marriage covenant. Covenant theology ignores this because it focuses on describing God's covenant merely in theological terms of sovereign-servant (there is truth in this, of course, but it is not the focal point). That's not how it happens in the Scriptures.

GOD OF COVENANTS

In Scripture, God does not act like an animal; He acts like a husband, always. We often confuse the concepts and think that the covenant at Sinai with Israel is of the common type in the Middle East between kings and vassals. But that's not how the prophets themselves saw that covenant. Although the concept of king-servant was present, the central focus is on husband-wives (Ezekiel 23:1-9). God made a marriage covenant with Israel (Jeremiah 31:32; Jeremiah 3; Ezekiel 23:1-9), and this needs to be taken into account when talking about marriage.

We also need not to confuse the concepts. When God wants to emphasize the role of savior and king, the covenant carries within it the blood, for without blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). But when God wants to highlight His promises and the consequent relationship with the people, the blood takes a backseat, and the contract takes precedence. How do we know this? Well, the covenant that God made with Adam did not involve blood, as it was made only in terms of promises and threats. The Torah itself has a similar structure, with its feasts merely foreshadowing God's final covenant with the people, which would indeed be through the blood of Christ, and would place blood in the background, focusing on the subsequent relationship. But we should not get lost in comparisons. God made a Covenant with Adam, and this covenant is the basis of human relationships: God made us to relate through covenants.

It's also important to note the role of each part of the covenant: God is always the husband (never the wife), and the Church (including Israel) is always the wife (or wives, depending on what is being taught). Passages like Jeremiah 3 and Ezekiel 23 are the best examples of the plural case (wives), and Hosea 1 is the best example of the singular case (wife). Notice that the prophets themselves interpret the covenant at Sinai and with Abraham not as a covenant between a sovereign and subjects, but as a marriage covenant. It's not a metaphor. It's the actual relationship. Proof of this is that when Paul reaffirms the prohibition of relations with a "cult prostitute," he emphasizes that we are one spirit with Christ (1 Corinthians 6:17, 20). Metaphors cannot be doctrines that divide right from wrong, so it's essential to note that there is indeed a marriage between God and His people.

It would be absurd if it were otherwise. Think of Hosea. If the marriage between God and His people is a metaphor, then Hosea is making a metaphor of a metaphor (he marries a prostitute to symbolize God's relationship with His people in the Old Testament), and he can never reach reality. As far as we know, the Old Testament is a shadow of reality, not a shadow of another shadow (Colossians 2:17 – but note that the text speaks of the law, assuming that God's marriage in the Old Testament is a shadow).

Now consider Ezekiel 16. Ezekiel 16 describes Israel's journey from its origins to the Egyptian captivity, its multiplication in Exodus 1, its growth, maturity for liberation, and finally, marriage (at Sinai). It's important to note that the prophet does not describe all of this as a beautiful metaphor of God and His people because at the end of Ezekiel 16, God says He will treat Israel like an adulteress, yes, with the penalty of death, and that's what happens to the people: Israel is killed by other nations. If everything were a metaphor, not even death could be real. Moreover, God would not kill the people for a metaphor.

In perspective, it's easier to say that the marriage between man and woman is, in fact, a "metaphor." Why? We know from Scripture that marriage seals the fact that both become one flesh; this means that the death of the flesh ends the marriage. Considering that we are spiritually married to God, and this will not end, marriage in the present world only symbolizes God's marriage to His people, not the other way around. What is temporary, by definition, cannot be reality.

Think of it another way: Christ Himself says that in heaven there is no marriage (Mark 12:25), which is logical even from the Torah, as it only connects marriage to the flesh – only if the flesh were to continue to exist would marriage continue. Now, isn't that proof that, in reality, God created marriage to express His relationship with us and not that the marriage between God and His people is a reflection of the marriage between man and woman?

Also, God, being a good husband, disciplines and rebukes Israel. He teaches the people, and the people, for their part, have the covenant of submission to God and His commands. This is the marriage covenant. If the people violate this covenant, God pursues them. The truth is that the covenant does not cease to exist; on the contrary, even when God gives a certificate of divorce (Jeremiah 3:8), it does not say that Israel ceases to be His wife, but rather foresees that He will give Israel a better covenant, with lesser burdens and greater mercy (Jeremiah 3:12). In fact, God never abandoned Israel, as He saved the remnant from the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, having converted the first Jews in Acts 2–3. God indeed made the new covenant with Israel (the nation) represented as Judah and included the Gentile church in the covenant (the remainder of Israel). Then He made both into one church. Thus, the entire church and God became one spirit.

Now, marriage can only be dissolved by the death of the flesh, but with God, we are spiritually married. If the spirit does not die and, especially, our husband never dies, the marriage is never dissolved with God, ensuring His people complete salvation. Here, we are shown, therefore, that the marriage relationship further highlights the transience of physical marriage: God did not create Adam with the intention that his marriage would last

forever. Rather, God intended only to teach something through the creation of Adam – that the last Adam would come (1 Corinthians 15).

Note that God's relationship is marital (Hosea 2:19, 20). Therefore, everything that is true about God's relationship with Israel/the Church is true regarding the marriage of Husband-Wife(s). Marriage is the full expression of God's relationship with His people.

Note: Just as God is not obligated to marry, we cannot presume that man is either. However, as we should note, God's marriage to His people allows for many blessings, which presupposes the same for the marriage between man and woman. If we consider the full meaning of marriage, we will understand that God gives it as a blessing and not as a commandment. We will return to this below, commenting on Genesis 2.

GENESIS 2 – THE CONTRACT

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis 2:23-25)

We need to contextualize Genesis 2. The text is not talking about the ideal model of human relationships. There's no such thing in Scripture. The text doesn't deal with "ideal" things; that's our invention because we can't explain with our minds why some things are allowed. Instead, it's teaching about what the marriage contract is. We'll demonstrate below.

How do we know the text isn't talking about an ideal? Because not even Jesus cites it that way in Matthew 19 or Mark 10. Jesus, when citing the passage, proves that it's directed toward the marriage contract, not marriage in its relationships. We need to remember that the creation of Adam was exclusively for him to represent Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45), so the figure can't be confused with things that are not essential to it. For example, if God wanted, He could have created Adam with children, but He didn't, to express the full relationship of Christ with the Church. God didn't want Christ to be alone, so He gave Him the Church.

Let's flip it: does it mean the ideal of marriage is not to have children? As you can see, the text itself says the opposite of that. So, we can't assume that because Adam was created in a certain state, that state is the ideal. In fact, Adam couldn't be the ideal in any way, because, as Paul shows, creation was not the ideal, but had the original intention of expressing the coming of Christ, not being an end in itself (1 Corinthians 15:45-50). Thus, it's not a text strictly about sin in relation to sex but about the contract.

Note: What would be the ideal? Being married or single? For instance, in Heaven, we don't marry anymore (Mark 12:25), is that proof that the ideal for us is not to be married? What is the ideal: creation or Heaven? This apparent contradiction only exists because we reason in terms of Greek ideals and not by biblical notions of right and wrong. God didn't create man to be the way he was created, because creation is good, but not glorious. Adam couldn't inherit the kingdom of God because he was corruptible, as evidenced by his fall (1 Corinthians 15:50). Thus, at no point is the original creation, in Scripture, used as an ideal, but as something to be surpassed – and this applies even to marriage itself, as the original creation doesn't express the ideal of marriage, only the commandment tied to the marriage contract, that's all. Heaven, even though it is the Ideal, says nothing about marriage on Earth, so any attempt to use either as an ideal results in failure.

Speaking of sin, the text is not about a commandment. As we have already shown in "What is the Law of God?", commandments have demarcation lines of transgression. "Not to marry" finds its line where? In age? In financial conditions? Worse, in Jeremiah 16:1, 2 the Lord Himself forbids Jeremiah to marry. God cannot contradict His own commandments; He will never command a man to lie with another man's wife, or to kill an innocent. Therefore, we can say that this text is not a commandment about to marry.

If we go further, we will see that Paul instructs, in 1 Corinthians 7, that ordinary men should not marry (the order is different for bishops, even in the context of persecution). And for what reason does Paul say this? Because of the present moment [when the church lived under persecution between the years 40 and 70 AD

(1 Co 7:26, 27)]. Is Paul contradicting the Law of God? By no means! He knows well that there is a matrimonial law (Romans 7:2, 3), but this law is not about the obligation to marry, but about the act of marriage itself, which is the contract.

Now, we know that there is some commandment in the text of Genesis 2, but if it is not about having children or getting married, what is it then? Simple, God's commandment is about what the marriage contract is, hence the explanatory clause ("therefore" and "they shall be one flesh", meaning they cannot cease to be). As Jesus himself demonstrates, God's commandment is that the marriage contract binds individuals for life (Matthew 19:6). Only in this and in this is the commandment.

What are the evidences of this in the text itself?

The text says "his" wife: we have the feeling that this is a natural writing that simply implies that the individuals became husband and wife after becoming one flesh. But the truth is that this text says the exact opposite. The order in which things happen will clarify, see how it is written and see what is demonstrated:

(a) The man leaves his father and mother

(b) cleave unto

(c) his wife

According to the logic of the text, the order of events is: (a) his wife (b) leaving father and mother (c) cleave unto

Why do we know this? Simple, the text doesn't say that the man joins "a" woman or "the" woman, but "his" woman, meaning she is already his wife before the union, and the union doesn't make them husband and wife – this is clear and direct in the text, without needing further explanation. Also, it doesn't say "hold fast with your girl" or "with the virgin", as the text aims to show that the contract precedes the physical union, and thus uses precise words. The text aims to demonstrate that **Eve was already Adam's wife before he joined her, and this contractual union has the physical bond as the limit of the contract's validity.** We will see other texts that prove this, but we need to clarify more details.

For example, leaving father and mother is something that can only happen before the union of the two, as this act signifies the creation of a new family. Thus, the text is teaching about the separation from the family due to the marriage contract. So, only the parents are present here. They are the authorities of the marriage, and the marriage is recognized before them.

Note: The text is not concerned whether the contract is written or verbal, as we see, God's contract with man is not written, although symbolized by the trees in the middle of the Garden. The text is also not concerned with pragmatic issues, such as whether the lack of civil registration can cause any problem or not for political administration (submission to civil authorities has no relation to the validity of the marriage contract before God – at most, it is a record due to our submission, but this record has no real value). See below.

Here still fits another piece of information: why is it the son who leaves father and mother? Because contrary to what is often said, marriage was consummated in the woman's parents' house, as a means for her parents to have proof that she was a virgin (Deuteronomy 22:13-18; Song of Solomon 3:4) – the objective of the text is solely to prove the woman's virginity, with the route taken being nonessential to validate the marriage.

Another question raised by the contract is: who can accept it? Although this answer is given several times in the texts we will study next, we need to understand what Genesis accepts as the "parties." These parties are not – as Catholics think – the Church, nor are they – as Protestants think – the Political Government, nor are they – as liberals think – the individuals, although in extreme situations they "witness" between each other and God. Let's explain.

The only ones present in the text are the man's parents, which indicates that the weight of the contract is not merely on the woman's parents, but on the acceptance by the man's parents. They are the ones who accept the marriage or testify in favor of it. Only the parents (not the siblings, nor the State, etc.) have this power in the scriptures. This text of Genesis teaches about the marriage contract, not about the politics acquired by man afterwards, therefore, we must understand that this is the assertion of the text. The man does not marry

because a church said so, or because a politician said so, but because the parents (of both parties) accepted and agreed in a vow.

In summary, in Genesis 2, the commandment is "they shall become one flesh," that is, "they shall not cease to be one flesh," thus becoming the marriage contract. This contract is established intrafamiliarily and is for as long as the flesh lasts, making the violation of this contract a sin (spoiler: divorce does not violate the contract but what happens after it).

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT IN SHECHEM AND DINAH – MISTAKES AND HOW TO RESOLVE THEM

*And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, **he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.** 3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. 4 And **Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.** 5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come. 6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter: which thing ought not to be done. 8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. 9 And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. 10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. 11 And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. 12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife. 13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: 14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: 15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; 16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. 18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. 19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. 20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, 21 These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. 23 Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of their's be our's? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. 24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city. 25 And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. 26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. 28 They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, 29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. 30 And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. 31 And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an **harlot?** (Genesis 31)*

Here we have a strange case: Shechem first have sex with Dinah, humiliating her. However, note that Shechem himself asks his father to take Dinah as his wife, proving that men understood that sexual relations did not make individuals husband and wife. Furthermore, he followed exactly the relationship described in Genesis 2: the man leaves his father and mother and needs the authorization of the girl's parents for the marriage. Within this, it is noted that sexual relations without marriage with a girl who has parents is folly (note: "lying with Jacob's daughter" is the problem; if she did not have parents, the text would address it differently). Clearly, what is at issue here is an act of dishonor, not an act of sin (we will see more about this later).

Hamor and Jacob also understand that Shechem was not married to Dinah. However, the problem that occurs is that, in the midst of it all, Shechem stops dealing with Jacob and starts dealing with Dinah's brothers (this was his great mistake). Until then, as long as everything was being resolved by Jacob, the process would follow according to Genesis 2 and Exodus 22 specifies, but Shechem's impatience prevented him from dealing with the proper authority. The result: Dinah's brothers kill Shechem and his family. Yes, they were innocent men before Jacob, and to prevent this from happening again, God's law explains the marriage process better later on.

So, having said that, Dinah went to Shechem's house (without ceremony [because marriage is not a ceremony, but nothing prevents it], and without another authority), making the situation even more complicated. After all, the property belongs to the husband, and if Dinah lived with Shechem, she could already be considered his wife. But Jacob's sons were wicked; they violated their own vow, killed innocents, and did evil. All based on the fact that Shechem treated Dinah as a harlot. Now, does the Bible punish with death the prostitute and those who lie with her? Clearly not (we will see in another text about this issue), unless it is cultic sex; hence, there is impiety in the hands of Jacob's sons. And God, to prevent this from happening again, teaches:

*And if a man entice a maid that **is not betrothed**, and lie with her, he shall surely **endow her to be his wife**. If her father utterly **refuse to give her unto him**, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. (Exodus 22:16-17)*

Now, does sex make them husband and wife? Look, the text of Exodus 22 aims to prevent what happened to Jacob's family from happening again. It's not about prostitution or anything else. Exodus 22 shows that a man becomes obligated to take the girl he seduced as his wife, considering that she lives with her father (which is different from a prostitute, where there is no seduction, only payment). In this scenario, there is an obligation to marry. Exodus excludes any other relative from the relationship, showing that if the girl lives under her father's authority, the man is obligated to marry her. On the other hand, the father can refuse, indicating that neither of them is husband and wife, and the man does not face the death penalty (if it were adultery, he would). Therefore, this has nothing to do with adultery and cannot be inferred from it.

In reality, what the text wants to ensure is that what happened to Shechem does not happen again: death. The man is innocent, although he dishonored the girl. And, in the law, dishonor is not a sin (as we have already shown in the introduction). Now, if a man treats a girl who lives under her parents' authority as a prostitute (by sleeping with her), should he be punished with death? No! Because there is no sin, only dishonor. Now we can revisit the issue: what is the marriage contract? Is it sexual union? No, because no father can invalidate the marriage union anywhere in Scripture: what God has joined together, let no one separate. In other words, Exodus 22 proves that sex did not make them married because "he shall take her to be his wife" is in the future tense, not the present, and the father can refuse to make his daughter a wife, meaning that they did not get married.

But this raises another problem: what if the girl hides from her father that she has already had sex with a man? It's quite simple, in this case, **she has sinned**:

*But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: **because she hath wrought folly in Israel**, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. (Deuteronomy 22:20, 21)*

Indeed, Exodus 22 anticipates that the father knows about the sexual act and seeks to preserve the lives of the man and the woman because there is no inherent sin. However, the woman who engages in sexual relations without her father's knowledge and consent is to be put to death because she has committed a sin by violating her father's authority. Note that the text in Deuteronomy does not say that the woman was married to another man but that she was prostituting herself in her father's house (indicating that she would not die if she did not live with her father [with an exception if the father were a priest - Leviticus 21:9]).

Deuteronomy 22 is proving by all means that: 1 - sex is not marriage; 2 - but it is a violation of marriage if the woman has engaged in it under her father's authority, has not disclosed it to him, **and then marries another man**. A question may arise: when should the woman tell her father that she has had sexual relations? Before marrying another man, so the father will follow the process outlined in Exodus 22:16, either allowing or invalidating the relationship she had and making her free to marry.

Now, if a woman and a man have become sexually united, what are they? "One flesh" (1 Corinthians 6:16), but not husband and wife. As we have seen above, a contract is necessary for "one flesh" to be equivalent to becoming "husband and wife" (thus, a man becomes one flesh with as many women as he sexually unites with, but only with the one who enters into a marriage contract with him is he married for life). But consider it another way, if it is true that becoming one flesh is equivalent to marriage, what can we say about Rahab, the former prostitute? I must say that God does not annul any marriage, whether it occurred before or after conversion. Therefore, if Rahab was one flesh (in the sense of marriage) with the men she united with, she not only committed adultery but also made her husband an adulterer, and Christ would descend from a person who remained in adultery (Matthew 1:5 - David committed adultery, but he did not remain in it).

Note: Deuteronomy 22:20 shows that the man only discovered that the woman was no longer a virgin because she did not bleed (cf. verse 17 [the garment with blood was shown as proof of virginity, which may explain why the first night of sex could be in the parents' house {Song of Solomon 3:4}]). On the other hand, if there is no carnal union, the contract can be broken by either party, such as the groom, and we see this in the story of Joseph (Matthew 1:18-20), proving that Deuteronomy only wants to show us that the contract cannot be canceled after the physical union, but it says nothing about what would happen without this union. If Joseph were to unite with Mary, from his perspective of the facts, she would be worthy of death, but by releasing her from the contract, she would not become a sinner and would not deserve death; she would only be obliged to marry the one who had impregnated her (Exodus 22:16, 17). Thus, we should understand that the contract can be broken by the husband as long as the union is not consummated.

Only the covenant can elevate the value of "one flesh" to something greater than mere sexual relations (2 Samuel 5:1). This is why we do not say that animals get married, because they cannot make covenants or practice justice, which is the image of God in man. Do animals have sex? Nevertheless, we do not expect their union to be treated as marriage.

JUDAH AND TAMAR - MARRIAGE AS A CONTRACT ABOVE ALL

*6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. 7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord; and the Lord slew him. [...] Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, **Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown**: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. 12 And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. 14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, **and she was not given unto him to wife**. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. 16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? 17*

*And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? 18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. 19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. [...] And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy **daughter in law hath played the harlot [adultery]**; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. 25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. 26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, **She hath been more righteous than I**; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more. (Genesis 38:6,7, 11-19, 24-26)*

Let's see how the contractual process was followed: after her widowhood, Tamar returned to her father (that is, to the authority over her), but returned with a marriage contract. Here we need to be cautious, as the text says she had not been given to Shelah as a wife. In the absence of technical language, the meaning is clear: she was married to Shelah, but the act had not been consummated. How do we know she already had a marriage contract? Because not only those who informed Judah, but Judah himself acknowledged that she committed adultery after becoming pregnant. Notice how distinct this is from the case of Dinah, where prostitution is the issue, not adultery. The proof that this was recognized is that the penalty for adultery is death, therefore Tamar should have been put to death. Don't believe it? Deuteronomy 22 clarifies:

*If a **damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband**, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; 24 Then ye **shall bring them both** out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he **hath humbled his neighbour's wife**: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. 25 But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die. 26 But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter:*

What we have before us? Something quite simple: a virgin engaged to a man who lies with another man without any resistance commits sin (note that the text, even though she is a virgin, already treats her as another man's wife). But not only that, the text reveals something about the story of Judah and Tamar: Tamar was engaged (betrothed) to Shelah, and since she appeared pregnant without any protest, there was a presumption of guilt upon her, deserving the penalty that the text foresaw. In fact, by the way the text deals with the matter, both (Judah and Tamar) should have died, and hence we notice that Judah's statement ("She is more righteous than I") makes perfect sense: how could he punish her if he himself should be put to death? He could not accuse her; his judgment was not free, he was guiltier than her, so he could not "cast the first stone." What we have, therefore, is not just a mere Jewish culture understanding the contract as marriage, but the law itself affirming it – God considers them both married when the engagement contract is accepted by the parents, and after that, sexual union is just the consummation.

Note: In Leviticus 19:20, we see that a betrothed female slave would not be put to death if she lay with another man. This proves that the marriage contract can vary depending on the previous contractual structure. However, once a woman is free, if she lies with a man other than her betrothed, she should be put to death. The man committed sin, clearly, as shown by the need for atonement (only for the man, as the woman is not treated as guilty of adultery in this case – note that this differs from the cases in Exodus 22 and Deuteronomy 22). Another variation of the marriage contract is the levirate, which imposed the obligation to bear children in the name of the brother who died (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). This contract could be unfulfilled, but once accepted and not fulfilled, God saw it as sin (resulting in death), as it would be the breaking of a vow (Genesis 38:8-10 – no, the text does not speak of masturbation).

We can summarize the understanding of the Old Testament and Genesis 2 as follows:

1 - Genesis 2 establishes that the woman is the man's wife before the physical bond.

2 - The physical bond marks the fact of the contract, making the validity of this contract real for as long as the life of the flesh endures (since we do not resurrect with the same flesh, this is why marriage is not reinstated in the Resurrection [Matthew 22:30] – it would be, if we returned to the same body [as believed by the Pharisees and by much of the 'Reformed']).

3 - Thus, Genesis 2 and the Old Testament legislate on the fact that marriage is an unbreakable contract, as Jesus shows, it is only on this contract that Genesis 2 specifically deals with (Mark 10:7-9).

THE NEW TESTAMENT

There aren't many passages in the New Testament about marriage in the same way as in the Law. The Law defines the terms, the New Testament accepts them. But let's consider a few passages to notice what we have been saying:

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: 18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. (John 4:17-18)

What do we have here? First, an interpretation that the woman would be an adulteress, however, we cannot confirm what happened. We only know that she had 5 husbands, and these five either died or divorced her. Whatever the reality, we know that the fact she was living with a sixth man did not make him her husband. Note that the passage says nothing about whether this man was married to another woman or not, since polygamy was not a problem. The issue is that neither she nor he ever formalized or made marriage vows, so she was simply living with him, in the practice of *porneia* (sexual relationship without a marriage contract), proving that even Jesus recognizes (according to the law) that sex does not make two people husband and wife.

Another proof that the marriage contract is God's law is found in Romans 7:2 ("For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth "). Think of it this way: when or where in the Torah is it stated that a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives? Since everyone expects an unequivocal statement because they interpret God's Law without it itself, they do not understand that this Law is clearly that of Genesis 2. It is the only text in which this marriage contract is specified in the way Paul says it (bound by the law while the husband lives - "one flesh" - cf. Rom 7:3). In 1 Corinthians 7:39 Paul says exactly the same thing.

Note: A compelling comparison would be the Nazirite vow. No one in particular was obligated to take it, but once taken, it had specific laws governing its practice. Doing anything outside of this vow (like cutting one's hair) was a violation of it, resulting in sin (as breaking vows is a sin). Similarly, marriage does not obligate anyone in particular to its practice, but upon making the marriage vow, the limitations of the vow affect you regardless of how you wish the marriage to be. Therefore, it cannot be undone, as by the nature of the marriage law itself, it is for life, limits the number of husbands (to one only), and establishes a relationship of superiority (husband) and inferiority (wife) – yes, call me misogynistic, sexist, or any other adjective coined by experts.

But there is an observation that confirms what we said at the beginning: when Paul explains the law of marriage, he always speaks of the woman (not the man) being bound to the husband (and not the husband to the woman) while he lives. Of course, one thing implies the other in a certain way, however, the form of the argument signals something we leave to address now, although present in Genesis. Notice that in Genesis 2 the text does not say: "a **woman** shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife"? Why not? Well, because the woman is passive, so she is the one who is bound to the husband, but the husband is **not obliged** to be bound **solely** (singularly) to her. Therefore, in Genesis 2 we clearly see that the contract limits everything to one husband, but not to the number of women.

We can explain it another way: God's law (and the New Testament) demonstrates that the woman is singularly bound to the husband, and although this implies the contract on the opposite side as a binding of the parties, it does not mean that both parties have the same rights and duties. Now, this should be clear because we

know that, although the contract is one, the man should love the woman, and the woman should submit to the husband (1 Corinthians 7:39; Ephesians 5:22, 25), thus the same contract establishes distinct roles and rights for the parties. Or will you say that God can only have one people? (we are not saying that he has two or three, but if he can have more than one). The people, on the other hand, can only have one God. God's marriage contract with the people implies duties for both parties, but the duties are distinct and consequently the rights. Understand the central point: **marriage is a contract, verbal or written, but above all a contract and this contract has two sides, giving distinct powers to the parties, but with an identical binding for both: the indissolubility of marriage.**

Note: Numbers 5:11-31 strongly resonates as evidence of this contract, because, for example, the man is the only one in the relationship who can feel jealousy, and this is never attributed to the woman. The marriage contract that God created implies the possibility of jealousy on the part of the man (Numbers 5 only speaks of male jealousy, never female), but never on the part of the woman. This clearly proves that the contract grants distinct rights and duties to both parties.

The Right Over the Body of Another – To Use and To Be Used – Objectification

When Genesis specifies that both are "one flesh," one of the things being said is: one has control over the flesh of the other. This is different from commanding life in general, something mentioned only in relation to the husband. Let's look at the right of "to use and be used" in Scripture:

Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. (1 Corinthians 7:3-4)

Paul begins by showing that there is a kind of kindness or benevolence associated with marriage that is owed. There is a duty there (so he's not inventing this now). This duty is for the man not to sexually control his own body, nor the woman hers. Therefore, in the marriage covenant, becoming one flesh (until death) means that sexually, they belong to each other. Ironically, by thinking that this is either a novelty or a general principle of the law, we fail to notice that the perfect example of this is the marital life of Jacob.

And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. (Genesis 30:3)

When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. (Genesis 30:9)

And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night. (Genesis 30:16)

These Greek ideas (of "objectification") have flooded our current world, saying that men who do with women "whatever they want sexually" are "objectifying" them. Aside from the fact that this means nothing because it's based on the woman's feelings, we see that the general concept contradicts Scripture, which is favorable to "objectification" of both parties (remember that Scripture establishes dowries [payment] for marriage, the financial capability of the man [to the dismay of MGTOW], among other things that we would consider "objectification"). Jacob's case proves this and even proves it from the perspective of women. Jacob did not protest at any of the times they demanded sexual relations from him, or his sexual power. And he did so because he was one flesh with them, and had no right to refuse them. See, this is what Paul has just said in 1 Corinthians 7:

Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. (1 Corinthians 7:5)

Was Jacob praying or fasting? If not, then there was no reason to refuse the offers from Leah and Rachel. This means that even if Jacob did not want to, he should fulfill, since his acts do not contradict biblical law, but establish it (as seen in Genesis, even the establishment of the marriage covenant). Men have no obligation to sexually satisfy any other woman outside of the marriage contract, but Jacob had the obligation to satisfy Leah and Rachel (with the concubines) because they were in a marriage contract. Outside the

contract, if a woman demands my sexual action, I am not obligated. Within marriage, however, her sexual desire is a command, going against this is to violate the contract. Biblical law establishes this relationship, which is subsequently reinforced by Paul.

Sarah and Abraham go through the same situation, as she demands that Abraham lie with Hagar. Now -- think believers -- Abraham's case was as much a mess as Jacob's, so it cannot be what Paul has in mind. But, in fact, it is precisely what he has in mind, because this is what Genesis 2 establishes: the mutual right over each other's flesh. While this right does not violate the marriage contract (for example, the man making the woman lie with another man), there is nothing to prove that the cases of Jacob and Abraham are not precisely the best practical examples of "the husband and wife do not have authority over their own bodies." Any sexual union without a marriage contract does not obligate either party to have authority over the other's body. However, in marriage, if one party (man or woman) deprives the other of sex, they are defrauding them (1 Corinthians 7:5 - ἀποστερέω [cf. Mark 10:19]). Therefore, Jacob, even if he wanted to, could not refuse the sex demanded by Leah and Rachel in any way. Jacob's mistake was to marry two sisters (Leviticus 18:18) and not to have sex when and with whom they demanded it.

We can see where Paul got the concept of defrauding (ἀποστερέω - ἀποστερεῖτε). It is suggestive that the text of Exodus 21:10 uses, in Greek (in the Septuagint, which was the version known to Greek-speaking Gentile believers), the same word to express what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:5. Ironically, it is one of those texts that deals with polygamy, and as nowadays everyone is afraid to touch these texts, we lose what the apostle himself in the New Testament said.

Moreover, it is clear that if defrauding is prohibited in a polygamous context, it is also prohibited in a monogamous one -- or you didn't see me using the polygamous texts above? It becomes even more interesting when we notice that the text of Exodus 21:10 carries the concept of "right", that is, it seeks to establish the right of the first wife, showing that the husband not only owes her with goods, but also sexually (perhaps this text is one of the best summaries of the meaning of the marriage contract in the Torah [Pentateuch]). From here comes the concept of servitude in marriage. If you cannot defraud, it is because, in a sense, you are in a situation of servitude -- which is what Paul further develops in 1 Corinthians 7.

This should show us the deep and mysterious role of the marriage contract. And violating it is breaking the covenant. Breaking this contract is usually called "adultery," "infidelity," or "defrauding." We will summarize the first and second terms below (since we just explained the third), proving what adultery and infidelity are:

- 1 - Sleeping with a young woman engaged to another man (Deuteronomy 22; Genesis 38).
- 2 - Sleeping with another man's wife (Leviticus 20:10).
- 3 - Dissolving the marriage contract and remarrying the same woman who has already married and dissolved the contract again (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Leviticus 18:20; Leviticus 20:10) -- we will see this in the chapter on divorce.
- 4 - Dissolving the marriage contract and remarrying any other woman (Genesis 2:23-25; Malachi 2:15, 16) -- we will see this in the text on divorce.

Closing Practical Points

Without covenant, without contract, there is no hierarchy. God made the world to have hierarchy from the beginning, with the woman being created after the man, signaling this fact (1 Timothy 2:12, 13), and the Fall only aggravated it (1 Timothy 2:14). If the family does not understand the contract it has, the rest of the world will be anarchic, with no obedience to any authority, with constant revolutions and contempt for all elders. The family itself loses value, as it is seen as the result of a mere animalistic union, and not as the treaty of authorities (husband > who seeks the girl's father > becomes a father himself > repeating the cycle). It's ironic to note that families with greater respect and submission among children often are Muslim, because in these families (though deceived by a false prophet), the understanding of the marriage contract still prevails -- see if the children do not properly respect their parents in these contexts. The covenant is what maintains hierarchy in the world. God is the God of the covenant. Therefore, man must be a man of the covenant.

DATING

Dating is nothing more than an appendix and can be resolved with a simple reasoning:

1 - Biblical Law does not prohibit anything similar to dating.

2 - Biblical Law presupposes that young men and women eventually have sex without a marriage contract (which could be in dating).

3 - There is only sin if sex in dating is hidden from the man who will marry the woman.

4 - Therefore, dating is not a sin.

We need to explain point 1 better: many say that dating is a sin because it did not exist in biblical times. However, such a thing is an outright lie. Dating with commitment did not exist, but dating did. The understanding of the Law is that relationships without commitment do not fall under God's prohibitions (as we saw in the text on the Law), therefore, it is not appropriate for dating to be prohibited, with our innovation actually being dating with commitment. We know this because men and women have always related without commitment, so the biblical Law sees the need to set limits: if the girl lives with her father, the boy must marry her; if she hides, then she sins when marrying another man (so, there is no sin to marry the same man!). Anyone who reads the text and thinks that these things happened by accident is extremely "innocent."

Finally, Paul's reasoning in Galatians 5 is: **against these things there is no law**, therefore, we must understand that if there is no law against dating, then there is no sin in this relationship.

The other side of the argument that because it did not exist, it is prohibited simply does not make sense. Even if it were true that dating did not exist, consider the following situation:

The fiat currency without backing did not exist, does this mean that those who use it today sin? Clearly not (and some like Gary North still say that governments sin by issuing fiat currency). Following this same principle, the wedding party with the bride arriving later would be a sin, since in Scripture it is the Groom who arrives later and meets the woman at her parents' house – therefore, all current weddings in the West would be sinful. Sin, as we saw, has to be something prohibited, and God never prohibited anything similar to dating, only imposed limits with one of them resulting in sin if marriage is contracted with another man.

This subject will become clearer throughout the book, especially in the chapter on prostitution.

CONCLUSION

The marriage contract is the central theme of the first marriage;

The Torah testifies that marriage is a contract;

The New Testament reaffirms the understanding of the Torah;

The lack of understanding of this contract destroys the family itself.

Divorce and Remarriage

Now, it is essential for us to understand that marriage is a contract, and not a sexual relationship. Already in Genesis 2, we have proof of this when it is said about marriage that a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, that is, she is his wife before the consummation of the union. Genesis 2 is also relevant in showing the type of contract that exists in marriage: when a man and a woman enter into this contract, they are united as long as there is life in their flesh, and therefore, the marriage contract ends when the husband dies (Romans 7:3; 1 Corinthians 7:39) – it is the end of the contractual bond, after all, the contract lasts as long as there is flesh, and if one of the two dies, then there is no more contract because the flesh no longer has life; it is quite simple: the contract states that the flesh is the temporal bond that limits the marriage.

Similarly, it is important to emphasize that God's Law is fundamental in this matter, for what it says about marriage is naturally a rule. If it does not prohibit, it is allowed, if it prohibits, it is not allowed. Thus, when the law stipulates a form for marriage, it must be accepted, resulting in a breach if this line is crossed. Naturally, some things that biblical law allows offend Western sensibilities, dating back to the time of Augustine, although this is not our focus now.

Here, however, we will not dwell on the evangelical issues raised against what we will say, as we will focus on what the biblical text says: Genesis 2, Deuteronomy 24, Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 23, Malachi, Matthew, Mark, and Paul. All of this will be addressed here, albeit briefly.

OLD TESTAMENT (OT)

Marriage in Genesis – The Inviolable Contract

We have already strongly demonstrated the contractual nature of marriage; however, it remains to note the detail that we saved for this text: in Genesis 2, it is said that man and woman become one flesh (v. 24). This needs to be understood, first, as a mystery (Ephesians 5:31, 32) and, second, as something definitive. The text in Genesis does not say: one flesh until something happens. It simply states that the union exists as long as the flesh exists (without flesh, there is no way to be one flesh, obviously).

You might say, "But in Genesis 2 there was no sin, so the contract is treated ideally there; with adultery and fornication, we should understand that divorce and remarriage by the innocent party are permissible." However, in Genesis 2, there is also no "father and mother" (neither did Adam have parents nor did they have children themselves), yet both are mentioned in the text. It is obvious that the purpose of the text is to establish the rule for any place and time in the world, maintaining the exceptionality of Adam's case only in the fact that there was no sin, but not in God having changed what He established for the marriage contract (Jesus will refer to this by saying, "it was not so from the beginning," showing that this is the *order*, not the *ideal*).

Note: Jews in their theological disputes claim that 'one flesh' means the children, but this is absurd. The text is pointing to a mystery, for we do not know what "one flesh" really is (if one flesh is "the children," then the mystery is over), no text explains this; in the same way that being one spirit with the Lord is likewise a mystery (1 Corinthians 6:17). Furthermore, the Jews knew that Genesis 2 establishes an inviolable contract, with the legal permission for divorce being an explanation due to the existence of sin and, therefore (they believed), undoing this mystery of one flesh (would the children die in the divorce?). Moreover, this explains why there is no marriage in heaven, since flesh and blood do not enter heaven (1 Corinthians 15:50), preventing a new contract.

Note that in Genesis 2 the commandment is very clear: "and **they shall be** one flesh": this is the commandment, seeking to cease being one flesh results in sin, therefore, showing that there was never, even in creation, any possibility for divorce and remarriage, since ceasing to be one flesh is breaking the commandment if I circumvent it to become one flesh with another woman (or man).

Deuteronomy 24 – The Proof that the Contract is inviolable

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. 2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. 3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; 4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the Lord: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 24:1–4)

We don't know why men, when reading this text, stop at the first verse, which mentions the reasons for divorce, and ignore the rest. Now, the text is clearly stating that a divorced woman cannot remarry because, upon remarriage, she becomes defiled, and as Leviticus shows, defilement (in the context of marriage) is adultery (Lv 18:20; Lv 20:10). But let's go step by step.

First, we have the possible reasons. Now, the problem is clear: the man saw some *uncleanness* ("nakedness" or "blemish") in the woman, and therefore gives her a certificate of divorce. Here, it is not mentioned, for example, that the man could have mercy on the woman, because the law wants to express the hardness of

the people's hearts. For this reason, this order is not given conditionally, which led the Pharisees to understand that it was a *mandatory* command to give the certificate of divorce. Foolishness. If they truly knew God's law, they would know that this order exists only to prove the fact that the people (the men) had hard hearts. This law does not aim to show that the woman is indecent, but rather that the man could (and should) surpass the expectation and not give the certificate of divorce. The concern is that the man does not cause the woman to become defiled or, in other words, commit adultery.

For what reason, then, does the law not say: if you find **sin** in her? More interestingly, Moses (if that were the objective) could have used the Hebrew term "*zanah*," which means prostitution or some dishonorable sexual relationship (Dt 22:20, 21). See, the law would not contradict itself. Two chapters earlier, it was stated that if a woman hides that she is no longer a virgin, she is liable to death (not divorce). And the man, if he imputes any sin to a woman he married, and it turns out to be false, cannot divorce her (Dt 22:16-19) – note that if he suspected sin, there was also another route: Nm 5 (The Law of Jealousy). Thus, Deuteronomy 24 is not talking about sin, since in the case of sin, the woman would be put to death, therefore, the concern of Dt 24:1 is mercy. The focal point is not the *reason* for divorce, but rather that the man is not being encouraged to practice it because, by doing so, he makes his wife adulterous – if she remarries. Therefore, the man who divorces his wife makes her commit adultery (Lk 16:18b).

Clearly, the law is not legislating on *zanah*, not even in the case of the divorced woman. Now, a divorced woman who lies with a man does not marry him, so she commits adultery, but she does not have a contractual bond, so if she has lain with another man after the divorce, she can still return to the first (and this is what happens with Israel in Jeremiah 3, we will see below). It is only a second marriage that makes her indefinitely adulterous, locking her into the impossibility of returning to the first husband, making him adulterous if she returns to him (because whoever marries a divorced woman...). If sex were equal to marriage, a man could never lie with the wife who betrayed him again, because she would be married to the other man forever! This would nullify any chance of forgiveness.

In summary, the reason for divorce can be anything a man considers shameful; however, neither the woman (nor he) can enter into a new marriage. Likewise, he could not enter into a new marriage without first reconciling with his wife.

Secondly, the text is so clear that it requires no further explanation: the role of divorce has no real value in nullifying the fact that they are still one flesh. It is a formality that, to some extent, protects another man from taking that woman as his wife. Thus, divorce does not annul the contractual vow; it merely separates the parties, who will remain married.

Thirdly, the text only deals with the woman because the Scriptures show that the woman is the one bound to the husband (Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:39). This is because no husband is bound to any woman in the *singular*, but the woman is bound to the *husband* (in the singular). Therefore, there is no better way to illustrate divorce than through the woman, to prove not only that the man has the authority for divorce but also that she is the one in the role of being bound to one man. We will discuss this in detail in the next chapter.

I don't know what magic is supposed to allow, as many theologians claim, the "innocent party to remarry." For what reason would either party be free to remarry? Think about it: if marriage makes two people one flesh, how can the guilty party continue to be one flesh with the other person, but that person is no longer one flesh with the guilty party? It simply doesn't make sense, since the marriage contract makes both one flesh, therefore, either the contract is completely undone or it is not possible to undo it.

Now, having said that, is it a sin to give divorce? Not at all! The law does not legislate sin, nor does it regulate it. Otherwise, God would sin by giving a certificate of divorce to Israel! (Jeremiah 3). The problem is that, having given the certificate of divorce, I doubt that any man or woman would want to remain alone for the rest of their life... that's where the sin would lie.

Note: Abraham did not divorce Hagar, so he could take Keturah as his wife. Check Genesis 21:8-14 and 25:1 (by this time, Sarah had already died). Similarly, King Xerxes (Ahasuerus), upon marrying Esther, did not give a certificate of divorce to Vashti, thus preventing Esther from committing adultery by marrying him (Esther 1:10-12, 19 - note: as in the case of Abraham, there is no mention of divorce, despite the physical distance [no, being physically separated is not divorce; otherwise, a long journey would make husband and wife divorced {ironically, the Romans

allowed remarriage if the man stayed away from home for a long time, even under Christian rule. There was a lack of biblical knowledge}}).

Closing this chapter (as it is very important), the conclusion is simple: giving a certificate of divorce to my wife makes her adulterous unless she already is before (in which case it will not be my certificate that makes her adulterous, but herself).

Jeremiah 3 - A Proof of Deuteronomy 24

They say, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? shall not that land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord. (Jeremiah 3:1)

What do we have here? Well, the explanation of Deuteronomy 24! As we argued in the text about the Marriage Contract, the marriage between man and woman is, in a certain way, a shadow of God's marriage with His people. What applies to one applies to the other. Therefore, God could not marry His people again if it were possible for this people to marry another god. Just as we saw in Deuteronomy 24 regarding the woman.

And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. (Jeremiah 3:7-9)

Indeed, God Himself gave a certificate of divorce to Israel, but since she did not marry another deity, God still says to her:

Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, **Return**, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. (Jeremiah 3:12)

Now, we have the final proof of the role of the certificate of divorce: it came to signify the mercy of the husband! And in this particular case, God showed that the "loophole" in the law allowed Him to take back Israel! When we read Scripture with Scripture, everything becomes clear. God would not contradict His law; He would not confuse what it permitted. Now, if the law does not forbid it, it is not sin; therefore, God can take back the wife who has prostituted herself, and He could not do so if she had remarried.

Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: (Jeremiah 3:14)

Ezekiel 23 – The Death of Israel

Ezekiel 23 is a lengthy text, so we'll only mention its central points. In Ezekiel, God doesn't give a divorce decree; instead, He pronounces a death sentence. Israel did more than worship idols; they engaged in idolatry through sexual acts (yes, actual sex, using it as a form of worship) and by sacrificing their children to the idols. To ensure a greater penalty upon Israel, God, this time, doesn't cry out for mercy but foresees the destruction of the people.

This demonstrates how the final destruction of Israel would make God the husband solely of Israel (the true one). Just like in the story of Abraham, where God sent away the children of the slave woman (cf. Galatians 4) to remain only with His wife, the New Jerusalem, who gives Him children of promise.

Malachi 2 – Serial Marriage with Divorce: Infidelity

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. 12 The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts. 13 And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. 14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. 15 And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. 16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. (Malachi 2:11-16)

This is our last text from the Old Testament on the subject. In it, we have the treatment of something unusual. By this time, Israel was no longer a wealthy nation, which made it difficult for a man, for example, to support two wives. What happened then: to avoid the fixed expense of supporting two wives, the man divorced the woman he married when he was young ("wife of thy **youth**") and married another (who, besides everything, worshipped another deity). Here is the importance of seeing the noun in the feminine. In Jeremiah, Israel and Judah were two women who related to "men," that is, gods. Now Israel is divided into individuals, each of whom marries women (thus, the problem is not primarily that they worshipped other gods, but that something was wrong in the marriage).

When God shows that he hates divorce, he is not hating what he himself allowed merely for allowing it, but because both parties who practice it begin to sin (as we have already said). Now, men were not prohibited from marrying more than one woman, they never were (Dt 21:15 - God doesn't care about this Greek philosophy and Roman law sensitive to the fact that he allowed a man to have more than one wife), but divorcing one to marry another is disloyalty and, in the context of marriage, disloyalty is adultery. Do not be unfaithful, as infidelity is the breaking of the covenant, and every breach of the covenant results in death, because it is sin.

Note: if you haven't noticed, no text (neither in the Old Testament nor the New Testament) allows divorce initiated by the woman. This is for a simple reason: just as Israel asking for divorce from God would be a sin, it is also a sin for a woman to initiate divorce against her husband. Perhaps you may say, "What about cases of abuse? What do you do?" When the Scriptures were written, there was also "abuse," and yet the treatment of the text does not revolve around this problem. But just as a man is not free for remarriage after divorcing a woman, even if she becomes a prostitute, so too a woman is not simply free to give a certificate of divorce as she pleases.

FIRST CONCLUSION

We have seen that since Genesis, the main texts about marriage accept with tranquility not only the enduring validity of the contract but also show that divorce does not annul it; on the contrary, divorce is a superficial rupture that does not break the nature of becoming one flesh. The reason for divorce is irrelevant.

Moreover, if the New Testament offers a different interpretation, relaxing this (or increasing the rigidity), it would clearly contradict the biblical Law, which would be absurd because God does not invalidate His commandments! How does God deal with it? It is quite simple: if Jesus came with any novelty, Christ cannot say that He only speaks what the Father has spoken (John 14:10) if He says something different from what the Father has spoken!

NEW TESTAMENT (NT)

The Gospels: Mark and Luke

And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery. (Mark 10:2-12)

Mark was the first of the four gospels written, and this information is relevant because there is no "exception clause" in this text, meaning there is nothing like "except for marital unfaithfulness." We don't do as certain commentators who insert into the text what they want to see and claim that Mark "had in mind the exception clause when writing." How would I know this if he didn't write it? Worse, being the first of the four, his readers didn't have access to Matthew's gospel to compare to this exception clause. The truth is that Mark is showing the original sense: that divorce did not annul the marriage, regardless of the reason.

But let's go back to the beginning of the text. The Pharisees want to test Jesus, knowing that among themselves there were two conceptions: that the certificate of divorce could be given for any reason and that it could only be given for major reasons (the famous schools of Hillel and Shammai). If Jesus *answered according to one of the two schools, the other could easily accuse him, exposing the intrigue already present among the Pharisees*. The point is that whichever side he took would be used to defame him since here we have clear evidence that the Pharisees wanted to set a trap for Jesus (what do you think the 'test' they wanted to make with Christ was?). The Pharisees united against a common enemy, hoping that Jesus would disagree with one side.

The answer from Jesus, however, broke both schools. Jesus shows that it was the hardness of the people's hearts that made Moses give this commandment. Now, Christ points out the obvious factor that the hardness of the hearts reinforced the reason for the commandment, which indicates that a heart not hardened would avoid the certificate of divorce – pointing to mercy instead of the imposition of the commandment. This commandment is for a hardened heart to give the certificate of divorce and never marry again – that is contained in the commandment (as we saw in Dt 24). Hence, if my heart is not hardened, I will not give the certificate of divorce for reasons that do not please me.

The obvious conclusion follows: if God has joined together (yes, any marriage vow following the logic of Genesis 2 is God joining), no man can separate – not even Moses. Genesis 2 is God's commandment, Deuteronomy 24 is God's permission. Genesis 2 is until death do us part, Deuteronomy 24 is just a documented spatial separation that does not truly separate flesh.

Jesus also repeats Malachi: the man who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. In Malachi, we saw that there is disloyalty in a man divorcing his first wife and marrying again, something also clear in Genesis 2. Thus, Jesus is affirming the Law and the Prophets by giving this commandment.

Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery. (Luke 16:18)

It is indeed interesting to observe how different Gospel accounts present the same teachings of Jesus, each tailored to their intended audience. In the case of the teachings on divorce and remarriage, Matthew provides a more detailed explanation, likely because his audience included many Jewish Christians familiar with the nuances of Jewish law and tradition. On the other hand, Mark and Luke, written for predominantly Gentile audiences, offer a more concise presentation of Jesus' teachings, omitting some of the specific Jewish legal debates.

It's important to recognize that the absence of the exception clause in Mark and Luke does not necessarily imply disagreement with Matthew's account. Rather, it reflects the Gospel writers' emphasis on different aspects of Jesus' teachings to suit their respective audiences.

Regardless of the specific wording in each Gospel, the underlying message remains consistent: Jesus reaffirms the sanctity and permanence of marriage, emphasizing that divorce and remarriage constitute adultery in God's eyes. This overarching principle is consistent with the broader biblical teachings on marriage found throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Matthew 19

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; 2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. 3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? 4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. 10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. 11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. 12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. (Matthew 19:1-12)

Note: Jesus says "in the beginning it was not so." He is clearly stating that the permanence of the marriage covenant is that of Genesis 2, and not a Jewish interpretation based on the later decree of Moses in Deuteronomy 24. This is not the ideal, it is the mandate: if I break the covenant and remarry, I sin. Furthermore, if you remove the exception clause from the text ("except for unchastity"), you are left with exactly the text of Luke and Mark – which should raise suspicions, considering that Matthew is written for a Jewish audience.

The Pharisees asked Christ if divorce is permissible for any reason. Jesus is unequivocal: man cannot separate what God has joined together. This would have ended the argument if the questioners had not continued to press. Now, the Pharisees are pointing out that Moses commanded giving a *writing of divorcement* (meaning they already understood that divorce does not annul the marriage according to Jesus). If Jesus had taken a Pharisaic stance (which was already known), there would have been no surprise from the disciples, who said that it is not advisable to marry! Notice that Jesus' emphasis is not on the number of wives but on the durability of marriage. This is why the disciples were astonished.

Ah, notice that the Pharisees question Jesus by citing Moses. This citation is interesting because they do not say, "But Moses allowed it in such and such circumstances!" If Jesus had said that remarriage was allowed under certain circumstances, the Pharisees would have said, "But Moses said that in this circumstance divorce can be done." Since Jesus says it is not allowed under any circumstance, the Pharisees simply say, "But Moses allowed it." Do you see? The point is not the circumstance, but the fact that divorce does not allow for remarriage. The Pharisees were caught off guard in the end, as they failed miserably in testing Jesus.

Having said that, Jesus concludes by saying that there are eunuchs (yes, castrated men, as castration diminishes sexual desire) who made themselves eunuchs. The problem is that, for some idiotic reason, those who read the passage think that the eunuchs are those who never married for the sake of the kingdom, but

what Christ is saying is not that (although it may include them). He said that after divorce, someone cannot remarry, so what recourse would a man have, for the sake of the kingdom, to prevent the desire to remarry? (see, if the woman had committed adultery and persisted, and the man gave her a certificate of divorce, he would not be free to remarry, hence the reason for becoming a eunuch).

The problem is that everyone reads this passage thinking of men who became eunuchs in Jesus' time, influenced by Greek asceticism. Sad mistake. Christ is mentioning the eunuchs of Isaiah, who became eunuchs in order to keep God's covenant (Isaiah 56:4 - Hebrew text [note: something pleasing to God is contrasted with something pleasing to oneself]). These eunuchs would have more children: spiritual children (Isaiah 56:5, 6).

Note: To silence the ignorant, it is necessary to reinforce. There is an explicative "waw" at the end of verse 4 of Is 56, showing that the past actions of the eunuchs (keeping the Sabbath and choosing to please God) result in keeping the covenant. Furthermore, the choice is in a mode (Sequential Perfect Qal verb) that in this context sounds like an act done in the past: the eunuchs chose what pleases God. Now, what was this unique choice made in the past? I leave the question for you to understand Christ's interpretation of the passage. If divorce implies this, is Christ really allowing divorce under any circumstance with remarriage?

The disciples' shock wouldn't be great if Jesus said that in the case of adultery divorce annuls the marriage; as we know, among them, this perspective was already popular, as it was also taught by many Pharisees. Either what Jesus says contradicts the expectation even of the disciples, or there is no novelty in what Jesus says to have startled them.

The Exception of Matthew 19

Now we can finally get to the so-called exception clause. Christ is not contradictory. Everything he said in the passage does not favor an exception clause. Moreover, if he agreed with either of the two Pharisaic schools, the other would immediately question him in this context. The fact that the questioning comes precisely from the disciples and that the questioning carries the weight of marriage itself makes everything even more evident as to how this clause should be translated.

The translation that would best suit the 'exception' would be as follows:

Whosoever shall put away his wife, even it be for prostitution [or sex without contract], and shall marry another, committeth adultery

[To make sense in English, the "not even" can be reversed to "even it be", thus becoming: "even because of prostitution". The explanation for this is too technical for the current purposes of this text].

To this, we need to add points that we have already raised, but which will now make more sense. Why does Christ say "prostitution" and not "adultery"? We already know that in Scripture, engagement is marriage and, therefore, a woman having sex with another man is equivalent to adultery (cf. Gn 38:11, 24; Dt 22:23, 24, and our text on the Marriage Contract where we explain these passages). Therefore, Jesus is not merely speaking of adultery – given the emphasis of the text ("even," and the disciples' reaction), Christ is talking about something worse than adultery.

First, we saw the case of Israel in Jeremiah 3. As we saw, even with Israel's prostitution, God was still her husband. Not even her prostitution made her belong to another man, nor did it annul the marriage with God! Worse, the divorce decree that God gave to Israel did not make her cease to be His wife! What do we have here? Personal opinion or Scripture interpreting Scripture? You see, this is what Christ is saying: not even prostitution (which is worse than adultery because it is constant, frequent, and involves various men) has the power to invalidate the marriage.

Secondly, we have the case of Hosea. Hosea does not give a divorce decree to his prostitute wife, although, in chapter 2, it is said that she is not a wife (but this needs to be read considering what follows, that God will marry her again, but she will be different [Hosea 2:14-23]). The point is that even in her prostitution, Hosea's

wife was not separated from him. Like Hosea, God could not undo His marriage to His wife with a divorce decree.

Christ is evoking these clear examples, in addition to Deuteronomy 24, which shows that, no matter the reason, the woman continues to be the wife of her husband. But we still need to explain the "not even," and please allow us to be tedious because we will have to mention a bit of the Greek of the passage.

In 1 Timothy 5:19, Paul uses the term "except" (ἐκτός). This term (and its variations) is used in other passages clearly denoting something that is "outside," or cases of exception (outside: Matthew 12:46; 23:25, 26; Acts 16:13; except/otherwise: Acts 26:22; 1 Corinthians 14:5). If the evangelist wanted to clearly exclude the case of prostitution, this would be the best term. However, that is not what Matthew does; he says: μὴ ἐπι ("not even in"). Did you notice that the possible translations conflict? In the end, the translation depends on the translator's background. If he accepts the context and the Old Testament, he will translate it as "not even in" (in English sounding like "even in case of"). Thus, Christ emphasizes not an exceptional situation but a limit: imagine that your wife goes out every day to sell her own body, well, believe it or not, even in this case, if you give her a divorce, you cannot enter into a new marriage, leaving you, as an option, to become a eunuch or to live bearing the weight that this information carries. If you could divorce your wife in this case and could enter into a new marriage, why become a eunuch? It wouldn't make sense.

Note: in 1 Timothy 5:19 there is also a μὴ ἐπι, which is normally not translated as it would tend to hinder the understanding of the text in English, but it would sound something like: "except (ἐκτός) otherwise (μὴ ἐπι), by two witnesses." However, I have wished to spare the reader from excessively technical details, so that the reading remains fluid. These mentions of the original etc. serve merely to assist those who may have some knowledge of the text in their languages and remain in doubt.

To say anything different from that contradicts the Creation in Genesis 2, Deuteronomy 24, God's relationship with His people (Jeremiah 3; Ezekiel 23; Hosea 1-2), and the other two Gospels that deal with the subject. But let's turn to a somewhat more challenging case, actually the most difficult of all: Matthew 5.

Matthew 5

*31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

Here is where theologians invent things and come out unscathed. They say that at this moment Jesus is speaking as God, when he says "But I say to you." Now, it is clear that he is speaking as God, however, if he says something contrary to what is in the Torah, he will contradict himself! See:

*Think not that I am come to **destroy the law, or the prophets**: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, **That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.** (Matthew 5:17-20)*

If the law allowed divorce in any situation and Jesus is saying something contrary to that, then he is abolishing the Law. If he is saying something contrary to the scribes and Pharisees and affirming the Law, he will never contradict it. Now, Christ cannot be saying that he will fulfill the law and then contradict it by saying that marriage can be annulled in some cases. For, as we have already seen, the law is clear: nothing truly annuls

a marriage. That's why Christ begins by affirming these things in chapter 5, to introduce the fact that he is contradicting the Pharisees (both those of the school of Shammai and of Hillel), and not the Law.

Also, if Christ took any position alongside any Pharisaic school, this would be the moment for the Pharisees to question him, to argue back, but Jesus does not teach like the Pharisees (Matthew 7:28-29 [remember, for what reason would Jesus approve a Pharisaic position if he is saying that we should surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees?]). But let's turn back to the initial text, whose exception clause is distinct from Matthew 19 (yes, I know many people say it's just a variation, the point is: if it's just a variation, then this text means exactly the same thing as chapter 19, and the discussion ends, as we've already shown what Matthew 19 means, but the truth is that here we have something distinct, pointing to another aspect).

The point is that the text is saying that it is the husband who divorces the wife, so - we must think - it is echoing Deuteronomy 24. Furthermore, another problem we can notice is that the woman would become an adulteress in any case. See: Jesus is concerned that the man who gives the divorce will make the woman an adulteress ("*causeth her to commit adultery*"), therefore, Jesus is demanding mercy from the man. Jesus does not want the man to make the woman an adulteress (proving, in this, that the divorce given to an 'innocent' person keeps her married).

Another point is that Jesus mentions the word "adultery" (μοιχεία - moicheia) several times, but the exception clause comes with another term (πορνεία - porneia), and these terms have distinct meanings (Matthew 15:19). Thus, similar to chapter 19, we should understand that Christ is talking about a repeated act of adultery, prostitution. But let's see how the passage looks without the exception, to help us understand what the exception is excluding:

*31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, [...] causeth her to commit adultery:
and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

Did you notice that without this exception, the passage is read almost exactly like Mark and Luke? Note that without the exception, a man makes the woman adulterous if he divorces her! Now, Christ is precisely saying that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees; by giving the divorce certificate, I am not surpassing them, but rather contributing to the spread of sin. Notice that without the exception, I am making the woman an adulteress.

This leads us to another question: what is this exception for? To remarry? That is not stated in the text. Let's see how the interpretation looks if we consider the exception the way it is presented to us by current scholars: "If you give your wife a writing of divorcement (except for sexual immorality), you make her an adulteress." Does this mean that if she has committed sexual immorality, she is not an adulteress? This is the logical conclusion for those who read the text presupposing a possibility of an exception for remarriage. Thankfully, marriage in the Bible works differently, as long as there is no divorce, but we will address that in another text.

Now we can approach the concept of the exception:

*If you give your wife a writing of divorce, causeth her to commit adultery. But in the case of sexual immorality **on her part**, you do not make her adulterous.*

You can see how everything gets inverted? You could argue that Jesus is thinking about the husband's illicit sexual relations, but that doesn't make sense in the context, as the focus is on the woman, and the "porneia" refers to her actions, not those of the husband. Therefore, if the interpretation of this exception is that it actually allows for divorce, it would simply mean that a person who has sinned is free to marry again.

As Jesus is saying, without exception, that marrying a divorced woman results in adultery, then it cannot be possible for the exception clause to be an allowance for remarriage. So, what is the exception?

The truth is that the interpretation is very close to what we said above. You see, Christ's concern is that the man who gives a certificate of divorce to his wife **makes** (ποιεῖ – a term not present in the other texts about adultery, and which is really relevant here) **her** commit adultery (after all, she will desire to marry, and she

will). In the case of her prostituting herself and him giving the certificate of divorce, she does not become an adulteress *because of him* – for she already is one. The exception has to do with the man causing her to commit adultery, not with permission for remarriage.

With this in mind, how would the translation of Matthew 5 look like?

*31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:
32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of **her** fornication, **causeth her** to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

Jesus is teaching men that, according to Deuteronomy 24, a woman will commit adultery if she remarries, and the man will be virtually guilty for not showing mercy (he will not have surpassed the righteousness of the Pharisees). However, if she engages in prostitution, and he gives her a *writing of divorcement*, he will not be the cause of her adultery, as she committed adultery beforehand by engaging in prostitution. Again, Jesus' focus is on a woman who engages in prostitution (not one who commits a specific act of adultery), and the exception clause looks forward in the text, not backward. Jesus is pointing out that the husband should still seek the woman as much as possible, and when it is no longer possible, by giving her the certificate of divorce, he will leave her to the adultery already present in her, not being the cause of it. Finally, however, he cannot remarry, as this is not even addressed in the text, and as we have seen, Matthew 19 shows that a man has no right to remarry after divorce even if the woman is engaging in prostitution.

A man who gives a *writing of divorcement* to a woman, except in cases of prostitution, causes her to sin. Or, in other words, a man who gives a *writing of divorcement* to a woman makes her sin, except in cases of her prostitution. Fully in accordance with the law and very simple. The reason why people don't like this solution is that we want difficult solutions to make the work of specialists seem worthwhile - logically, specialists don't like simple things.

Note: see the difference in emphasis between Matthew 5 and 19. In chapter 19, the point is that divorce renders you unable to remarry, which proves that the subject is not the same as in Matthew 5. In Matthew 5, the concern is that the man causes the woman to sin when he gives her a certificate of divorce. That's why God redeems Israel, because if He called them and then dismissed them, Israel would sin even more.

Romans and 1 Corinthians

For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (Romans 7:2, 3)

Paul is writing to the Gentiles, so it naturally sounds simpler (much like Mark and Luke). He makes a direct statement without exception (because there is none): the woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives! The only situation that allows for her to enter a new marriage is his death. This text is a rule, it doesn't allow for another interpretation. The "law of marriage" determines that both are one flesh, so the woman will be considered adulterous if she sleeps with another man (the reverse is not true, hence only the woman is mentioned – however, we will address this in a subsequent text). But there is one last major text in the New Testament where people try to grasp for proof that divorce allows for remarriage: 1 Corinthians 7.

*And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:
11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)*

First, it's quite simple: Paul is saying that the Lord commands a believing wife not to divorce her husband. However, contrary to this, he says that if the woman does divorce, she cannot remarry [*let her remain unmarried*], because the man from whom she separated is still her husband! The logic in this text is straightforward—Paul does not allow remarriage for the woman, but at most, a return to her husband. He wouldn't contradict Deuteronomy 24 or Romans 7 (which he himself wrote). Notice the focus on the woman: if she marries another man, she cannot return to her husband, reflecting the same perspective as Deuteronomy 24.

But why did Paul give this instruction? That's also simple: the Corinthians **were in the last days**, under persecution, so it might be necessary for the wife to separate from her husband. That's why he adds more information afterward, saying that those who are married should live as if they were not (not in debauchery, but without the attachment they had before, as both could die, or one of them; thus, Paul seeks to free them from worries—1 Corinthians 7:28-32—this instruction from Paul only applied to that moment, as they were in the last days, making this advice irrelevant today, but instructive, considering places where the church is actively and physically persecuted).

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:12-15)

The most absurd thing of all is to suppose that being "called us to live in peace" presupposes remarriage, as some do. But let's see: Paul says that when the unbeliever departs, the believer is not bound in such circumstances, that is, not enslaved to the other party. This is relevant when we consider the initial context of 1 Corinthians 7, in which Paul asserts that the body of both the husband and the wife belongs to the spouse (v. 3-5). Now, if my body belongs to my wife and hers to me, I have the duty to sexually submit to her and vice versa (as in the case of Jacob with Rachel and Leah, since he did not protest against serving them sexually [see our text on the Marriage Contract]). This, of course, is a form of servitude.

When the husband or wife leaves, I am no longer obligated to sexually fulfill that person. Similarly, when a man gives a certificate of divorce to his wife, he frees her from this servitude (although, of course, she cannot remarry). This means that he cannot demand sexual satisfaction from the woman to whom he has given a certificate of divorce—and neither is she obliged to satisfy him sexually. The final proof of this is that God has called these believers to peace (and not to another marriage).

Paul is affirming: when your spouse leaves, do not go after them, and do not expect them to come back to you to use the right they have lost. You have been called to peace (therefore, do not quarrel over sexual rights). This becomes even stronger when we consider that the next verse begins with a "for" right at the beginning.

For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (1 Corinthians 7:16)

Do not go after the one who left, thinking you can save the unbeliever! You were called to peace! - Paul says. It's in the text, plain and simple.

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. 40 But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:39, 40)

No, it's not if the husband leaves, nor if he is an unbeliever; it's if he dies that the woman can marry again! Only then can she enter into a new marriage. How can you contradict this clear statement that concludes the

content of Chapter 7? Paul is not contradicting himself! As we have seen, everything is clear up to this point, for Scripture shows that God does not accept a woman who remarries after divorce. Thus, when the husband dies, he frees the woman. Therefore, Paul is relatively liberal, saying that there is no problem with divorce itself (as we have seen), but if one has divorced, they can only return to the spouse if they have not remarried (a situation in which they would be in adultery).

One more observation: Paul emphasizes the happiness of the single widow because of what he has already said in the context: under persecution, marriage would bring more sorrows than joys. As we see, the Bible allows someone not to marry for reasons of 'personal happiness', therefore, it does not pressure anyone into marriage nor makes it a commandment as such. Making it a commandment is legalism (although I know that many will accuse us of legalism because of what we said against remarriage).

Note: consider the case of Zacchaeus, his repentance led him to repay four times what he had stolen (Luke 19:1-10), according to the law (Exodus 22:1; 2 Samuel 12:6). What do you think a man married to a divorced woman before conversion should do? Or what should a man do who divorced and remarried before conversion? Does what happened "before conversion" not matter, or does repentance imply correcting what was wrong before? I leave it to the reader to ponder this responsibility.

Soon we will also address Polygamy and Prostitution, topics that undoubtedly leave any Western heir of Greek philosophy and Roman law with their hair standing on end.

CONCLUSION

The Old Testament is clear in stating that divorce does not annul marriage;

The New Testament, likewise, affirms the same thing;

Therefore, divorce does not annul marriage, making remarriage after divorce adultery.

Polygamy in the Law of God – Part 1

The issue of male polygamy (a man with more than one wife) is recurrent in church history, with treatises ranging from contextual acceptance (such as Luther accepting and even approving a king's bigamy) to complete demonization of the subject (as seen in much of the medieval church). However, rarely do we see a comprehensive treatment of the subject in terms of God's Law and Scripture - something we aim to address by examining the topic throughout the entire Scripture.

However, most who venture to address the topic immediately assume that family unhappiness came about because of polygamy and therefore conclude that such events must be a way for God to teach that polygamy causes conflicts (Jacob), breaks promises (Abraham), or goes against God's ideal in creation (Adam and Eve). All of these assumptions prove flawed not only due to cultural context (which we will address in part 2) but also by ignoring and breaking all the principles of biblical interpretation established by these same authors who oppose male polygamy.

After all, polygamy is a characteristic of "Christian" sects (Mormonism) or false religions (Islam), as well as a cultural element of ancient peoples among whom Israel found itself (Egypt?). We will address these questions in the second part, while in this part we will focus solely on polygamy in the Torah, or the first five books of the Bible.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis 2:22-24)

The first event noted is that God created one woman and not two for Adam. Then - concludes the monogamist - God did not allow Adam to marry more than one woman (in his mind, if God allowed Adam to marry two, logically, He should allow two husbands for the woman). The fact is that in the law, we clearly see the prohibition for a woman to have two husbands, but never for a husband to have two wives (Deuteronomy 21:15; 24:1-4; Exodus 21:9, 10; Leviticus 20:10). However, below, we will consider the subject from weaker to stronger points.

The minimum required

It ignores the clear context of the creation of Adam and Eve, who were created not only alone but in their minimal capacity (without children, without a home, without clothes, without eating meat, etc.), so that although today we use clothes, eat meat, and have homes and children (to the point of finding it absurd not to have some of these things - 1 Timothy 6:8a), they were not established in the creation of man. We must understand, therefore, that if God allowed man to have multiple wives later, it was because in creation, God's intention was to show that even a man with nothing can have, at least, one wife.

The structure of an order

Another problem is that orders are given in the singular. Look at God's commandments in general and see which ones are in the plural. You will notice that every command of God is in the singular, which clearly explains the command to unite with the woman in the text. "Thou shalt not kill" (do not murder), "Thou shalt not steal" (do not steal), etc., are always in the singular. However, the best example is "love thy neighbor" (Leviticus 19:18). Should I assume that because the commandment commands me to love only one neighbor (in the singular), I cannot love more people? Well, of course, the commandment is written like this because in the worst condition you are in, it is possible for you to love your neighbor (help an individual), and also to prevent abstractions from those who claim to love humanity (something impossible humanly). God knows we are limited, and He always orders in the context of the minimum required.

Note: Indeed, even the commandment to honor father and mother emphasizes singularizing the parental figures, avoiding abstractions: "Honor your father and mother," not "your parents," proving, in any case, that a commandment of God is singular.

The mercy of an order

However, suppose that God commanded a man, in this text, in the following way:

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his **wives**, and they shall be one flesh*

We would be demanding that men marry, at a minimum, with two women! God created Adam with nothing to show that even someone living in nature, without possessions, can at least have a wife, and if He created two women for Adam, He would be teaching us to burden individuals heavily. God made the world this way is the best way to allow polygamous marriage without lacking in mercy.

One flesh

It's funny that in our mindset, inherited from the Greeks, "one flesh" is seen as equal to 1 + 1. In the biblical mindset, it has never been like that. A man becomes one flesh with however many women he joins; for example, every time a man joins with a (cult) prostitute, he becomes one flesh with her (1 Corinthians 6:16 - not for a lifetime, as there is no contract). Now, if it is like this, why can't "one flesh" include two women and one man? Thus, they will all be one flesh, but with a marriage contract. We cannot deny that this contract was real with Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and Keturah, as well as with Jacob, Rachel, and Leah. All of them were one flesh with their wives, regardless of whether there were three or two (Deuteronomy 21:15).

Wife Bound to the Husband

It should raise suspicions that when Paul speaks of marriage, he always mentions that "the wife is bound to her husband" (Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:39), but not that "the husband is bound to his wife." The issue is that Genesis 2 shows the reason: it is the man who joins "to his wife," therefore, the woman is "his," while he is not "hers," clearly establishing the marriage contract with freedom for the man and restriction for the woman. It is in this reasoning that Paul will always say that a woman can only remarry when her husband dies, but he never says this of the husband (Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:39).

Interpretative Tradition

A great mistake looms over men who want to interpret Scripture from the history of the church, ignoring that Scripture itself establishes an interpretative tradition. Look, David interpreted passages from the Torah, so his interpretation is our tradition. In the same way, other prophets of God interpreted key passages of the Law that became clear because of them. Thus, we must assume that, since this text is one of those found in beginning of the scroll of the law, there was a great prophetic or theological tradition in the OT proving that its pointing was towards monogamy. However, this does not happen, and it does not happen because this text did not prove anything about monogamy.

See the case of David and Solomon. Both had the daily reading of the law for them (Deuteronomy 17:18), and David even said that he meditated on it day and night (Psalms 1; 19; 119); how did he, enlightened by the Spirit of God, see in the law the revelation of Jesus Christ or that God did not desire sacrifices (Psalms 40:6; 51:16, 17) even though the Law repeatedly mentioned the need for them, but did not notice the most basic of basics in a reading that, as it is now shown, would be extremely simple?

David, furthermore, had at least eight wives (Michal, Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah, Bathsheba [the latter being the result of adultery, but not the others, interesting, isn't it?]), and he never noticed this? Even Solomon, when he fails to follow God's Law that limited the king's wives (Deuteronomy 17:17), has his mistake clearly pointed out, being contrasted with David, who kept many women without straying (1 Kings 11:4). Now, what does the interpretative tradition of this text (along with the rest of the Law) point us to? It seems quite simple.

Believers vehemently assert that no one (relevant) in the tradition or history of the church defended male polygamy, and suddenly, the "Xénos" and the "Magos" come to defend this? The question can be turned around: no one ever defended monogamy in the interpretative history of Scripture (from the OT and NT themselves), and suddenly, Greek and Roman believers (quite suggestive since they were monogamous) start defending monogamy?

The Shadow and the Reality

Finally, this text has a reason to be as it is that goes beyond itself. Fulfilling the fact that God announced the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10), Adam was a shadow of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:45-49). Now, the best way to literally symbolize the unity of the church was if God gave Adam only one wife. If God were to give Adam two wives, it would teach us a confusing message through the shadows of the Old Testament, suggesting to us that the Church could be double, without unity, or with permission to dispute among themselves (since two sisters enter into dispute if married to the same man [Leviticus 18:18]). The text is clear and does not compromise any message if we read it as God taught us to read His Law: by comparing it with itself (1 Timothy 1:8).

Note: Further below, we will see the case of Hagar and Sarah (as seen in Galatians), showing that the message conveyed by both is that Hagar foreshadows the Israel that persecuted the Church, while Sarah foreshadows the Israel that is free and persecuted. Therefore, if in a perfect world God were to give Adam two wives, it would symbolize through them bizarre things, such as the probability of cohesion between ancient Judaism and Christianity or the potential division within Christianity – something absurd.

Genesis 2 does not prove anything against polygamy; rather, it even presupposes it, given the need for the text to express other information beyond that.

GENESIS 4 – LAMECH, WICKED POLYGAMIST

Lamech is the first man recorded in Scripture to practice polygamy. Many assume that because he was wicked (having apparently killed two people, or we have a parallelism), everything he did in this regard is sinful. But a question arises: although I am not saved by what I do, can I act in accordance with the law in particular matters? Let's see how to deal with the passages regarding this issue:

And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. (Genesis 4:19)

Now, the men might say: "God is implying that polygamy is a sin; look, Lamech was a wicked man, and look what he did." Yes, Lamech was a murderer (Genesis 4:23), but does that mean he was an adulterer? Furthermore, contradicting the interpretative tradition of the Old Testament clearly ignores the context of Lamech's wicked offspring:

*And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. 21
And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. 22
And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron (Genesis 4:20-22).*

Wicked sons of the wicked produced: tents and domestication of cattle, two musical instruments, and work with brass and iron. Conclusion: to domesticate cattle, play these two instruments, and work with iron and bronze is sin! Wonderful! Of course not, because you know how to separate wickedness from action. We could even invert it: if Lamech had only one wife (like many wicked men out there...), what would that prove against monogamy? Nothing! The difference is that I, a polygamist, have the honesty to recognize when a particular text does not serve to defend or oppose something...

GENESIS 6 – NOAH, THE SECOND ADAM

We've already cited a text (1 Corinthians 15:45-49) which says that Jesus is the last Adam (not the second), for Christ, in reality, is the one who does everything that Adam couldn't do: He redeems, gives life, rules the world, etc. Wouldn't it be obvious that if Christ is the last, there must be other "adams" between Adam and Christ? Even the neo-Calvinists acknowledge this! (Just read the book by Morales to notice). It's obvious that the representative role of Noah, who is a Christ before Christ, needs to take into account the only wife he had. The Church was saved because of Noah; he was the righteous man (the first in Scripture – Genesis 6:9), therefore, representing that he would save the world by his righteousness (doesn't it remind you of something?).

Moreover, remember that Genesis 6 takes place in a context of intense wickedness, after women had become corrupt (Genesis 6:2-4). If Noah was a righteous man, and all the other women in the world died, then all of them must have been wicked! Would you want a righteous man to marry one of those corrupt women? Clearly not, or it wouldn't be fair anymore.

GENESIS 16, 21 AND 25 – ABRAHAM, SARAH, HAGAR AND KETURAH

And Sarai said to Abram, "Behold now, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children. Go in to my servant; it may be that I shall obtain children by her." And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her servant, and gave her to Abram her husband as a wife. And he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. (Genesis 16:2-4)

There are so many misconceptions about this that it's hard to know where to start. Let's start from the 'beginning.' God had promised Abram that he would have offspring. This offspring would not be from a servant of Abram (Genesis 15:2-4), but someone who would come from Abram himself. Here, many suppose that Abram should understand the message and assume it would come from Sarai (Sarah). However, this reading is foolish, considering that the maidservants who bore children were counted as having borne them for their mistresses (see Genesis 30:1-24 [especially v. 6]). So, wouldn't it be nonsensical for Abram to imagine that his offspring would come from a servant of Sarai? Indeed, Sarai herself understands this in the above text. Do you think Abram failed to understand that God's promise would be fulfilled through Sarah? No, he didn't fail; it was necessary for it to be so (see below):

Hagar, a Concubine by Right

See how God deals with Hagar in all circumstances:

1 - After fleeing from home:

7 And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. 8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. 9 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. 10 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. 11 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. (Genesis 16:7-11)

Compare this with when a sin was committed:

Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die. (2 Samuel 12:14)

Having committed adultery with Bathsheba (Abram did not commit adultery?), God doesn't even accept giving a name to the child born of this sinful relationship (and causes the child to die at seven days old, to prevent circumcision [2 Samuel 12:18]). Instead, He promises that the child will die, even with Bathsheba suffering greatly – having already lost her true husband. Now, God does not contradict Himself; either Hagar's child is the result of adultery, or it's just one of those things permitted by God (concubinage).

2 - After being driven out of the house:

12 And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. 13 And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. (Genesis 21:12, 13)

15 And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. 16 And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bow shot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. 17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. (Genesis 21:15-18)

People tend to believe that Abraham doubted God's promise by lying with Hagar, but the text is so clear that it should leave no doubts: God's promise was intended **for any descendant** of Abraham (Genesis 21:13). God's goal was to bless any descendant of Abraham to become a great nation, not just Isaac. It was Hagar who did not yet understand God's promise, which extended to both Isaac and Ishmael. However, God had promised that Ishmael would not die before becoming great. Therefore, unlike what He did with David, God understood that Hagar was Abraham's concubine by right, and thus blessed her along with her son.

Note: Many argue here that this was out of God's mercy, which is pure falsehood. Hagar was blessed and Ishmael grew up because God said he was Abraham's descendant, and God promised to bless the offspring, whoever it was. Therefore, God fulfilled a promise and did not bless an act of sin.

The Shadow of the Old Testament and the Reality in the New Testament

24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. 26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. 29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. (Galatians 4:24-31)

Why did Abraham need to expel Hagar from home? Because Ishmael persecuted Isaac (Genesis 21:9). What Paul shows is that this had a clear message: Hagar, being a slave and able to give birth without the need for the Holy Spirit, bore a son who persecuted the one born by the power of the Holy Spirit (this is the contrast between flesh and Spirit here). Since Hagar did not need divine intervention, her lineage was carnal and blessed by God's promise to Abraham (I know, the text says that only one is of the promise, hold your thumbs).

Hagar could have children by Abraham without God's promise, meaning just by being with Abraham. However, Sarah could only have a child from Abraham through a miracle, and miracles are fulfillments of promises. Therefore, the true Child of the Promise is Isaac, not Ishmael.

Hagar prefigures Jerusalem, which persecuted believers, the Jews who hated Christianity, even though they were actual descendants (according to the flesh) of Abraham. Note the need to understand the shadows and figures of the Old Testament: Isaac, from whom the nation of Israel came, is understood to have fathered children of the flesh, while believers, who have no blood relation to the Jews, are the true children of Abraham.

Was there any mistake on Abraham's part? Without the Law, there is no sin, but the Genesis story foresees certain things that would later be adopted in the Law. Deuteronomy 21 provides that the firstborn son should receive all privileges, not the one who comes afterwards, in the case of a man who has two wives (we'll get to the text). The truth is that Abraham ended up prioritizing Isaac (obviously it was a miracle), so in such circumstances, there was unnecessary conflict between Sarah and Hagar because Abraham's priority should have been the firstborn son.

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Keturah, Abraham's third wife

The funny part is that, as we only focus on disasters and problems, we don't notice that Abraham had another wife besides Sarah and Hagar. In fact, the case is so peaceful that there are no issues in the text. And

Abraham, of course, wanted to be the father of many nations. If it depended only on Isaac for that, it would be somewhat complicated...

Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. 5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. 6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. (Genesis 25:1-6)

This text is used to say that the reason polygamy was tolerated in the Law was for the Earth (the world) to be populated. And it's true that here we have such a circumstance, explaining well the reason for Abraham sending all the sons to the East. The big problem that arises is that, after the world was populated (back in Deuteronomy...), we still see not only permissions for polygamous marriages but even the defense of them (and this throughout the Scripture). It's not possible that no prophet or sage noticed that the world already had "enough" people...

Sara, an example of a submissive wife

In 1 Peter 3:6, Sara is mentioned (basically the only woman in the Old Testament mentioned as an example of submission). The question is that, being an example of submission and seeking these practical examples in the Old Testament, we basically find 3 moments:

- 1 - Sara calling Abraham "lord" (not mere cordiality, otherwise, it would not make sense for Peter to point that out - we will see this in our text about family).
- 2 - Sara omits information at Abraham's command (we will also address this in another text).
- 3 - Sara, thinking about God's plan, submits to Abraham and gives him Hagar as a concubine so that, submitting to Abraham, she may have a child.

Now, women find Sara's example of submission very beautiful, but they never stop to think about how she actively exercised this submission. In this last case, she submitted knowing that she should give Abraham (her lord) descendants and, therefore, did not become an obstacle for Abraham to have another woman.

How many women from the biblical femininity movements would have the courage to do this? Certainly none, because they are focused on a model of woman that deviates from the standard stipulated in the Scriptures.

Abraham's burial

Having our great patriarch expired, where would he be buried?

- (a) With Hagar, who left years ago?
- (b) With Keturah, whom he sent to the East contributing to the population of the Earth?
- (c) With Sarah, who was not sent away but was kept together because of Isaac?

I leave the answer to the reader.

GENESIS 29, 30 – JACOB, RACHEL AND BILHAH, LEAH AND ZILPAH

The text is too long to put it here, so I suggest you read Genesis 29 and 30.

Disputes, the argument of the minimum

How many times have you heard: "God prohibits polygamous marriages because they cause problems"? I want to know when, in a place where there are more people, there are fewer problems? These same people often argue that a woman should have about 4 or 5 children... forgetting that when there are more people under the same roof, there will be more problems. But hypocrisy doesn't allow them to notice that they use different standards.

Furthermore, they start from the wrong premise to interpret the text. After all, if Jacob had many problems because he married two sisters, it's because polygamous marriages are being discouraged, isn't it? Tell that to the text of Leviticus 18:18:

*Neither shalt thou take **a wife to her sister**, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.*

Jacob spent his life cheating, so Laban gave him a problem for life: he would have two women who would always be rivals **because they are sisters**. Jacob knew he suffered, but he couldn't go back. He married Leah (whom he didn't want), but his contract was for Rachel.

Note: The text of Leviticus 18 has undergone a significant reinterpretation. Many force a translation like this: "And you shall not take another woman with your wife," but such a translation completely ignores the term [אָחֵי - āḥōī] (sister), used several times in the Law in this clear sense (Genesis 4:22; 12:19; Genesis 24:59; Leviticus 18:11-13 [in the same context]). Not to mention that the concept of "becoming a rival" is present not only in Leviticus but also in the story of Jacob, perfectly summarized in this verse (and in Ezekiel 23, which we will return to later).

The bizarre thing about all this is that in the history of theology, the Church Fathers (terrible at biblical interpretation) always thought that Jacob married two women because of "his appetites and passions," when in fact Jacob hardly shows strong sexual desires, being constantly pursued by the two women: the ones filled with "passions" in the text are Leah and Rachel, not Jacob, who is not recorded as seeking relations with all of them at the same time – he only wanted Rachel, and ended up with 4 women in his house.

Speaking of four women, even though Jacob had relations with Rachel and Leah's maidservants, do we see any rivalry between them? No, of course not, because the maidservants were not sisters, nor were they sisters of their mistresses. They also didn't enter into a situation like Hagar, who had conflict because of Ishmael and Isaac, and the attention and contempt of Sarah. Therefore, what is the lesson from Jacob's life with Rachel and Leah? Never marry two sisters, you will have problems.

Note one detail: are all of Jacob's sons treated as bastards or as the founders of the nation of Israel? If they were bastards, they could not be sons (Deuteronomy 23:2).

Jacob's Burial

Jacob died and was buried next to Leah (Genesis 49:31, 32; 50:13), his first wife. So – as the squeaky-clean Roman believers deduce – God only recognized Leah as Jacob's true wife. They just forgot to mention that Rachel died far away from where Jacob was, making it impossible for her to be buried elsewhere (Genesis 48:7; 35:16-20). Where did Leah die? We don't know, but close enough to be buried in Machpelah, the place where Abraham and Isaac were buried, which would be relevant to the Promised Land (and Israel's story begins from this field...). Furthermore, even if burial with the first wife carried a relevant message, it would only be in relation to what the Law would later state in Deuteronomy 21, showing that even if we do not love the first wife, we should not deprive her of her rights. Remember that we do not guide ourselves by subliminal messages, leave that to conspiracy theorists and traditionalists regarding monogamy.

GENESIS IN GENERAL

We notice two characters in Genesis who were monogamous (I won't even argue about Esau's polygamy, because they'll say He's wicked, as they do with Lamech...), they were: Isaac and Joseph. As observed at the beginning of the text, there is no 'moral' obligation for polygamous marriage, in fact, there is no 'moral' obligation for marriage at all (see the text about The Marriage Contract). So, it is only natural for Isaac to have been practically monogamous. Moreover, there are several texts that say Isaac frequently conflicted with Rebekah, indicating that their marriage would have been troubled... interesting, isn't it? No man needs to justify the reason for having a single wife (just as being a eunuch or having none). It's none of our business, and the biblical text remains silent on it.

Joseph is a special case, as he was a ruler in Egypt and Egypt was a monogamous nation (despite tolerating concubinage). How about that? Of the clear cases of monogamy in Genesis, 50% (of the clear cases) can be explained by the cultural environment... quite suspicious, isn't it? We'll return to this topic in the next text. We can clearly conclude that Genesis offers no message against polygamy. Below, we'll move on to Exodus.

EXODUS 1 – MULTIPLICATION

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. 11 Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. (Exodus 1:10-12)

Pharaoh was clever. He knew that a polygamous people would grow more than the Egyptians (Jz 8:30), who were monogamous. Peoples inclined towards polygamy multiply more, as a man can have more wives and impregnate more women than one woman can bear children (cf. Jz 8:30). What we consider a miracle in Exodus is the normal means for a people to maintain multiplication. But Pharaoh's greatest cleverness lay in something that nowadays nobody seems to pay attention to: he sought to put men to work more outside the home, avoiding their relationships as much as possible... poor thing, this works in a monogamous world, where the job market will naturally decrease the tendency to be interested in having children, but it doesn't work in a polygamous world, where a man can rely, for example, on two women to take care of the children, depending less on him (among the Jews, women were the ones who cared for the children - Pv 14:1; 29:15). Interesting, isn't it?

Then Pharaoh orders that baby boys be killed (not girls) - Ex 1:15-17 - because, clearly, he wanted to control the number of people being born in the long term. Now, the fact that only boys were killed proves the point again: a woman takes longer to bear children, so he would equalize the number of people between the Egyptians and the Hebrews (Ex 1:7), so that the Hebrews would remain at a lower reproduction rate. Now, if the issue were simply to kill all newborns, Pharaoh could simply have ordered the killing of all babies, something he clearly did not do.

EXODUS 6 – BIRTH IN ERROR (A CONTRAST)

In Exodus 6:20, we see that Moses and Aaron were born to Jochebed, the aunt of Amram, and his wife. Wait, aunt and wife? According to God's law, such a relationship is prohibited (Leviticus 20:19) — **God forbids the relationship that brought Moses into existence**. Thus, even the relationship that gave rise to Moses's life is clearly prohibited, but we do not see a prohibition of polygamy. These men who come to accuse us of sin are digging into the Bible for subliminal messages against polygamy (as is the case with an article in Desiring God, which literally says this), taking texts out of their contexts, and asserting what the Bible never affirms. What happened to "the clearer texts interpret the more obscure ones?" — in this matter, do you abandon this principle?

EXODUS 20:14 – YOU SHAL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

In the same law that allows having two wives (Deuteronomy 21...), it is written that adultery is prohibited. Do these men who see monogamy in everything think that God is schizophrenic? God says that the adulterer must die (Leviticus 20:10), so how, in sound conscience, would male polygamy be adultery if no one in the relationship dies because of sin according to the law?

Think about it this way: Moses, who received this commandment from God, did not see any conflict between it and a man having multiple wives. Such a thing would be absurd because it would be a clear, direct contradiction that wouldn't require the New Testament to be known. The commandment is clear and must be understood as it was conceived (by God). If, when God said this, the concept included polygamy and concubinage, it cannot, after 2000 years of being written, mean something different. I know many may say, with the air of superiority that only a liberal would have, that in the New Testament Jesus clarified this, revealing Himself to also be against polygamy. I didn't read that part in the New Testament, however, if that's true, and if the law did not sufficiently clarify the concept, then the Law was not competent to teach about Christ and God, nor to express the nature of God (as these same theologians say), because it lacked a new word that said that what was allowed before is no longer allowed, **based on the same words**.

But let's do another mental exercise: suppose I am a faithful believer with two wives, believing I am not committing adultery. Suddenly, Christ says that having two wives is adultery. Would I go to hell, that's the only explanation. Unless, of course, these men suppose that if I'm already married then there's nothing to be done, and I won't go to hell (even if I'm having sex with two women... that seems suspicious, doesn't it?). Would I have gone from being a friend of God to an enemy of God, or would I remain a friend?

In these matters, the wildcard answer is always: "it was because God had mercy." We'll see more about this argument ahead.

EXODUS 21 – IF I GET ANOTHER WIFE?

*9 And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters.
10 If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. (Exodus 21:9, 10)*

The father gave his son a wife and then another one. Wow, Moses, right after prohibiting adultery, you're going to authorize a father to give his son two wives? Wouldn't it be better to say that whoever is already in such a situation should stay that way, but from now on, all of this is adultery? What's even more interesting is that both women have marital rights, which puts both the husband and the wife in servitude, meaning they must be ready to give their sexual strength to each other when necessary.

Here I will also address another point: the text is not regulating polygamy for it is something bad. The law is fulfilled in love; if a man loves the women he has properly, he will not diminish the provisions or marital rights of the first. What the Law aims to do is protect the first wife from possible unlove from the husband, and it does not mean at any point that by regulating this, polygamy is a sin—it's the same as saying that because the law regulates weights, the sale of products is a sin.

EXODUS 22 – MANDATORY MARRIAGE?

16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. (Exodus 22:16-17)

For some Puritans, mere flirting made marriage obligatory. Thankfully, God never listened to the Puritans to establish His laws. Here we have a mandatory marriage that may not become marriage if the father so desires. Clearly, even sex does not create a forced covenant between man and woman, but note below:

Did you notice that the man is not killed? I thought the wages of sin were death... but here we don't have death, we have something else, because the man did not commit adultery, and for this reason the text does not even consider whether he was married before or not. If he is married and lies with a girl who lives under her father's authority, then he is obliged to marry her (unless the father refuses). Oh, well. Adultery? No, the possibility of a marriage added to the first.

If Exodus does not prohibit polygamous marriage, then I must assume that such texts allow themselves to be practiced in a context of polygamy. It's obvious. However, note that not much is said, as polygamous marriage is already taken for granted, similar to what happens in Leviticus:

LEVITICUS 18 - DO NOT LIE WITH YOUR SISTER (CONTRAST)

9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. (Leviticus 18:9)

*11 And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. 12 And yet **indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife.** (Genesis 20:11-12)*

Could Abraham and Sarah's crisis have been caused by this? We do not know, but what we do know is that God prohibited even this type of marriage, practiced by Abraham, but did not prohibit polygamy. How can we accept such a poor interpretation of Scripture as monogamists do? If God wanted to, He would have forbidden polygamy, and Leviticus 18 was a good opportunity. Note, however, that Amnon sinned by lying with Tamar by breaking this prohibition in the Law; we have a clear example that Amnon was punished with death, even though the one who killed him sinned in the act (this will be discussed later).

The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. (Leviticus 18:11)

Perhaps your father has another wife, besides the first, so the biblical text already prohibits your relationship with your sister, even if only on your father's side.

Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time. (Leviticus 18:18)

We have already explained this text, but it is worth noting two details here...

In the best chance to prohibit polygamy, the biblical text merely issues a warning (without a death penalty) that marrying two sisters would bring problems for a man – not marrying two women in general. This is as close as the text gets to saying that any polygamous marriage is a sin.

Furthermore, the second part of the verse "*uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time*" suggests that polygamous intercourse could involve two (or more) women at the same time (which is the sense of ["על" - before", "next to", "upon", "besides"] in this context, indicating the physical proximity of the two while naked – this is also the same interpretation found in the LXX of this text. The phrase "every woman is either bipolar or 'bisexual'" is somewhat humorous to hear, expressing a certain truth. However, the text cannot remain hanging in the air, proving that, despite claims that this was culturally uncommon, it was never prohibited (if you read our text on Polygamy in the New Testament, you will see the explanation of "women abandoning natural relations" in Romans 1).

LEVITICUS 19 – DIFFERENT PENALTIES

20 And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. 21 And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a trespass offering. (Leviticus 19:20, 21)

The man is guilty of sin, but since the woman was a slave (meaning she already had a law upon her shoulders), God does not allow them to be punished with death, so only flogging and offering for sin (the death of an animal) are required. But notice how the situation changes: now, if a man lies with a betrothed slave woman, there is already a penalty... but nothing for polygamy.

LEVITICUS 20 – PENALTIE FOR ADULTERY

And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (Leviticus 20:10)

How many innocent men have wrongly died based on this text! The text only punishes with death if a man lies with another man's wife, and since sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4), we cannot assume that the text condemns as sin a man who lies with a woman who belongs to him (or who is not yet, but may be). Naturally, the explanation is clear, there is no adultery committed between a man and two women who already belong to him. To contradict this is to contradict the clear texts of God's Law, as well as the less clear ones.

LEVITICUS 20 – MAN WITH MAN NOT... BUT TWO WOMEN CAN

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. (Leviticus 20:13)

Not everyone notices what is missing in a text. Notice that neither Leviticus 20 (nor 18) condemns the relationship between two women. After all, in polygamy, do you think a man lies with one at a time? Thus, the text shows that if a woman marries two men, she is adulterous and the man is a sodomite. On the other hand, there is no need to prohibit a man with two women or two women lying together, because in polygamy, two women will certainly lie with their husband at the same time! It is clear that the text simply allows women to lie together because they will be married to a single man! Leviticus teaches quite a lot by contrast.

NUMBERS 5 – JEALOUSY

Proving that all texts directly and indirectly approve of male polygamy, we come to this one, which is the only one that describes jealousy in complete detail:

12 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, 13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; 14 And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: 15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. (Numbers 5:12-15)

28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. 29 This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; 30 Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the Lord, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. 31 Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity. (Numbers 5:28-31)

Feel free to read the entire chapter, but look at what I ask you: Who is jealous in the text?

We follow the same principle as Leviticus 20:13: what does the text not mention? It does not mention jealousy from the woman! Of course, she cannot be jealous; the husband will have other wives besides her, duh! The idea of a woman being jealous is as contrary to the biblical text as her trying to have two husbands. Just as God is jealous for Israel, only the man can be jealous of his wife (1 Corinthians 10:22; Deuteronomy 32:16; Exodus 34:14). If the woman is jealous of her husband, of course, he cannot have another wife, or it will greatly complicate the relationship. We are still searching for a text that, at least indirectly, contradicts polygamy in the law. Therefore, let's move on to Deuteronomy.

DEUTERONOMY 17 – THE KING AND HIS WIVES

15 Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. 16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. 17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. (Deuteronomy 17:15-17)

Finally! We found a text prohibiting someone (the King) from multiplying wives! Now, this seems like an ideal pointed out in the law, doesn't it? Ah, how much context matters. Read it again and note this: if it is true that prohibiting multiplying wives implies that the King (only the king) should have only one, then I should assume that the king should also have only one horse, as it is in the same prohibition structure.

But you see, for consolation, I suggest you note that this text only speaks of the king, exclusively of him, so even if it pointed to monogamy, the reason would be clear. Look, not even gold should the king multiply, and yet we don't want the king with just one gold stone, do we? Perhaps if it weighs several tons, it could be considered one. What is the text saying? It's just an administrative instruction: don't multiply these things, for the more you have, the greater the chance your heart will become corrupt. After all, the same goes for money. You can have plenty, but be careful, if you grow too much financially, your heart may be ensnared by what was meant to give you freedom.

DEUTERONOMY 21 – TWO WIVES (LOVE BOTH)

15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: 16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: 17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his. (Deuteronomy 21:15-17)

Please, if you have two wives, make every effort to love both, for this text is saying that if you love one and despise the other, you risk treating the situation unfairly. See, God does not say it's a false love, but that a

man not only can, but should love two women when he is married to two women. It's the same instruction as Paul's: "Husbands, love your wives" (Ephesians 5:25). The law is fulfilled in love, therefore, if a man despises a woman, what this order from Deuteronomy aims to prevent is that the man's lack of love results in penalties for the children and the despised wife. What God **wants to regulate is not polygamous marriage, but the consequences of lack of love for one of the two wives.**

Note: Previously, God also regulates the lack of love in verses 11 to 14. If you, in a war, take a woman home, you should not sell her afterwards; instead, you should act with love and set her free if you are not pleased with her (v. 14). Love is the fulfillment of the Law, so it's clear that when God regulates these issues, He wants to prevent lack of love from causing you to act in any way towards another person. Notably, **commanding love for both wives regulates polygamy as much as commanding a husband to love a single wife regulates monogamy** – meaning, it's not monogamy that's being regulated, but rather the lack of love.

An example of how lack of love for the wife who gives the first child can be harmful for everyone is the case of Leah and Rachel. Jacob loved Rachel, who did not bear him children, while God made Leah, the first wife, give him children (Genesis 29:19-31). Nevertheless, Jacob persisted in his failure, because when Rachel gave birth, it was Joseph who was born, to whom Jacob gave privileges (Genesis 37:3 [remember that Benjamin was born after Joseph]), to the point that the other brothers envied him, leading to malicious acts against him (Genesis 50:20). Thus, we learn from this story that lack of love will naturally result in intrafamily conflicts. The husband's order of love should begin with the first wife, and that is what biblical history always teaches.

Of course, the man should love all his wives. It is not, as people influenced by philosophy think, that if you love one, you will not love the other – they are not enemies like God and Mammon. How many marital conflicts would be resolved if it were simply understood that a man can love as many women as he has! This dialectic of the husband's love only exists for those who have not carefully studied the biblical text:

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites (1 Kings 11:1)

Do you think Christ would come and simply put an end to it, as if it were nothing?

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Jean-Marc Berthoud, a theologian, says that God discarded polygamy in the law and pointed to monogamy as the ideal mode of love and marriage. Unfortunately, they forgot to deliver this message to God, who clearly established in His Law polygamy, not as a command, but as permission for a man who desires it. The desire, of course, is not sinful; we are not ascetics – nor Greeks. If our desires do not contradict God's law, there is nothing against them, unless, of course, my desires covet my neighbor's property or his wife (Exodus 20:17).

We cannot address opposing arguments such as cultural, economic, theological issues, etc., in this text. Therefore, in the next text, we will specifically address these arguments before continuing to explain the other biblical texts. To our sadness, men cling too much to their cultures and customs, and therefore, they miss out on what God permitted in the biblical text for the joy of both men and women.

CONCLUSION

There is nothing in the Law against male polygamy;

God commands a man to love his wives, in order to avoid injustice;

Love fulfills the Law when it is within what it allows.

Therefore, Male Polygamy is blessed by God.

Polygamy in the Law of God – Part 2

We know that besides what is addressed in God's Law, there are economic, cultural, historical, and even theological arguments to explain why God allowed male polygamy and - supposedly - prohibited it later. In part 1 of this text, we dealt with how the biblical Law actively defends polygamy. However, we defended the subject only within its internal structure, in the Law. We did this because even the New Testament says that sin is the transgression of the Law (1 John 3:4), and without law, there is no sin (Romans 4:15 [meaning if God did not prohibit, it is not a sin]), so it is natural to address polygamy in God's Law first. However, there are various external questions to the law seeking to explain why God would allow polygamy at that time and then supposedly prohibit it later, considering that it was neither a ritual law nor related to the civil government of ancient Israel - things that are normally agreed to have passed.

In the text below, we will take another step to prove that God never intended to prohibit male polygamy, but rather, we were, because of certain circumstances and misinterpretations, led into this cultural reading of the Bible. However, below, we will not be extremely systematic, as we will only provide brief answers.

CULTURAL

Once again, Jacob, the son of Isaac, is accused of committing a great crime because he had four wives. But there is no basis for a criminal accusation here: for a plurality of wives was not a crime when it was customary; and it is a crime now, because it is no longer the custom. There are sins against nature, sins against customs, and sins against laws. In which of these senses, then, did Jacob sin by having a plurality of wives? As regards nature, he used the women not for sensual gratification, but for the procreation of children. By custom, this was the common practice at that time in those countries. And by laws, there was no prohibition. The only reason it is now a crime to do so is because custom and laws prohibit it. Whoever disregards these restrictions, even if they use their wives only for having children, still commits sin and harms human society itself, for the sake of which the procreation of children is necessary. In the current altered state of customs and laws, men cannot take pleasure in a plurality of wives except out of excessive lust; and thus arises the mistake of supposing that no one could ever have had many wives except out of sensuality and vehement sinful desires. Augustine Against Faustus, XXII.47

Our Culture

Under the word "custom," we can understand the concept of "culture," so both are used almost synonymously. And here we have the first argument against polygamy thinking in this cultural context. Augustine, seeking to defend scripture against Roman and Greek sensibilities, creates a schizophrenic law in God, so that something that was not lust becomes so (based on human laws).

As we noted in our previous text, it makes no sense to accuse the Hebrews of merely following the culture of the time in which they lived. Now, who guarantees that the concern against polygamy is not itself influenced by the culture in which I live, and that the believers of the Old Testament were following God's permissions? The cultural argument is a mere assumption because there is no way to prove that something is from their culture or ours.

Whenever these men allege that something is a product of someone's culture and that our culture is distinct, they will always judge as sinful those who have a different culture from ours. This explains a lot.

Furthermore, Augustine subjects God's permissions and what is sin or not to cultural environment - that is why he is so loved by men who accuse customs in others. Look, even in the New Testament, sin is what contradicts the Law of God (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15 etc. - check our text "What is the Law of God?"). If Augustine says that now sin is also because we contradict customs, what would he do when the custom goes against something that God does not prohibit? What about believers who stand up against state orders that are not inherently sinful (such as wearing a mask)? Are all these in sin?

Finally, note that Augustine's concern (and that of many theologians) is that it "harms human society." This is proof of how Roman he was, and influenced by his own culture - just like men are today. Would God allow and even grant wives if this were actively harmful to human society?

Their Culture

Now, notice how flawed this argument is when we consider the cultural context of the Hebrews. You could even say that the cultural environment up to Jacob was polygamous (which would already be a lie), but you couldn't explain how, even after the Egyptians favored monogamy, there was still strong polygamy among the Hebrews to the point that God never contradicted it. Look, the Egyptians were monogamous (reason enough to explain Joseph's monogamy) and it was not allowed to marry more women in any way, except for common concubine relationships without marriage. Now, after years in Egypt, amid a monogamous culture, it would be much less difficult for God to prohibit polygamy among the Hebrews, given that they knew and grew up in this context. God, who requires us to do simple acts like giving thanks for what we eat (1 Timothy 4:1-5) to more difficult acts like putting an end to idols and adultery (Joshua 24:14 [text showing that the Israelites should not worship Egyptian deities]), never demanded an end to polygamy with regard to the culture of others.

We could still argue and say that the Canaanites were polygamous and that, therefore, the Hebrews absorbed this from their culture. But in Leviticus, which warns against practicing the works of the Canaanites (Leviticus 18:3), there is no warning against polygamous practices. Let's look carefully:

After the doings [customs] of the land of Egypt [which were monogamous], wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan [which were probably polygamous], whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. (Leviticus 18:3)

Should I not be monogamous or should I not be polygamous? Well, that's not the subject of the text, because when God enumerates the sexual acts practiced by the Canaanites, among none of them is male polygamy being prohibited. We see prohibition against:

- Relations with any relative (v. 6) or mother (v. 7, 8); with sister (by father or mother - v. 9 [Abraham did this]); with grandsons (v. 10); with nieces (v. 11); sister, daughter of your mother and father (v. 12 - already presuming possible polygamy of the father); with single or married aunt (v. 13, 14); with daughter-in-law or wife of your brother (v. 15, 16); with daughter and mother (v. 17); and with grandsons and granddaughters (v. 17); a woman with her sister (v. 18 [Jacob did this]); and during menstruation (v. 19); with another man's wife (v. 20); and finally, a man with another man or animal (v. 23, 24).

When the text decides to talk about the works of the Canaanites and Egyptians, no verse condemns polygamy; instead, it condemns other practices of these peoples that God calls sin. This would be the perfect time for God to prohibit polygamy, since He Himself is seeking to prohibit what the Canaanites did among themselves. Still, we see that culturally Israel had the baggage to form a monogamous people, and God did not make the slightest effort for this to be terminated among His people.

Note: Some may argue that all cultures were polygamous because they accepted concubinage. But this is false; concubinage was a common practice among Greeks, Romans (the founders of Western monogamy), and even slave owners recently. The point is that concubinage (a stable sexual relationship with a slave) is different from marriage (which implies liberation from slavery). A practical example is Leviticus 19:20, where a slave woman who is engaged does not suffer the death penalty for adultery, but if she is freed and still engaged, she does (as Tamar would have suffered the death penalty in Genesis). From our modern monogamous standpoint, Israel allowing concubinage and contractual polygamy would be an even greater cruelty than that of the surrounding peoples, who only tolerated concubinage. This shows that if God wanted to, He could regulate only concubinage and avoid progress in marriage contracts, but He approved both.

A reminder that God's Law is universal

Notice that God is judging the Canaanites by a law that had not been given to them in writing (Leviticus 18:25). God Himself says that the Canaanites are being condemned for these practices (Leviticus 20:23). Moreover, when God revolts against the "customs of other nations," He clearly delineates throughout the entire chapter what these customs are:

And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. (Leviticus 20:23)

Not wanting to lose the debate to Faustus, Augustine contradicted God to establish his own custom and not sound to his enemy like a sexual deviant, as the Romans thought the Jews were. However, note that God's Law is universal, and therefore God condemns the Canaanites even though they had never heard of Hebrew customs. As we can see, if polygamy were condemned by God, it would be universally condemned, not just by custom.

Furthermore, the Babylonians (who later took Israel into captivity), Greeks (who even had a calculation to prove that marriage is between one man and one woman, even if the woman dies), and Romans were all monogamous. Of course, all this was by state imposition; after all, in the short term, monogamy proves to be

economically viable and more controllable. Ironically, Rome only had difficulty controlling the Jews and the Persians (who were indeed polygamous). Israel had larger and more developed cultures steeped in monogamy. Do you really think it would have been "the culture of the time" that would have created in the Hebrews the need for polygamy?

Note: Among the followers of Pythagoras, it was conventioned that the number 2 was feminine and the 3 was masculine, with the number 5 being equivalent to marriage, so that going beyond or falling short of this number would be a distortion of marriage (my goodness, where did they get that from?). Cf. this information here (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/numbersymbolism/Pythagoreanism>). The Egyptians were culturally monogamous; the Babylonians were due to economic necessity; the Greeks for philosophical reasons, and the Romans for legal reasons (imagine the difficulty of dividing inheritance under state control for polygamous families?). We are not saying that things were exactly like this, after all, there were legal, philosophical, economic, etc. reasons in all cases. But some things are more evident in certain environments, besides, historically, there may be a lack of information (it may be that the Egyptians were more so for legal reasons, but due to lack of access to materials proving this, it is presumed to be a mere acceptance by custom).

PASSIONS

And she [Sarah] gave her servant to her husband not to satisfy his passion, but to give him offspring. Augustine, Against Faustus, XXII, 33

Greek Asceticism

Greek asceticism was one of those ideas that man should avoid his "passions." Not without reason, Augustine equates "sin" and "passion" in his book *On Free Will*. Well, it is said that passion is sin, but in what sense is this? Because, according to current theologians, all disordered passion is sin. When, in fact, God strongly resonates that sin is the transgression of a law, that is, crossing a line. Who can say what the appropriate level of passion is? However, the desire for another man's wife, strong or weak, is sin, regardless of the level of desire. Do you see how clear and direct God's Law is regarding "passions"? Passion is just one of those philosophical categories that entered Christianity and made it domesticated.

Auguste Comte, an 'atheist', who believed that we are living in the rational phase of humanity, was against remarriage, even after the death of any of the partners, something he called successive polygamy (what did he have in common with the church fathers? Greek Philosophy, of course) - all because he believed that reason favors unity and symmetry. Unity and symmetry are good tools for science, but not for theology, which is based on how God orders things and not on how we want to understand them (which is always the supposedly simpler path). For their dialectic, a man cannot love more than one woman - much foolishness and contradiction with the biblical text, especially if we look at the *Song of Solomon*, written by Solomon after having several wives... the most romantic and loving book in the Bible is the result of polygamous love, unlike this dialectical asceticism. In the end, monogamy is favored by philosophy in Christianity and not by the Scriptures.

How can anyone say there is passion when a man marries two women? God himself married two, when he married with the northern Israel and Judah (Ezekiel 23), would God be condemned as a sinner for "yielding" to passions? Furthermore, this nonsense presumes that a man needs to be restrained, that is, he has to be content with what he has. Nowhere in the Scriptures is this said, except when your desire to possess something is the desire to possess something that belongs to someone else, not what is for sale, for example. If contentment means being satisfied with the minimum, let us leave our homes, jobs, and the money we earn, which is greater than at any time in the history of the world, and turn to "Christian" asceticism, which only serves to condemn the innocent.

Roman Virginity - the goddess

Furthermore, what would you say if you knew that the main Roman deity, for a long time, was worshipped as "always virgin"? Vesta, the most popular Roman deity, was so because she proposed an ideal life for women and in the home: she was a virgin, and the loss of virginity could even cost her life. It is not without reason that in Rome believers were extremely concerned about virginity... If you knew how much we borrowed from the Romans, you would be amazed.

Anyway, if a woman should be a virgin (in the Roman's mind) so should the man be, therefore, if they were priests, it would certainly not be a good thing to marry and also not to have sexual relationships. Roman culture, despite being very sexually open, had among its ideals "sexual purity," something that was only not more popular because it needed a religion that sufficiently influenced people. Now, after this religion arrived, everyone started to hide their sexual life (okay, it's true that the practice of unrestrained sex decreased). Do you really think these sexual passions would be allowed by God and suddenly prohibited in the NT, coincidentally in the Roman milieu? Suspicious, very suspicious...

This goddess was so relevant to the Romans that Livy, Plutarch, Dionysius, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus considered her in high esteem; not to mention the Twelve Tables of Rome (Lex Duodecim Tabularum) - fundamental to Roman Law - which in the fifth table still dedicates itself to taking care of the possessions of the virgins of Vesta, so valuable was this goddess and the virginity associated with her. Something that makes total sense, since Vesta would be the "founder" mother of Rome. Thus, all Roman culture revolved under pressure around this ideal of purity. In the end, we eliminated idolatry, as no one even knows anymore who Vesta would have been, but the custom continued, and we still think that the ideal is what we learned from Roman culture.

Oh, the Romans went through population crises, that is, their people were getting very old and the birth rate began to fall (ironically, at some moments they believed the world was too full of people... it's too many people for the State to manage, that's all). Monogamous peoples that last a long time tend to have this tendency to fall in birth rates. They are excellent for growing economically and culturally fast, but they die slowly.

Anyway, Vesta pointed to an ideal of purity, with "fornication" being a great problem for the Romans, something that included polygamous marriage, by extension. You see, the sense of purity and lack of passion comes from Roman culture and Greek philosophy, with their greatest ideals resulting in a supposed sexual purity that avoids polygamy. We are heirs of Greek and Roman morality - and that's why we are afraid of male polygamy.

Ironically, medieval priests had a little less fear. Based on passages like 1 Timothy 3:1, which prohibited the bishop from having more than one wife, many, along with their wives, included concubines. But of course, neither the reformers nor the Catholics will add this part of history to their books - something we will consider at the end of this chapter.

Disgust and ugliness

Some may still say how disgusting it is to imagine two women in bed with one man, emphasizing that this is purely driven by passion, as even Jacob did not lie with Leah and Rachel at the same time. Of course, he wouldn't lie with both, they were competing with each other! Didn't you read the previous text? This is only disgusting to our modern culture, focused on the concept that desire for many things is passion and, therefore, ugly (applying aesthetics to God's orders) and even disgusting.

This argument is characteristic of women who assimilate things based on what they see and feel, that is, they cannot judge beyond appearances, at least not normally (it is good to place these observations at the end because there is always someone with exceptions, which prove nothing beyond the rule we are showing - if there is an exception, it is because "there is a rule"). Such a thing is as foolish as it is weak, highlighting our sensitivity and not what the biblical text allows. I imagine Solomon having to have relations with one woman at a time out of the thousand... what a complicated life it would be to follow this rule.

ECONOMY AND POLITICS

It's obvious that monogamy favors the economy in the short term.

This shouldn't even be up for discussion! We're not talking about political or economic science; we're talking about what God calls sin and what is not sin! It might be that buying a car strains you financially and perhaps even leads to bankruptcy, but that's not because buying a car is inherently sinful; it was just an inefficient way of managing your money. If monogamy favors the economy, it's not because of reasons of holiness or lack thereof, but rather because it promotes a family-oriented outlook.

Consider this example from Paul on how monogamy and even singleness promote an outward focus beyond the family:

But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:33)

The persecuted Church should never be too concerned about large families, as Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians 7, because a married man is concerned with pleasing his wife (and the more wives, the more he needs to do for the family). What Paul instructed wasn't something exclusive to his knowledge, as governments before him sought to control marriage and childbirth, as this would lead people to better serve the state and social ends. Therefore, it's natural that monogamy favors any objective outside of the family, whether it be "the kingdom," the economy, the state, GDP, among other things outside the family realm.

Note: We could further change it to: "the married man is concerned with pleasing his wife, not with serving the state (polis)." Ironically, Plato was against the private ownership of women (being the property of one man – polyandry) so that, having no private possessions, men would dedicate themselves fully to the polis. This is clearly stated in his book "The Republic" (423e–424a: "all these women shall be common wives to all the men, and none shall live privately with any man; the children shall also be common, so that no father shall know his own offspring, nor any son his father"). For Plato (and the Greeks), even having a wife or husband would be an impediment if you are a guardian of the city. Quite intriguing, isn't it? Monogamy takes power away from the family, and we will see this as we discuss the prophets.

Calling polygamy a sin because of economics proves that we love money more than truth and the Law of God. These same people are the ones who love it when others are poor for the benefit of the church, but want to destroy the family that God allows us to have.

The State does not permit, and we must obey the authorities.

It is true that we must obey all authorities that God has placed over us, this is undeniable, mainly based on the fact that authorities are instituted by God (Romans 13:1 onwards). The problem begins with the limit of obedience. Now, we saw in the previous text that even though Egypt was monogamous, Israel multiplied polygamously under the power of Pharaoh, although Joseph remained monogamous. Furthermore, in the New Testament, it is quite evident how Paul argues, avoiding unnecessary friction with authorities.

So, where is the line that allows me to marry polygamously in a contrary State? The issue is simple: first and foremost, it is not considering male polygamy a sin. If you do that, no matter what the State says, you will never judge your brother unfairly, bearing false witness against him; instead, you will know that even if you may be disobeying a human authority, you are not breaking any of God's commandments regarding family establishment.

Secondly, the text of Exodus 1 allows us to notice that the common population has the right given by God to have their wives in a polygamous manner, while state authorities (like Joseph) must be exemplary models of the state structure, therefore avoiding polygamy in a government that prohibits it. The more politically prominent a Christian is, the less desire he should have for polygamous marriage, unless he lives in a state that permits it (the opposite of this may even provoke religious persecution).

But notice how these Christians who prohibit polygamous marriage in a monogamous state are hypocrites: what do they do when it is said that they should preach to Muslims (who are polygamous)? That marriage as taught by God is monogamous, even though Muslim states allow a man to have up to four wives. By their hypocritical standard, in such a state it would only be a sin if a man had five wives. What will these men do if

the government stops prohibiting polygamy? Clearly, they will not submit to authority, condemning themselves in what they claim to approve.

Note: Remember that, according to Scripture, the marriage contract is made between the husband (or his parents) and the parents of the woman, so the fact that the State does not issue the marriage contract does not mean that there is no marriage. Marriage occurs independently of the State, and its bureaucracy should be obeyed, but we cannot confuse what the State calls marriage with what Scripture calls marriage. We do not want to rebel against human governments, only to properly distinguish between what God permits and what man establishes.

THEOLOGY

The theological arguments are almost as poor as the previous ones. But they usually have one thing that the previous ones don't: that real sense of piety, self-denial, and (unnecessary?) suffering that every believer should have. The appearance of piety should not be a reason for us to cling to things, nor should the appearance of wickedness (which we sometimes think exists in something that God did not prohibit).

The need for Christ's birth

Did Christ have to be born? Of course! It's the promise of Genesis 3:15, that He would come from the woman. However, some theologians say that God allowed polygamy to facilitate the birth of Christ (I don't even know how that would make sense). But the same text that is fundamental is the one that refutes them. Look, Genesis 3:15 is the only text that speaks of the "seed of the woman" instead of the seed of man (to Abraham, for example, the promise of descendants is through his seed). Considering that women do not ejaculate sperm, this must mean something, as it is excluding man from the equation (and logically, the need for polygamy) – and showing that the birth of the Savior would, as already demonstrated here in Genesis 3, be virgin, without the need for male seed.

There is no reason to believe that Jesus would only be born because of polygamy, first because of what we saw above, since there was no need for a man for the birth of Christ, secondly, we only need to read Matthew 1 to notice that the genealogy of Jesus never needs "two women at the same time", but only one after the other, that is, a descendant of the previous one.

Genesis 2 is God's ideal

We have already explained Genesis 2, but here is a detail: were the prophets stupid? Now, Jesus himself says, in Matthew 19, that what God created is the way things should be, and he charges the Pharisees and his disciples (remember that Jesus was still under the OT), so it makes no sense we say that Genesis 2 was a mystery to OT believers. By the way, the text is so clear that it should make monogamists suspicious of the monogamy present in the text *without anyone noticing it in the entire OT*.

Everyone points to Genesis 2, a text that says there is one woman for only one man. We have nothing here that resembles a great hidden, mysterious work or one that needed more revelations: the text was there. Thus, those who need to prove how Genesis 2 passed eons without being understood are precisely those who defend monogamy.

Some will still say that as God tolerated divorce, so he tolerated polygamy. This comparison is foolish, because, as we argued in our text on Divorce and Marriage, in the law it was clear that divorce was given out of hardness of heart, but that the strict practice of it is not and will never be a sin in itself (apart from the fact that it not annul the marriage). Now, if this is the conclusion of divorce, it could certainly be polygamy, since they want to make use of the comparisons. Furthermore, God never gave divorce as a gift to anyone, but he gave women to David as a prize: now, what is that? It is clear proof

that the comparison of polygamy with divorce makes no sense at all, unless, of course, you believe in advance that both polygamous marriage and divorce are sins.

Believing in polygamy when you get to the biblical text is a recipe for thinking it is right

But the monogamist comes to the text believing that monogamy is God's standard, and accuses us of coming to the text believing in polygamy: hypocrites always accuse themselves when they accuse others. Can't you see that you have come to the biblical text believing that monogamy is God's standard? Now, if it is God's standard, the analysis of the biblical text itself will prove it, but this does not happen, because whether we arrive at the text believing in polygamy or not, it is there. If you think about this, you don't need to read the following texts, as you are already closed in your cultural understanding, and does not agree with the biblical text.

The mercy of God – who only had mercy on this sin: double standards?

Still others will say that it was always a sin, but because of God's mercy the thing was postponed until the New Testament. Such argument, in addition to being foolish, is indecent. When, in the NT, God recognizes that ignorance or lack of knowledge is an argument for mercy, this is said already considering the existence of the law on those sins (Acts 17:30), it would not make sense that God, the perfect God, of suddenly changed his mind, and began to treat and teach things differently.

Even, for example, there is no sin where there is no law, men suffered the consequences of their mistakes. Jacob, who married two sisters, had them in dispute all the time (Lev 18:18), never something passed without some consequence.

However, polygamy is still practiced even today in the world without any consequences. God and his Law are the ones who are despised in their permissions. Furthermore, what would it be if God allowed one sin and not another? One weight and two measures?

Now, the wages of sin is death (Rm 6:23), therefore, we cannot assume that for all other sins God established the *death penalty*, but left only this one unpunished. This even contradicts those who often tell us that we cannot have pet sins! If God allows this sin out of some necessity, then God has a pet sin. As we have seen, God condemned all types of sexual sin even in Leviticus, and never refrained from condemning anything, no matter how small it seemed. Men's conclusion about God's lack of condemnation for this is just one of those evidences that what speaks loudest in them is a moral sense inherited from pagans and not from God.

Christ only has one wife

Christ has only one wife in the New Testament (just in case, since in the OT God has two...), so this can only point to the need for our marriage to agree with Christ's - say the monogamists.

But nowhere does it say that we are to imitate the marriage of Christ and the Church in all aspects, but rather that wives should submit to their husbands and husbands should love their wives. The numerical relationship has never been presented as a model of Christ's marriage for man.

These same people who argue like this are against women blindly obeying their husbands, although in the relationship between Christ and the church, the church must follow Christ "blindly". I could add a million things that these same people do not accept in the relationship between Christ and the church applied between husband and wif(v)e(s): could our union be only spiritual? Could the man leave and "come back after a while"? Certainly not... but for their own reason they want the example of Christ and the church to apply to the numerical aspect.

I could even question it in another way: if Christ wants, couldn't he have another church like God did with Israel and Judah? See that the problem is clear and simple: can the church be jealous of Christ? It wouldn't even make sense to ask this, but there are so many enemies with so many questions that we cannot ignore some nuances.

Furthermore, if Christ were depicted with two wives, that would confuse everything even more! See, the church must have unity. How is unity represented in the marriage between Christ and his people? Only if Christ has "one people", "one church" and, therefore, "one woman". God even when it comes to his polygamous marriage with Israel and Judah, does so because there was division among the people, causing the need for it to be explained in this way. We know that division is bad, so in the case of God with his people two wives mean "division"; however, as for men it means "multiplication" (as we noted when commenting on Exodus 1).

Progressive Revelation

It is not uncommon to say that the progress of revelation makes this distinction between the prohibition in the OT and the NT, but as we have already argued in other texts on our website, revelation *is not the same as law*. God revealed to Paul things that no believer had access to, and Paul continued to keep it to himself (2 Cor 12). Now, if this were a law, Paul would sin in keeping it to himself, since God's counsel cannot be restricted. As these men do not understand that the Law of God ends in Deuteronomy, they can only read the Bible from the perspective of "sin / not sin" and not "sin / wisdom / administration", for example, making believers sinners of things that, eventually, the bible just says that it would be good not to do (but not because of sin).

Even so, if we still consider the progression of revelation, nothing will change, for as we will prove in the following texts (the next being about polygamy in the prophets), God is consistent in allowing polygamy in both the OT and NT, and the progress of revelation *only reinforces this*, otherwise it would not be progress, but a return. In our texts on The Divisions of Scripture and on Scripture in the First Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith we make it clear that it is not without reason that only the "Law" (the pentateuch) is called "law", therefore, what it does not prohibit cannot be a sin – these texts are in our book on the Westminster Confession of Faith and on False Sins.

Note: there is an argument, usually from liberals, that polygamy existed because of Israel's tribal context. In addition to the fact that "tribal" means nothing as an argument, this would imply that something about "civilization" is right. However, the civilized Greeks and Romans were the ones who had idolatrous festivals and used magic in rituals to false gods. On the other hand, the Greeks, as long as we know, were monogamous even when they were still tribes, so what relationship would be truly tribal?

HISTORICAL-THEOLOGICAL

The need to populate the Earth

God would have allowed it to populate the Earth – the polite man's argument. The problem is that we know what God allowed to populate the Earth. For example, we know that one brother marrying another is a sin (Lev. 18:9, 11), but the children of Adam intermarried (because, as Paul was tired of saying: where there is no law there is no transgression – Rom 4:15 [precisely speaking of this period before Moses]). Thus Abraham married Sarah, being his sister, and Moses' father married his own aunt (Ex 6:20), this being prohibited afterwards (Lev 18:14) – all this so that the Earth could be populated, otherwise, everything would end with the children of Adam and Eve. But where is the prohibition on polygamy? If these things could have been allowed for population growth, where is the ban on *all* of them? It doesn't make sense for God to use double standards on this... and only on this.

Furthermore, the only text that would actually lead us to directly believe that God's goal with polygamy would be to populate the earth is Genesis 25, in which Abraham marries Keturah. But even this text would not prove that this is the objective *of polygamy*, since Abraham had already lost Sarah there and, on top of that, we have no way of knowing whether Hagar was alive.

Therefore, the only text favorable to understanding does not favor *this* understanding.

The Church has always seen it this way, it is our tradition

This argument is full of a series of assumptions, so I will only dwell on one or two points (aside from this being a variation on the first cultural argument):

That the church always saw it this way after the closure of the NT is no surprise.

As we noted, the philosophical and cultural environment favored this thinking in the church (do you think only OT believers made mistakes?). The Church Fathers, in a revolt against Judaism, also wanted to get rid of Jewish interpretations and, in order to avoid a hermeneutical vacuum, it was necessary to adapt Greek and Roman philosophy to the biblical text and vice versa.

What we had was this invasion, without mental freedom from the Greek notion of marriage.

And why should I worry about that? Christ himself showed that if we do not believe in the law it is not possible to believe in him (John 5:46), he never said that we should believe in the history of the church, or in the members in particular, as a definitive form. The history of the church is not a good judge, as we have men who condemned the marriage of a priest as adultery (saying he was married to the church – making it an adulteress [as she is married to Christ]) and men (believers?) like Charles The Great and the city of Münster with polygamous practice. This madness that the history of the church resolves things is only possible for those who make the cuts they want from history to favor their own philosophy and not to agree with Scripture.

Note: we follow a type of "Solo Scriptura", but not the type that denies that we cannot learn from the history of the church, after all, we only know some things because someone else told us, since we had not noticed them in the biblical text! However – the Romans argue – only the church attests to Scripture. But they themselves say that Catholicism was founded by Christ's words to Peter, making him the founder of Roman Catholicism (RC). If this is true, then the Church itself is founded by Scripture (where such speech is recorded), and these arguments of material sufficiency, etc., will make no difference. The opposite of this is to fall into the circularity argument (which Romans hate [because of philosophy], but which God uses on his Scripture, which attests to his own inspiration). Another detail is that the OT only came to us, in part, because of the care of the Pharisees, who kept it with great 'affection'. You see, the very text they preserved contradicted them in both its letter and spirit, so we cannot assume that because the RC may have been relevant to the preservation of the biblical text will automatically mean that it cannot be contradicted by it. The Scripture is the only book that can "spit on the plate it ate" (isn't it the Bible that kept condemning the Israelites, the same ones who received the Scripture from God?). Ultimately, we are arguing that there has clearly been no consistent defense of polygamy throughout church history, so how could we cite "respectable men" on the issue? What authority could help us? Furthermore, the authority of the lesser always comes from the greater, and if Scripture favors polygamy, it is the highest authority on our belief, not individual men throughout the history of the church – their authority adds nothing to Scripture. Only someone stupid would expect arguments from other men on a subject that *clearly has not been handled well during the history of the church.*

God's mercy towards women in a patriarchal society

Oh, enlightened people of the 21st century, what would become of God and his Law if we had not, only after at least 6 thousand years of human history, reached the end of this patriarchal way of life. We are the enlightened, unique ones, to whom God revealed things that had never been said before! – foolishness.

Other peoples were monogamous and yet everything worked out well in patriarchal cultures. It makes no sense that God allowed this to Israel because of something that was not practiced among neighboring peoples under the same circumstances. What a bad situation Israel was in, that while other nations did not need polygamy to take care of women, the Hebrews had to practice it...

God's mercy is demonstrated by the fact that such a polygamous relationship is not a sin and never will be.

Only wicked people have practiced polygamy recently

Okay, I know that Luther approved of polygamy, as he himself says:

I confess that I cannot prohibit a person from marrying several wives, as this does not contradict Scripture. If a man wishes to marry more than one woman he must be asked if he is satisfied with this decision in his conscience, so that he does so in accordance with the word of God. In such a situation the civil authority has nothing to interfere. Martin Luther, De Wette II

But that doesn't mean anything, because it is easier for men to turn against Luther and say that he is impious than to accept that we are the ones who are wrong.

But let's collaborate with the monogamists:

The woman considered the grandmother of modern Feminism accepted male polygamy, and her name was Mary Wollstonecraft. In 1772, she found himself in a strange circumstance with Henry Fuseli, so she approached Henry's wife asking her so that they could enter into a polygamous relationship (note that I avoid using the term 'polyamory', because the term is more political and allows for a relationship polygamous by both men and women). However, Mary did not force Henry's wife, who just did not accept the relationship. Unfortunately, they could have had a very happy marriage, and perhaps feminism would have taken longer to emerge (we believe that feminism is simply a natural development of how our culture is related to marriage).

Anyone who reads Mary's materials will notice that she would actually be against modern feminism, as she defended sexual purity, marriage and demanded that women work and study well, and not pick fights with men and husbands. However, none of this will make any difference to the monogamous movement, which sees things ideologically, and thinks that every defense of polygamy is a sin or the fruit of a sin.

There is no argument against this, not because we don't have evidence of faithful polygamous men, but because being polygamous automatically throws you onto the spectrum of sexual pervert and immoral.

SOME JOYS OF POLYGAMY

It is clear that we do not want to make this text long, as it is a mere complement to part 1, but we cannot finish it without highlighting some points that experience itself has demonstrated in the lives of polygamous families. Oh, and please don't confuse this with the polygamy of sects like Mormonism, Islam (which is nothing more than a "Christian" sect) and Judaizers, these do not really know the Law of God, as they oscillate on invented revelations and traditions.

And God has not revealed anything new since the end of Israel, in the year 70 AD. And, as the prophecies were intended for the Jews and early Christians (Rom 3:1, 2; 1 Cor 14:21, 22 [Paul quotes the Law showing that these gifts were for a sign of the judgment that would occur upon the Jews], Dn 9:24 ['to seal' the vision and prophecy is to close them after the judgment predicted in Daniel 9 {1 Cor 13:9, 10 also predicts this same closing of prophecies and visions}]), we should not wait for God to give new revelations, rather, let him confront us with his word.

End distrust and stress

In the previous text we saw that Numbers 5 proves that only a man can be jealous in marriage, which, otherwise, shows the lack of need for women to live in jealousy of their husbands, distrust and fear. As the apostle Peter himself clearly puts it, the woman is the weakest vessel (1 Pet 3:7), so it is expected that she will not be able to deal with feelings of jealousy, stress and distrust in the same way that a man eventually deals with it. Now, polygamy would not only produce less stressed and jealous women, but happier and more contented women, knowing that they don't need to keep checking their husband's clothes, cell phones and smells, in the expectation that he is cheating on her. In a world where polygamy is common, unnecessary suffering on the part of women is not a necessity.

The same goes, in a way, for men, who are sad because they desire girls (not married women) who they would like to be their wives. Internal struggles, "identity" conflicts, sadness over a sin that doesn't exist and tiredness with life are common things for a man who has no right to have another wife, as he only thinks of himself as evil and how incapable he is to follow this commandment of God (which is nothing more than human tradition).

Help at home

Another interesting case is that of help at home. For example, in the USA, although there are laws against polygamy, it is not uncommon to find polygamous Christian families, and in some, the husband even needs to spend long periods away from home (I'm talking about those called up for war, for example). In a case like this, a woman alone (perhaps with a child) is at the mercy of distant relatives or the care of some friends. None of this is a problem in a polygamous relationship, where the two wives (or more) help each other, with one comforting the other and helping around the house.

The truth is that, although monogamy encourages a man to look outside the home, it is in polygamy that he can achieve a better balance of household care. Of course, on the other hand, you will have a greater need to divide your attention, as you cannot wait to get home and always have one or two women to have sex with. Rather, he must be cordial and live the home life (1 Peter 3:7).

Therefore, polygamy ensures that the need for men to produce within the home decreases in the sense that they do not need to take care of household chores as much as in monogamy, on the other hand, there is a greater need to "spend quality time", as they will now have two or more women with whom to share attention and moments.

Child care

Taking care of children is, without a doubt, one of the most difficult, especially depending on the type of things parents want for them. Polygamy does not cause confusion in children's minds, rather, it points out to them even better the role of male leadership and female submission – everything becomes much clearer. It also becomes easier on an educational level (a great modern concern, but not a sin, of course), since now he can have the capacity and teaching of "two mothers", instead of one who, perhaps, would not be able to handle or wouldn't know some things. United families tend to be stronger, even more so if that particular family's concern is homeschooling.

Man's contentment

In our culture we learn that contentment is a merely internal thing, something that only exists if we are totally selfless and dedicated to poverty and as little as possible sexually (some Church Fathers would say that sex is only for reproduction and nothing else – it was a necessary evil). We inherited this, in a way, from the Middle Ages, in which the number of festivities frequently prohibited sexual relations, making men more prone to sexual violence, due to the pressure imposed on them, not only from wars, but also because of the most of 100 annual festivals that implied an obligation of 'chastity' (again, presupposing the impurity of sex). Ironically, it was the Puritans who most strongly broke this excessive Roman Catholic preoccupation, although they maintained various levels of 'sexual purity' that were also not necessary.

However, this is not our topic, I mentioned it just to note that we have great difficulty accepting that someone (a man in particular) can have a high sexual desire and, therefore, needs greater satisfaction. This was supposed to be something normal, because while one is not satisfied with a number of things and seeks more without sinning for it, it is natural that someone may desire more in the sexual area. A man with two wives may have double problems (like Jacob), but he would also have double blessings, considering that whoever finds a wife finds a blessing from God (Pr 18:22). We cannot ignore that a man like this lives more satisfied, and may even have more children, creating a happier family.

Focus on the home

One of the modern concerns is that women and men are less and less focused on the home. The novelty of this is that this information is now being disseminated, but, as we noted in Plato's Republic, this objective was present in older societies, in which the maximum commitment of men to war or politics was sought. The opposite, however, which is the case with polygamy, creates

an internal focus, that is, in the home, seeking the care of wives and children. Now, this doesn't mean that every polygamous family will be like that any more than it means that a monogamous family is necessarily outward-looking. We're talking about *general focus*, and unless you're so nominalist that you don't notice general influences, it's obvious that we're not talking about absolute cases: the world is not a square.

Note that even if women work outside the home, there will be no need for both of them to work or for them to have jobs that require long hours (as is commonly the case in Brazil: 8 hours). See that this creates a cycle: women are less dependent on working outside the home, and can be more at ease at home, with their common tasks, in a calmer life. We are not called to a vocational mission in the business world (in the popular sense that became common idea because of the Puritans); we are just people wanting to live a peaceful and ordinary life (1 Tim 2:2). Chesterton himself says something curious, relevant to our context, which is the (popular) idea that women are slaves when they serve their husbands, but free when they obey their masters – as if the latter were focused on their *total* well-being. We don't need to surrender to this type of life outside the home, on a mission that isn't ours, in a fight that we didn't buy.

The focus on the home will be the result and the cause of our joy in a world in which male polygamy is practiced and not accused, giving women more security that their husband's other relationships will be within the contract and even decreasing the chance of bringing diseases from outside the home.

In our next text we will return to the pure biblical text, exposing polygamy in the Prophets (counting the books called "historical") and we will see how we can learn from them what God did not prohibit in his Law.

One last observation

However, before we conclude, I need to mention something:

The fact that the matter is so clear, that is, that polygamy is not a sin, may make you afraid, after all, it seems like we are reinventing the wheel. The problem is that we cannot have such fear, precisely because we know that our entire history is and was like this: forgotten things are always brought to light.

On the other hand, we also don't want you to become some kind of polygamy templar, fighting against conspiracies that supposedly seek to hush up this issue. Although there may be systematic suppression, you better live a peaceful life on this subject than suffer pains because of it now.

Therefore, when fighting with these men we do not argue as if they were part of a corrupt religious system, I am much more willing to peace than to conflict, even if I occasionally use stronger language, due to the heat of the argument.

Thus, I step out of the way of God's truth, so that it shines alone. And if, by chance, it does not become a 'success' now, it is because it is not God's will that such a subject should still be known and defended by his church. It may be that God wants to leave this blessing for another time or for another generation. Even if, we believe, no work we do in God is wasted: therefore, at least, we believe that the present work will be useful to someone – to someone who perhaps suffers over such a matter and despairs alone without finding relief for his own soul. in men.

We must be patient, because the world does not depend on this to exist. Injustice, it is true, leaves us amazed, sad and tired, but we must pray to God asking that men have their understanding open to what is in the Word of the Lord and which cannot be ignored. Be a man.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that nothing suggests that male polygamy is against good experience;

Most arguments against polygamy are shortsighted, as they see the world only from our perspective;

Male polygamy favors joy and stability in the home, when practiced according to the structure permitted by God.

Polygamy in the Prophets

Having seen that the Law (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) not only allows polygamy, but in some moments presupposes it as natural, it would be good for us to see in the Prophets how this law continues.

After all, if it is true that the Bible does not contradict itself, then we need to wait for this non-prohibition in the Law to have subsequent effects. So, now, what you will see is how David, Solomon, Ezekiel and a few others dealt with Male Polygamy. Oh, and of course, we assume here that "Prophets" include the so-called Historical books (such as Kings and Chronicles) while the "Poetics" are the remaining books (Job and Psalms, for example).

JUDGES

Considering that Joshua does not have anything very relevant to the case of Polygamy, let's go to Judges, which is a book that is extremely stigmatized as portraying one of the worst periods in Israel - something that has some error, but we will not deal with it. For now, we need to note the texts and what they actually mean:

Mother of Sisera

28 The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? 29 Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, 30 Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two [lit. one wom, two wombs]; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? 31 So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

Although these are the words of Deborah in the mouth of Sisera's mother, they clearly express something that was present in the Law of God:

10 When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, 11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife; 12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; 13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. 14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her. 15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: 16 Then it

shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: 17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his. (Deuteronomy 21:10-17)

In our text, in part 1 on the Law of God, we comment on this event and, now, in Judges, we see that Deborah was aware of this law, and applied it to this lady. Unlike commentators who even say that this text from Judges is proof of the immorality of the time (Barry Webb), we see Deborah applying her knowledge of God's Law in a song and nothing more.

Note: it is often said that in Israel you could not marry a foreign woman, and this is true. But when there was a war God generally allowed Israel to take girls as spoils of war. The prohibition was on specific nations and peoples whose idolatry was clearly irreversible. Furthermore, the context of Judges 4 – 5 highlights that it was Deborah who sang about Sisera, and not Sisera who sang – therefore, although this text does not result in a clear defense of polygamy (as the song is placed in the mouth of the enemy), it is clearly not contrary to the Law of God in this sense.

Gideon and others

30 And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives. (Judges 8:30)

What makes it possible for a society to continue without a birth crisis?

This text clearly answers: you have more children by having more women. It's very simple and clear. Not to mention that, as mentioned in Hebrews 11, Gideon is one of the heroes of the OT Faith, which makes this case very suggestive for us.

Of course, many say that Gideon failed, especially because he allowed Israel to practice idolatry through sex. But this, as in the case of Lamech, proves nothing against his polygamy, any more than it would prove anything against monogamy if he were monogamous. Or do you think that only polygamists propagated idolatry? (remembering that the Babylonians, Egyptians and Greeks were monogamous, and were extremely idolatrous).

They also had several wives: Jair (because he had 30 children – Judges 10:4), Ibzan (Judges 12:8, 9) and Abdom (Judges 12:13-15), of whom either nothing negative is said or they are even actively positive! Now, these men were leaders in Israel, and yet they had many women, how can you assume that God would be putting up with this without punishing and/or sending a prophet? Even the concubine who committed adultery against the Levite died a horrible death through sexual sins (ch. 19), and you think God would ignore polygamy like that?

Furthermore, if polygamy would be proof that someone is wicked, what about when the individual was holy? Why cannot his holiness purify polygamy, but impiety is immediately connected with polygamy? It's quite simple, we arrive biased in the texts, imposing our (Roman) culture on them, that's all.

We must also make one more observation: every monogamous society goes through an inevitable population decline and the texts of Judges (and Exodus 1) come to show us how Israel grew in Canaan precisely because its leaders and renowned men dedicated themselves to having many wives. Even today, the countries that grow the most in population are polygamous countries (and in the USA they

Note that the evil of David's act is the entire context: the death of Uriah and the adultery, this becomes clearer in chapter 12, but here we have an interesting note. Since Bathsheba lost her first husband, she *mourned*. Note that her sadness was deep, so much so that the verse highlights this. Yet God guarantees that her son will die, adding sorrow upon sorrow. Unlike what God does with Hagar, who was given the promise that her son would be a great nation and people, being this used to console her, but what we have here is a contradiction with the desire to Bathsheba and her sadness – in no way does God console her (and her son died 7 days old, before circumcision – which would have been on the eighth day –, showing that God completely refused the relationship [2 Sam 12:18]).

7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; 8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. (2 Samuel 12:7, 8)

Think of a text that is read backwards? Here clearly God mentions that He Himself gave David the wives (in the plural). God made David a polygamist. Now, we know that no sin is granted by God and that every perfect gift comes from God in whom *there is no change* (James 1:17), if, therefore, polygamy was some kind of evil, how could God himself grant David women? Some say that here the author is saying that God gave these things in general. I don't know how this changes what is clear: the text mentions women specifically, and not as an abstract generic gift: God does not give in to abstractions.

And if David still wanted more, God would grant it. Now, Scripture does not prohibit anyone from desiring more, but rather from desiring what belongs to others (as David's own story proves). Unless you are Augustine reading this text, it makes no sense to think that David would want more women merely for reproduction and increasing offspring. The truth is that if David found little (numerically), God would give more. And the next question is: what else? More freedom, women and kingdom – that's what the text is about. By the way, if David asked God for this in prayer he would grant it, after all, God does not grant, in prayer, what is sin, but what is according to his will (1 John 3:22; 5:14).

Ironically, the fact that David did not want *too many* women is used as an example to be compared to the fact that Solomon did not have much restraint in this regard, but we will return to this point.

11 Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. (2 Samuel 12:11)

See that now God is telling David that He will make someone close to him take *his wives* (in this case, it was Absalom, his own son).

This penalty that God gives serves as proof that he paid David proportionately, showing that adultery is, for all intents and purposes, sleeping with your *neighbor's wife* and not your own. God had already given David seven wives, demonstrating a certain degree of perfection and blessing on His part towards King David and, later, Isaiah will use the same numerical value of wives in his prophecies.

Note, however, that David was not a bad father. They say David was a bad father because his sons rose up against him, but the text is saying that the sons rose up against David for committing adultery and killing, not for being a bad father: stop reading the text with a Roman and supposedly logical cause-and-effect lens.

They cite the case of Amnon (2 Sam 13), who took Tamar against her will, being his sister. David never punished Amnon, he just got angry. Nonsense. David could not go beyond God's law: Amnon was a man, Tamar did not ask for help, she just remained silent in Absalom's house, and there was no witness who accused Amnon's sin to the point of standing against him.

David could not kill Amnon or do anything against him at this point, so the text says that David was angry, while Absalom *hated Amnon*, that is, David did not allow the sun to take hold over his anger, while Absalom fueled anger for two years (2 Samuel 13:21, 22, 23, 28), resulting in the murder of his brother, and thus committing another sin.

However, now let's look at a positive event in David's family that reminds us of Judges 8:30:

Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker. 2 And unto David were sons born in Hebron: and his firstborn was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 3 And his second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; 4 And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. These were born to David in Hebron. 6 And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul. 7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and Ishbosheth said to Abner, Wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine? 8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ishbosheth, and said, Am I a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to day with a fault concerning this woman? (2 Samuel 3:1-8)

Let's do a test: what does the text cite as *proof that David's family was growing stronger*?

- (a) Did David get more weapons?
- (b) Did David have more horses?
- (c) Did David have more children?

If you said "C" then you are right!!! After all, when the text itself says that Abner strengthened himself in Saul's house, this is evidenced by his having Saul's concubine for himself. Now, if we want strong families in the face of any oppression, the best thing is to have more children, and you have more children by having more wives (Judges 8:30). It is for this reason that the psalm says that children are the Lord's heritage *against enemies*, as God gave them to us to use our children against God's enemies (Ps 127:3-5). Monogamous saints do not accept Psalm 127, as they do not accept Judges 8:30 or 2 Samuel 3:1-8.

Note: Paul says that *everything that was previously written is for our teaching* (Rm 15:4), if these passages do not serve to teach us what adultery is and what it is not, what are they for? To be 'adulterated' by modern masters? Men say: "this text only proves that God gave gifts to David, not that he approves polygamy" – O Heavens! Where have you seen it? – the 'gifts' that God gave David were: Cakes and toys? (B) Women and property? (c) Nothing. If you see the point, you will notice that there are no gifts given by God that are not themselves good things. God gives his children trials, but when the context shows that God gave something because he approved of what the individual did, it is because these things are in themselves good (like, for example, cakes and toys). So, God, our God, doesn't care about these things that we fear...

Solomon and his deviation

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites: 2 Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.(1 Kings 11:1-8)

Traditional, reformed and conservative people always tell us that we need to look at the context, and they masterfully use the context against charismatic and neo-Pentecostal movements in general. However, note that when it comes to the subject of marriage, they defend their own culture, ignoring the clear context. The simple question asked could be: what made Solomon go astray, the many women or the fact that they were women that God had forbidden? Now, the text of 1 Kings itself says, and even cites another text of the Law:

When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; 2 And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: 3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. 4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly. (Deuteronomy 7:1-4)

Ironically, the text that is referenced in 1 Kings 11 is not Deuteronomy 17:17, which warns the king not to have many wives, but rather that he should not have wives from specific nations. Naturally, Solomon loved them all, because in the Bible there is no such thing as "if you love one you hate the other", except in truly "moral" matters (loving God or sin, for example). The text also completes, contrasting Solomon with David, his father: something that is very relevant, since we saw that David had several wives and *did not go astray because of them*. The contrast becomes more interesting when we notice this.

Of course, Solomon had an absurd number of wives that he couldn't deal with, but Scripture doesn't accuse him of lust (imagine: do you think he had sex with one at a time each day?), rather, Christ cites him as a believing king, despite the sin of idolatry he allowed to return to Israel.

Again, all this emotional preoccupation with sexual boundaries that we have is ours, not the Bible's (at least not in this matter, of course).

General cases

There would be no space to mention Rehoboam (who acted against wisdom, but had several wives [2 Chr 11]), Abijah, who feared God and carried out his purpose against Northern Israel (2 Chr 13) and Joash, upright before God (2 Chr 24). All of these are examples of both wicked men (Rehoboam) and believers (Joash), and polygamy played no relevant role against one or the other, and their impiety or piety also proved nothing against (or in favor of) polygamy.

We also have the case of Esther, who married Ahasuerus even though he was still married to Queen Vashti (whom he banned from entering his presence, and not who gave a letter of divorce – Et 1:19). Thus, the great heroine of the OT became involved polygamously with a king, without this being seen as a bad thing.

In addition to all this, as we highlighted in the text on the Law, until now the interpretative tradition of prophets and kings has never considered the possibility that having many wives is contrary to God's will. What can we say? Could God be schizophrenic? Clearly not.

JEREMIAH, EZEKIEL AND ISAIAH

We need to understand, first of all, that the role of the prophet was extremely complicated. He was subject to several problems in his marriage. For example, God killing the prophet's wife as a sign and foreshadowing that Israel would suffer at the hands of an enemy (Ezek 24:15-27), or that the prophet should not want to marry (Jer 16:1-4). These questions show that the prophets had certain peculiarities regarding marriage itself.

Another factor that makes everything difficult is their prophetic role. For example, we know that Moses had two wives (perhaps at the same time or not, the biblical text does not say – and Calvin thought it was absurd that it was at the same time), but the other prophets normally came in moments of judgment or to announce judgment on Israel, while Moses was not necessarily this type of prophet in an integral way. Now, if the prophet came at a time of judgment, it was possible that he would not marry (Jer 16:1-4) or that, as believers were persecuted, they would remain single (1 Cor 7:26, 27 [note Paul's emphasis on "present necessity"]). Such elements prove that prophets could not simply have as many women as they wanted, as they would suffer along with them or prevent them from fully exercising their prophetic calling. And since God is not concerned about forbidding anyone in particular from getting married...

That said, it doesn't mean that there aren't prophetic elements that capture polygamy in some way, and it is these elements that we will see:

Bigamous God in Jeremiah

6 The Lord said also unto me in the days of Josiah the king, Hast thou seen that which backsliding Israel hath done? she is gone up upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot. 7 And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not. And her treacherous sister Judah saw it. 8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. (Jeremiah 3:6-9)

The division between Israel and Judah is intentional. The kingdoms were divided into two parts (cf. 1 Kings 12), in which different kings reigned. This division was evident even before, in the period of David, since David first reigned 7 years in Judah and only later was elected over the rest of Israel (2 Sam 5:5; 2 Sam 19:41-43). This division would not go unnoticed by the prophets, who demonstrated

that it was God's work that Israel was *intentionally divided by Him* (1 Kings 12:24). Evidently highlighting a flaw in the people *at that particular time*.

Having said that, what we noticed is that it becomes necessary to describe God not married to a bipolar nation, as if she were a single woman, but with two women who have different attitudes. And here it is necessary to note the fact that this is not a parable, but it is the real relationship between God and the people, which is a covenant, of marriage (check out our text *The Marriage Contract*). The reality is that the people were one spirit with God, being a real marriage (1 Cor 6:16, 17). Thus, it is not a mere parabolic explanation, as occurs when Jesus describes himself as if he were a thief (Rev 3:3). Now, if God does not commit sin, and married 'two women', how can polygamy be a sin? Note that Israel lying with other gods is adultery, but God "lying" with two parts of the same nation is not.

Clearly *the entire OT distinguishes between adultery and polygamy even in relation to God: if people worship another god then it is adultery, but if God has two wives it is a marriage covenant*.

Note: theologians love to do what is called *analogia entis*, to say that, because God is beautiful (how?) we should do beautiful things, etc., but they ignore when this applies, for example, to polygamy: if God can have two wives, why can't we? He never forbade us, and he even showed proof that he did so. What we have is that God does not communicate like this just because Israel has this culture, but because his covenant in fact divided the people in two, with Judah being the tribe of kings and which would reign over the others (Gen 49:8-10), therefore, in the OT, the division of the people was not due to sin, but God's active interest.

Ezekiel and the Bigamous God

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, 2 Son of man, there were two women, the daughters of one mother: 3 And they committed whoredoms in Egypt; they committed whoredoms in their youth: there were their breasts pressed, and there they bruised the teats of their virginity. 4 And the names of them were Aholah the elder, and Aholibah her sister: and they were mine, and they bare sons and daughters. Thus were their names; Samaria is Aholah, and Jerusalem Aholibah. (Ezekiel 23:1-4)

When we comment on Leviticus 18:18, which prohibits us from having two women who are sisters, we emphasize that there was no death penalty for this in the law, which shows that it is not a sin, after all, the punishment would be intrigue between the two women (as happened with Rachel and Leah, who were sisters). Here in Ezekiel we have the reason for this: God cannot suffer the death penalty, and cannot be accused of sin, therefore, by marrying Aholah and Aholibah (sisters) we could not accuse him of sin. However, clearly, Aholah and Aholibah disputed with each other and entered into frequent conflicts (1 Kings 12 through 2 Chronicles shows how this was... chronic in Israel). Thus, unlike Jeremiah, Ezekiel wanted to emphasize even internal disputes with his prophecy. At once we see that neither the Law considers God a sinner (because there is no death for marrying two sisters) nor was the fact that there was a perennial conflict between one part of Israel and another ignored.

Again, we can note that this is not a mere parable, because the relationship is as real as the disputes that existed between the North and South of Israel. God clearly wants to show that he does not sin and that Israel was his people who lived in fights and (in this case) prostitution (sex with idolatry: Ez 23:19, 20).

Isaiah and polygamy as a blessing for them

9 The shew of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. 10 Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. 11 Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. 12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. (Isaiah 3:9-12)

This prophecy from Isaiah shows that Israel was, like Sodom, sinning to the point that women ruled men (effeminate men produce women to rule them). Thus, we have a judgment here: men abandoned women and, therefore, women began to gain power and strength over them.

However, in chapter 4 God predicts joy, that the judgment will pass and there will be a blessing:

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach. 2 In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. (Isaiah 4:1, 2)

We cannot ignore that this prophecy awaits "7 women" in search of a single man, and that only men who have not been judged could take away their shame. This means that the remaining men (the saints – v. 3-4) could save these same women from sadness! In any case, polygamy would be a blessing in removing shame and suffering from women who have emerged from a trial. Isn't that clear? The numbering implies a full judgment on the part of God that would result in the surplus of honorable men to take away shame from women. In the end, polygamy is benefiting women after a trial, which is the clear meaning of the OT text. Remember that David had *seven wives*, with the eighth being because of a sin: just as God blessed David he would bless the saints who would survive the ordeal.

Still, in relation to the NT, this clearly predicts the end of the Old Covenant, since the Jews would be destroyed and only (or almost only) Christians would remain. Who could the women who escaped turn to for help? The prediction of judgment in this context implies, from the opposite end, that only holy men could save women from their shame after the end of the nation of Israel (hence the "escape from Israel" in ch. 4:2, but still continuing in the mount Zion [which was in Israel...], and which symbolizes those saved in the New Covenant [v. 4:3; Heb 12:22]).

Malachi and serial divorce

Some theologians come to Malachi and try to prove that, shortly before the NT, there is a reproof from God on polygamy. In fact, in Malachi God says that he hates divorce, not polygamy, since what happened was that men gave a divorce letter to the older woman ("of their youth") and married new women (Mal 2:14, 16). This is called adultery by Christ, based on the clear fact that Scripture forbids remarriage.

There would be no space to deal with Hosea, which is such a particular case that it is not possible to consider it in this text.

CONCLUSION

The prophets do not see polygamy as a sin or weakness;

Polygamy is even a blessing;

God is shown as polygamous;

Therefore, polygamy is not a sin.

“Poetic” Books

We have seen that God did not prohibit polygamy in the Law, and that the prophets even treat it as a blessing from God after judgment (in the case of David and Isaiah prophesying), which suggests, at the very least, that the poetic books (Job, Proverbs, Psalms, “Ecclesiastes” and Song of Songs) will agree with the rest of Scripture. We will seek, by way of example, to treat the short texts of poetic books in order to demonstrate the principles that apply to others (otherwise we would have a gigantic text below).

One observation: we call these books poetic only because of their structure, but they are as prophetic as the previous ones.

JOB

A man who doesn't covet 'virgin'

I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid [lit. virgin]? 2 For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high? 3 Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? [...] 7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; 8 Then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out. 9 If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; 10 Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. 11 For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges. (Job 31:1-3, 7-11)

Beautiful text. Let us make a covenant with our eyes not to look at any woman other than our (first) wife... but wait, is that what the text says? The first curious element is the use of the term “virgin” or “girl” [maid], which depends on the context to be defined. For example, in Exodus 22:16 the term is clearly defined:

And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed (Exodus 22:16)

The need for definition is obvious: the word was both a term for “bride” and “single” (Deut. 22:23, 28), so we depend entirely on context to know what kind of girl Job did not look at.

Note the general context: Job is arguing about his righteousness, seeking to show that he is more righteous than his friends are willing to acknowledge.

In this sense, it would be natural for him to be saying that not even an engaged girl is the object of his desires, rather, only someone who has never been married and who does not have a fiancé. By contrast, remember that polygamy was accepted here, therefore, if Job's justice was not to look at a single girl, it would be of no use, rather, it would become a laughing stock for his friends at this particular point, since everyone knew that Polygamy wasn't a problem. So how was Job more righteous than the average man in his day when it comes to this? Simple: not wanting a married girl!

Secondly, note the immediate context: he contrasts looking at a virgin girl with his own wife and refers, still together, to his neighbor's wife. Something very characteristic of the concept of adultery (Lev 20:10). Job was so fair, therefore, that he didn't even look at a bride, as he understood that she was already his neighbor's wife, exactly as we proved in our text on the Marriage Contract. Here it is

also clear something that Jesus will say in the NT: we should not desire our neighbor's wife – which we will deal with in the last text on Polygamy.

PSALMS

Your wife (in the singular)

3 Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. (Psalms 128:3)

The promise is in the singular about the woman and – monogamists think – therefore God does not bless polygamous marriages. Furthermore, contradicting what we saw about David and Isaiah, for example, it does not allow a very simple type of thinking: where there is polygamy there is monogamy. This point is so evident that it would not even be necessary to remember Isaac and Joseph, who were monogamous even in the midst of polygamy. Thus, if the psalm foresees this blessing, we cannot expect it to necessarily be in the plural.

In fact, if it were in the plural we would have a problem similar to Genesis 2: the message conveyed would be that the blessing would only be achieved by having more than one wife, when in fact polygamy is a permission, not an obligation (you are allowed to work like street sweeper, shoemaker etc. and that doesn't mean you necessarily work with these things...). Thus, God avoids the confusion of thinking that only a man with at least two wives will be blessed with a 'fruitful vine'.

Therefore, if you have only one wife, you can also have a fruitful vine at home – and that is beautiful.

SAYINGS

Above we saw that speaking of the wife in the singular does not signal anything against polygamy, rather, it only presumes that God's blessing does not depend on it to occur. However, now we will see how the book of Proverbs deals with the same subject, even more so if we consider that the person who wrote a large part of the book was Solomon, simply the greatest polygamist in the OT. Therefore, when reading the book, we must keep this information in mind, as he is not expected to condemn himself in what he approved or disapproved of.

Don't sleep with a strange woman

18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. 20 And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? (Proverbs 5:18-20)

The use of translation in modern languages confuses us, since the term "woman" in Hebrew normally indicates a mature and married person, or at an age after marriage. As we saw in Job, the term for a single person would be "girl" or "virgin" depending on the context.

Here, however, Solomon is highlighting the need to cling to our wives and not to another wife. If this explanation is not enough for you, see what he says in context:

8 Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house: 9 Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: 10 Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; (Proverbs 5:8-10)

Solomon's concern is clear: if you get involved with a strange woman (from another man), you will have to spend taking care of what you will give: like a child, for example. So, if you could have children with your wife and retain the honor for yourself, what will you do when the strange woman becomes pregnant and you cannot take the child for yourself? Will she have to, like David, try to deceive her husband into thinking that the child is his?

See the use of the term "strange" in the following context so that you understand, once and for all, the distinction:

24 To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. 25 Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. 26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. (Proverbs 6:24-26)

Proverbs 6:24-26 is showing a difference: while a prostitute costs you a piece of bread, the adulteress costs you your life (your soul – Lev 20:10).

Naturally the text is making a parallel between "stranger" and "adulteress", proving that when Solomon is using this language his concern is, finally, the married woman, and not the single woman or prostitute. Heavy for us? Let it be.

Later, in Proverbs 23:27, Solomon warns us against the prostitute (*zanah*), which is clearly the case of a married woman who prostitutes herself (cf. Jer 3 and Ez 23). Even the authors of the Septuagint understood this to be the case, and refrained from translating *zanah* by some variation of *porneia* (which would be prostitute in Greek), and used a very specific term: *tetréménos*, which even among the Greeks (Xenophon and Aristotle, in his *Metaphysics*) are women who killed their husbands... suggestive, isn't it? In short, "strange" is another man's wife, and clinging to your wife is an obvious contrast to that. Solomon certainly did this and did not repeat his father's mistake, so he clung to each of his wives so as not to sleep with a strange woman (from outside).

Having a wife is God's benevolence

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. (Proverbs 18:22)

Thank God, have you ever thought if I only achieved God's benevolence by having two?

Furthermore, the contrast is clear, since Solomon does not want to highlight the number, but the quality, since in Proverbs he declares that there is a wife who is horrible:

It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. (Proverbs 21:19)

Do you think he is saying that marrying a contentious woman is a blessing from God? Of course not, rather, he wants to show that finding a *wife* (good and dedicated, not contentious and quarrelsome) is God's benevolence. The focus is on quality and not number.

SONG OF SONGS AND ECCLESIASTES

The queens and concubines praise the new wife

Song of Songs is also a book written by Solomon that caused shivers even among the Jews, which is why it took a while, even among the Hebrews, to be accepted as "canonical". Some even attributed the writing of this book to Solomon's idolatrous moments, proving that people do not know how to separate sex from idolatry in their heads, as if all intense sexual interest were equal to idolatry. But this is not our topic yet, let's just focus on the fact that the most romantic book in the Bible was written by a polygamist who already had several wives and concubines:

8 There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins [brides] without number. 9 My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her. (Songs 6:8, 9)

Here we see that in a situation where there is no jealousy, even wives and concubines praise a new wife, believing that she is an addition of beauty to the already present relationship. Note that here Solomon was perhaps still in the middle of his career to the thousand wives, since he mentions "only" sixty queens and eighty concubines. Solomon's brides were yet to consummate their marriage, so we can at least assume it was a large number at this point.

Oh, the shared love... Proving once again that the Bible is not dialectical when it comes to male love, knowing that there was one for everyone, although it was possible to have favorites, of course (who doesn't?). By saying "yes" to one woman (considering the common wedding ceremony) you are not saying "no" to everyone else, it is just a matter of time or conditions.

Again we see with what love and praise polygamous marriage is viewed.

Even if there is a beautiful and main woman, perhaps because she is the only daughter or because she is incredibly beautiful. From this we know that an extra woman in a marriage adds more beauty, not ugliness or disgust. Only clean Roman and Greek men saw dirt in this.

Note: Solomon's compliments to her are mostly erotic, highlighting the size of her breasts and the fact that they are "round" (Song 7:3, 7; 4:5), or the size of her ass and legs (7:1; 1:9). There is a lot that we have lost because we read the Bible with asceticism and puritanism.

Love your wife

Live joyfully with the wife [...] (Ecclesiastes 9:9)

Imagine, for the hundredth time, if this text were in the plural... only those who had more than one wife could enjoy life? For now, however, we will leave the role of meditating on these things to the reader, and in our next text we will deal with the New Testament, which is certainly where everyone believes that God changed his mind about polygamy and discarded all the beauty in it.

CONCLUSION

Poetic books are not against Polygamy;

They highlight the chance of greater beauty in it when everyone understands its role;

There is also no dialectic: a man can love them all;

Even if you have favorites for specific reasons;

Therefore, even in poetry and song polygamy is not condemned in OT.

Polygamy in the New Testament

We have seen that God did not prohibit polygamy in the Law, that the prophets even treat it as a blessing from God (as in the case of David, for example) and that poetic books even embellish polygamy, which suggests, at the very least, that the NT will agree with the rest of Scripture. The New Testament must provide that there is no sin linked to polygamy, if it is true that it is not even in the OT. This change in something that was never prohibited by God would cause a very large rupture between the OT and the NT, something that clearly cannot occur, since God's Law (ie, his commandments) do not change, although the law in its ritual or ceremonial meaning has reached its fullness with the coming of Christ and, therefore, no longer needs to be put into practice – that is, it should be proven that polygamy is part of the ritual law of the OT. Thus, the fact that we treat the NT in a separate text is not because we believe that there is a break between the OT and the NT, but because it is necessary so that the texts do not become too long.

JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

We need to make an observation before we start: when Christ came, the word "adultery" still meant what it meant in the OT, after all, Jesus did not come in the New Testament, since the New Covenant begins only *after* him and not before. Thus, if the word "adultery" appears, it needs to be seen, at least in the gospels, in the clear sense of the OT (it is only adultery if a man sleeps with a married woman).

Also, note this text:

7 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-20)

Christ did not come to contradict the Law, but the Pharisees. So Jesus is clearly saying that what he will say in the rest of the chapter up to Matthew 7 is not about overcoming the law, but rather to the Pharisees, who invented their own law (the "righteousness" of the Pharisees). We need to have this as a background, because Jesus is telling us to look at what he says as a contrast to the Pharisees and not to the Law of God, which he cannot *destroy*, otherwise he would be lying.

The supposed end of Polygamy: don't desire another woman

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. 31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: (Matthew 5:27-31)

Jesus clearly does not begin by saying "It is written" (Mt 4:4, 7, 10), but with "it was said y them of old". This formula shows that it was the ancient sages who were the source of the Pharisees, and not what was written in the Law. Thus, Christ is contradicting not the Law's teaching on adultery, but the Pharisaic teaching, which focused on *external practice*: "if you do not lie with your neighbor's wife, you have not committed adultery", completely ignoring the tenth commandment, which commands us *not to desire our neighbor's wife* (Ex 20:17).

Now, if Jesus does not contradict the Law, why would he put an end to polygamy, approved by the law? If Christ were ending Polygamy, the Pharisees would immediately tell him that David, Solomon and even Deuteronomy 21 predict polygamy; however, what we see is that everyone recognizes that Christ's teaching is true and authoritative, and not something new from the "ancients" and "Pharisees" (Mt 7:28, 29). Therefore, what we have here only refutes the fact that adultery is not the act performed, but the desire in the heart, in relation to one's neighbor's wife.

Note: the Bible cannot prohibit a man's desire for any girl, for the simple fact that this is natural and basic for there to be any relational interest (if I prohibit any man from looking at any woman with any desire, I am virtually preventing any relationship, which the Bible does not do – as prohibiting marriage would be the only way to prevent a man from desiring a woman, whatever that may be). We saw this in Dt 21, in which without knowing the girl, being attracted only by her beauty, a man can marry her. Only if the text said that "husbands" cannot desire "women" could it signal the end of polygamy. This is accepted as basic in Scripture. Only in an individualistic world are desires condemned as such.

Note, also, that an element is missing in the text: there is no term that indicates that desiring *another* (that is, one more) woman is what Jesus has in mind. Literally Jesus says that one should not desire "woman", and not "another" (*[allos]* – as in Mark 10:12, in which the prohibition after divorce is that one cannot marry any *other* woman). If Jesus were prohibiting the desire of any other woman besides our first wife, it would be enough to add this term, highlighting the contrast between the "current" and the "other" woman – something that does not occur in this text! Jesus does not want you to desire a specific type of "woman", not just any type, so only the context and the specific term used for "woman" can clarify what type this is.

Note: for Jesus to prohibit desiring any other woman, the text should be like this: "anyone who desires *another [allos] woman*" and not "anyone who desires [a] woman". As there is no "other" in contrast to the first (Mt 19:9; Mk 10:11), there is no reason to think that desire for another woman is prohibited!

And the context makes it clear, because in Greek, as in Hebrew, there is a distinction between single and married women. When the word "woman" appears in our translations, we usually speak of married. This form is an attempt to convey the message of the word *gyné*, which in the following verses is again used to refer to someone who leaves *their wife*. We cannot abandon the term and the context that clearly shows that Jesus is talking about *married women*, not single women. If Christ wanted to prohibit, for example, the desire for an unmarried girl, there would have been simpler terms (such as *parthenos*: girl, virgin).

And if that wasn't enough, Christ is using the term "covet", clearly pointing to the Greek translation of the tenth commandment (to covet [what belongs to someone else]). We could even translate this text like this:

"You have heard that it was said by the ancients: "Thou shall not commit adultery" But I tell you that whoever looks at [any] wife to lust after her has committed adultery with her in his heart. [...] Whoever leaves his [own] wife [...]"

Clear as water.

Finally, if Jesus says that polygamy is now adultery, he will not be bringing a better interpretation of the law, rather, he will be *contradicting it*. See the difference:

OT = Polygamy is not a sin (therefore, I am a believer as a polygamist) – I am a *friend* of God.

NT = Polygamy is a sin (therefore, I am wicked if I call myself a believer and polygamous) – I am *an enemy* of God.

This is not a question of degree, but of contradiction. Furthermore, it would be very surprising if Christ said that now polygamy is adultery without any protest from the Pharisees, who at least knew that it was not a sin.

Note that when the apostles advocate the end of shadows in Acts, a contradiction against the OT is clearly noted, since the OT ordered ritual practice and, therefore, saying that it would come to an end would be equivalent to putting an end to the law (Acts 6: 13; 21:28 [the witnesses were false, but the isolated information was true]; Heb 8:13 [note the theological teaching of Hebrews 8: it is the end of the shadows {Law}]). If Christ spoke *against* the Law of God this would be easily noticed, something that does not happen.

The supposed definitive end of polygamy

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (Matthew 19:4-6)

If you have already read our explanation of Genesis 2, this may even be slightly redundant, however, I will avoid repeating the arguments and focus on the points *in this text*:

First, Jesus is not talking about polygamy, rather, he is talking about divorce. This is the subject, and it would not make sense, suddenly, for Christ to mix two themes in the same answer, since the disciples themselves are only saddened by not being able to remarry after being divorced (v. 7 onwards). If this answer from Jesus refuted polygamy, the Pharisees' questioning would immediately include polygamy, but even they understood that Jesus only responded in relation to divorce, and not polygamy. Look:

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? (Matthew 19:7)

Did you see? It is there in the written text: "Why did Moses allow a man to have two wives? (Dt 21:15ff)". Did not see? It's because there isn't, the only issue is divorce and not polygamy.

Second, Jesus mentions that the *two* (not three) will become one flesh. But this should be obvious, even in polygamy. After all, when I unite with each woman I am one flesh with her (1 Cor 6:16)! Or, by chance, do you have two penises to mate with two at the same time? Of course, in a polygamous marriage there are "several twos" due to a simple basic anatomical necessity.

Third, if Jesus said "he will be united with his wives" he would be accused of adulterating the biblical text, after all, in Genesis everything is in the singular, and we have already explained in another text about the marriage verses (in what we commented on polygamy in the Law God's). In the end, Jesus' explanation is only about divorce and has no merit regarding the role of polygamy. Remember that at that time the common men of Israel were not rich, therefore, naturally, polygamy did not even enter their field of interest, as they could not pay for the dowries of several women, much less support them at the same time. This, however, was not the case with the authorities, who had many women.

The ten virgins (brides)

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (Matthew 25:1-10)

This parable is curious and suggestive on some levels. The common answer to it is that Christ is talking about a wedding feast with virgin guests celebrating. Some even see an echo of Psalm 45:9, which would make them the bride's helpers. However, as we see in the parable, they accompany *the groom* and not the bride, although, it is true, some still say that they met the bride afterwards.

The problem is that the reading is anachronistic, since we have no record of a ceremony like this in that region. What is likely to have happened is the following:

- We have no reports of this type of marriage, and we are monogamous;
- Christ tells this parable, and Christ is a defender of Monogamy;
- Therefore, this parable is reporting a party that we no longer have today, but a monogamous marriage.

The conclusion is not due to the historical record, but to a forced reading of the text. Now, however, let's point out some interesting details:

First, the term "virgins", as in the OT, normally indicates engaged girls, and not merely virgins, depending entirely on the context for its clearest definition.

Second, in John 2:5 the support given at the party is by "servants" and not brides – considering that they (the virgins) are not even mentioned in John sounds strange.

Third, the closest record of a similar event with virgins going somewhere is the case of Esther (Eth 2:2-4) which clearly shows that all the women there were potential wives for the king. In the case of the passage from Matthew 25, this choice ended up being automatic, since the 5 foolish brides did not enter the party at the expected time.

Fourth, even if we consider the general context still, we notice another problem: suppose that virgins are going to attend the groom's party, which is celebrated with *someone else* (the bride – clearly the church in the NT), how can virgins attend a random party represent the church if it would be represented by the groom's bride at the party? Thus the disciples would participate in the party, but they would not be the bride of Christ...

Of course, some will say, we can't interpret parables literally... obviously we can't, but we also don't do like Augustine, who said that each virgin was a sense of the body, which should be free from its desires and vices (we need to laugh a lot at that one Greek interpretation of Augustine...).

Which elements in the parable are not 'literal'? Whether there are five virgins or ten is clearly not so directly relevant, since the church is one, although its members were, at that time, at risk of being surprised by the moment of Christ's return. The relevant factor for number 10 could mean the completeness of the church and the risk of part of it not being ready for Christ's return. So even though the parable doesn't have literal elements in all aspects, some things sound strange.

Referring to the groom, in Greek, although the word "groom" could be in the dative or even accusative, it is found in the genitive. In practice, the genitive means some level of possession, so we can

understand that the passage is saying something like this: "to meet your fiancé" and not "the fiancé"; If the passage were in some other mode, its translation might be "meet the bridegroom" or "meet a bridegroom." Not to mention that "virgin" is the foil for "groom" in scripture, demonstrating that even in the broader context the most natural reading of the text suggests that the bridegroom is for virgins, not virgins in the void.

Lastly, even if these virgins were assistants to the final bride, they could be like Zilpah and Bilhah, who were assistants to their mistresses to also serve as a means of increasing their husband's offspring.

The fact is that there is no evidence that this signals a traditional wedding celebration at the time that Christ walked the lands of Israel, leaving us with only the text. Yes, I know, there are many books and commentaries that cite certain sources about this event... but have you checked the sources of these comments? They don't result in anything.

APOSTLE PAUL

Now we come to where it matters for those who deny that polygamy continues to be approved by God. If the law, the prophets, the poets and Christ did not contradict polygamy, Paul, magically, contradicting everything seen so far, will be against it, right? No? Let's see below:

The prohibition of Sodomy

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. (Romans 1:26, 27)

The point is simple: we argue that the fact that the Bible does not prohibit one woman from sleeping with another favors the fact that polygamy allowed a man to sleep with two women. However – say the monogamists – Paul is forbidding a woman to lie with another right in this text above.

As we have already seen, the NT cannot prohibit something that the OT did not prohibit, because, in addition to violating the fact that only what is in the Law is a sin, it would also make the authors of the NT inventors of new traditions. So, we need to see the text considering that among the Jews polygamy was practiced and, therefore, there was the possibility of a woman sleeping with her husband at the same time as another. This would be no more absurd than a man sleeping with his own mother or sister, which the text of Leviticus 18 and 20 prohibits. Now – they say – a woman sleeping with another was so absurd at the time of Leviticus' writing that it wasn't even prohibited. But in a polygamous world like that, was it more absurd for a woman to sleep with another than for a man to sleep with his mother, sister, aunt, niece or any other relative? It would be much more likely for a woman to sleep with another woman than a man with his own mother, precisely because a man leaves the house, but a woman in a polygamous relationship is unlikely to not touch the other.

But let us return again to the text of Romans: what Paul says is "burning desire" occurs among the Gentiles (v. 16, 23-25), therefore, it cannot be the polygamy that Paul has in mind, since among Greeks and Romans it was prohibited and even common citizens thought it was absurd (like the case of Faust, enemy of Christianity and who used the Patriarchs' polygamy against it). Therefore, we must keep in mind that *Paul cannot be prohibiting what the Law did not prohibit.*

Another problem is that this text from Romans is the only one in the biblical text with this line of reasoning (the written form in Greek) and that it apparently prohibits a woman from sleeping with another, while there are other texts that reinforce the prohibition of a man to lie down with another (1 Cor 6:10, for example).

And if we look at the text, we notice that there is something missing for it to condemn a woman sleeping with another:

For even their women changed their natural usage, contrary to nature, [they became inflamed in their sensuality, woman with woman]. And in the same way, men also, leaving the natural use of women, became inflamed in their sensuality towards one another, men with men, committing turpitude. (Romans 1:26b,27)

In brackets we add the information that would supposedly be missing, as Paul leaves the abandonment of the natural use of women incomplete, believing that his readers would understand easily – after all, everyone knows that there is no sex between women, since their sexual organs are not external, for this reason, how can you ban something that simply doesn't happen? Paul could not prohibit one woman from “lying” with another because it is impossible for such a thing to occur on any real level.

Furthermore, men “left” women, while women “changed” their own usage. They did not leave men, rather, they changed something that was within them, and used what they possess against the initial objective. The text is clear, and Paul says that things follow this line: women changed the use of what they had – men leave women.

Clearly Paul does not want to leave any doubt: women did not abandon men to lie with each other, but rather, even with men, they changed their own natural use, and men left women and lay with others, leaving the natural use of women.

Note: many idiots come to this text saying that the prohibition is only in relation to idolatry, that is, that a man sleeping with another is a sin only if it is for the glory of some deity. This is a lie, the text continues saying which practices are reprehensible, such as, for example, dishonoring father and mother, and unless it is only a sin to dishonor father and mother in a context of glory to another divinity, it will not make sense to assume the same from the rest of the text.

Let's look at a text that was written close to Paul's time, also by people with a Hebrew mindset:

[...] do not become like Sodom, which changed its nature, contrary to it. The same way the Watchers changed their nature. (Testament of Naphtali)

The Watchers would be angels who slept with women (an irrelevant subject for us now); these angels, like Sodom, would have changed their nature, going against it. Note that Sodom changed its nature, acting contrary to it, that is, causing men to lie with other men. The angels similarly changed their nature, but instead of sleeping with other angels, they slept with women.

Note that the concept of “likewise” in the text does not mean that the change is the same in both cases, that is, that if men lay with men then angels lay with angels – this does not make sense in the text. The problem is to abandon the state in which we were created with regard to the type of body we have, so a man cannot abandon his own nature, and can only sleep with women and never with another man – in which he would use his anus to have sexual intercourse.

This is interesting to observe: what is used in man *against nature* when one sleeps with another? Of course it's the anus. What, therefore, would be used on women against nature?

In the Greek and Roman world it was common, very common, for a pregnant woman (remember, it was a monogamous world) to have anal sex with her husband due to the fact that she was pregnant, in addition, for those who did not have animal entrails to be used as “condoms”, anal sex was a 'good escape'. Do you realize that the context of Paul's listeners clarifies our point a little?

It becomes more interesting if we note that, by default, in Greek and Roman society, anal sex was more common between mentor and apprentice, which makes “even their women” very suggestive in Paul's

text, highlighting not their inability to practice this, but even the men doing anal sex between themselves and women already having a vagina, even they stopped using their own vagina to use their anus. Paul's concern is not that women are habitually pure, since precisely because *they are not* is that they are also prohibited from preaching (1 Tim 2:12-14; 4:7), but rather that having the natural means for sex permitted by God, they abandoned it.

Let's reinforce two points: first, "likewise" and, second, "even".

The doubt remains among many that if Paul says "in like manner" in the text of Romans then he is saying that the equivalent of women changing their natural usage is for men to lie with each other, meaning that both are, in fact, being homosexuals (both women and men). But note this: the "likewise" refers to "contrary to nature" and not to "changed" and "abandoned". The similarity between the case of women and men in the context is the fact that they did things against nature.

An example may clarify: you made money in company A that handles paper, I, similarly, made money after receiving an inheritance. Now, similarly refers to what? The company? No, because I inherited the money and you worked for yours – however, in both cases there was monetary gain, and that is what is similar in the cases.

Regarding the term "even" their women... Paul cannot be saying that women are guardians of morality, meaning that men become corrupt first. This is a mistake: Eve sinned first, women were responsible for the deviation of Israel in Baal-peor (Nm 25), Solomon went astray because of women, and the same Solomon says that among men he finds one, but among women he does not find none [righteous] (Eccl 7:28, 29). It is clear that this "even" has to mean not that even the women who are supposed to be the guardians of morality have sinned, but rather that it makes no sense for them to stop using the vagina and start using the anus, since it is basic and rational to use the vagina instead rather than the anus (remember that the context of Rom 1 is to prove that idolatrous men are irrational too).

Believing that women are the guardians of morality only leads men to be guided by them, as if they could be light on our path. To avoid this confusion, God does not allow women to preach or exercise dominion over their husbands (we will see in texts later).

Now, the conclusion we draw is that going against nature in a woman is using the only thing she has in common with a man: her anus. Thus, when the Law prohibits men from lying down with another man (as it would only be used to "lay down" the anus) it is also prohibiting this in relation to women, as it is the same organ necessary for this sexual perversion. Therefore, what we have here does not invalidate polygamy, but rather clearly reinforces it, as it does not touch on the subject in any way.

Because even women changed their natural use, using the anus, in a similar way, men, leaving the woman's natural use [...] slept with other men.

Husband's wife and not "wife's" husband

2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. 3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. (Romans 7:2,3)

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:39)

People look at what the Scripture says, but they forget what it *doesn't* say.

You will never see a passage like this: "the husband is bound for as long as the wife lives", because, after all, it is she who is called an adulteress if she marries again, not him. Paul is consistent with the

Law, proving that it is the wife who is bound to her husband and not the husband who is bound to the wife (in the singular). For while the husband lives, the wife cannot marry again, but while the wife lives nothing is said about the husband, since he can, naturally, marry, *according to the law* - here we see that Paul thinks about marriage according to the law, and not according to custom, and we have already seen that the law approves polygamy.

Paul ending polygamy

We saw above that in 1 Cor 7 Paul clearly teaches that the woman is the one who is bound to her husband (and not the other way around), so – we must assume – there is nothing in his writings against polygamy. Even so, there are those who point to the beginning of chapter 7 as contradicting polygamy:

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (1 Corinthians 7:1, 2)

If we do a good evaluation of 1 Co 7, we will know that this chapter is extremely contextual, that is, it is linked to the moment in which the believers in Corinth lived, in such a way that Paul suggests that not even engaged people should get married, as *the end it was close* (close for those people who read the letter). This can be seen here:

25 Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. 27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. (1 Corinthians 7:25-27)

Now, if God instructs us to marry, for what particular reason is marriage seen as negative at this time? Simple, "presente distress". A man would suffer much more when married than single in the context of persecution:

28 But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. 29 But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; (1 Corinthians 7:28, 29)

As we see, Paul wants to keep marriage to a minimum in 1 Cor 7, all because of suffering (well, well, that sounds very utilitarian to today's preachers). His instruction is not, as some Roman Catholics think, that sex and marriage is a necessary problem, but that adverse problems of persecution and destruction cause us to avoid marriage (Jer 16:1-3). As the apostles said that Christ would still return with the Corinthians alive (1 Corinthians 15:51) and the apostles were not false prophets (Dt 18:22), then nothing would be wiser than to suggest that they avoid marriage at that time (yes, Christ has already returned, but we deal with it in another book).

We could also conclude by showing that this instruction in chapter 7 as a whole is contextual by pointing out how Paul wants no one to get married here, but in 1 Timothy 3:1, 2 expects the bishop to be married. Now, we have no contradictions in the Bible, and Paul just wants to show that the suffering of the Corinthians in marriage is something private, seeking as little relations with women as possible.

But let's go back to verses 1 and 2: we saw that Paul wants no one to touch a woman: the same people who say that this text establishes as a commandment that a man should have only one wife do not accept as a commandment that we should prohibit a man from touching a woman. Of course not,

because this subject (of commandment) is not Paul's focus, so that in the rest of the chapter he repeats that there is no commandment from the Lord about some things (v. 6, 25). Do you think a man who is concerned about God's commandments would prohibit male polygamy *against* God's commandments? (1 Cor 7:19).

Furthermore, verse 1 says that "it is **good** for a man not to touch a woman", which, if it is a commandment, directly contradicts Genesis 2, which says that it is **not good for a man to be alone** (Gen 2:18). This alone should reinforce the contextual and specific value of this passage.

Since we are not at the end, nor under intense persecution, Paul's instruction does not apply to us... not even that we should not touch women or avoid marriage. We need to appreciate that Paul's instructions are valid for a persecuted church, something that will only make sense in an environment of intense suffering, and imminent escapes, in addition to the sudden loss of goods.

If we applied the text of 1 Cor 7 outside of its context, we should not even encourage marriage among us!

Finally, look: the problem that Paul is dealing with is "sacred prostitution" (which we will deal with in another text), therefore, to prevent men from desiring prostitutes, what will Paul say?

"Each man must have his own wives, and each woman must have her own husband."

Of course not, after all, he would be contradicting himself, and stating that a man should have at least two wives! Well, he wants the person not to even get married in this chapter, and would he be saying that each husband should have "wives"? Or, worse, what would it be like if you only have one wife? Ironic as it may be, saying "every man has his own wife" is the only way to **allow** polygamy, since saying it in the plural makes it immediately **mandatory**.

Note: why does it seem that the NT is not as clear as the OT on the subject? Firstly, because the NT *assumes* what the OT does not condemn as sin; second, because the cultural environment itself did not favor this, since, in general, believers came from the monogamous world, not polygamous; thirdly, the circumstantial needs of the church before 70 AD made even being married unfeasible, let alone having more than one wife! Thus, we should not be alarmed by the apparent lack of clarity in the NT, but recognize the context of the New Testament itself and its main audience.

Bishop, husband of one wife

2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2, cf. v. 12 and Titus 1:6)

Remember 1 Corinthians 7? Well, there Paul gives a very interesting principle:

32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: 33 But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:32, 33)

The logic is quite simple: the more women a man has, the less he can actively dedicate himself to "the things of the Lord". Thus, it would be at least contradictory for Paul to want bishops to have more than one wife, since his goal is for the bishop to have time and means to take care of the church, and not just his own family:

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) (1 Timothy 3:4, 5)

This should be simple and understandable.

On the other hand, there is something being ignored in this text, which is the fact that 1 Timothy is about *administrative* instructions and not about sins or commandments. Commandments are given to all believers (1 Cor 6:9-11), administrative instructions are given *only* to leaders. For example, if this list is about sin, then it is a sin for a believer to be newly converted (v. 6), or to make some profit from what they do (v. 3). Therefore, what Paul is saying is not to prohibit it, but rather to optimize the care of the church (v. 4, 5), making polygamy permissible to everyone except the bishop (although, again, there is no sin in ordaining a polygamous bishop, since the focus is not on sin, but on better administration or not).

Paul is consistent in his administrative advice for both individuals (1 Cor 7) and leadership (1 Tim 3), because by avoiding marriage or many women, a believer suffers less during persecution and a bishop has more time and willingness to govern the church. The opposite of this is just that man's dissatisfaction with the Law of God, cutting texts from contexts, and making them mean what the individual's own culture says.

Note: in 1 Tim 4:12 it is shown that the elder (presumably) should be a model for the flock. And, of course, we need to see what the model is, since we know that, for example, there is no way for a priest to be a model because he is not merely a neophyte (since it depends on the passage of time). Furthermore, the characteristics of the "model" given in 1 Tim 4 deal with *godliness, holiness, and attributes that all believers should have*, not that which is exclusive to bishops. Reading the text in a different way is forcing the text to say what it didn't say at any time.

Lastly, as many suggest, if Paul says the bishop has to be like this, it is because there were others in the church who were polygamous when this passage was written. Thank God this passage still means something more, which is precisely to allow not only for neophyte Christians (recently converted), but also for polygamists, by stipulating this rule *only* for bishops and deacons (v. 12). The rule is clearly allowing ordinary members to have more wives, and the bishop is only restricted in the number of wives.

If this list is about sin, clearly it is a sin to not have children and not be married (v. 2, 4, 5), and many elected pastors without wives or children have sinned. The reason for an administrative list is to reduce the chance of error, and not to exclude those who do not fit into it from the church. Thus, a married man with children will have been trained to know how to run a church more practically than someone without. Is it possible for someone without children to run the church better? Of course! And that is precisely why it is an administrative list and not about sins.

We note, from the cases cited, that it is not a question of sin, but of administration, something that will never be charged to any common believer (no matter how much the modern mind may not want to accept it). We are absorbed in the idea of excellence, something that made Saul himself sin, and that has made many men burden the church with false activities and orders and breaking commandments that were not spoken by God. In the end, the presbyter's model is only in piety, patience and the things he suffers for the gospel, and never in administrative abilities – unless, of course, you confuse piety and administration (which would be profoundly stupid).

Accepting what is in the Scripture must be the basic requirement of men, and if they do not accept it, they prove how proud they are, since they cling to what they have "learned" and not to what God says.

CONCLUSION

The OT is not against male polygamy;
The NT is not against male polygamy

Therefore, there is no sin in male polygamy

The Wife in Genesis 1 - 3

We will deal, in some texts, with the role of the husband and wife according to the Scriptures. Such an undertaking will be difficult, considering the cultural environment in which we live and which, by promoting the pride of believing that we live in the fullness of time, makes it seem that all previous cultures were backward and that they influenced the biblical point of view regarding women – with answers always being: “that was for that time”, “the bible couldn't go against culture, because it would increase persecution”, “you're sexist if you believe in certain things” etc.

However, our proposal, going beyond cultural questions (see our text Polygamy in the Law of God – Part 2 about this), is to deal with biblical texts from the creation of man to the consummation in Revelation, therefore, this series of Comments and textual explanations will lead us to have a vision that is not isolated (as it usually is, only dealing with Ephesians 5, for example). It will hurt the eyes and ears even of those who are called sexists; of course, because the biblical text, which wants to show that things are not cultural, begins to deal with this issue already in the creation of man. But don't despair, we don't want to make any political changes or change any specific laws, rather, we want to expose the biblical text and show its meaning, regardless of what we think of it today.

We will use comments from the New Testament (NT) that eventually explain specific passages, since, naturally, we will begin our study with Genesis, and not with the NT, as is usual with most authors. If a practice is not encouraged by both Testaments, something suspicious must be noticed about it, so that we refuse to look with one-eyed perception at the sacred text.

GENESIS 1 – CREATION

The problem of Hierarchy

The first problem is that we think that the hierarchy exists because of sin, such nonsense is only possible for men who have a mentality in which individual freedom is the dominant factor, and ignore that obedience to God is, in itself, an act of hierarchy and *full and complete submission*, without restrictions. God, who does not sin, is the first in the entire hierarchy of the world, to whom angels and men are subject, and this in itself is not a sin.

If hierarchy is a problem introduced by sin into the world, we must also be free from God's rule to escape sin – which is absurd.

Another point is that even among angels there is a hierarchy:

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief [first] princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. (Daniel 10:13)

The text is clear in itself, and emphasizes the role of Archangel Michael (he does not have the title “angel”, but “archangel”, adding information to his category). We clearly have *top-down* governments among the purest beings we know, which also demonstrates that complete submission is not the result of sin (or do you think any angel would disagree with Michael in some order? If he disagreed, what do you think would happen?).

It would not, therefore, be unfeasible for God to use the language of government in the creation of the world, and this not only in relation to rational beings, but also irrational ones:

18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:18)

The concept of government is very clear in relation to created things, even those that cannot audibly command anything. For us Westerners, such information seems just a poetic effect of the fact that this text demonstrates poetic elements (even in Hebrew). But we know that each letter in the Law has a meaning in the sense that there is a reason for it to be written that way and not another (Mt 5:18).

The sun and moon rule because all the stars were created to act in accordance with these main stars. As an example of this, in verse 14 we are told that the lights serve for *signs*. How do signals work? It's quite simple, the OT festivals were marked based on the positions of the sun and moon over the stars: Easter occurred when the sun was over Aries (the celestial lamb) and the month of Tishrei occurs in Libra (the scales of judgment [cf. Dn 5:27]), as it is the month of judgment and final trumpets.

Now, without the sun and moon there is no reference to the constellations and, therefore, there is no government, and they run wild. It is the sun and moon that *determine when something occurs*. Therefore, God established these things by showing us that even the stars point to government structures (cf. Gn 37:9, 10 [note that the stars are Joseph's brothers, the sun is the father and the moon is the mother]).

Now, having seen that everything in the world, even in purity, is rooted in the concept of government, we should not be surprised that God created man to dominate things, to the point that they are subject to him:

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28)

This text practically ends chapter 1 of Genesis (which is a *general* explanation of the creation of man), showing that man's role is to subject all things and dominate them – in a world without sin yet.

Thus, while the sun and moon rule the sky, man and woman rule the earth – and this foretells Christ, the Sun of Justice, who rules with the church heaven and earth.

This does not mean, however, that man and woman govern the earth *equally*, as the creation of man is *summarized* in chapter 1. In chapter 2 the stages are shown and what becomes evident is that this is the role of man, with the woman receiving this role by derivation, that is, the woman subjects and dominates because the man subjects and dominates – and this will become clear below.

In any case, irrational animals were subject to men and women in general, and this cannot be ignored. As we do not have space to explain what this means in shadows, we will just say directly: Adam is Christ, the woman is the Church and the animals are the peoples and States of the world (see the prophecies of Daniel and Acts 10, equating the animals to the Gentiles).

GENESIS 2 – MAN AND WOMAN

Woman's submission before sin

7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)

The order in which things happen has relevance in Genesis, as they raise questions. For example, why did God create man first and leave him without Eve until he “realized” he needed her? Now, evidently, because the world had been created for man to govern it and not for woman (just as the world is for Christ, and not initially for the church). This is so remarkable that even Paul points it out:

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. (1 Timothy 2:12, 13)

Now, before saying that Eve sinned first (v. 14), he says that the woman's submission to her husband is due not to sin, but to the order in which things were created. Here, of course, he is talking about the order of things in the human scope, and not in the general scope (after all, animals do not govern man, and to make this clear God says in chapter 1 that it is man who dominates!). The structure of the world already demonstrated that man came first, just as the archangel Michael "is the first" (Miguel is one of the "firsts"), signaling his governance over whatever comes later (wife and children). The teaching is that simple to disturb those who think they are culturally wise.

But things don't stop there, because God, when giving the order, says **only** to man:

16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: (Genesis 2:16)

This is similar to all the following cases: God communicates with Abraham (and not first with Sarah), communicates with Jacob, Joseph, Moses (and not with his wife or sister), David (and not with his 8 wives) until the moment of fulfillment of the promise arrives, when it is addressed to Mary instead of first to Joseph (after all, Genesis 3 promises that the seed *of the Woman* and not from man that would generate salvation [explaining that man's seed was impure for this, and showing us why Lev 15 exists]), nothing more natural than such communication reaching Mary first - we will see this better when deal with the NT, including the act of announcing the Resurrection of Christ).

Note: note that God is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and not of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel/Liah – not that God was not their God, but that the hierarchy structure that God created is represented by man, not by the woman.

In any case, before sin, God did not want to communicate with the woman about orders, but with the man, and left it up to the man to pass this on to the woman (logically, in the hierarchy of the Garden it follows God > Man > Woman::: World). What can we say? We will continue:

18 And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. (Genesis 2:18)

It is the first time that God says that something is not good in relation to the creation of the world, showing that what would come after that (the helper) would come to solve the problem of man being alone. Now, God created the woman *for* the man, and not the man for the woman. Thus, the text clearly shows that the existence of women is for subordination to men and this points out another thing: the Church was created because of Christ, and Christ does not exist because of the church. Thus, the parallel remains perfect, as we should never ever assume that the interdependence of both is related to hierarchy: a king needs subjects, a leader needs subordinates, but the subjects are not greater than the king or equal to him. The logic of the text is to show that, even if there is dependence on man ("it is not good *to be alone*" – "helper"), she was created because of man, and not the other way around, so that she must be subject to his purpose and not he to hers:

8 For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. [...] 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. (1 Corinthians 11:8, 9, 12)

Current readers of 1 Corinthians think that Paul was bipolar, because he had just said that women must submit because they were *made for their husbands*, and then he says that the man also comes from the woman, as if that nullifies what was said right before. It would be a contradiction just after 3 verses, which would be absurd. So, let's look at what matters first:

Paul is punctuating female submission to her husband by focusing on the creational fact (and not sin), proving that the fact that a woman comes from man and is created *for* man must make her submissive to him, and there cannot be equality of power between both in no way (when explaining the NT we will go into more detail of the text). However, when Paul talks about the fact that man comes from woman he is turning the hierarchy situation into a situation of dependence (v. 13). God wanted to show that both depend on each other, so that without the woman, salvation would not be born in the world and there would be no continuity of man in the world itself, in the Lord. If God did not give the woman to the man, the man would be alone and if he sinned he would die alone, without continuity, as he would not have a helper.

And speaking of helper, let's go back to the text: although it is true that God himself is called "helper" in the Law, as he helps people achieve the promises, the text of Genesis intends to focus on another aspect of this same word: now, man was not created to be a woman's helper, but she was his, therefore, the role is that she subordinates *everything about* her to her husband, and not the husband to his wife. Unlike God who governs and helps his own, the woman is governed to help her husband.

We must follow the narrative of Genesis 2, which clearly does not say that man is a helper. Whoever helps has his help subordinated to the purpose of the person being helped, adapting to him, and not him to whom he helps.

Note: note that we call God Lord, not Helper. Now, does that mean He won't help us? Of course not! But this is due to circumstance, not to God's role, which is Lord. Thus, unlike God who is first Lord, Eve was created to be a helper and not mistress or equal to her husband. God helps us to achieve his promises and salvation in Christ, the husband helps in the woman's holiness - but the woman helps her husband in everything, because that is why she was created.

And if that wasn't enough, let's see what the text says:

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (Genesis 2:21, 22)

Contrary to what we think, although man and woman are in the image of God, both are not equally the image of God. And this is clear even here: God created man from the dust of the ground directly, but woman was made in a derivative way in the image of man, and this is not we who say, but Paul himself:

7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. (1 Corinthians 11:7)

While the man expresses the glory and image of God, the woman expresses the glory of her husband. This is as clear in Genesis as it is in 1 Corinthians 11. If God wanted two equals, he would create them in the same way, but as he did not want to, he made the woman from a derivation of his glory - the man. It is clear that Paul omits the part referring to the "image" in relation to the woman, as she is in fact the image of God (as we have already said - Gn 1), but she is not the glory of God, but of man. What does that mean?

What is clearly said in Genesis: man is the image of God expressing his power and dominion over the world, woman is the image of man, expressing his power and dominion over the world: therefore children (even men) must submit to their father and mother (Ex 20:12) and not just their father. And because the woman is a derivation of man's image, she has more difficulty with justice, since God's image is His justice on man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (Genesis 2:23)

Now, God gave the name "Adam" to Adam, showing his sovereignty over him.

Adam did not name himself, as he could not exercise power over himself - and in the Scriptures, the one who gives names is the one who has authority over others (that is why children take the names that their parents give, since parents are authority over them, and not themselves). We see a clear example in the life of Abram, who had his name changed by God to Abraham, and Jacob, who had his name changed to Israel. These clearly demonstrate that naming is a sign of authority over what is named.

Furthermore, in Genesis 2:19, 20 God gives Adam the task of naming the animals, proving that Adam had authority over them. God did not, in any way, want the woman to give names to the animals, to highlight that the authority began with the man, both in the government of the world and in the government over her - and this is also proven by the naming of Adam to her.

If she called herself woman (note, it was not a personal name given to her, Adam gave her a *category* name - as he did with animals) she would be an authority equal to or greater than man.

As we see, Adam did not call his wife Eve until after the Fall (Gen 3:20), showing that the level of submission was so great *before the Fall* that she did not even have a personal name like Adam. Now, allow us to say that this is absurd to any female and male ear today, but the scripture is not interested in defending mine or your culture, but rather what God says. Let's look at one last interesting point:

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

Note that this text is focal, as it determines the nature of marriage: it is for as long as the flesh lasts (**they shall be one flesh**), and is between a man and a woman.

However, what goes unnoticed is the significance of *his* wife, since not only is she his before they specifically become flesh, but **she alone** is his and not the other way around. We know that even the NT when it talks about this somehow highlights that the woman is linked to her husband, and does not say that the husband is linked to the wife (in the singular - Rm 7:2, 3; 1 Cor 7:39). This demonstrates that the woman is her husband's and therefore can only be his, while he can marry more than one woman, proving that the removal of polygamy is the removal of part of the man's authority. If it doesn't seem clear, whenever a biblical text talks about adultery, the focus is on a married woman (Lev 20:10) and not a man - suggestive, isn't it?

Of course, before the Fall, submission seems easier, after all, there is no sin, there are no disorders and there are no doubts. But the truth is that this original submission is permanent, regardless of what we currently think, and that brings us to Genesis chapter 3.

Note: think about Christ and the parallel with the Church. Does Christ need the church to govern? Of course not! But God created the church to govern under Christ's reign - as Eve was to Adam.

God's Curses on Sinners

The common reading of Genesis 3 (especially the verses that talk about the woman's will) is that we must overcome these things by changing them, that is, overcome the curses by the truth of God in the New Testament, in which there is no more male or female. However, as we have already noted, the hierarchical structure between man and woman does not come from the Fall, but from God's Creation, with women expected to submit. And this is already shown even when God decides to take satisfaction from Adam when he sins:

8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. 9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? (Genesis 3:8, 9)

Did God call the woman? Not at all, because her representative and head is Adam, not herself. The logic of the text's treatment is to show that, even before God "knew" what happened, he had no interest in dealing primarily with the woman, as she was not responsible for God's orders and her care as Adam was. Now, we also saw in the previous chapter that God only gave the order to not eat the fruit to Adam and, therefore, God in no way communicated with the woman, except through Adam or when he himself pointed to her (which occurred in chapter 3). Thus, what we have is God treating the woman as submissive and hierarchically inferior to her husband, this being clearly proven in this text.

However, now let's look at God's curses on both of them:

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. 16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Genesis 3:14-19)

By ignoring the context and structure of the text, we get caught up in the interpretation. Here, therefore, we will not only consider God's curse on the woman's will, but rather the broad context to then define what this curse of God is about. And the first element that should be noted is that every curse has a salvific act attached to it.

For example, in the case of the serpent, after saying that it will walk in the womb and eat dust (curse), in addition to its enmity with the woman, God states that the woman's seed would hurt its head (salvation).

Note: this is why in 1 Tim 2:15 Paul says that a woman would be saved by giving birth to children. This is a comment by Paul (not a statement about the case of all women) in the context of Genesis 3, as the woman would be saved by giving birth to children, showing that the seed of the woman itself would save her, and not that the pregnancy in would save any particular woman. We will comment on this text when talking about submission in the NT.

Thus, we need to divide, in the text, salvation from the curse:

CURSE	SALVATION
Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed	it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel
<i>I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children</i>	<i>bring forth children</i> [children were not curses before the fall, so it is not after]
<i>and thy desire shall be to thy husband</i>	<i>and he shall rule over thee</i>
<i>cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee</i>	<i>and thou shalt eat the herb of the field</i>
<i>In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread</i>	<i>shalt thou eat bread</i>
<i>till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return</i>	[There's no salvation for this here {Hb 2:15}]
6 curses	5 salvations

Regardless of what it means for the other beasts to suffer (the serpent will be *most* cursed, and not the only one – the serpent's sin cursed *all* animals), we know that the serpent lost something, its legs, being reduced to a crawling animal. Furthermore, if we look at the solution it becomes clear that for *this problem* God provides a way: the serpent will be crushed (and it was).

The first curse on women is the *multiplication of pain*, and this is relevant here because God had already said, before the Fall, that women would have children and, therefore, having children cannot be a curse, but rather a salvific act (Gen 1:27, 28); Therefore, it is conclusive that her pain is the curse regarding having children.

However, God adds another curse on the woman, since the text itself changes the subject (first it talked about children, now it is about the husband). Her desire will be about her husband (or for him), showing that whatever this means, it is a bad thing; but then we see salvation from this: and he will rule over you. Remember again that we already saw that before there was a fall, as women were already hierarchically inferior to men, and this could not be a curse, but rather salvation.

We can continue to note the points: the land was cursed, and thorns are now produced, however, we will eat the grass of the field, as it is God's salvation after dealing with the thorn; eating the sweat is a curse, but having the bread is salvation (against death). The only curse that has no counterpart is death, since, even though God guaranteed the defeat of the serpent, he did not promise, in this text, victory over death, making it impossible for there to be real salvation from it, proving that victory over this curse would be the greatest of all (Hos 13:14; 1 Cor 15:55).

And for this reason Christ is exalted, Lord over all, as he was the first to overcome death and this curse.

And this brings us to an interesting point about curses: they are more descriptive than imposing. Now, a woman does not necessarily need to feel all the pain of having a child, nor does the man necessarily need to suffer to eat, nor does the woman's desire need to be over her husband. On the other hand, salvations are essential: without the seed overcoming the serpent there is no victory, without children of Eve Christ would not be born (and she would not be saved), without the husband

dominating the wife is lost, without eating "herbs" and "bread" there is no life. And we know this because Christ reverses the curse of death, proving that other curses can be reversed. For this reason, whatever means "a woman's desire is for her husband", it need not be so.

Having noted this, the question that arises is: what exactly is the meaning of "desire"?

The desire "for" or "about"

Careless reading of the text does not allow us to understand the contexts because we do not compare one text with another. Thank God we have another verse in Scripture written almost exactly like this one (in Hebrew):

And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (Genesis 4:7)

Note: The Hebrew form basically changes the direction of the desire ("your husband" / "you") and who governs it ("he" / "you"), which in itself also shows that the first part of the curse is the problem, not domination (after all, Cain dominating his own desire is precisely what God is commanding him to do – for his own good).

See that the focus in the text of Genesis 4:7 is to prove to us that this desire "over" someone is a problem, but dominion over it is the solution. God shows us in this passage of Cain what he said to Eve and about her: your desire for your husband is bad, but his dominating you is the solution. Now we need to check what specifically Cain's desire needed to be mastered:

6 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. 8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. (Genesis 4:6-8)

What was Cain's sin? Wrath *against* his brother; it is his desire to kill Abel that was the problem. Note that this desire is called sin, and needed to be dominated, as wanting someone to die is an almost uncontrollable sin, hence the need for control. As you can see, we don't know what "desire" is without looking at the context and, presumably, this is the solution to Genesis 3, a text in which there is the same description of the problem of Eve's desire. Let's see what the context tells us:

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? [...] 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife [...] (Genesis 3:12, 13, 17)

People come here and say: Adam sinned by putting the blame on the woman!

Now, if it's not the woman's fault, it's also not the snake's fault, which the woman herself says made her eat the fruit! Furthermore, what was said is not a lie, as no biblical passage states such a thing: Adam actually ate because he listened to the woman, and God himself says this in verse 17. Not only that, in verse 13 God asks why the woman did what she did! What do we have here? Even the apostle Paul says that it was the woman who sinned first and says nothing about the man being to blame (1 Tim 2:14). We are the ones who are sensitive and have difficulty accepting that Adam did not lie when blaming Eve.

However, what is the desire that is in focus? Clearly it is Eve's desire, which ruled over her own husband, and God curses her so that her desire often goes against him. This is not only noted in the

context of Gn 3, but it is the same case with Cain, in which the desire was against him. Since the beginning of the world, a woman has had the desire to control her husband and the salvation for this is to allow herself to be dominated by him. This way we know that the translation "against" can very well replace the meaning of "for" or "about" in the texts: "your desire will be *against* your husband" (Eve) / "your desire will be *Against* you" (Cain). Disagree as much as you want with this point, but it is what is clear in the biblical text itself and cannot be changed. It's better if you say you don't want to subject yourself to this (and if you're a woman, this will prove precisely the point of the text).

Note: note that, although Eve is the one who sinned first, whenever it is said about the entry of sin into the world, it is said that it came through Adam, so that it proves that greater authority implies greater responsibility, having attributed to himself the errors of his subordinates and, proving by all means, that Adam represents Eve even in terms of the Fall.

Some notes

We saw above that both before creation and after the Fall, female submission is God's order and structure. Now, for those who are anxious to reverse the effects of the fall, they must start not only by facilitating the work of men, but also with believing women (I am only talking about these) overcoming their own desire. Before she only needed to submit to her husband, now, to her sadness, she needs to overcome her personal desire for control to achieve full submission. If you want so much to "redeem" the effects of the Fall, redeem your desires so that there is submission without distrust.

Furthermore, many love to say that Adam should take on Eve's guilt, but that would be lying to God and Adam did not lie. The glory of saving his wife went to Christ, with him taking the blame for her sin, but not lying, but rebuking and disciplining (Rev 3:19). However, regardless what the solution to the crisis between Adam and Eve was, it is clear what the medicine was that God gave: the husband dominating over his wife, and not being equal or inferior. Every attempt to equalize is the effect of God's curse on the woman (because either she managed to dominate her husband, or there is conflict between them due to the attempt at domination).

We could show that matriarchal, or minimally egalitarian, societies have existed for a long time. All this because man can only look at what he sees with his eyes: both are born the same way, therefore – they think – they are born equal. However, the fact that one comes from the other does not serve to end the hierarchy, but rather the independence of both. Now, the man needs the woman and the woman needs the man, without one or the other there is no continuity, there is only sadness. Looking by faith is seeing this relationship through scripture, and not through our customs or what we see with the naked eye.

If non-believing women are not submissive or the laws do not favor this relationship within families, we have nothing to do with it. After all, God gave the world to men to manage it; however, with regard exclusively to believing women, submission is a fundamental role in their relationship with their husbands, with the opposite causing suffering in marriage, which is evidently caused by women.

In a later text we will deal with the role of the husband, but note that in principle God is concerned with solutions to problems and, for this reason, there is no mention here of the husband loving his wife, etc., since the solution to the out-of-control desire is not love, but dominion (Gen. 4:7). Thus, if a man does not love, there is no excuse for a woman to disobey him; just as there is no reason for a man to stop loving his wife if she is unsubmitive (something we will deal with in the case of the story of Hosea). For this reason, in our next text, we will deal with female submission in the rest of the OT and, when we comment on the NT, we will deal better both things (male love and female submission).

CONCLUSION

It is not a sin to have hierarchy and government;
Therefore, this is not the fruit of sin;
The woman was created in submission to her husband;
Therefore, sin did not cause his submission;
After Sin, women's submission became more difficult;
Therefore, what needs to come to an end is the conflict inserted in submission, and not
submission itself.

The Wife in the Old Testament

In the text below we will use comments from the New Testament (NT) that eventually explain specific passages, since, naturally, we will begin our study with Genesis, and not with the NT. If a practice is not encouraged by both Testaments, something suspicious must be noticed about it, so that we refuse to look with one-eyed perception at the sacred text.

THE GENEALOGY

The silence of genealogies and the reason for it

We have already said, in several texts, that the fact that something *is not said* in the Law means something. For example, the fact that the Law does not prohibit you from working at night or during the day implies that you *can* work at night or during the day – something simple and clear. The point is that this is not the only thing the Law is silent about: it is silent about women in genealogies. And this is generally due to two factors in the law itself:

– Sin entered the world through woman. This is very clear. It makes no sense that those who are considered “dead” become part of the genealogy explicitly. Ironically, women only become genealogically relevant in the New Testament, proving that Christ's salvation reached them, giving them life. Now, this is the reason why, for example, genealogy does not deal with the lifespan of Cain's descendants, but rather with the holy seed. For God, Cain's descendants were dead, and could not, therefore, live before him (which explains, in part, the lack of female genealogies).

– God communicates through men in general – with rare exceptions, like Deborah. We see this in Creation, with God always communicating first with Adam and with Abraham, a situation in which God clearly shows that the head of the home is responsible for God's commands.

It would not make sense that, when communicating with men, God recorded women in genealogies as if they were heads of families. For this reason, you will never see, in the scriptures, it is said that God is the God of Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel, but rather the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, because it is with men that God deals with and, therefore, the genealogy focuses on them – in addition to pointing out that they were alive before God.

WOMEN IN SILENCE

What the text doesn't say

Another example of silence is, literally, the silence of women in the Law. In general, they do not speak or their speeches present their disputes, weaknesses or, at least, their misunderstanding of some information (as occurs with Sara). The law always wants to emphasize that, in general, women are not

prepared to govern and cannot, in any way, teach among the people (cf. 1 Tim 2:14, 15). Yes, there are feminine speeches in the law, like the song of Miriam or the request for the rights of girls in Numbers, but these are, as they say, exceptions, and cannot allow for rules. This points, of course, only to general aspects, but below we will note what is clearly and explicitly said in the biblical text.

SARAH

My Lord

Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? (Genesis 18:12)

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (1 Peter 3:6)

Every word in the Law has its objective, and this is no different. Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him "lord". Before many think this is a nice sense of politeness, it must be said: Sarah refers to Abraham as "my" lord, and not merely as 'lord' in a generic sense of respectability. Furthermore, since Peter wants to emphasize Sarah's obedience (and not her politeness), it is obvious that what he has in mind is that this titular address is about obedience and not merely 'respect'.

Sara was the greatest example of submission, as she did not remain in furtive, hidden obedience, but expressed it in the way she treated her husband. Unlike what we are taught out there, Sarah was the perfect example of a wife in the OT because she submitted to Abraham even in the way she speaks, not calling him as if he were an equal, but rather "my lord". And this is suggestive, because in the same chapter Abraham uses the same expression to say:

And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: (Genesis 18:3)

The text wants to teach that Abraham subjects himself to God the Father, while Sarah subjects herself to Abraham. Peter, commenting on this text, recognizes its clear teaching, that Abraham's lordship over Sarah is similar to that which God has over the Church (Abraham). And this should already show us in general terms something that would be, in the NT, specifically related to Christ and the Church.

In any case, what we saw was how a single term (in Hebrew) signals Sarah's submission, and how the same term signals Abraham's submission. If we want real marriages, with that relationship that God instituted between his highest servants, it is important not only that we have faith like Abraham, but that the wives are submissive like Sarah.

Note: it is funny that when the word 'ezer' (helper) appears referring to God and the wife, the fact that God is a helper is always emphasized and, therefore, this term does not mean that the woman "serves the man"; on the other hand, the fact that Sarah calls Abraham "lord", with the same context signaling that the Lord is God, no one takes into consideration! Is that hypocrisy?

Giving Hagar – for the promise

Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her

maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. [...] 8 And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. 9 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. 10 And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. (Genesis 16:1-4, 8-10)

What we have before us is a distinct case from David's adultery, as God fulfilled his promise to Abraham, showing that all of his descendants (whether through Hagar or Sarah) would be multiplied. And here we have our second point regarding Sarah: she submitted to God's promise by giving Hagar to Abraham.

Many, reading this passage, say that Sarah failed and Abraham in the same way, because his wife was Sarah, not Hagar. However, anyone who understood what happened in chapter 15 knows that God's promise was not restricted to Sarah, but rather to Abraham's descendants (whoever they were). And this differs from David, who committed adultery with Bathsheba and had his son killed by God. Here we have the clear and true message: Sarah – unlike almost all women in the West – was willing to submit to Abraham by granting him her own servant so that he could have descendants – and this is not seen as a lack of faith or failure, on the contrary, God blesses Ishmael so that he may be a powerful descendant of Abraham and be multiplied (Gen 17:18-21), according to God's own promise.

Note: note that only in chapter 17 does God say that it will be *through Sarah* that the promise will be kept, although Ishmael has it in part, but without God's covenant (Gen. 17:19).

It's incredible that when people talk about women imitating Sarah, this big step is almost never mentioned. Would you (if you are a woman reading this) be willing to give your husband another woman so that he could have offspring? Difficultly.

Obeying when everything is doubtful and contrary

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: 12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. 13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. 14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. 15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. 16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. 17 And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? 19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. (Genesis 12:11-19 [chap. 20 also])

Men who read the Bible are so willing to accuse, that they accuse Abraham of lying, when, in fact, he only omitted information (Gen 20:12), and omission of information *is not a sin* (see our book on False Sins). In any case, when the New Testament comments on Sarah, what does it say?

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (1 Peter 3:6)

How many records are there of Sarah obeying Abraham? Peter did not get this information from a vacuum, from his head, rather, he did so so that his readers/listeners understood, based on the story they knew, that they should have Sara's obedience mirrored in women. And then the question returns: what case of explicit obedience do we have from Sarah? When Abraham told her to withhold information that put her at risk of adultery.

We have already said that obedience is not consent. A woman should not obey a man only when her "conscience is clear", there is no such thing in the Scriptures regarding a woman's obedience to her husband. Or do you think Sarah was at peace with Abraham's decision? Now, in order for women to be able to deal with doubtful obedience, Peter completes his instruction to women by saying:

and are not afraid with any amazement. (1 Peter 3:6)

Of course, fear would be natural in a situation like this and, therefore, Peter steps forward so that the women do not fear. And here we will see the fundamental part of the apostle Peter's argument when commenting on the woman's submission to her husband with Sarah being the exemplary case:

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives (1 Peter 3:1)

There is a problem in translation here in King James Version. The best would be: "*they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives*" – as NIV renders it. It is "word" vs. "behavior", and not "God's Word" vs. "Wife's conversation".

God is so interested in the hierarchy being maintained in marriage, that even the preaching of the gospel is not given to women, because, when the husband does not obey the word, that is, he is an unbeliever, the woman must be subject to him, so that her behavior wins him over to the gospel and not her word ("without the word"). This is a clear contrast in the text, and also echoes the life of Sarah, who did not protest against Abraham even though he was putting her at risk.

Note: remember that at that time an unbelieving husband was not like today. These men often went to idolatrous cults, which even included cult sex. At no point does Paul or the apostles expect women to divorce these men (see chapter 7 of 1 Corinthians [which Paul calls Belial, i.e. dedicated to other gods]). Imagine an instruction like that today? Women short out.

Now, you can disagree if you want, however, it is extremely clear in the biblical text that Peter does not distinguish between "submission" and "subservience", as God did not want women to preach the gospel to their husbands, such is the level of submission that demands of them. This is the reason for Peter to contrast "conduct" with "word": if the woman behaves like a believer, in submission to her husband, the expectation is that he will convert by seeing her behavior, not her words. And where does Peter get this from? From Sarah's total silence in relation to Abraham's order.

But let's see what Peter continues to say about wife's submission:

For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands (1 Peter 3:5)

Later we will deal with clothing, however, note that here Peter highlights that female beauty lies in submitting to her husband. Some will clearly say that such a thing is absurd, because where has such a thing ever been seen? Obey even an unbelieving husband who probably doesn't love his wife as

he should! But see that the woman's obedience is not conditioned on her husband's knowledge of the Scriptures and, therefore, he does not love her "as Christ loved the Church". God does not set conditions: either you obey him, even when it is questionable, without a word, or you do not behave like Sarah and the pious women who obeyed their husbands. A fact proven if we consider how little women have a voice in the OT, and that Peter is not afraid to use it as evidence of submission. Sarah must be studied in her behavior if women want to imitate her bearing.

Note: it is interesting to note that in Leviticus 12:1-8 there was a period of impurity due to childbirth. As an effect of the Fall, a woman who had a boy was impure for 40 days, but for a girl she remained 80 days (twice as long) in impurity; demonstrating that there was expected to be greater impurity when giving birth to a woman than to a man. With the NT, however, there is no man or woman (in this particular sense), so no one is born impure in the ritual sense of the term, and there is no longer a need for purification. Something that should be clear to us.

SUBMITTING YOURSELF AS TO GOD AND THE EXPECTATION OF INFIDELITY

We, the church, must submit ourselves in everything to God (Dt 6:2; cf. Eph 5:24b) and, therefore, trust his orders in everything that happened to us. Thus, we cannot doubt that the Scripture wants that, in the same way that God's people submit to him, the woman must also submit to her husband, as the husband represents God (Christ) and the woman represents the church - and even as far as we know, neither Christ nor the Church are cultural elements.

Infidelity and the Husband's Love in the OT

The most intriguing thing is that in the OT God always expects Israel to be unfaithful, something like a type of "idolatrous hypergamy", in which Israel continued to tend to have other gods besides the true God. Now, this should point out a few things, and one of them is that, regardless of the time, it is expected that a woman will have some difficulty in her fidelity to her husband. This is evident in the relationship that God establishes with his people, showing that they strive to submit to a single God as much as a woman strives to submit to her own husband.

See the Story of Hosea: He married a prostitute who never gave up prostitution, unlike Rahab (symbolizing a repentant church), Hosea's wife did not hold back, but was loved until the end. And here is why Scripture commands a husband's love for his wife: she will be difficult, and you must love her even when she is unsubmitive and unfaithful.

The difficulty in understanding this is because we reason in the form of cycles, but Scripture treats it as two parallel lines: the husband must love his wife independently of her; and the wife must submit to her husband, independently of him. It's not "submit to your husband if he loves you," after all, as we saw in 1 Peter 3, your husband may not obey the Word, which means he may not love you. Likewise, an unbelieving woman will hardly submit well to her husband, and yet he cannot stop loving her even if she does like Hosea's wife. Of course, in some cases it can seem unbearable, and that is why God gives Israel a divorce letter (Jer 3, Ez 23), but he never stopped loving her, to the point of promising a better alliance, with fewer demands (something which will be considered).

Nowadays, however, when someone preaches, they always emphasize that the husband must love his wife under any circumstances, but for a woman to obey her husband there are infinite issues, ranging from the supposed immorality of the order to the husband supposedly not showing love. Forget these questions.

Ironically, the husband's love finds no reason for it in his wife. Unfortunately, romanticism has distorted this so much, that today every woman wants to be loved for a reason, when the greatest love in Scripture is love *without a reason*. Proving the honor of the one who loves and the weakness or

incapacity of the loved one. However, when the beloved has something to offer, this only increases the confidence or pleasure of the love expressed by the man (something present in Proverbs 31 and which we will see in another text). How do we know this is *normally the case*?

Now, because God and Christ (whose love we are called to imitate) saw nothing in the Church (OT and NT) to attract them, since the church, before being Christ's, was a series of idolatrous nations and unsubmitive people who were overcome by the word. What is this if not unconditional love? God the Father himself does not fail to describe his love for the church in terms of its prostitution, which was saved by God, or a dirty baby incapable of doing anything (Ez 16:4-6).

Therefore, more beautiful, from the point of view of the scriptures, is love without a cause, the man who only loves the woman, and who does not need anything from her or in her to do so.

Hosea also points out other details:

19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. 20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord. (Hosea 2:19, 20)

God's promise to his wife is a marriage without rituals, that is, without the law. The true law will stand (in righteousness); but the demands will decrease (Acts 15:10). What made Israel find the other gods attractive were not only the sexual and dietary rituals they involved, but their greater simplicity and less demands – there was a lack of commitment to them. God, therefore, shows that he will have mercy, and would make a covenant of kindness with Israel, so that she may delight in God and truly know him. So, clearly, a man who wants to have his wife's fidelity, if he places exaggerated burdens on her, can suffer from her infidelity, knowing that she will find greater lightness in other men. This does not mean that the man does not rule the woman, just that a smaller load makes submission easier, because the burden is light.

What do we learn about the love of man in the OT? That he must love his wife more than his own honor (from the fear of being called "horned"), however, and together, a woman must submit to her husband more than anything in this world – above fears, distrust and own interests. The reasoning is clear and simple, and so we see that none of the modern movements for the liberation of wives or "male rights" have any biblical relevance.

SOME QUESTIONS

Deborah

Many argue that Deborah is an example that God not only gives women powers, but that they can be superior to men to the point of teaching them. The reading, however, fails, firstly, because she was not a priestess or Levite (who were responsible for teaching the Law – Dt 33:10) and, secondly, because prophetism has ceased and, therefore, there is no similar position left for women today. Finally, Deborah was not a judge (a characteristically masculine position), but she judged Israel by the prophetism she exercised (Ezekiel 22:1-3 [Ezekiel was not a judge, but he judged Israel by prophecy, his prophecy being judgment and prophecy at the same time]).

See that judges were mainly military:

9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he judged Israel, and went out to war [...] (Judges 3:9, 10).

Deborah was called by Barak to war, as she would not go (Jg 4:8, 9) without his call: however, as a shame for Barak wanting to involve a woman in the war, Deborah's prophecy signals that a woman would defeat Sisera (v. 9). This issue is so problematic that even the Septuagint says that the one who was judge during Deborah's period was Barak (1 Sam 12:11 more likely to signal Samson, not Barak [after Gideon], as read, for example, in the Talmud Rosh Hashanah 25a:16).

In any case, Barak was the judge, because he was the one who went to war and freed Israel during the period of Deborah, and she only prophesied God's judgments, clearly fulfilling a judge's role. And even if she had been a judge, what her role would prove is that the church can send women to preach at the missions level, winning over other people (which was the role of the judges), not that she preaches for the church in the clear and direct sense. And, even if we could consider something different, she is just *an* example of a woman exercising some power, something that is not even remotely treated in Scripture as the model of a wife (after all, several texts said otherwise, and you cannot take a text and point it out as if it simply destroys the meaning of others verses already discussed – and which are much clearer, with ready application and everything else).

Note: in chapter 2 (v. 16-18) the role of the judge was to free Israel from the hands of the enemies and not to judge legal issues, to be at the city gates, or something like that. Thus, it is as if the judge judged not the actions of Israel, but the actions of other peoples against Israel (Jz 2:18). As is clear, the more properly internal judgment took place by the elders (men) and at the city gates (Dt 25:7). Therefore, Deborah could not be a judge in the strict sense of the term, since God himself gave Israel's enemies into Barak's hands and not Deborah's (Jz4:7).

The woman who obeyed David and not her husband

The first error regarding the interpretation of 1 Samuel 25 is to think that there was some disobedience on the part of the woman towards her husband. This never occurred in the text, because he never commanded her anything regarding David. The only thing that happened (and you can read the passage) is that, knowing that David was coming to kill Nabal, she put her own life at risk, seeking to preserve the lives of her husband and family with the servants. Now, if that seems strange to you, look at this law:

1 And her husband heard it, and held his peace at her, and disallowed her not: then all her vows shall stand, and every bond wherewith she bound her soul shall stand. 12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the Lord shall forgive her. (Numbers 30:11, 12).

A husband can, as soon as he finds out, cancel his wife's vow (see it is the only broken vow that God forgives by default); now, if he never knows it, he will never be able to cancel it, even if he says, in a general way, that all the wife's vows are cancelled, since the law makes the breaking of the vow conditional on the husband's knowledge. Now, as you can see, the biblical law is extremely material: a woman only has her vow broken fairly by her husband if he knows about it. Likewise, an order is only obeyed by a woman if it is given by her husband. Nabal never commanded Abigail anything regarding David and therefore she never disobeyed him. Nabal only said that *he* would not give anything to David and was in no way forbidding his wife from doing so (because she was not aware of any order from him regarding her – 1 Sam 25:11).

Note: let us return to the passage of Numbers 30. It is complete regarding the wife's vows, and proves that no woman can be blamed for a vow that her husband prevented her from practicing, protecting her, and also ensuring that the man has more authority than a woman even in these things. God wants to show that *He considers the husband's word to be of greater value than that of the wife, which is why a man cannot cancel his own vows, but he*

can cancel his wife's. We are the ones who think that everyone's votes are equal, God himself doesn't treat it like that. The Lord, even in the vows made, showed that the hierarchy (man > woman) is more important than the commitments made by the woman with *Himself* – no matter who it hurts.

Esther

Queen Esther proves nothing about women having a higher hierarchy, by the way, how many women would be willing to marry a man who is still married to his first wife and – get this – forbade her from entering his presence in the royal courtyard (having she obeyed very well)? For *our* culture, this would be a sign of objectification (“sin” that does not exist in the Bible) and of bad nature, however, for Esther, he was her husband to whom she subjected herself – not to mention that she only acted at the behest of another man, who had authority over her. Read the book that bears her name and realize the role of humility she plays.

Ruth

Ruth, in silence, looked for a rescuer for her; submitted to him even before marriage. She does not serve as proof of a “strong” woman in the style we think (Rt 2:8- 13) – for us, her act is something that a woman today should never do, after all, every woman owes herself respect, isn’t it?

In the end, everything we saw proves by all means how much a woman should submit to her husband, and not some kind of weak complementarianism, of almost equality. What we have in the Scriptures hurts the ears of proud men and weak women (because only strong women can trust that everything their husband orders them is correct to obey – weak women distrust everything, and only do it if they feel safe {the opposite of force}).

CONCLUSION

The OT agrees that the woman must be submissive to her husband, regardless of his faith;
The OT agrees that the husband must love his wife, regardless of her conduct.

SUMMARY AND MORE INFORMATION:

In creation, God made man before woman: this is the Apostle Paul's starting point on the female position in the church (1 Tim 2:12, 13) before talking about sin (1 Tim 2:14). When man and woman sin, God *first* addresses the man (Gen 3), maintaining the standard that they were not equal to each other. Even though the woman sinned first, sin is *always* attributed to the human race through Adam in Scripture (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22). If they were equal, Scripture would deal with the imputation of sin in such a way as to attribute the entry of sin into the world to Eve and Adam.

After all, higher in hierarchy = higher in responsibility.

Hierarchy can exist perfectly in a sinless world. Between God and the angels there is clearly a hierarchy, and between one angel and another it is also obvious that there is a hierarchy. Hierarchy does not exist because of sin. The hierarchical ordering of the sexes is *not* a consequence of the deliberate disobedience of Adam and Eve; What we see after the fall is the difficulty of women's subordination (Gen 3:16).

Jesus clearly incarnates as a man, not only to fulfill the original type (of which God first created man as a representative), but because nowhere in Scripture can any woman represent the family (God always communicates with men to reveal something to the families – that is why it is said “God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” and not “God of Sarah, Rachel and Rebekah”).

In Acts 2, Luke states that the new era dawned with the gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers. In the new Spirit-endowed community, Luke quotes Joel as saying, “Your sons and *your daughters* will prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18).

When the Spirit is present, men and women can proclaim the word of the Lord with power. However, this does not change the original structure of creation (without sin) or after the fall (with sin), as we know that even in the Old Testament there were prophetesses (such as Deborah), and even so they do not exercise a role of authority. Prophetism is different from authority.

The teaching of the apostle Paul clearly tells us that women cannot exercise any leadership in the church, although they can, in some way, help in preaching the Gospel to people who do not know the Word.

Even though he recognizes their role of prophesying (and here what makes the most sense is at the level that Deborah did, so that if the gift ceased this role ceased together), he does not allow them to say other things or play the role of man. Paul always had an extremely “discriminatory” theology, highlighting that man and woman, in the new covenant, have equal access to the throne of grace (Gal 3:28 – which deals with access to God's promise, and not position in the church; a promise that in the OT was only for *a people*, through the descendants of *one man* [Abraham]) .

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul insists that men and women must be distinguished when they pray and prophesy in the church by what they have or do not have in their heads. Paul's main reason for writing these words was to insist that when women in the congregation prophesy or pray, they do so as women, and men do so as men. However, the most interesting thing is that Paul begins the chapter by saying that woman was created *for* man (v. 8, 9). Not only that, Paul shows that there is clearly a hierarchy between man and woman when he says that Christ is the head of the man, and the man is the head of the woman (v. 3): Christ is the head of the man not only because he is the one who commands, but because it is hierarchically above; which is the same for men in relation to women in the same text.

The way in which the apostles order the submission of women is clear proof of a way that must go beyond culture and time, as at no time are orders conditioned to the moment. The Fall and Sin itself is something transcultural, which is not limited to Hebrew or “patriarchal” society.

In 1 Tim 2:11-12 the prohibition against women exercising authority and teaching in the church is *not* directed at a particular situation. As you can see, Paul says in the chapter about how God created man *before* woman, and then about how woman sinned *before* man – this is not a particular case, but the way God records the Fall of the *entire human* race.

To say that it is a private situation is to sabotage the very basis that Paul gives for saying that a woman should submit to her husband and not lead in the church.

Thus, we can “sum up the summary” as follows:

These texts are regulatory and should be understood as dealing in a timeless way with the problems of the church, whether in a patriarchal culture or not.

The prophecy, even if it had not ceased, could not be used as proof that a woman has any authority close to that of a man, given that there was a prophetess even in an extremely “patriarchal” context.

When affirming that Paul, Peter or the Torah yields to culture for these orders, it is necessary to evaluate whether *we* have not yielded to culture and want to make the text say something it does not say. Why are we, “enlightened beings”, not the ones who gave in to culture? Is it always the Bible

that gives in to culture? Furthermore, the question remains: how do we know that a text is cultural and not another? If this order of Paul/Peter/of the Torah is cultural, all others can be, there is nothing that can distinguish these things.

Wife and Husband in the New Testament

We saw, in our text on the submission of the wife in the Old Testament, the comments that the New Testament itself makes regarding submission based on the case of Sarah, Abraham's wife. Here, in this text, we will deal properly with the New Testament, because, with the growing tendency to divide the messages of the two testaments, not only have they taught that the wife's submission is something from the Old, but they have also distorted the clear and straight teaching of the New Testament regarding the beauty involved in this submission and, also, the true love of husbands.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Clearly we could not leave the subject without context, and this is what we will first consider before the biblical texts themselves.

Cultural context and the Letters to the Gentiles

It should be surprising that, in the New Testament, only letters to the Gentiles have strong warnings about the submission of wives to their husbands. Furthermore, we must also consider that the letters usually deal with problems or difficulties in the church. For example, when Paul draws the attention of the Corinthians regarding the Supper (ch. 11), we clearly see that it was a problem *in that church* and, because this concern is absent from other letters, it is clear that the supper was correctly practiced in the other churches. Likewise, when highlighting some particular orders to avoid those of the circumcision (Galatians), it is evident that the common problem in that church was related to the willingness of those believers to listen to this type of teaching, and not that it was normal for churches accept this teaching.

As far as our subject is concerned, only 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Peter and 1 Timothy (letters to gentiles) deal strictly with the position of women, and the reason is clear: among gentile women it was much more difficult to have submission. And this is due to several factors:

- Among the Greeks, women eventually took care of cities when men went to war, to the point of administering justice (albeit together with the elders). In Israel this was never allowed, on the contrary, even with men going to war, men always remained in power and in the administration of the cities. Thus, women found it easier to understand the role of men in Israel, while among the Greeks, not so much.
- Among Gentiles, state imposition of monogamy was common. This means that women had a value very close to that of a man, so with the exception of concubinage, no marriage was authorized between a man and several women, making them, in terms of relationships, feel much greater than Jewish women – who accepted another wife for their husband without complaining.
- Among the Gentiles, women were common in battles, in Israel they only acted accidentally (as in Judges). This added value and pride to women among the gentiles.
- Among the Gentiles, women were teachers, priestesses and served as mediators between men and gods (like cult prostitutes); in Israel, the only office a woman could hold would be prophetess (which

no longer exists), while the priesthood, kingship and family leadership could only be exercised by men, therefore making it much more difficult for a Jewish woman to be proud.

– Now look at this all in reverse: the context of Ephesians 5 says that the husband must love his wife as Christ loves the church because, clearly, among the Gentiles men were not in the habit of loving their wives, and the same occurs with the wife's case in the same text! Now, if Paul commands a woman to submit to her husband to point out a cultural aspect of that time, so too is the husband to love his wife a cultural aspect of that time (which would be absurd, after all, why order something that has already been done?!). The fact is that the text only serves to prove that culturally these things *did not normally occur* among the Gentiles.

– Among the Gentiles, women were queens; but there never was a queen in Israel recorded in Scripture, except the one who visited Solomon and who was a Gentile.

– Finally, while among the Hebrews God is always "Father", "Lord", "Husband" (always masculine attributes), among the Greeks and Romans there were an infinite number of goddesses, as if they were women who guided people and decided entire destinies – "great is Diana" (Acts 19). Do you think women had such a low *status* among gentiles? While Jesus is incarnated as a man and the Holy Spirit is from Christ and God the Father (therefore, it is not "feminine"), among Gentiles gods and spirits as well as heroes turned to the feminine – even if they believed that the feminine was chaotic.

The result of all this is obvious: women were never, ever, absolutely despised among the Greeks, even having (look at this), more rights than among the Jews, eventually. This only adds to the fact that it is not possible to isolate texts dealing with wifely submission from the clear cultural contexts in which they are found. Below, therefore, we will deal specifically with each particular text regarding female submission to her husband:

1 Corinthians 11 – Submission since creation

3 But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. 5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. 6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. (1 Corinthians 11:3-7)

Paul is not stupid. He begins the text by establishing the criteria of authority that *are not cultural*: Christ is the head of every husband and the husband is the head of the wife, and God is the head of Christ. Now, Paul does not want the Corinthians to get confused and, therefore, puts between the statement that Christ is the head of man and that God is the head of Christ the information that the husband is the head of the wife. What is true for one of these heads is to be applied to the others.

It becomes more interesting if we consider the general meaning of "head" in the OT (Dt 28:13), pointing to a sign of leadership and power. The husband, therefore, is the head of the wife because Christ is the head of the husband. It is an eternal determination, which does not depend on any government or culture.

However, then, Paul shows that what he will deal with after that is not about a structure of commandments specifically, because instead of using the meaning of "sins against his own head", he highlights that "a man who prays or prophesies with the covered head dishonors it." And this is relevant, since God instituted the priest, who prayed and, eventually, could prophesy, wearing a miter

covering his head (Ex 28:4). Now, God cannot institute sin, therefore, such a thing is a dishonor, but not a sin.

Of course, there are dishonors that are sinful: for a son to curse his father is a dishonor, and it is a sin because it stands against the clear authority of Scripture (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9) – although a father may curse a son (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9) as we see Noah curse one of his sons in chapter 9 of Genesis. In the end, dishonor is *confusion* (ironically, it is also the meaning of the Greek word used by Paul). For this reason, for a man to cover his own head is dishonorable, as it violates the principle that he was created directly by God from the Earth, without deriving from another person, and therefore cannot cover his head, which reflects the glory of God (we will see below).

The woman, however, must wear the veil, for she is the glory of man, and the glory of man is not to be displayed, but hidden – and it is the glory of God that can be displayed. This is clear from the context of 1 Cor 11 that we are following. Therefore, when a (married) woman does not wear a veil (in public), she is exposing her own husband to dishonor and this is based on the fact that he is her head (and not in a cultural environment). On the other hand, thank God, the dishonor in this text is not a sin – although it confuses the hierarchical structure founded by God.

And we have clear evidence of this when we consider what Paul says: it is shameful for a woman to shave her head, therefore, it is better for her to wear the veil. It is clear that he is not talking about a symbolic veil or symbolically shaving one's head, as these are very tactile things in the text without any figurative language.

So, in conclusion to this, it is clear that the role of leader in the home belongs to man as the role of leader in man belongs to Christ.

8 For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. 9 Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. 10 For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. 13 Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? 14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. 16 But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God. (1 Corinthians 11:8-16)

Paul once again bases his hierarchical structure not on the environment of the Corinthians, but on creation: who of the human race was created first? The man or the woman? Clearly it was the man (which proves, in part, the literality of the order of things in Genesis) and, therefore, even horizontally, a man comes before the woman, being, therefore, her head. Likewise, when woman was created, she was created *because of man* and not man *because of woman*, signaling to us that woman exists for man, and man exists for God (I know you can think about "objectification", but the Bible doesn't care).

So, so far, the argument is threefold: 1 – Christ is the head of man as man is of woman; 2 – Man was created first; 3 – Woman was created *because of man*. Therefore, we have 3 main arguments in favor of a clear hierarchy between husband and wife. This all results in the subargument that this is why women should wear a veil.

Next, Paul says that, in the Lord, neither woman nor man are independent. And here is the contrast: "nevertheless." Paul argued all this time proving that there is hierarchy, however, contrary to what a man might think, both depend on each other *just as a king depends on the people*. This relationship between man and woman also applies between God the Father and Christ, as one cannot exist without the other (God the Father being the head of Christ – as Paul already said). The focal point is that if there is dependence, there is no annulment of the hierarchy, pointing out that Paul just wants to show

that, despite the woman being created because of the man, the man himself cannot live without the woman and vice versa.

Suddenly Paul jumps to the description of the man with long hair, showing this to be dishonorable. Now, God himself ordered that the Nazarite not cut his hair, and Samson himself had long hair until it was braided (Judges 16:19) and, even in dishonor, he was a saint dedicated to God.

Proving, once again, that external signs only point to the internal disposition, but they can be broken without necessarily breaking the essential parts internally. For this reason, even though a woman dishonors her husband without the veil, she does not sin – just as a man with long hair does not sin either. But both dishonor authority (the man himself and the woman her husband).

For this reason, Paul does not start from the "law", but from "nature", from the physical world, because in the Law Paul would never find such an order for the use of the veil among women, or the prohibition of long hair for men. And "nature" here has a crude and general meaning that men's hair doesn't normally grow like women's. In Scripture the only thing that can be deduced from it is that which is patent and evident, from which no philosophical knowledge is needed (as Paul also points out in Romans 1, demonstrating that one man sleeping with another is a violation of nature, as it is clear that the anus is not used for sex).

Lastly, God gave the woman hair instead of a veil. Yes, it seems confusing because we didn't read it carefully – Paul is still talking about the "first woman". God, when he created Adam and Eve, gave Eve no other veil than her own hair, which, in itself, proves that the veil only appears after the Fall and was never part of the structure of the world as such, except in the fact that already be part of a woman's body. Thus, the hair is her veil, and a woman who shaves her head therefore dishonors her husband. Thus, this is the structure:

Man > without veil: short hair = honor and glory of God

Woman > veil: or long hair (at least) = husband's honor and glory

Finally, Paul also says that if anyone wants to continue to dispute this issue, they should know that no church has "this custom". Now, the logic is very simple in this text: Paul is discussing the use of the veil and, therefore, he is saying that someone can still continue to question it. This person needs to know that there is no church in which the custom was not to wear the veil, something that matches the concept of "tradition" mentioned in v. 2, which was passed down by the apostle.

Of course, in the end, Paul's concern starts from the hierarchy and, only later, enters its external expressions, without these expressions being, in themselves, the total foundation (after all, cult prostitutes also occasionally covered their heads [as Tamar also did]).

The truth is that whoever continues to dispute these things *also* needs to see what the general custom is and not ignore it (so, should not dispute, in fact). However, this is the last point of Paul's reasoning, proving that we have left the custom of demonstrating female submission to their husbands.

Note: the ring on the finger is an equalizer, as it treats men and women as equals. The veil, however, was only for married women, so it drew a clear distinction between the two. On the other hand, and as we have already said, not wearing a veil is not a sin, just as wearing a wedding ring is not mandatory. The focus of the text is simply to point out that the veil is an external demonstration of the real hierarchy that exists between husband and wife (which is why the veil only applies to married women, and not women in general – which would be stupid).

1 Corinthians 14 – don't even speak

33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. 34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35)

For those who question the context of women being silent, I will just point out this: in Paul's mentality, God is not a God of mixing things up, therefore, if he says that a woman should be silent in church, what he is seeing is that this confuses the environments, as the woman is not at home, a place where she can speak to her husband more openly, but at church; and in the midst of the church, the leadership speaks and, only exceptionally, a prophetess or woman who prays covered (I'll come back to that in a moment). Thus, if God is not a God of confusion, for Paul it makes sense that the woman would not even speak in the middle of the church, as that would mix things up.

It is important to note that "in churches" does not refer to a location, but to the group of believers. So, when believers gather for worship, this time is "in church" and therefore the woman must remain silent. And here, unlike chapter 11, Paul says that submission is how the law determines, and where does the Law determine? (we have already explained in the text about submission in Genesis 1 – 3). It is not custom that Paul is dealing with, it is the Law of God that is at stake. The veil is a matter of nature, but submission and silence is something of the Law of God. Whoever violates this sins.

What does the text further suggest? Just as in chapter 11 we know that there was a debate about the use of the veil and also female submission, here we see a similar problem. Apparently, Corinth was a (Greek) city where women were extremely inclined towards leadership, and this translated into the difficulty for the church to establish criteria for women to remain silent. Another point, however, is that in 1 Cor 11, at the beginning of the chapter, nothing was mentioned about worship, leaving it open whether or not Paul was talking about the time when the church.

Note: most defenders of "equality" point out that the passage from Joel 2:28-32 states that the "daughters" (that is, women) would prophesy "in those days". However, this is not what the passage says: "afterwards I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old people will dream dreams, your young people will see visions". (Joel 2:28). The promise is that certain subjects would prophesy: sons (single), daughters (single), the elderly (men) and the young (men), and this does not revolve around married women, although they prophesied (according to the text of 1 Cor 11 – [but check Acts 21:8, 9 and 2:17 reporting only *daughters* as unmarried girls]). In this way, Paul is not prohibiting all females from speaking in the church, only those who are married and those who do not have prophecy – without prophecy there is no reason to speak (and without a veil one should not pray). Furthermore, with the end of prophetism, there is no reason for young women to speak in church. And no, "prophesying" is not the same as "preaching", despite many people thinking that.

It seems radical, but biblical texts must be understood within the framework in which they were conceived. Otherwise, we will say things that are not there, just because we want to have a bias that approves or accepts the cultural characteristic that we believe to be absolute or God's order.

Ephesians 5 – submission in everything

21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife,

even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. (Ephesians 5:21-24)

This text is extremely distorted, because – they say – Paul would be talking about corporate subjection, in which one is subject to another, women to their husbands and husbands to their wives. The problem with this interpretation is that women are **the only ones who are to submit as the church submits to Christ** (while subjection to one another is “in the fear of God”). And not only that, they are the **only ones who are ordered to submit *in everything***.

Like 1 Cor 11, Paul says that the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is of the church (changing, here, the fact that Christ is the head of the man). At this point this argument has a distinct appeal: Paul wants to show that, in the same way that the church obeys Christ *in everything*, a woman must obey her husband *in everything*. In 1 Cor 11 Paul wants to show a creational structure and how obedience is externalized, here, he wants to point out the *extent* of obedience.

Paul does not expect women to be submissive only in part, or because of particular interests, because the church, which is not cultural, submits to Christ in all places and times and, therefore, women must imitate the church. Therefore, this passage cannot be an effect of culture, because it is seeking to establish something not common among the gentiles, since, I suppose, among the gentiles women did not submit to their husbands like the church did to Christ (nor did husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church).

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. 28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: 30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. 32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. (Ephesians 5:25-33)

If the previous order is just cultural, this must be the case too, after all, the husband loving his wife was just an order at that time, right? We, however, have higher interests than cultural quarrels that die and are repeated in other ways. Let's see:

– The husband must imitate Christ in his love. Now, if a woman must obey her husband, then loving his wife does not mean that he will do what she wants or desires, nor that he will submit to her or be pleasing to her taste. The husband is called to imitate Christ in love, and the Lord Jesus never wanted to please the church according to her desires, but rather *his*. For Paul, there is no romanticism when it comes to the structure of marriage, so much so that when he highlights Christ's objective with the church (and which must be imitated) is that he does what he does to the church so that it would be glorious to *himself* and not “for her”. Does it seem selfish? It doesn't matter, God is not interested in our acquired moral concerns, and Paul even adds: “in this way”, that is, in the same way that Christ loves the church so that she becomes beautiful *to him, to his liking*, the husband should love the woman, and not leave her lying around to her liking or anyone else's.

– Christ gave himself for the church to sanctify it (that is, separate it from sin), purifying it through the word. In the same way, husbands must give themselves for their wives, making them understand that they must separate themselves from sin, suffering their sin, but, through the Word (clearly in terms of

instruction) teaching them how to avoid sin to be exclusive to the her husband (interesting, that Christ's focus is to purify the church from idolatry [adultery], which is the man's focus too, in this case). "Giving yourself in" for a woman is not about doing what she asks or supposedly needs, but rather seeking to understand and learn how to sanctify, that is, separate from sin! It is incredible how women turn husbands into servants using this passage, which says the opposite: the husband suffers the wife's sin, sanctifying her (remember Hosea), not pleasing her when and how she wants - the husband's sanctification over the woman is to separate her from other men or women who raise them against him, that's all.

– Loving a woman *as oneself* is profound, because again a man must look at his wife for his own sake, just as God does things to Israel for his own sake (cf. Is 48:11; 43:25 Ez 20 :9, 39). Again, it sounds like pride and selfishness, but the Scriptures teach that a man should have honor, and honor implies that even his wife he loves because he wants to and because it is himself he wants to care for.

– There was nothing in the church for Christ to love her, in the same way, one should not look for anything too much in a woman to love her, for this reason, the man loves her because of himself. Now, novels seek to focus on the qualities of women, confusing the woman of Proverbs 31 with common women. The truth is that a man commonly loves a woman independently of her, without ever seeking interests in her that lead him to love her. Above all, it is his self-interest in taking care of himself that leads him to love. This is a much truer love, because if it does not depend on her to exist, it will not depend on her to be maintained: a true love in grace.

None of this is us saying – it's in the text that you and I can read.

– Christ sustains the church and feeds it. I think the meaning of this is obvious. But a note is worth making: this does not mean that women do not work outside the home, however, we will return to the subject when commenting on Proverbs.

1 Timothy 2 – Creation and Fall

11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. 15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. (1 Timothy 2:11-15)

At this point it must be clear how "man" the apostle Paul was, after all, he did not allow women to teach in the church, even in a culture where women could even be priestesses. And, to prove that Paul's focus is not culture, he says that first Adam was formed and, only later, Eve.

Now, why did Adam come first? Because the world was created for him to dominate, however, without a woman, he cannot do this well, therefore, God gave Eve. This is Paul's reasoning and nothing will change what is in the text!

But if creation were not enough, the Fall also testifies against women's leadership capacity, because, even though they were created later, they sinned first. Note that this is just an addition to the previous argument, and is not, in itself, something that works alone. Paulo was not stupid, even if modern people consider him so.

The final part, which states that the woman would be saved by giving birth to children, is a comment by Paul on Eve's state of Fall, as this is what God promises her: her seed will crush the serpent's head. Now, it is nothing more than a preview of salvation for women, who could only be saved by giving birth to descendants until they reached Christ. This is not the first time that Paul comments on a "verse". In 1 Cor 11:26 he states that taking the cup "announces the death of the Lord" after saying what Christ

said at the end of his earthly ministry. Likewise, in 1 Cor 15:45, in its first part, we have the text of Genesis being quoted and, in the same verse, a comment by Paul inverting the passage. This happens more often, but two pieces of evidence should be enough for us to understand that this was nothing new.

In the end, this comment from Paul is not saying that women who do not have children will be condemned (for that is what is opposite to salvation), but that having children Eve would be saved – and this teaches women how much the Fall prevents any power over man.

Note: note that here we have the introduction of the subject of elders. Paul wants the elders' wives to be silent in the church, even though they are the leadership. For this reason he immediately enters into this subject afterwards.

1 Peter 3 – Submit at any cost

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. (1 Peter 3:1-7)

The “likewise” that Peter uses here is the result of a long line of argument in which he asserts several things about submission. Now he wants to show that, even if the husband is an unbeliever, the woman must obey him without trying to convert him using words. This is the clear contrast in verses. If a husband is not a believer, it is not the woman's responsibility to convert him, just to obey him. God is much more interested in how things are done than we are willing to realize.

We have already seen how Peter comments on OT passages, so not much else is needed here regarding women, except to reinforce this information: women's obedience has no relationship to their husband's love.

At a time when there was cultic sex everywhere, the woman should submit to her husband who certainly would not love her as Christ loves the Church and, therefore, we must understand that this is God's order – which sounds heavy to us, because we want freedom above all and not the truth and love of God's Law.

Finally, husbands must love their wives, living with them intelligently (something that only applies to believers, of course), so that she is honored as *the weakest vessel*. Do you know what that means? It is that she is protected, having her provisions and conjugal rights maintained (Ex 21:9, 10), doing everything possible so that she is not also deceived by any wind of false doctrine; for both inherit the same life, although they are distinct children of God. A man who breaks this principle prevents his own prayers from being heard.

Now, God just does not hear the prayers of the wicked and the wicked who do not want to have his wisdom (Pr 28:9) – therefore, a man who does not treat a woman with the dignity that the law commands him to do, giving due care, will not be heard by God *even if he cannot be challenged by his own wife either*. Give your wife due honor by preventing her from being placed in circumstances that demand more than her strength (such as, in a Greek context, preventing them from ruling entire cities or going to war) or by giving her conjugal rights, that is, when she wants to have sex, do it – otherwise, you breaks the Law (Ex 21:9, 10) and therefore your prayers will not be heard.

Note: see that Sarah obeyed Abraham, putting herself at risk, even of adultery, and this is counted as obedience. The risk that Peter says a man should avoid regarding a woman is that of dishonoring her himself (for example, taking away her conjugal rights).

When a woman can speak

3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; 4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. (Titus 2:3-5)

The context in which a woman can teach another is when she is older; she herself can teach other women, even though they were taught by men (after all, Titus was a man). And – note – what is the teaching that elderly women should pass on to younger women? Loving your husband and children, be sensible, honest, a good housewife, kind and subject to your husband.

Love: it is something very simple, a woman should not love another man, only her husband, because whoever loves, in fact, will take care of whatever is possible, for this reason Paul includes children under the guardianship of the newlyweds' love. Furthermore, in a context like that of Antiquity where it was not uncommon for a naked man to walk around, it was extremely necessary for the woman to love her husband, avoiding any contact with these other men.

Discreet: she needs to be able to evaluate the circumstances in which she finds herself. And this is not without reason, as young newlyweds have great difficulty really weighing the intensity of events and their level of seriousness. A husband with a foolish wife suffers because he cannot trust his new wife's description of her problems. If he is soft, he will give in and despair along with her.

Chaste: in fact, the concept reinforces purity, without mixture or hypocrisy. The truth is that a woman must be honest in the sense of not mixing with what would pollute her (like another man) and have the transparency due to a wife.

Home: the Bible never prohibited women from working outside the home (something we will address when commenting on Proverbs 31), however, normally, women who work outside the home are unable to handle what happens inside, so what is the general instruction for women? Being housewives (a housewife means taking care of the children – since a house at the time had almost no dishes, furniture and similar things).

Good: that is, willing to help even outsiders. Don't be irritated by the needs of others.

Obedient: naturally, Paul concludes the list by reinforcing the main role of women: obedience to their husbands.

This is what one woman should teach another and anything outside of this hinders the good management of female life. Basically, while men need to deal with several things and various capabilities, women need to have basically 6 simple and relatively general skills.

At no point does Paul require women to be incredible theologians, masters of knowledge or skilled seamstresses, nor does he require them to be full of skills in the kitchen, always be well dressed at home and things that only the husband can or cannot demand. Not at all. He leaves freedom, just pointing out the general lines so that wives (because that's what he's talking about) are able to serve their husbands better and, therefore, better serve God.

Note: note that the letters in the New Testament were written when there were no “women's rights” or similar things among the common people. Even so, the authors of the New

Testament do not make several observations, even if at that time there were more abuses than today – proportionately. We are not wiser than God, so we will not focus on these problems.

OTHER CASES

After everything we have seen, certain individuals still point out three specific cases in the NT about exalted women: Mary, those who saw the resurrected Jesus and the apostles. We'll see soon.

Mary

God gave Eve the promise that her seed (not man's) would generate the savior, therefore, nothing more natural than a woman, 'alone', generating the Messiah, so that there the promise was already for a virgin and also that what would be born from her would already be the Christ. Now, sin entered the world through a woman, it would be logical that salvation also entered through a woman. Furthermore, man's seed was impure, reason enough for the Messiah not to come from his seed (Lev 15) – therefore, we cannot expect God to continue communicating with Joseph, who wasn't living with Mary at this point– They were just engaged, and hadn't gotten together yet.

The point is that Mary receives the angel directly, being communicated of God's justice, because Eve was also communicated by God of her perdition. Do you think this changes women's *status*? Not at all as far as her husband is concerned, but as far as God is concerned. For before, she was separated by rituals that burdened women more than men, but now, because salvation entered the world through a woman, she has the same access as a man has to God, without the need to purify her whether from menstruation, conception or sexual intercourse with a man (something that occurred in Lv 12 – 15). Mary is the first to be freed, although she still had to practice the rituals of the Law until Christ died.

The first in the Tomb

Women were also the first to see that Christ was resurrected and announced this to the apostles, so that they doubted them – After all, women really don't tend to trust information like that. The problem is that no woman has ever been prohibited from speaking the truth, and even from saying something to another man (who is not her head) or outside the context of the church. Scripture is so clear that it expects the Proverbs 31 woman to be able to teach the law of God. Do you think that announcing the resurrection of Christ to the apostles was a paradigm shift? It never was.

The Bible never prohibited a particular woman from saying anything in general to any man, or even teaching him. The problem is that when we read "woman" in the Bible we tend to think of a "gender"/sex, when the Bible tends to think of a structure: single, married or widow. A married woman does not have the right to teach her husband simply because she wants to – that is the point. Furthermore, it would make sense for women to be the first to see that Christ was resurrected, as the parallel needed to be complete: Eve brought death, Mary brought life, and the *tomb emptied was seen* first by women – the end.

There is a lie here. Jesus did not appear to women in general, but to Mary Magdalene – from whom he had cast seven demons (Mk 16:9, 10) – and to the other Mary (Mt 28:1-9). This is relevant, because they are the first to see the resurrected Jesus (he didn't appear to Mary, his mother, first).

After that, the appearance of Christ centers on the men, disciples, whom he actively commands to preach (Mt 28:16-20 [said *only to men, apostles, not women*]). The disciples did not believe anything that was being said about Jesus being resurrected, whether said by a man or a woman (Mt 28:17; Mk 16:10, 11-13 [here it is proven that the disciples had no problems that women announce it to them, because the problem was unbelief, and not anything against women – v. 14]; Luke 24:24, 25). They

(women) were tasked with announcing only the resurrection, and not with how to keep the commandments and words of Christ – which was given only to the apostles.

Apostles

Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen, and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. (Romans 16:7)

First, even if Junia had been an apostle, apostles no longer exist, so this passage would lose any relevance in our debate. It's the same problem with prophetesses, who did exist, but their role has ceased and, therefore, any appeal to their existence does nothing to help how the church deals with women *today* – since being a prophetess is not the same as being a 'priest'. (something strongly contradicted by Paul in 1 Tim 2).

Second, the only passage that suggests the existence of female apostles is this one (Junia) against several passages that reinforce the silent role of women in the church. Now, even though there may be women who preach the gospel outside the church, it is clear that what we have here is unique and, therefore, cannot be used as if it would tear down the entire structure of the *entire church*.

Third, the translation "note among the apostles" (I will spare you the intense debates over the meaning of this part), suggests not that they were apostles, but rather that they were known very well by them, to the point of being held in great esteem – which would make sense in this context, as Paul is reinforcing the relationships of individuals to whom greetings should be sent (v. 3, 8, 17).

Fourth, the foundation of the Church Wall is the Twelve Apostles (Rev 21:14), separating what is inside from what is outside (Rev 22:14, 15 [interesting that the dogs are only outside the city, isn't it?]). Now, Junia is certainly not on this basis, therefore, at most, she would be an "apostle" in the broad sense of the term, as someone sent to preach to the people. In any case, nothing favors this foolish idea of female apostolate *today*.

So, what we saw is that there is nothing that favors any female leadership/preaching position within the church, except from older to younger women. And we cannot derive any general authority from others from the supposed apostolate of one woman.

JESUS ABOUT WOMEN

Some will appeal to how Jesus treated women, but before that, let's consider the errors below:

Common mistakes:

— That only what Jesus said matters. Whoever claims this does not know everything that Jesus said, because if they considered each of his statements, they would take into account this one:

39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. [...] 46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? (John 5:39, 46, 47 —see Luke 16:29–31; 24:25–27)

Notice carefully what Jesus is saying here: without believing in the Writings of Moses, how can we believe in Jesus? Thus, at the very least, if the Gospels are essential for us to know what Jesus thinks and teaches, the Law of Moses is essential for believing and understanding what he thinks and teaches. There is no lack of context (you can venture to read the entire chapter). Christ shows

that the Pharisees did not believe in the Law of Moses and did not correctly examine the Scriptures (the sum of the Law, Prophets and Poetics). So, therefore, if "only what Jesus said matters," then the entire Law matters—for it was he who said it. We could add to this several things said by Jesus that are not taken into account, but we don't have space for that.

— That talking to women and having them as followers implies a change in status. Considering what Jesus says about the Law, let's see what the scripture demonstrates positively about women: firstly, the law itself shows how they were fundamental, as in the case of the spies who were saved by a prostitute in Canaan (this prostitute, in fact, does part of the genealogy of Jesus — Rahab); or, in this case, the role of Sarah and Hagar in the generation of two great nations or peoples; second, we see that there are books dedicated to women — such as Ruth, Esther or even Judith, if we consider the apocryphal. Third, in several battles in Judges, women were essential, as in the case of the prophetess Deborah and the one who threw the mill over an enemy's head. We could extend the examples, but another negative statement of the law must suffice: nowhere in the Law is there any prohibition on talking to any woman or having them as followers. If the culture in Jesus' time was "anti-feminine," it was not so because of God's law. This was the status of the woman or girl before God – and it is what a woman could do.

Thus, Jesus communicating with women and treating them well is not in disagreement with the Law nor does it impose a new standard on how to deal with them.

Rather, it expresses the flow of how the law predicted and already spoke of Christ (John 5:39).

What Jesus "says" about women

In his incarnation: First and foremost, Jesus did not incarnate as a man for a cultural reason. It should be noted that even though Eve sinned before Adam (1 Tim 2:11–14; Gen 3) it is always Adam who receives the blame for sin (Job 31:33; Ho 6:7; Rom 5:14; 1 Co 15:22). And the biblical parallelism is clear: Adam is equivalent to Christ and Eve is equivalent to the Church (1 Cor 15:22; Eph 5:24).

If a woman died on the cross, the message would be that the church could die for its own sin to pay for it. Only a man could be the one who would pay for sin, as it is to man that the blame was attributed. If the man has authority over the woman, her transgressions are attributed, in a sense, to him - this is how a husband himself loves his wife, suffering the pain of the consequences of her sins, even if, like Christ, he rebukes her and correct (Rev 3:19).

Second, the promise in the Law was that the seed would be a man (Gen. 3:15), and even Moses predicts that "The Prophet" (masculine) would come and be like him (Dt. 18:15). Considering that these messages come from God, it is God himself who is teaching the people that the person who would come would be a man, not a woman.

Furthermore, Exodus 18:21,25 shows that elders could only be men.

Jesus, as Judge and Ancient of days at the end of Old Testament History, could only be a man, therefore (Is 33:22; Jer 33:15; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim 4:1; 2 Cor 5:10). Whoever refuses to recognize this does not realize that the incarnation and judgment could only be carried out by a man. Women have no place in judgment, in condemnation, and even in relation to salvation they become dependent on a man (Christ) – about eschatology, we commented in our book on the Westminster Confession of Faith.

When choosing the disciples: As we evaluate the life of Jesus out of the Old Testament, people tend to think that everything that happened was an accident, improvised. But, for example, the traitor, the man who sinned against Jesus, in order to fulfill what God determined, needed to be a man (Ps 41:9; Mt 26:23; Acts 1:16–20 [bishopric: male]). The point is that God's prophecies are his determinations, so that God is the one who decides that men should be placed in such positions (John 15:16, 17). This, more than anything else, proves that Christ, in accordance with the OT, acted and appointed

men. Not because of cultural pressure or other limits. If God wanted, he could, since the Fall of Adam, announce that women would save humanity, and then everyone would have a more willing heart to do so — which doesn't happen. Furthermore, and reminding us of the fact at Exodus 18:21, 25, the Apostles also played the role of judges over Israel. Jesus says that they would judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:28), showing that their role could not be taken by women. The Law, in a sense, predicted the structure of judgment at the end of Old Testament History. Jesus is clearly aiming his teaching at the patriarchal style.

General events: when Jesus was merciful to prostitutes, he was against the condemnation of an *alleged* adulteress (who did not fall under the penalty of the law due to lack of evidence and that Jesus himself could not judge), he spoke to a Samaritan woman... none of this changed the *status* of women in relation to the law, as the Law never ordered the death of a common prostitute (nor of a tax collector), never allowed the trial of an adulteress without the man and without the established judges, never prohibited a Jew from speaking with a woman or a Samaritan, on the contrary, they should be loved, as the Law commands to love your neighbor (Lev 19:18).

Jesus' relationship with women expresses the law's relationship with them. And if we want to know how Jesus would deal with being a woman's husband, we just need to see how Jesus deals with the church: giving orders, reprimanding, loving and sacrificing himself, without her being able to do anything - and then, are you willing to imitate the marriage of Christ?

CLOSING

The woman's mission: the question often asked is "what is the woman's mission?".

Now, her mission is to be submissive to her husband. The question arises what she should do with "gifts" that she happens to have, and the answer is easy: she herself is a gift to her husband, therefore, if she thinks she has a gift, she must use it in accordance with "mission" of her husband. The fact is that the husband's "mission" is not something that falls from the sky, it is something much more commonplace and common than it seems, because it could be that he is simply a street sweeper for the rest of his life and his wife helps him not only taking care of him, but at home and, perhaps, even working with his own hands (something that was common in biblical times – although they don't tell you that). This means that "a woman's mission" is not necessarily to have many children, as this mission was particular to Jewish women who would be saved by the holy seed. Therefore, we cannot be confused: her "mission" is "her husband's mission" – whatever this may be (it may become clearer in our text where we will deal with the woman in Proverbs).

Submission and subservience: then, naturally, they ask: "but this is not 'sub-mission', but subservience". Well, that's exactly it. The fact that English distinguishes between one thing and another does not mean that the biblical text makes this distinction and, if you have read this far, you can clearly notice this. A woman does not have a mission separate and apart from her husband (that is, it only applies to married women), but her husband is her mission, because that is why she was created: as a gift from God to her husband. The Bible does not address this issue of "individuality" with regard to husband and wife, as not only are they both one flesh, but neither the woman's body belongs to her nor the husband's to him (with regard to the sex) – 1 Cor 7:4.

Excellence of man: to conclude, we are told that a woman can only marry a man who, in fact, is a man and can already fend for himself, who is an excellent worker, when, in fact, it is just the opposite, as that the woman was given to the man because alone he would not be excellent at what he would do: "It is not good for the man to be alone [...] helper" – in other words, without someone to help him, he would not be able to handle things properly and would never be excellent at anything. We cannot reverse the biblical text: what makes a man truly become a man is when, having in front of him what he needs to do, he has an assistant at his side.

Men's marriage: here's an extra case: it was common for men to get married late in biblical times: either because of wars, or because of 'fun' (they never tell you that part), or because of work. In reality, it was extremely common for a man in 35 years old to marry his first wife of 16. It is likely that such a relationship was like this not only because an older man is often aware of problems and how to face them, but because a 16-year-old woman is more easily teachable if she hasn't had sex yet - not to mention that you would hardly find a woman over 20 who has never had sex, hence the role of virginity in throwing women's marriages down in age, while there is no subject of virginity for men in the Bible (we will see more about this).

CONCLUSION

The OT and NT fully agree with female submission;

The OT and NT command a man to love his wife;

However, neither the husband nor the wife depends on the other to perform their own duty.

Women in Proverbs

This text has instruction for men who clearly care about not only finding a wife, but who also want to deal with the ones they already have wisely. The wisdom of Proverbs is twofold: on the one hand, wisdom means knowing the Law of God (Dt 4:6) and, on the other, it also means reading the circumstances and avoiding those that are pragmatically bad. Therefore, with Proverbs man will learn how to avoid some things and how to recognize others.

We will explain the subject in a way that goes from one extreme to the other, dealing with the wicked woman up to the one who is virtuous. In the case of Proverbs, it is still relevant that we consider that it's text is the one that most often calls "woman" "woman", as it is almost always considering married women. We cannot confuse this information, which will be relevant: the text is not concerned with describing single girls, but women who get married, hence, Proverbs will rarely speak of "virgin" or "girl" (single), while its focus is that type of girl who has already been married and is therefore a woman. That said, in some cases, what it says about a married woman can eventually be perceived *before marriage*, and that is where the wisdom of the text's teaching lies.

By the way, have you noticed that there is no passage that deals with "quarrelsome men" or "beautiful men without criteria", or "virtuous men"? Of course there isn't, because the Bible was written for men, and only men who need to know these things said in Proverbs, in particular. Women are the ones in focus to be studied here, and not men – which, naturally, means that this text is not written for women, but men (married) and boys (single).

STRANGE AND IMPIOUS

16 To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; 17 Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. 18 For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. 19 None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. (Proverbs 2:16-19)

Who is this woman? The stranger, as Proverbs calls her, is another man's wife, the one who abandons her own guide, who has cared for her since her youth. This woman, who is married, has the ability to praise a man and win him over with her words that elevate him. Don't fall for this nonsense: a married woman who starts to praise you should be avoided (although the text says nothing against a married

woman who only has a friendly behavior towards you). Run away, like Joseph, from someone else's wife. Also, be very careful, because, as Genesis 39 shows, this type of woman has great power to make you be punished even if you have done nothing. To avoid falling for a married woman, chapter 5 tells us:

3 For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: 4 But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. (Proverbs 5:3-5)

The death mentioned here is to show us that, even if man does not punish you with death, God will consider you dead, as Leviticus 20 shows us. This woman's feet will take you to the abyss. Avoid any compliments from you. And if the negative factor is not enough for you, look at the positive stimulus:

15 Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. 16 Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. 17 Let them be only thine own, and not strangers' with thee. 18 Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. 19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. (Proverbs 5:15-19)

Solomon, who already had several wives, separated a single girl from a married woman, after all, he knew that the sin would be blatant if he sinned like his father, David. And what is his instruction? Now, cling to your wife's breast, kiss it, cling to your wife and not to someone else's. Does yours have enough to satisfy you and, if it is not enough for you, marry one more (2 Sam 12:8) – but never, ever, touch a married woman – because the one who wants to take you to bed is wicked, and will make you wicked like her (Pr 23:27, 28 [our language does not quite capture the meaning of "prostitute" in this text, which refers to a married woman who prostitutes herself, not a single woman]). Read chapter 7 of Proverbs for more information about this woman (see chapter 9:13-18).

20 Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness. (Proverbs 30:20)

Ironic how in our culture the man who only looks at another (single) woman already feels guilty (for no reason), but the woman who commits adultery or is "hypergamous" even though she is married feels nothing. Forget the subject of feminine sensitivity, as it only works when it suits (although, of course, the text is talking about the *adulteress* and not women in general, be careful).

CONTENTIOUS WOMAN

19 It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman. (Proverbs 21:19)

13 A foolish son is the calamity of his father: and the contentions of a wife are a continual dropping. (Proverbs 19:13)

See, it's not a sin (unlike a strange woman) to marry a contentious woman, which is why Solomon says it's *better* to live in a wilderness, not that it's the only option. You can live and coexist with a contentious woman, but you will suffer so much that you will prefer to live in a place with no one around.

A quarrelsome woman is one who keeps arguing, and her argument is like a drop of water that keeps falling and never stops (in other words, it goes on and on and gets irritating). How to identify it? Well, it's simple: if you see a woman complaining about everything and getting upset about anything, you're looking at a quarrelsome woman.

She is boring, tiring and wastes her husband's energy – anything is a reason to complain, anything makes her a hedgehog. A woman like this makes you prefer to live even in a small place, without possessions and great things:

9 It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. (Proverbs 21:9)

The text explains itself.

BEAUTIFUL, BUT NOT CAPABLE

22 As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman which is without discretion. (Proverbs 11:22)

This type of woman exists in droves, and we need to recognize them: they are beautiful, but they don't know how to judge things (this is what the term "discretion" means in Hebrew, something, unfortunately, lost in translation). Now, what is a pig with a gold jewel in its snout? It is a dirty animal, incapable of recognizing the value of the jewel before it. As we can see, the scripture recognizes that the feminine beauty is something and, therefore, a beautiful woman is desirable, it is pleasant, however, if she does not know how to make the necessary minimum judgments (like Abigail, who managed to stop David from shedding blood [1 Sam 25]), she will dirty her own beauty skin and will make it repulsive.

Normally such women are useless despite their beauty. These are not necessarily quarrelsome or impious, however, it is very difficult for men who need a more distinguished woman, who knows how to take care of what belongs to them, to be useful (and yes, there are ugly women who do not have "discretion", the point of Proverbs, however, is not to let beauty deceive you, since men naturally avoid ugly women). These women, as they gain freedom, use the beauty of their bodies to stand out. It is sin? Clearly not, but she makes everything around her dirty, making everything messy and confusing around her. Instability will be present.

Note: of course we can divide women into any quantity or type, but God, in his wisdom, divided them primarily in the way it is found in Proverbs, so that we understand which are preferable and which are avoidable. Note that some women are not present, such as, for example, the gold diggers (those who marry, literally, for money), and this has a reason that we will see when commenting on chapter 31 of Proverbs. The point is that Proverbs does not close the categories, but says which are the main types to avoid and which to aim for.

COMMON

There is another category of woman that is present in Proverbs too, but we don't notice it because we only read the text as "is". See below:

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. (Proverbs 31:10, 11)

Before dealing with Proverbs 31, note that the text wants to show that a virtuous woman is rare, difficult to find. Notice that, by clear meaning and obvious meaning, Proverbs 31 is saying what type of *common woman is*. In other words, just reverse the text and this ordinary woman will be found. Furthermore, we need to keep in mind what we have seen so far, as the book itself never said, for example, that the quarrelsome woman or the adulteress is the common woman – in fact, the texts clearly show that they are not exactly the majority (for so, be careful when generalizing – it may be that due to a Providence situation *you* are surrounded by bad women).

So, since below we will see what a virtuous woman is, we will just say directly what the common woman is like: her husband cannot trust her to do everything he expects, she brings some level of suffering to her husband (remember our text about the Submission of Women in Genesis 1 – 3), cannot work (well) outside and inside the home at the same time; does not have very high negotiation skills, nor is extremely capable of doing kindness to all the poor he meets; her husband is common, not a prominent man and not rich; this woman doesn't know God's law very well, and her husband isn't in the habit of praising her (after all, there's not much to praise anyway). All of this is a leveling summary of the rare woman of Proverbs 31.

Far from this being bad, it is just proof that Proverbs left this gray field on purpose, speaking ill of incompetent and ungodly women and exalting those who are above normality. Otherwise, being a normal and common woman is an honor, as there is no condemnation or irritation, just as there are no exaggerated expectations about it. In other words, Proverbs, through silence, teaches us how to admire the common woman in particular, and how she should be satisfied with this, as she will not need to bear the suffering of the wicked, the loneliness of the quarrelsome or the stupidity of the beautiful Woman and she will not need to live "above average".

THE WISE WOMAN

*Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.
(Proverbs 14:1)*

As we have seen, there is no passage that says "quarrelsome man", for the same reason that there is no "wise man builds his house", because the wisdom of the text is pragmatic, that is, it is considering women's attitudes towards their husbands and children. For example, when a man says "I destroyed my marriage because of pornography" he is assuming the guilt of a foolish woman, since, in fact, the marriage "ended" because of her, not him (we will get into this subject in other text). In any case, the wise woman deals with things and works around them, while the foolish woman is noisy and fights head on, bringing down her own home. The man is the leader of the home, therefore, his decisions can cause suffering, however, marriages generally "end" because of women, not men. We will return to this text shortly when commenting on children.

SOME VIRTUE

29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. (Proverbs 31:29)

Furthermore, there are girls and women who have some level of virtue, although not like the virtuous woman. Now, in this case it is quite simple, just reduce the level of "perfection" with which the virtuous woman is described. Thus, a relatively virtuous woman can sell things for some profit, in addition to being good to her husband, but not enough to always be considered virtuous in the unique and strict sense of chapter 31 of Proverbs.

VIRTUOUS

he words of king Lemuel, the prophecy that his mother taught him. 2 What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what, the son of my vows? (Proverbs 31:1, 2)

Note: some versions say "from Massah" instead of "the prophecy", as in Hebrew both terms are written the same.

First important point: a virtuous woman does not learn to be one, she is just found. Now, how do we know this? Because when Lemuel's mother taught him about this woman, what she said was a prophecy, not a writing for the women around him to conform to. In this case, it is evident that Lemuel's mother did not say this to a woman, but to a man (and this is how Proverbs 31 should be read); because it is not the man who must adapt to the woman, but the woman to the man, in particular, the virtuous woman exists *because of a specific man*.

3 Give not thy strength unto women, nor thy ways to that which destroyeth kings. 4 It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: 5 Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted. 6 Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. 7 Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. 8 Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. 9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy. (Proverbs 31:3-9)

Now, not only is a virtuous woman for a type of man, but the type of man she serves is one who exercises power and dominion, such as kings, rulers or men invested with authority who need to exercise judgment. It is for this reason that Lemuel's mother talks about avoiding women and then talks about drinking (which we will not talk about here, as we have already discussed gluttony and drunkenness in the book False Sins).

Excessive drink in the mouths of kings makes them pervert justice, just as women below virtue can also pervert the king's justice. A man ends up listening to his wives more than seems, and this in a legal context is very dangerous. For this reason Lemuel is alerted.

His mother's concern is that he won't be able to carry out his own mission as a judge and, therefore, asks him to run away from all types of women, except one. Lemuel should avoid even common women or those who had some virtue, he should look for the virtuous woman, as the others would prevent him from having time and head to judge - and that is the case today, as the virtuous woman does not exist for believing men, but for men who are invested with discriminatory authority (both inside and outside the church, of course).

10 Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. (Proverbs 31:10, 11)

Now, however, his mother starts to point out that Lemuel will have difficulty finding her, but it is possible, as she immediately says that she is expensive – something that would only allow a king or a rich man to possess. Now, in a context where there were dowries being charged to marry a woman, it is obvious that a father with a daughter with so many attributes and skills would charge a higher dowry, which is why she is expensive: which father wants to lose a skilled daughter for so little? Today, however, in the West, the practice of dowries no longer exists, but that doesn't mean it has become cheaper.

Note: regarding payment of dowries: you must know that every marriage involves expenses, but what you may not know is that in the past the dowry equalized things a

little, as nothing was subjective: every man knew that he had to pay a dowry, and that prettier women were more expensive, therefore, they more easily accepted that they would not get a certain type of woman. However, with the woman holding the financial power herself, a man never really understands why someone uglier can get a woman that he, who is more beautiful and hard-working, cannot. The reason is simple: when paternal authority limited children more, the dowry made men understand this case, making them understand that women cost money before anything else.

Proverbs never accused a woman of being interested in wanting a man with money, just as the Bible never accused a man of wanting to marry a woman (even a foreign woman) because of her appearance (Dt 21:10, 11). The reason is that this is natural for both, and if both accept this, everyone lives in peace (so much is complained about the supposed objectification of women, while they themselves sell their nude images on the internet – because this is how you deal with their beauty, which is natural [not for the virtuous, however]).

In any case, a virtuous woman (who knows how to be this way) will hardly marry a man who cannot afford to pay a lot financially to have her. As a result, her husband trusts her and therefore this investment will not be wasted. He pays for his trust in her, as he will keep his secrets of judgments, his failures and will also carry out what he needs without there being any doubts about her honest behavior towards his husband.

So, men, give up on that woman if you don't fit in with this husband.

12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. 13 She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. 14 She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar. 15 She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. (Proverbs 31:12-15)

Biblical law never prohibited a woman from working outside the home, as doing so could prevent the existence of a virtuous woman. For this reason, what we see is that the virtuous woman is able to handle animals and buy food, works with her hands (forget the European standard of delicate little hands – the virtuous woman is not focused on beauty, although she may have it). It is always good for her husband, as she will not conflict with him in these interests (while an ordinary woman ends up arguing with her husband precisely because working outside the home stresses and disturbs her). Finally, she wakes up at dawn, prepares the food and (here's a reason to be rich), orders her servants (who were slaves, but we'll accept the meaning of servants) to do the housework (a big house, certainly). I'm sure no one has ever explained this text to you in detail, right?

16 She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. 17 She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms. 18 She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night. 19 She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. (Proverbs 31:16-19)

This woman, without needing to consult her husband, knows how to buy a property (rich!) and, with the money from her work, increases her own prosperity (an ordinary woman usually just consumes); in addition to working outside, she also manages to take care of a garden that provides food (in this case, wine – hence Lemuel's mother's warning to be careful). It prepares her arms and back to handle the work (maybe go to the gym, these days, who knows?). The most interesting thing is that on top of that she can do the calculations and notice that she has been earning well (to decide whether to continue investing in what she has been doing).

Even after this routine, however, she is always ready to wake up in the middle of the night, her rest is not inattentive. In the end, she has skills with her hands.

20 She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. 21 She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet. 22 She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. 24 She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant. (Proverbs 31:20-24)

Willing to help those in need, whatever they may be, and even taking care of those outside, she still manages to take care of the house, so that all the children are always well dressed for the cold, wrapped up for the winter (dressed in purple, because they are rich, of course). And her husband? Well, he's a judge, and he's one of the best! Hence the wealth. Even with all this, she still manages, look, to sell what she produces. This woman is extremely rare.

25 Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. 26 She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. 27 She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. (Proverbs 31:25-27)

This woman is not worried like most, as she is ahead or has the strength in her mind to deal with uncertainties. Furthermore, in an environment where women have little knowledge of the Law of God (after all, parents were obliged to teach the law only to their male children [Dt 11:19 {"son" is only masculine in this passage, which does not mean that daughters could not be taught, otherwise there would be no virtuous woman – but the minimum duty is teaching male children}]), she knows the wisdom of the Law, and instructs with the goodness that is in it (for the law is good [1 Tim 1:8; Rom 7:12]). Even so, she continues to follow everything that happens at home, so she is not lazy (hmm... it seems that most women are lazy; thank God this is not a sin).

28 Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. 29 Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. 30 Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates. (Proverbs 31:28-31)

Her children praise her, her husband speaks well all the time and, comparing her with other women, he knows that she is above all. Therefore, it is said that beauty is vain, as it passes away, but the woman who fears the Lord (since most are not like the virtuous in fear) continues to be praised even after her death, so that she is publicly recognized (clearly Proverbs never had a problem recognizing when a woman deserves public exaltation).

The virtuous woman is the perfect way to conclude a book whose first subject is avoiding the wicked woman – and it ends the romanticism of many husbands, after all, your wife is not virtuous if she does not fit into this structure. It is clear that much more could be said about each woman, however, as our focus is only to draw attention to the texts and show their direct explanation, we will not focus on the details. Let the reader dedicate himself to studying the passages discussed more carefully.

So, what we've seen so far is a series of women to avoid, some against which nothing is specifically said, and others that are good. But in the end, it's only about women, because men need to know what kind of women they can handle or need. It has nothing to do with "the value that man gives

himself”, but rather what man actually is: the one who must dominate. To exercise this, you need to be wise and listen to the advice of Proverbs.

Note: in Ecclesiastes 7:25-28 there is a strong criticism of women. Many commentators simply think it is an effect of Solomon's personal experience that does not apply to all women, however, the term “woman” may well refer to married women who indulge in sin (adultery) but do not turn back. Men who have sinned like this, however, eventually turn back the way (like David). The text itself says that there is no woman among “these”, that is, those who are wicked (cf. v. 24). The comparison of woman with death echoes Proverbs, in which it is said that a woman (adulteress) leads to death (however, she is worse than death for leading a man to misery). Another point is that at the end Solomon talks about justice, highlighting that women *do not know how to be fair*, that is, while among men Solomon found one with a coherent and balanced sense of justice, among women he found none. It may be that the intensity of this problem changes between the Old and New Testaments (as we explained in the comment to WCF), but it is clear that men are much more trustworthy than women – Therefore, the confidence that a husband has in a virtuous wife is commendable: for she is very rare.

CONCLUSION

There are different types of women;

Men need to know how to choose the ones that best fit their needs goals;

Choosing outside of them can result in much unpleasantness and suffering;

There are, however, women who are not for every man;

And there is a woman who is only made for a specific type of man

Women's Clothing

The extent to which this issue causes divisions today is absurd. Not only because of some invented patterns (and others that are true), but also and, mainly, because simple distinctions necessary for understanding the biblical text are not made. Distinctions such as, for example, woman and girl (or virgin), sin and dishonor (or shame); not to mention our and biblical concepts, as well as the fact that women mistakenly reason about beauty according to European standards and, at the same time, foolish people accuse them of “Eurocentrism” (which is not a sin anywhere in the Bible, and it can never be).

All of this accumulates over our heads, which need to deal with thoughts that we classify as legalistic, liberal (theologically), cultural or just wrong. Because of this, we will start by drawing some basic distinctions, just to make everything clearer.

DISTINCTIONS

Woman and Girl

The first thing that people don't usually realize is that the requirements regarding clothing are always made considering *married women*, and this is very simple to understand, even through the biblical

language and context in which they appear being ordered to dress in certain way (see the context of 1 Tim 2, for example, or 1 Pet 3 – always signaling the husband together).

As we have already said in another text, the scripture is not primarily concerned with issues of male and female sex, but rather with hierarchies: husband – wife | rulers – governed | sirs - slaves | God – men | parents – children etc., as God created the world, and even the angels, based on hierarchical structures. Therefore, when the biblical text wants to highlight something referring to an unmarried woman, the term normally appears as “girl” or “virgin” and, only in a few cases, unmarried girls are referred to as women (an exception would be the case of prostitutes, who are also called “women” [1 Kings 3:16], but it should not be expected that the dress rules were intended for them).

Therefore, it is important that you do not forget to always remember what is normally in mind when talking about women in the Bible: woman = married; girl/virgin = single (depending more on the context to know if we are not talking about one girl being engaged). This will also be noted in the texts we discuss.

Sin and Dishonor

Another ignored problem is that not all acts of dishonor are considered sin in the Bible, and not all acts of sin are called dishonor. Nakedness is a dishonor, but if it were a sin, being naked when bathing or to a doctor would be a sin. Let's explain better:

Sin: sin is that which requires the death penalty (see our text What is the Law of God?), and without the shedding of blood we cannot be cleansed (Heb 9:21-23). Thus, for example, ritual impurities were not a sin, as they required bathing or a mere short period of time to become clean again. Sin is disobedience to God's orders or breaking of God's prohibitions – in other words, it is breaking His law (1 John 3:4 [which is only the Torah]).

Dishonor: dishonor is a shame, shame is the mere exposure of something that causes us to be humiliated or that confuses hierarchies. For example, doing anything against your father or mother is dishonorable because it confuses hierarchies (although it is also a sin). On the other hand, a man with long hair commits dishonor (1 Cor 11:14), even though God defined the Nazarite vow by allowing long hair (Nm 6:5; Jg 16:19) – that is, God can order something that dishonors a man, because dishonor is not necessarily a sin. Of course, dishonoring someone can also be an injustice (Dt 25:1-12 is about dishonor and injustice, for example), but such a point will not be necessary in the specific context we are dealing with.

The questions that arise, therefore, are: 1 – does a woman or girl who does not dress in a certain way sin or commit dishonor? 2 – When someone female needs to dress in a certain way, does this imply every female person or just a category of woman? These key questions will be answered below. However, it is necessary to note that our text will not focus on “whether” the Bible requires something – as it does –, but what the level of this requirement is (sin or dishonor) and who it affects (women in general or a group of them).

Non-biblical cultural inspiration and false accusation

Finally, there is currently a stir looking for the “traditional” style of women. Such a thing, in itself, does not carry any biblical problems, since whatever the style (European, Asian or American from the 40s), there is no sin in any of them. For this reason, whoever accuses these women of being miserable sinners for reliving things from colonialist peoples is the real sinner. There is no reason for accusation, as the failure here is in not understanding that “traditional wife” does not equate to the American 1940s woman – that is just foolishness, not a sin.

Thus, both those who accuse are miserable and those who think they are excellent because of the model they seek are fools. The Bible did not give us an European or American model, but it also did not allow us to accuse the imitation of these models of sin. Sin is only the transgression of God's law, not cultural and human rules of conduct. Outside of that we just have a series of discussions of opinions that lead nowhere except to division and fight.

CLOTHES AT OT

Clothes and sin

Intrinsically, it is not possible to say that not wearing clothes is a sin, or that a certain type of clothing is a sin. First, because of the creation of man, in which there was no clothing. Secondly, because sin is sin in all contexts (there is no context in which adultery is permissible, or even blasphemy against God) – thus, if the non-use or certain use of clothing is a sin, then someone, when taking a bath, or if sleep with less clothes, will be in sin – something absurd and that only occurs in the minds of people who have no mercy.

Note: adultery is not wrong just because we fell in Adam, for exemple, but because God established in creation that a woman belongs to a man, therefore, since the creation of the world, God has not allowed women to have two husbands.

In the case of the woman, however, God gave her hair, as Paul himself argues in 1 Cor 11, showing that instead of the veil she had this as a sign of the man's authority over her. However, with the fall, this sign for some reason no longer had any effect, so it became necessary to wear a veil as a means of signaling to the angels that a particular woman belongs to a man. Thus, even the use of the veil could not strictly enter into the structure of sin, as there was never a biblical law that established it, only the custom based on the *nature* of the relationship between man and woman and the woman herself and the man himself.

Furthermore, there is no law regarding men's clothing (I know you thought Deuteronomy, but we'll get to that), which proves that concern about women's clothing (which there is also no law about, but there are always instructions about) has to do with its belonging to her husband. Now, in the same way as the Church belongs to Christ, the wife belongs to her husband and, therefore, when the Scripture talks about remarriage, only the woman is prohibited from having a new marriage while her husband is alive (Rm 7:2, 3; 1 Cor 7:39). The factor is obvious: the woman herself does not have to wear something just because she is a woman, but because she is married – which excludes single women from clothing instructions.

If this doesn't quite clarify how clothing is a matter of honor/dishonor (for the husband, not the wife), and not of sin, look at the case of Isaiah:

2 At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, Go and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and barefoot. 3 And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia; 4 So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. (Isaiah 20:2-4)

God *orders* Isaiah to walk naked for three years, signaling the Lord's judgment against Egypt. Many, however, claim that Isaiah only took off the "prophet's cloak", something that is not true, as the text compares (with a "so") Isaiah's nakedness with the nakedness of those who would be taken into exile: with buttocks out. Of course, if you check the Hebrew text, there will be no doubt that "outside

curves" means "buttocks" and therefore we have God ordering Isaiah to remain among the people completely naked for three years, without hiding his shame.

Note: in addition to this prophecy referring literally to Egypt at the time of Isaiah, it also refers to Israel, in the New Testament, which was destroyed by the Romans (Rev 11:8 [the Lord was crucified in Israel, not in Egypt, showing that spiritually another name for ancient Israel was Egypt]). This is so because a prophecy has, at most, two fulfillments: the literal, in shadow, and the real, spiritual – except when it refers directly to the Messiah, as there is no other Messiah or other coming of the Christ, subsequent to the prophesied one.

For our mind that possesses Greek morality, God could never command this. But this is not a sin, because, as the text points out, walking naked only causes shame, humiliates, dishonors (the man to himself, and the woman to her husband). God, who does not contradict himself, because He never stipulated in the law details about uses of clothing for the common people (the priest had it, but because his clothing was a shadow in itself, pointing to a future spiritual reality, and was therefore a law that had expired).

Regarding women, when talking about sex, their nudity is always referred to as being, in fact, of their husband (Lev 18:8, 16). For this reason, whoever dishonors a woman by seeing her nakedness or having relations with her is, in fact, dishonoring her husband, who has authority over her.

The point is that, firstly, a naked woman dishonors her own husband, and the man who desires a naked woman (married, of course) commits adultery – that is, his adultery is dishonoring the woman's husband (here is when dishonors her becomes a sin, but only for the one who desires, and not strictly for the woman [who will lack mercy if she continues to appear naked for other men to desire, leading them to sin]). God is not a stylist, but he is interested in preserving the external signs that indicate the wife's submission to her husband.

DRESSING IN BIBLICAL LAW

Adam and Eve

We know that when Adam and Eve sinned, *they were ashamed of their nakedness* (Gen 3:7). Now, as you can see, nakedness became a problem for man because sin entered the world. Note that the Law does not say: "Adam began to sin because he was naked", but rather that he was *ashamed* of his nakedness. It was never a problem of sin, but of humiliation.

The law teaches, in Genesis 3, not only that death takes away man's flesh, leaving him naked (2 Cor 5:1-8 [in Paul's time, to die was to be naked, as there was not yet a body of glory ready to believers]), but that the problem with nudity does not exist because there is any evil in it – since God created man naked, and everything that God created is good. The spiritual message of the text of Genesis 3 leads us to understand the need for spiritual clothing, since the body of flesh and blood cannot be one (1 Cor 15:50).

Basically, Adam and Eve's problem was *knowing* that they were naked, and not being naked. The knowledge of sin, for a spiritual reason, made us perceive the nakedness of the flesh, as a sign of the nakedness that believers faced in their death in the OT (Rev 7:9 [see that without sin they have clothing, because the message of the clothing is another: purity]).

The shames of Eve and Adam became, in fact, shames, as they were the means for the human race to propagate itself. What was a pride for them, as it showed that they could generate children in their own image (Gen 5:3), as God did with man (Gn 5:1), became a humiliation and, therefore, the shame attached to the penis and vagina became widespread: now the generation of children

produced impurities (Lev 12 and 15 [it is not sex that generates impurity, but having children and contact with semen]).

Note: note Exodus 19:10 ordering that the Israelites' clothes be washed, signaling the purification of the (new) body of believers, and not just the clothes (cf. Zec 3:3-5). The message is not related to clothes per se, it is not for us to wash our clothes when we go to pray, but rather a purification of sin or the sign that we will have a new body (not of flesh and blood) in heaven.

The veil

64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. 65 For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. (Genesis 24:64, 65)

Even though a man saw her (the servant), she did not cover herself with the veil. However, as Isaac approached, she noticed the need to cover herself, pointing out that she was preparing for her engagement to him (she immediately understood why Isaac had come to see her). Now, Rebeca is proof not only that a single woman could walk without a veil, but that the veil indicated, already in Genesis, a submission present only to those who are married or engaged – and in verse 67 they are already married! What we have here is a clear sign that only betrothal (Rebekah knowing that Isaac came to take her as his wife) and marriage impose dress rules on women.

18 And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord, and uncover the woman's head (Numbers 5:18)

In Numbers 5 we have the case of the husband's jealousy over his wife. And what do we see? Naturally, the priest needs to *uncover* the woman's head so that she can stand before God, exposing her to God and dishonoring her husband (who has no proof whether the woman actually committed adultery, in this text). This shows that the married woman wore a veil, in honor of her husband.

There is one case, however, in which an unmarried woman uses the veil:

14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. (Genesis 38:14)

Tamar ends up deceiving Judah, since he had not given her Shelah in marriage. Judah treats her like a cultic prostitute (this is the meaning of the Hebrew term used by him here). And how did he know that she was supposedly a cult prostitute and not a common prostitute? Because she covers herself with a veil and is on a specific path. Only a cult prostitute would cover her head in this context. As this type of prostitute is no longer common, this passage becomes difficult to understand (note, however, that Judah did not offer any worship to another deity through her, as he used her as a common prostitute [zanah] and not a sacred one [qedesha] – which explains the small variation in the use of the term in the Hebrew text).

The only rule for general dress in the Law

5 *The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God. (Deuteronomy 22:5)*

First, the context of this text has to do with mixtures (they are not “several laws”, they are just organized in a way that *we do not usually reason*): one should not mix the property of another person with mine or another (v. 1-4); one should not mix a female bird with her young (v. 6-7); the edge of the roof must be separated from the rest of the house (v. 8); one should not mix seeds (v. 9); nor should two animals be mixed together in the plow (v. 10); nor distinct clothing (v. 11) etc.

Among these laws, some are shadows (like two animals yoked together [2 Cor 6:14 {cf. 1 Cor 9:9}]) and others are commandments (return the animal to its neighbor). So, first we need to understand two things: this law about something that belongs to women and men has the intention of separating what each one can use from the other (something clear in the context), and because it is treated as an Absolute abomination, it must be seen as a sin at any time – that is, we are not facing a shadow, but a commandment.

However, what would women's clothing be? Because Paul, when saying that a man dishonors his own head if he prays with it covered, does not say that this is an abomination, making us believe that such a law in Deuteronomy has nothing to do with whether or not a veil is worn. Note that Paul would have this text to refer to in 1 Cor 11 to say that a man cannot wear a head covering, however, he chooses not to do so, because the head covering is not something strictly feminine and because the text also has another meaning.

See, what would be a “men’s” and “women’s” costume? Would a kilt from the Scottish regions be men's or women's clothing? And pants, would they be men’s or women’s clothing? As we have already said, it makes no sense to define cultural demarcation lines for the law; therefore, this text from Deuteronomy cannot be stating something about clothing that can change culturally (otherwise, even today we should wear the clothing of that time and region, don't you think? – something for which there is no commandment).

The first point is that the translation is wrong. The correct translation (which even the Greek caught on) is: “A woman cannot wear warrior things on herself, nor can a man wear women's clothing”. Did you notice that the meaning is different? Phraseology is not interested in the fact that a woman cannot wear pants, for example, but that she cannot wear things typical of men – more precisely objects, and not clothes themselves.

Furthermore, the term for 'man' used in this text is *geber*, or “strong man”, “man of war” [Gen 6:4; Ex 12:37; Js 10:2] showing that it is this type of masculinity that women cannot associate with. Hence, it becomes clear why women should not be given male weapons or tools of war. This does not depend on culture, as it is clear what a weapon is– which is why Sisera, being killed by a woman, was not killed with male instruments, but neutral ones (Jg 4:21; cf. Jg 9:53 [never does a holy woman kill a man with any male tool of war – this is why Judges always describe what tools women used, to prove the sanctity of the action, and show that women maintained submission to the Law of God]). I suppose that if we say today that only men have the right to bear arms, women will immediately change the argument, saying that they have the right together (instead of saying that “guns kill”).

In the case of men, they are not prohibited from wearing part of women's clothing, but all of it. Therefore, the text does not prohibit “jewelry” or female makeup, but rather “clothing”, signaling that only when a man dresses completely like a woman will he overcome this prohibition. Thus, the Romans, who applied eyeliner, still did not sin, and even South Koreans who take care of their skin do not sin. However, men who dress completely like women (something recognizable in any culture) break this law, and are an abomination to the Lord.

Note: note that the law has never treated men and women equally. The woman is allowed to be closer in a masculine way than the man is to the woman (that is, women were not prohibited from wearing men's clothing, but men's battle instruments). And yet, there are elements that are permitted on both sides. On the other hand, Talmudic nonsense that prohibits men from even shaving their pubic hair must be discarded, since the text prohibits not the removal of something, but the addition of a set of things. And when this set of things becomes sin? When it covers both the upper and lower part of the man with women's clothing.

Basically, a woman can wear men's clothes, as long as she doesn't use men's accessories; a man, however, can use women's accessories, but not their clothes (as a set). A man being naked is a disgrace for himself, and there are some contraindications – a naked woman dishonors her husband and there are many contraindications. If it seems strange to you, ask why one fruit could be prohibited and all the others are not.

God's law is not symmetrical and is not intended to be so. Symmetrical morals and ethics is the Greek and Roman way of reasoning things.

PROPHETS AND POETICS

Wicked clothes

We have already seen how Isaiah is treated regarding his own clothing, but let's see what he says about women's clothing:

16 Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: 17 Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. 18 In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, 19 The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, 20 The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, 21 The rings, and nose jewels, 22 The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, 23 The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils. 24 And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle a rent; and instead of well set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty. (Isaiah 3:16-24)

This text from Isaiah says nothing against decorations or veils. Now, the law itself shows that married women wear veils, so why could the veil be a bad thing? The same can be said about mirrors. In this text, there is no judgment against objects, but against the people who use them. If this text prohibited these things, then we should prohibit them all – from foot ornaments to veils. The problem is clear in the text: the daughters of Zion exalt themselves, and that is why judgment came upon them. In the Bible, exalting oneself is not merely feeling great, in a generic way, but has practical actions (2 Chr 32:25; Jer 13:15 [showing that proud is anyone who does not listen to God in his orders]). These women, therefore, exalted themselves and enriched themselves (cf. v. 15), earning for themselves, buying ornaments for themselves, and ignored the poor. Normally, those who show off their beauty a lot forget about piety, however, we can never condemn any level of beauty or accessories in themselves as sinful.

Furthermore, the term translated as "wanton" actually signals a desire to have something. The looks of these women continued to wish they had more (not that they necessarily looked at other men).

God's judgment on them is to take away the things that were never wrong to possess. Therefore, the teaching of this text is: never take care of a woman's appearance to the point of ignoring godliness.

Prostitute clothes

See the contrast below regarding myrrh:

10 And, behold, there met him a woman with the attire of an harlot, and subtil of heart. [...] 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. [...] 19 For the goodman is not at home, he is gone a long journey: (Proverbs 7:10, 19)

This woman in Proverbs wore the trappings of a prostitute and was married.

However, what are these decorations? Now, these are not necessarily bad things, as this prostitute woman also used tapestries in her home (v. 16), and we know that the virtuous woman also takes care of her home with tapestries (Pr 31:22). Fine linen was present in the tabernacle, in addition to which myrrh is deliciously used for sexual intercourse between man and woman in Song 5:5. Therefore, we know that preparing the house to receive an adulterer does not mean that these things in themselves were or are impure. As in the law there is no separation between "prostitute clothes" and "common clothes", such thing can only be contextual: that is, she became a prostitute because the woman got out home with the decorations, but if she remained at home, between her and her husband, they would be decorations for husband and wife.

5 I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock. (Songs 5:5)

See, for example, how this passage from Song uses myrrh: it is oil all over the woman's body (for why would it only be on the fingers?); the dripping signals that the woman was, literally, "slathered in oil for sex". However, imagine if she left like this? Now, if she were a married woman she could literally be beaten by the guards, as she would act as a prostitute (Song 5:7). Here we see that the environment separates what is characteristic of prostitution from what is suitable for the marriage bed. In bed, everything that is from "prostitute" can be used (lingerie, oils, decorations, perfumes, sexy stockings, garter belts, etc.). As we have already seen, a prostitute wearing a veil does not make her any more holy, and the opposite is true: a married woman wearing "prostitute" items does not make her any less holy, as long as it is within the proper boundaries of the property or in environments for her and her partner only (because the Bible does not even prohibit sex outdoors, as long as it is only between the husband and wife(ves) {Song 7:12}).

It is clear that we could extend the treatment, but both the passage from Isaiah accounts for the uses of the prophets, and the passage from Proverbs accounts for the poetic books.

CLOTHES IN NT

The New Testament is more direct, which, if we do not arrive with due preparation from the Old, will make us the most lacking in mercy among men. There are no new laws after the Torah, therefore, the NT instructions need to be seen within the purposes that the contexts indicate, in addition, of course, to what the OT has already said: a married woman is the one who needs to worry about what she wears.

Furthermore, I must comment that in the Gospels there is nothing relevant about clothing. We know that Christ had a seamless tunic, and that he was crucified naked (his adversaries wanted him to be ashamed), but this does not indicate much about clothing (it must be said that it is likely that in John

13:4 Jesus removed completely his own clothes, as a sign of self-humiliation – cf. Mt 27:35 [where it is clear that the Greek term can be used for the entire garment]). Nothing, however, came out of Christ's mouth about clothing, as the Law also does not deal with this as much as it seems and Jewish women, apparently, still had the habit of wearing a veil in his time. And this explains part of the reason why only in gentile letters are there warnings about clothing.

Only to Gentiles

The first detail that needs to be noted is the fact that, in general, this concern with clothing basically focuses on everything that is aimed at Gentiles. And this has clear reasons: Gentiles did not have as many dress rules as Jews when it came to (married) women. Now, it would not be unusual, for example, for a married woman to go out to train in combat outside the house completely naked, in full view of other men (since around the house, movement was usually limited to property for Greek women). Such an attitude of dishonor towards their husbands was strongly present, especially among Greeks.

This justifies and explains a lot the reasons behind the treatment of the subject only in gentile letters.

The veil

We have already had the veil treatment on two occasions. So we will just point out that, in 1 Cor 11, Paul is actually arguing for the use of the veil, but on the basis of *nature* and, therefore, does not say that its non-use is a sin, but only a dishonor *for the husband*. It is evident from the text itself that it only deals with married women and, therefore, single women are left out (and here in accordance with the law, since there is no evidence of single women wearing the veil).

Dressing well

8 I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. 9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. (1 Timothy 2:8-12)

The context points out two things: the first is that Paul only speaks of married women, and the second is that Paul's focus is holiness, as this is what he points to when he says: "holy hands [...] in the same way", in other words, women's clothing points to holiness... but is this exactly what it is?

Unfortunately, because people don't know enough Greek, they don't understand the contrast that Paul wants to make. He means that women's focus should not be on attire, but on good works. In English this could be more or less like this:

"Men pray... holy hands... **In like manner also**, I will women to dress simply, not wanting to show wealth, but rather demonstrating good works". Of course this is not an alternative translation, we just want to point out what Paul's interest is in the passage, because women who worry about their appearance forget about love for others and good works (as we saw in Isaiah 3).

But let's look at the passage, to see what it proves in detail:

"Modest apparel": nothing more than thoughtful attire, without exaggeration. Anyone who understands how God's law works knows that this is not legislation, for what is thoughtful clothing?

She clearly obeys what is socially accepted as thoughtful. A woman should not exaggerate – this is basically what Paul is saying, without specifying exactly what it means to be “considerate” or “honest”.

“shamefacedness”: Modesty, in fact, is reverence. Conveys the idea of honor. And we have already seen who a woman should honor. However, it is another general characteristic, which cannot be well defined without falling into “legalism”. Modesty, on the other hand, focuses on the meaning of something well thought out, not in any way, nor showing off anything. It’s the flip side of “honest attire.”

While honest attire focuses on organization, a woman's modesty focuses on understanding the limits of what she can show and the moments she can show (after all, a woman could take off her veil for the priest).

Now, however, comes the first part of the contrast that everyone seems to ignore. Now, if everything here is a commandment, as soon as a woman braids her hair she will sin, or wear something made of gold, or wear an expensive dress (the focus is really economic). But here's another question: what is an expensive dress? When does it become expensive? What if it's expensive for you and not for me? See that Paul is giving terms that are not exactly delimiting. Therefore, he has in view that which is distinct. He wants to show that a woman who focuses on these things forgets about good works.

And now we can note his argument in another way:

Honest attire, modesty: the ideal way to dress so as not to worry > not to wear expensive things, because > then you will be able to dedicate yourself to good works.

Paul's concern is not whether a woman wears braids, but whether she fails to do good works by focusing on the braid and caring for it. For this reason, it contrasts with what is common to women, and which takes up their time and money. The standard of modesty for women in the Bible does not have sexual purposes as its main point, but rather *utilitarian ones*: good works. Just remember Isaiah 3.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: (1 Peter 3:3-5)

Interestingly, Peter, having the chance to contrast the use of grand clothes with simpler ones, decided to say that women's adornment is internal (and not in a specific amount of clothing). And here it is clearer because Peter is simpler than Paul, because Peter was not literate like Paul. But let's go back: what contrasts with a preoccupation with wearing frizzy hair, gold jewelry and beautiful dresses? The clothing of a meek spirit (that does not seek discussion) and quiet (that remains silent – cf. 1 Pet 3:1). And Peter justifies this, because in the Law and the Prophets how did women dress? In this same spirit, submitting to their husbands.

Note: in a text about prostitution we will deal with “lasciviousness”. Regarding the undeniable fact that a man will desire a woman and a girl with less clothing, see our explanation of Matthew 5 in the text “Polygamy in the New Testament”.

Now, if her husband orders her to wear a certain outfit, of course she must listen to him, as this is part of her subjection to him. But what Peter teaches is that a woman who prioritizes her appearance tends not to have a meek and quiet spirit, nor submission to her husband. Generally, vain women do not submit well, as they are more concerned with themselves than with due obedience. For this reason, simpler women have greater ease of obedience and meekness than women who are full of vanity.

Vanity

And speaking of vanity, is it true that it is a sin? Of course not, because, as the wise man says, "all is vanity" (Eccl 1:2), and yet we do everything, including work, even though work is vanity (Ecc 1:3, 4). Now, we are all vain, because vanity just means doing something that doesn't last forever. Don't be surprised that I tell you: vanity is not a sin, because even looking at something and hearing something is included in vanity (Eccl 1:8). Worse, seeking (intellectual) wisdom is also vanity (Eccl 2:15). After all, vanity is what passes, not evil. Vanity as evil is only when for the sake of vanity I do injustice to another, because justice is something of God, and not of time, or of common life. The Bible never spoke of clothing as a vanity in the sense of being something malicious, except, of course, in the fact that the priority on them prevents people from doing good works.

Ironically, "modest" clothing has caused many people to stop doing good works. In part, because many women are so concerned about the "right dress" (ignoring that Paul just says to keep it simple), that they fail to help others for the sake of supposed personal purity. Worse still, there are women who stop helping girls because they believe that they are impious in the way they dress – which is completely foolish and unfair.

It would help if they didn't worry about clothing before worrying about good works. Again, a woman can have whatever clothes she wants, but the moment the clothes get in the way of her good works it should be abandoned like any level of priority.

WHAT IS THE REQUIREMENT LEVEL?

We can answer the question: is it sin or dishonor?

It is dishonorable, because a woman dishonors her own husband or fiancé by dressing up and showing off; and nothing is said about virgin in the scriptures.

WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

As above, only married women are in view when it comes to clothing, and there are no specific regulations for girls who have not even gotten engaged. This, of course, is meant to confuse the minds of men, who think they understand God's law and ignore mercy and justice.

This does not mean that human laws cannot punish lack of clothing, however, they will be above God's requirements, thus lacking mercy. Of course, human order must be followed as much as possible (for we know that various orders contradict each other, even under the rule of one man). We, however, are only dealing with what is and what is not a sin, nothing more than that.

CONCLUSION

There is little about women's clothing in the Scriptures;

It is not a sin to dress badly;

It is a sin to falsely accuse someone (for dressing well or badly);

The scriptures do not teach anything about the clothing of unmarried girls;

The scriptures define how married women should dress;

However, clothing is controlled with the honor of the husband and the good works of the wife in mind.

Sons and Daughters

Now we will briefly consider the care of children, and we need to do this mainly keeping in mind the discipline that, on the one hand, we are taught is a sin to give up and, on the other, that in the Bible there is no literal discipline with a rod. Now, both positions are wrong, and that's because they both fail to understand what we say at the beginning of this book: sin is what the death penalty is applied to in the text - therefore, although the scriptures instruct us to correct our children with a rod, they never teach us that it is a sin to neglect it. But let's go in parts:

WHAT IS EDUCATION IN THE BIBLE?

Many have distorted, in favor of intellectuality and 'intellectual Christian heritage', the biblical texts that talk about educating children. There is no text that proves, for example, that it is the duty of parents to teach subjects in general to children, however, it is the duty of parents to actually teach something to children. But first let's see what "they" say:

*We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.
Psalms 78:4*

Many say that Psalm 78 proves that we should teach our children about creation in general, pointing out, for example, history, science and language. However, the text is so obvious that only by trying hard can someone see something other than what it says. The text talks about the law (v. 1) and the events that occurred in antiquity (v. 2, 3). Now, the proof of this is in verses 12 to 16, for example, in which events from the book of Exodus are reported.

For the author of the psalm, 'educating' (if we can use this term) is nothing more and nothing less than teaching the Law of God, and the events that are recorded in it.

Does this mean that it is wrong for parents to teach science, history or any other subject? No. We are not dialecticians. We just want to say that this is not what Scripture wants to convey to parents' primary responsibility for their children. Children are disciplined in the Lord, and teaching in the Lord is teaching the things of the Lord, recorded in the Law of the Lord, and not in human changeable science.

But if that wasn't enough, the law clearly tells us what should be taught to children and how:

8 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. 19 And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 20 And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: 21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. Deuteronomy 11:18-21

Many when reading this text assume that it teaches what the didactic method in general is: repetition. But that's nonsense. Repetition is linked to content, and God wants repetition to be only of the materials he gave us, that is, of his Word (in this case, the Law in particular). Does this mean that if this applies to the law it applies to other areas? No, because the Law of God does not change, but historical and scientific findings and language do, therefore, it is possible that repetition is even harmful in these other areas.

There is no comprehensive didactic method in Scripture for other areas. What we can observe is that Scripture is concerned with teaching itself, and only that.

Furthermore, failure to teach the law is not characterized as sin. God's objective in passing on the responsibility of teaching to parents is for their children to practice the law – and if, by chance, they practice without teaching, they will be doing the right thing, even if they do not fully understand it. Otherwise, parents do not receive *any punishment for not teaching their children, rather, the children will be punished if they are not taught by their parents, which is why discipline is the result of love*, since parents will think about their children and their preservation, this not being contrasted with the negligence of parents – as parents *can* be negligent (Pr 3:12; Hb12:6; Dt 8:5; Pr 13:24).

Therefore, it is clear that the Law of God is concerned purely and simply with education in the Lord, that is, about the things of the Lord – and is not involved in anything with *Constructivist* or *Traditional* or *Classical* education – these things are mere methods, just that, and making your approval or *disapproval* a matter of faith is subverting the biblical text.

WHOSE DUTY IS IT TO EDUCATE?

Now, we saw that previously the text does not seem to indicate who should teach the law of God, after all, both the father and the mother are involved in teaching degrees. However, we cannot ignore that in the biblical text mothers seem to be more present than fathers in personal teaching, and this is for a few reasons:

Firstly, because fathers carried out the most strenuous work far from home, while, for example, in a war, *all women remained at home*.

Secondly, because in a polygamous structure, it is impossible for the father to give individual attention to each child all the time, which is much easier for the mother.

Third, because we have practical examples of this in Scripture.

The Father as the one who gives initial instruction and the mother as the educator

It is important for you to understand that the marriage was often done with the woman being much younger, still in the 'learning' phase of the law. Which, of course, implies that she would be taught by her husband for some time. Furthermore, if the father was with the children, he should teach them the law and be corrected by their parents if they broke it (Pr 3:1, 11 [Solomon clearly addressing himself in a paternal way]). And this in such a way that a son who falls into sin is a disgrace to the father (Pr 17:21). However, it is suggestive that you do not see in Proverbs a concern for men who are not wise with the law in relation *to the home*, but rather women (although the book itself is for men to know the Law of God).

See this example:

*Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.
(Proverbs 14:1)*

A woman only builds a house or tears it down if her internal role in the home is greater than we are willing to accept. And here it is important to understand the basics of a home:

A woman at that time did not spend the day cleaning the house and washing dishes. In reality, it was common to eat with your hands (since the fork as such only became popular a little over 200 years ago), and in homes it was not common to have plates and glasses. In general, a woman was concerned with sewing and preparing food, other than that she could go out to negotiate and even sell items

within the limit of her abilities (Pr 31:13, 16, 22 [which implies even keeping the money inside of the house, since only with money to be able to negotiate at a time when there were no cell phones or things like that]). The point is that with this power in hand, and more time with the children at home, the woman ended up being held responsible for the lack of teaching the Law to her children:

*The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.
(Proverbs 29:15)*

As you can see, the idea of correcting in the text is not the father's, because why would the father's lack of correction be embarrassing for the mother? The reason is simple: it is because the first instance of correction for children was the mother and not the father. The two parents took action against the son only in the most extreme cases (Dt 21:18-21 [the son is killed for breaking the commandment to "honor father *and* mother" after adulthood and still living with both {no, it was not usual for a man to get married as early as they make it seem nowadays, early marriage was a relatively recent phenomenon}]).

In any case, the father may not be content with a foolish son (who breaks God's law), but it is the mother who is embarrassed by the fact that a son does not follow God's law, since she was the one who followed closely the child's discipline.

But we have further proof of how women were involved in teaching practical things about life to a (male) child: Proverbs 31 is written by a mother to her son (v. 1, 2), therefore, we know that women in addition to teaching the law, also taught their children how to identify other good women for marriage. Women are great at identifying others, they just need to be guided by God's law, and not by the customs of the time.

WHO SHOULD BE EDUCATED?

Here we will talk about something that everyone ignores: in the law the 'obligation' is to teach sons, not daughters. For this reason, among the unique abilities of the virtuous woman is knowing the Law of God (Pr 31:26). Why is this ability so praised in her if it were common in women? The reason is simple: women were not the first objective of the teaching of the Law, but men (that is why the Bible is written for men, and not women).

Does this mean that it is a sin or wrong for parents to teach their daughters? No. For how would a virtuous woman know the law if it were not taught to her by her parents? The objective is to show that boys are the priority in teaching the Law of God, while girls can be taught in the background. Ironically, we have completely reversed this, today we focus on taking care of girls more than boys, which is proof of how sensitive we are, as we have been guided according to who is more sensitive, not who is stronger *naturally*.

THE ROD

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. 14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. (Proverbs 23:13, 14)

Chasten thy son while there is hope [...] (Proverbs 19:18)

The rod and reproof give wisdom [...] (Proverbs 29:15)

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. (Proverbs 22:15)

Having noted that correction is naturally connected to love toward the child, one should not think that the more a parent corrects their children, the more they love them. And here we will have to make a distinction: there is discipline for breaking God's law and discipline for disobeying your parents first (which will still be a transgression of the Law, but you will understand soon).

An immediate transgression of God's law is for a child to steal, murmur against his parents, show interest in idolatry, bear false witness, or anything else that God condemns. In this case, when a child is corrected regarding these things, his soul is being delivered from *Sheol*, that is, from actual death. And death is the punishment for sin. Therefore, considering that parents teach God's law, they themselves have the role of correcting their children regarding God's law.

In this action, what we have is that it is necessary to make this type of correction while there is hope, because after the child grows up or dies there is nothing more to do. Children, therefore, need to be disciplined in relation to breaking God's commandments.

However, there is a second case: what if a child does not break a commandment of God, but disobeys his parents? For example, suppose you ordered your child not to pour water on an toaster. If he does so, in reality, he will not have sinned, not because of the toaster, since the law says nothing about throwing water on objects around the house. However, the child will have sinned by disobeying his parents in this sense.

At this level of disobedience, Scripture does not give any instructions, which allows for the most varied types of punishment/reprimand or lack thereof. Now, a child who does this, but is always disciplined at the same level of the law, will think that everything is God's law, which is a lie. Therefore, the teaching of Scripture always revolves around: teaching children to keep the law and disciplining them if they fail to do so.

Much of the conflict between those who believe that they should discipline their children for the slightest deviation and those who believe that they should not discipline their children for anything is because they do not know how to differentiate between what is and what is not a sin: in other words, they lack wisdom because they do not know the law of God.

Therefore, the Rod is essential, although not imposing in terms of sin or not. If you want to see your child free from death, that is, away from sin, use the rod, if you don't love him enough, you just won't use the rod when you see him stealing or anything similar.

In any case, the focus of children's existence is the parents, so neglecting to correct children is less serious than the children disobey their parents – we will return to the issue of children existing for their parents.

We could go further: all the Proverbs that talk about a rod actually talk about a rod, that is, something you use to beat your children, however, the Proverbs focus on the immediate sin, and not on a lack of education or civility. Parents, because of their power, can discipline for anything, but they are only required to do according God's law.

Note: why does Proverbs speak of "rod" and not "hand" – I can't hit with my hand? Obviously you can, however, the objective of Proverbs is to teach how to use the rod so that the child is afraid of the rod, and not of you – although he fears you for having the power to use the rod. Children who are hit at the hands of their parents tend to replicate more violence, while children who are hit by other objects tend not to replicate violence. Furthermore, excessive correction also has bad results, considering that children start to get upset with their parents, even becoming angry with them.

Our personal suggestion is that children should always know why they are being disciplined, and whether such discipline is for a transgression of a commandment of God or for a specific order from the parents. With discipline always taking place calmly, and not in moments of anger or rage, avoiding

slaps (Eph 6:1-4 ["discipline of the Lord" means "not disciplining them or avoiding disciplining them for things that are not from Lord", this is why he warns not to provoke children to anger, since disciplining them for things above what God demanded will provoke anger.

Why do I know that parents can discipline children for things that are not sins? Because of what Dt 21:20 says: 'a glutton and a drunkard' – and in the Bible there is no sin of gluttony or drunkenness (for more on this see our book False Sins). Why is the particular example in the text that the son dies after spending his parents' wealth on drink and food? Because he intends to show that parents have power over their children, even in things that are not sins. Therefore, for example, Hannah's vow committed Samuel to a lifelong vow (1 Sam 1:9-11, 24-28). It was not a sin not to give one's son to the Lord, but Hannah did so in a vow, making it mandatory for Samuel to obey that vow even after he was an adult. Parents, in the Bible, have more power over their children's lives than we ourselves are willing to recognize (which is why Noah can curse a son, but a son cannot curse his father, no matter what that father is like [Lev 20 :9; Pr 20:20]).

Thus, it is only important that we know how to distinguish between what is our order and what is the Lord's order, since our orders, if broken, can be corrected in the most varied ways and under the most varied disciplines, but for breaking the Lord's orders he gives us instructs the use of the rod.

This, therefore, proves that both those who force the use of the rod and those who are against it make mistakes, and they make mistakes because they read the Bible from our perspective, sometimes scientific and sometimes theological, and not biblical.

Children are the inheritance of the Lord

What goes through your mind when reading this:

Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. (Psalms 127:3)

If you thought: "children must be well taken care of because God gave them to me". You are mistaken, as this is not the meaning of the text. Now, what is an inheritance and a reward for? To be used. The logic is that children are an inheritance given by the Lord for us to enjoy them, and for this reason the psalm continues:

4 As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. 5 Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (Psalms 127:4, 5)

God gave children to parents so that children can protect and fight for their parents. The idea of the text is that, having children as an inheritance from the Lord, they will guard me, being faithful to me, obedient and protective.

Therefore, if children do not love their parents to such an extent, it is because something in our teaching and care has gone wrong. In reality, something in our authority structure is wrong. Because if children don't see their parents as instructors to whom they feel grateful, why will they fight for their parents or take care of them?

In any case, and to summarize, we must distinguish the fact that in the law there is no penalty for not disciplining a child, but the child suffers the consequences of not being disciplined in relation to sin, which proves a lack of love from parents.

CONCLUSION

Male children are a priority in teaching the law
Biblical discipline is limited to breaking the commandments
It is made with a rod
Disciplining for things outside of the Lord should be avoided

Prostitution and Pornography

Having described all the things that were shocking above, we thought it worth two more chapters: one on prostitution and one on eschatology. The first is for an obvious reason – everyone thinks that prostitution is the breaking of the family bond. The second, however, is the closing of the introduction to this book, since we need to clarify the bases on which we are writing, and it is necessary to close the cycle of this book with the subject in a similar way to reinforce the relevant points.

Furthermore, everything you saw throughout the book is here in some way, being a consequential and natural reading of the subject after everything we have seen.

PROSTITUTION

Terms and Words

In English, it is common to use the term fornication to refer to sex without marriage. There is usually no financial compensation for this.

We use the term prostitution when we want to emphasize someone who receives payment or who is extremely fornicating. Another word is incest which, for us, indicates those relationships with degrees of consanguinity, such as, for example, a mother or even a stepmother (even if she does not have the same blood as you [1 Cor 5:1, 2]).

Finally, there is the word adultery which applies to a man or woman who has sexual relations other than with the partner to whom they are married. It occasionally happens that a married woman is a prostitute, so she practices prostitution and commits adultery (like Hosea's first wife); it is not that this term is interchangeable with adultery, but that here we have a case of adultery whose focus is also to receive money in exchange.

In Bible it is not much different. In Hebrew there are terms for adultery and prostitution (although we do not see the term "incest"). The problem is that, for a Jew, any act without a marriage contract (receiving money or not) or with a relative receives the same word: *zanah*. Thus, it can be translated as prostitution, fornication and incest; while adultery has its own term.

What they don't tell you is that there is another term for prostitution, "*qedesha*", which would be something like "sacred", "dedicated". As we do not have common contact with prostitutes who have sex in honor of some deity, this term is usually translated only as "prostitution", losing its original meaning – something that is not exclusive to English. In Greek, also, in the Septuagint (LXX) version of the Old Testament, both "*qedesha*" and "*zanah*" receive the same translation, "*porneia*" (and its variations). However, a viable translation for the term "*qedesha*" would be "cult prostitution" or "sacred prostitution", while for *zanah* and *porneia* there is no good equivalent, as it depends on the context or background to define their meaning. Now notice this in Hammurabi's code:

If a father consecrates [his daughter] to god [as] a temple servant [qadištum] or a virgin (Hammurabi's code, law 181)

Note that even among the people of the Middle East there are similar terms for cult prostitute – the similarity is not a mere accident in this case, signaling that the “qadištum” were well regarded by the people neighboring Israel, while for Israel these same qedesha should be seen as impious and perversion of worship.

Another situation is that zanah is eventually used to practice idolatry in Israel (or outside). This is important to note, as Israel is the wife of God and committed adultery by practicing prostitution. The problem that many do not notice is that this term was not chosen without reason, as the worship of other gods often involved sex - so that when it is said that Israel prostituted itself, what is in mind is the cultic sex practiced by the people (see Judges 8:27 [separating idolatry from cultic sex]).

This raises a serious problem, because we must proceed with the text as it was conceived, and we must condemn what the text condemns, and not stretch its meaning to what we desire: this is what poets and literary masters do. The Law of God, however, needs to be read and understood in the sense in which it condemns things, so that we do not judge a person unduly or disproportionately. We will see in practical terms how misused words can confuse and disrupt the meaning that the text wants to convey. So pay close attention, as we will explore every possible case (not every particular case) given in Scripture.

SACRED PROSTITUTION

The law clearly condemns sacred prostitution, first, in the ten commandments, by saying, in the first, that we must have one God, and this is true. Now, as God never required sex as a cult, it is obvious that sex in a cult was linked to another god or to a form not permitted by the Father. The result, of course, we will see below:

Numbers 25

And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. 2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods. 3 And Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel. (Numbers 25:1-3)

The current text is not condemning prostitution in its strict sense, but rather the sin of cultic sex (Nm 31:15-18). The problem was the worship of Baalpeor through sex, and not having relationships with girls from other peoples, since Moses himself authorizes the Israelites to marry unmarried girls (Nm 31:18, 19), as the law does not prohibit from marrying a foreign girl (Dt 21:10-14), only those specified (Dt 7:1-4). Now, in chapter 7 of Deuteronomy it is clear why sex/marriage is prohibited with these women: “For they would lead your children away from me, so that they could serve other gods” (v. 4). In the end, what we have here is, clearly, the prohibition of sex as a cult. This is the message of chapter 25 of Numbers (see 1 Cor 10 where Paul clearly relates this to the cultic sex present in the context of the Corinthians).

Anyone who claims that this text applies to any type of prostitution needs, together, to prove how this is in this text.

Note, as a last observation, that “marrying an unbeliever” was not a sin in the Law, only the induction into idolatry was (something that commonly comes as an effect of marrying an unbeliever). This would already prevent a church from disciplining someone for marrying an unbeliever, except if, because of this marriage, the individual falls into idolatry or practices a sin that is actually condemned by law. Apart from this, marriage with an idolater is always discouraged, but never punished except in specific contexts, such as the case of Dt 7 applied later in Numbers. In general, the women of these peoples had already offered their bodies in worship to another deity, hence the difficulty of a sinless relationship, even more so with a body stained by idolatry – as this sin is against the body.

Deuteronomy 23

17 There shall be no whore [qedesha] of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite [qades] of the sons of Israel. 18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore [zanah], or the price of a dog ["sodomite, lit. "dog" here"], into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God. (Deuteronomy 23:17, 18)

We already explained in the introduction: unfortunately the translation gets in our way here: what is being prohibited is the cultic prostitute, and she is abominable to God, just as much as the cultic prostitute (which we will see in Ezekiel). Then, by parallelism, the text refers to the prostitute man as a dog and the prostitute woman as "zanah". Now, we have already seen that the text defined the prostitute as "qedesha", so the only thing that is in view here is to show that this woman who has cult sex in exchange for money (here is the reason for the use of zanah) is abominable to the Lord our God.

Jeremiah and Ezekiel

For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands; and thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot. (Jeremiah 2:20)

19 Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. 20 For she doted upon their paramours, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses. 21 Thus thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth. (Ezekiel 23:19-21)

In both texts what is clearly in view are sexual acts of worship, to the point that in Ezekiel it is even emphasized that the ejaculation of wicked men is like that of horses. Now, this is an emphasis given to show not that ejaculating heavily is a sin, but because it added to the cult, with the greater flow signaling the fertility presented in the worship of other gods. What we have, therefore, is an act of worship with sex, because ejaculating heavily is **not** a sin.

Hosea

2 The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord. (Hosea 1:2)

2 Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts; (Hosea 2:2)

Why did God want Hosea to figure through marriage with a common prostitute in the prostitution of Israel? Because the prostitution of a wife signals the sacred prostitution of Israel. Even the emphasis on breasts is present, showing that Israel had been prostituting itself in every way, making sex with other gods (Mic 1:7). So that Hosea would not have to deal with a cultic prostitute at home (whom the law prohibited him from marrying), God ordered a common one – can you notice some things already?

New Testament

Here it is necessary to remember that the concepts of qedesha and zanah were transported to the New Testament under a single term: porneia. Therefore, when Paul, Peter or any NT author talks about prostitution or sexual immorality, it is necessary to check the context in which the word is inserted in the letter or check the context of the target audience.

1 Corinthians

Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. 14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. 15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. 16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. 17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. (1 Corinthians 6:13c-18)

Note: be sure to check other texts in 1 Corinthians in which the terms "immorality", "fornication", "prostitution" occur, but which clearly refer either to what we will explain below or to the case of incest (1 Corinthians 5). By the way, in chapter 5 Paul says that one should not associate with those who prostitute themselves (v. 9), but, in the context, "prostitution" is incest (v. 1) – thus, what Paul wants to guarantee is that the Corinthians move away from incest practices, and not from prostitution (nothing would justify this sudden change of subject); therefore, we should not even eat with someone who is incestuous (cf. Lev 18).

We are facing a passage that, as a rule, is taught as if it were talking about prostitutes in general, however, that is not what the text is telling us. Paul's subject is the fact that our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19), and this body cannot be divided from a temple of the Spirit to a temple of something else (2 Cor 6:15 [the same reasoning as table of the Lord and of demons]).

Furthermore, we see that the clear contrast is who the body is for: whether for the Lord or not (v. 14). Now, what is text contrast? We already know that porneia (a term that Paul uses) naturally means, among the Jews, cult sex or incest, however, as Paul dealt with incest in chap. 5 (v. 1), here it is clear that the objective is to show that the body does not belong to another god, but to the Lord, who made his Spirit dwell in us. In this way, "Flee from fornication" is "flee from cultic prostitution".

For this reason, Paul, ironically, says that all sin is outside the body, but this is with the body. What is this? He wants to show that in cultic prostitution we give our own body in worship, while other cultic sins do not do this (see how the subject is cultic, since incest and marking oneself for the dead is something done with the body, but the Paul's subject is cultic, not sins in general).

As a reference, see that although incest is with the body, it does not make it of another divinity – in fact, in a way, all sin is with the body (or are you bearing false witness with the soul?) – and this proves that "prostitution" that Paul deals with here is not the common one, but the cultic one, making the worshiper one with the harlot and the false divinity.

And of course, union with a prostitute makes them one flesh, but not husband and wife. For more on this see our text on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage.

8 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. (1 Corinthians 10:8)

We have already dealt with this case, when commenting on Numbers 25 – it is the same event, of which Paul says: “let us not fornicate” (let us not practice cult sex). It is necessary to understand that, especially the context of the Corinthians, required such an emphasis on the distancing of sacred sex, as the city was known, precisely, for its sexual madness in relation to the gods (although it is said that there were “more than a thousand cult prostitutes in the temple” is perhaps an exaggeration). It is important to understand that these verses do not serve against prostitution in general, something that we will see in the following parts of the text when we talk about it –

here our focus is to show the malignancy of this sin, which cannot be converted into another, and must be read as conceived in the texts. This sin is desolating, and has destroyed peoples, in addition to having made Israel captive repeatedly.

Galatians

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, [...] 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, 23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:19, 22, 23).

We cannot ignore the clear context of Paul's sin lists: when Paul makes a list of sins, he not only expects his readers to know what each thing means, but he conditions that list on the other thing: whether the law is against it or not. The works of the flesh contradict the law of God, and therefore for every thing found in these lists of sin, we must find its counterpart in the law of God. Thus, when he mentions that adultery is a sin, he is not thinking in the sense that a Westerner thinks, but rather in the way the Law thinks about adultery, since the same Law never said anything against a man having more than one wife, for example.

For this reason, when the terms “fornication, uncleanness and lasciviousness” appear (which preachers never know how to explain) we must note the clear meaning of these words:

Fornication (porneia): sin of sexual idolatry, worship of other gods with sex (although it can be used to prohibit the sins of Leviticus 18, of sex with family members). This is prohibited by law, as we have just seen.

Impurity (akatharsia): this term is generally used to signal a mixture of things that must be kept separate, as, for example, in Romans 1:24, in which the “impurity of hearts” is explained as being the use of the anus in sex in verses 26 and 27 – the penis and anus must be kept separate, and must not mix. Furthermore, impurity is associated with a mixture of holy and unclean things, like the Pharisees (Mt 23:27) who, being externally holy, mixed with an interior full of sin and illicit desires. Paul's concern is, therefore, to make believers understand that “holiness” is not mixing things (1 Ts 4:7 [defrauding someone is impurity, cf. v. 6 {Mt 15:11-19 (what defiles [makes man impure] internal things, including adultery itself)}}). This is prohibited by law.

Lasciviousness (aselgeia): this term will be explained below – but I will say that lasciviousness is not dressing in a certain way or lusting after girls.

2 Peter

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrhah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation [literally: “from the lascivious conversation”] of the wicked: (2 Peter 2:6, 7)

Now, what "lascivious conversation" did the men have with Lot? It's quite simple, Genesis 19:5-9 makes it clear. The wicked men of Sodom and Gomorrah wanted to have relationships with the men (not the girls) who were in Lot's house. But this is not yet the key point: the men tried to break down the door of Lot's house to, by force, abuse the men inside (v. 9). Lot offered his daughters and men refused...

However, the last point is that the word *aselgeia* appears in Aristotle, when he says that (*aselgeian*) causes political revolutions (*Politics*, V. 4). *Aselgeia* implies violence – something very present in the text of Genesis 19 as well. Thus, when Paul and Peter criticize "lasciviousness", they are not thinking about any desire, but rather something similar to the use of force to have relations with someone, against nature. This is prohibited in the law, exemplified by the death of Sodom and Gomorrah shortly after this attitude: this is the teaching of the Genesis 19 narrative.

However, we can note one more detail:

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. 2 Peter 2:10

What does "despising government [authority]" have to do with the issue of Sodom and Gomorrah? Now, *aselgeia* includes insubmission, and that is precisely what happened in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah:

9 And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. Genesis 19:9

The wicked men realized that Lot acted as a "judge", and this is not without reason, because by offering his daughters in place of the men who were in his house (using paternal authority) he would prevent a greater evil: man sleeping with man. For this reason the men of Sodom and Gomorrah despised Lot's authority, being bold and obstinate. In conclusion, "*aselgeia*" is a term that oscillates between the meaning of sexual violence [against men], male homosexuality and overthrowing authorities from power.

Note: this term also appears in Mark 7:22 (denoting some type of insubordination and forced cheating, as it is not found in the sexual context of the previous verse), Rom 13:13 (reinforcing the violent sexual intercourse resulting from food feasts and drink dedicated to the gods), in 2 Cor 12:21 (pointing out the Corinthian sexual inversion [remember the case in 1 Cor 5 in which a man lies with his father's wife]), Gal 5:19 (in which the lack of context does not allow us to be completely sure of the meaning, but sexual violence or inversion is likely [as in the case of Lot's daughters sleeping with him in Gn 19]), Eph 4:19 (probably in the same sense as Gal 5:19), 1 Pe 4:3 (in the same sense as Rom 13:13) and Jd 1:4 (which the context points to an inversion, as a synonym for *porneia*, in v. 7, when reporting on the homosexual men of Sodom and Gomorrah). In other words, the meaning of the main term, of Greek origin, implies violence, but also inversion of the use of sex, and can be synonymous with both impurity and "fornication", when these terms are applied to male homosexual relationships.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (Revelation 14:4)

The fact that this passage is the only one in the Bible that links virginity to men should raise the eyebrows of scholars. Now, what kind of virginity is this? And what contrast is that with the lamb wherever it goes? In what sense are they firstfruits?

First, they are firstfruits because they were the first believers, the first saved. We are not the firstfruits, they were. However, these men were saved at a time when religious sex was common and natural, therefore, secondly, their virginity is linked not to the act of never having had sex, but to never having had religious sex – as they follow the lamb, not other gods: they are exclusive, unique. The text wants to show us everything that matters here: separating men from cult sex. This “common” meaning of virginity in the text is to link it to the cultic meaning; something similar to common prostitution, which eventually means cultic prostitution, when God wants to teach something (we saw this in Hosea).

In general, fornication was not the Roman concept of fornication (sex without marriage). Our term comes from the word “fornicare”, which only means sex without being married – something that is not the focal point of biblical terms. So when you read “sexual immorality,” “prostitution,” or “fornication,” you need to be aware that either the author has sacred prostitution in mind or the forbidden relationships of Leviticus 18— and in rare cases “prostitution” will mean “ordinary” prostitution. – that is, not sacred. This does not mean, however, that the Bible allows “common” prostitution, however, we need to continue analyzing the texts so as not to falsely condemn individuals. Thus, we have the first clear conclusion below:

Sacred Sex is prohibited under any circumstance

Note: in Zec 13:2 there is a promise that “in that day” (that is, at the end of the Old Covenant), the names of idols would be forgotten. This is proven by what we said above, as it is information linked to cultic prostitution that most believers do not know – as it was a promise from God that such things would be forgotten. However, our distance from the study has meant that we do not understand the texts that condemned only what was linked to idols.

PROSTITUTION IN THE FATHER’S HOUSE (WITH AND WITHOUT THE FATHER’S ACTION)

With father's action

Here we have, in fact, a case of “fornication” in the Roman sense of the term. A girl who has sex with a man, living in her father's house, has specific rules. To understand, we need to start with the story of Dinah (which we will summarize, but is found in Genesis 34):

Dinah was Jacob's daughter. One fine day, Shechem, Hamor's son, fell in love with her and convinced her to go to bed with him. The result was simple: this is considered a humiliation and Shechem needs to correct this. Clearly, to correct the mistake of having a relationship with a virgin girl who lives with her father, he decides to deal with Jacob to marry her (after all, sex is not the same as marriage). The problem is that Dinah's brothers take the lead and make a deal with Hamor and Shechem: if you circumcise yourselves, our sister will be yours. They lied, because while the men were feeling the pain of circumcision, they entered the city (of the family of Hamor) and killed all the men. The question that remains, however, is quite simple: Did Shechem sin or not? And, if so, when talking to

Jacob did he try to do the right thing and did he make a mistake when dealing with her brothers? To prevent this from happening again, God gives a law in Exodus 22:

16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. 17 If her father utterly refuse to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins. (Exodus 22:16, 17)

In Exodus 22 we see that a man who sleeps with an unmarried and virgin girl, who is still in her father's house, does not sin, as death is not prescribed for him (as we have already discussed in our text "What is the Law God's?").

Now, this doesn't mean that something doesn't need to be done. Jacob's sons had no mercy on Shechem and killed him, however, the law of God, which is full of mercy, wants to spare the man's life, and establishes that he must resolve only with the girl's father and must not be killed, but just pay compensation for the girl's dowry. However, as he is not married with her, he must take her as his wife (and not die – something that would have been done by Shechem if Jacob's sons had not interfered, as they did not have God's mercy).

The man's daughter committed zanaah, or fornication, but neither she nor the boy should die, but rather get married. However, when we think that things are over, we see that the father can also refuse to allow the man to marry his daughter, even though, in truth, the boy must pay the dowry, as he took the girl's virginity. Thus, even without marriage, there is no death in the text, which only proves that there was an act of dishonor on the part of the man, by taking the girl's virginity, humiliating her.

The scripture is clear, and exemplifies this both through the story of Shechem and the specific law in Exodus. So, if the father knows there was a relationship, they do not sin as long as the father takes action.

No action from the father

However, it may be that the girl's father never knows (or never does anything) and, one day, she decides to get married: what does the Bible specify to show what should be done? It's simple:

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: [...] 20 But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: 21 Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. (Deuteronomy 22:13, 14, 20, 21).

Here we have a curious situation: the text shows that prostitution (or fornicating) in the father's house is a sin, when this is not revealed to the father and, therefore, the girl must die – the man does not die because it would be expected that the girl told her father and he demanded payment of the dowry. God is showing that, with the father knowing the circumstance, no one should die, rather, it would save everyone's lives, as there is only sin when the Law punishes it with death. Here, however, the girl dies in front of her father's house (because it is also not known whether he agreed to this, proving that a girl having sex under her father's authority without marriage becomes a sin when she marries another man).

Interestingly, when Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, he wanted not to "spread a bad name against her" (Mt 1:19). If he slept with her and if he proved her supposed non-virginity, she should die. Therefore, so that she would not die, he intended to leave her, so that the man who slept with her

would only have to pay the dowry, and she would not die. However, the angel warns him that he should take her as his wife (which would put her at risk, of course – after all, how long was it until the wedding? [and was she already pregnant?]) It is likely that everyone accepted that Joseph had early relations with Mary).

With father's approval

However, suppose a father notices that there is good money to be made with some dowries paid? The Law anticipates this, and proves that a father cannot make his daughter prostitute herself:

29 Do not prostitute thy daughter, to cause her to be a whore; lest the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedness. (Leviticus 19:29)

This case is unique, we have a father seeking prostitution for his own daughter. And here we know that his interest can be both sacred and non-sacred (we have already seen this in Dt 22), therefore, if it is sacred (something favored by the context), he will be raising the wrath of God against the earth; if he is not, he will be making his daughter sin by having sexual relations under his authority.

It is difficult for us to understand these laws because they were not dealt with again in the New Testament, as there was no necessary circumstance for their treatment. Therefore, we need to recognize that the Law of God is sufficient for us to know what sin is, as the Apostle Paul himself told us in Galatians 5. And this leads us to the points below:

Cultic sex is prohibited under any circumstances;

Sex at the father's house, but marrying the man or being prevented by the Father is not a sin;

Sex in the father's house without his knowledge or approval is a sin (only when the girl is going to marry another man);

PRIEST

Naturally, common girls were limited to their father's property, that is, if they live with their father, they cannot prostitute themselves. However, for the priest's daughter the rule was much stricter, as she was linked by blood to the priesthood, even though she herself could not exercise it. In fact, the priest himself had stricter rules overall regarding the common people. Thus, we see:

7 They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God. (Leviticus 21:7)

A priest could not marry a woman who was not a virgin. And there was no regret that could change that, because virginity is not measured by commitment, but by the fact that the girl has never had a penis in her vagina. The central point, however, is that a priest could not marry a prostitute or "ex prostitute".

Note: The priesthood points to Christ, which turns the subject of this Leviticus law into shadow: that is, Christ would not marry a prostitute church (sacred prostitution). On the other hand, even though Christ was the high priest, he had, in his genealogy, a prostitute – Rahab: which also points to the shadow of this law.

9 And the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore, she profaneth her father: she shall be burnt with fire. (Leviticus 21:9)

This text also has a difficulty: would it be talking about a common or cult prostitute? The fact that the term "profane" (halal) is used makes us believe that this is a case of a cult prostitute. Also thinking about the case of being the only person punished with fire makes us assume this.

However, even if the text speaks of prostitution in the broadest sense, what we have is the limitation solely to the priest's daughter. And, naturally, the "daughters of Christ", in fact, are daughters of Zion, who cannot prostitute themselves in a sacred way – showing that God would deal more rigorously with anyone who dedicated themselves to this sin in the New Covenant. Which leads us to the following conclusions:

Cultic sex is prohibited under any circumstances;

Sex in the father's house, but marrying the man or being prevented by the father is not a sin;

Sex in the father's house without his knowledge or approval is a sin (only when the girl is going to marry another man);

~~The priest's daughter cannot prostitute herself;~~ (which we crossed out to point out that it is not the current meaning of the text).

WIFE'S PROSTITUTION

By definition we know that a married woman commits adultery when having sex with another man, however, it can happen that, in fact, she sleeps with several men and even receives money for it. What does the biblical text say? She commits prostitution and adultery. This is clearly the case with Hosea that we have already seen, and therefore it is clearly sin. The book of Hosea itself, however, explains what his wife's prostitution means:

I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery. (Hosea 4:14)

The prostitution of a wife is a shadow of the idolatrous prostitution of Israel. Men, with prostitutes and in their sexual act, sacrificed to the gods, as they had no understanding, they did not know God – and without the knowledge of God the people perish (this is what this passage means – Hos 4:6) .

It is because of these passages that modern authors think that "prostitution" in the Bible includes adultery, when, in fact, it **only signals repeated adultery with different men or receiving payment for it**. Therefore, we must understand that the prostitution of the wife is the aggravation of adultery. Making us note the points below:

Cultic sex is prohibited under any circumstances;

Sex in the father's house, but marrying the man or being prevented by the father is not a sin;

Sex in the father's house without his knowledge or approval is a sin (only when the girl is going to marry another man);

~~The priest's daughter cannot prostitute herself;~~ (which we crossed out to point out that it is not the current meaning of the text).

A Wife prostituting herself is a sin, as it is adultery

PROSTITUTION OUTSIDE THESE CHARACTERISTICS

The point, however, is that there is a type of prostitution missing that has not been addressed in any text, and that is what we will get to now: common prostitution. We need to be honest with the text and

understand it in the way it condemns things. We cannot stretch its meanings any more than we can lessen their meaning and weight, therefore, in dealing with the common prostitution below, a shock will be "received" by those who have always read the Scriptures carelessly.

Practical examples

First, note that the Law has not condemned common prostitution, as it has been very clear in the types of things it condemns and the types it allows.

So, for example, if a woman/girl prostitutes herself without living with her father and without worshiping some deity through sex, then there is no reason in biblical law to call this a sin. Furthermore, we are already shown in Exodus 22 that a girl does not immediately sin by having sex with someone to whom she is not married; otherwise, the text would demand the death of the man and woman, as is done in the case of adultery (Lev 20:10).

Nor can we, from the commandment that prohibits adultery, deduce that any type of prostitution is prohibited, as this never occurs in the scriptures, neither in the new nor in the old testament. As we have seen, in fact, there is a strong difference between both terms, which only intersect in the sexual act of a rebellious wife or one who wants to earn money through pleasures with other men.

Judges

However, if that weren't enough, we have biblical reports of prostitution outside the characteristics mentioned above, starting in Judges 16:1:

Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her. [...] 19 And she [Delilah, not the prostitute] made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. 20 And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. (Judges 16:1, 19, 20)

What made the Lord withdraw from Samson? (a) having slept with a common prostitute or (b) having broken the Nazirite vow? (Judges 13:5). Many people, it is true, say that this text from Judges 16 is a progression towards the fall, that is, that God was merciful to Samson until he completely fell into breaking his vow – however, this is just a false inference from the text, since nothing in it signals this, since God only abandons him after cutting his braids. Not even when he lied without false testimony was he abandoned, as we have already noted in our text False Sins (another book not yet translated to English).

The text of Judges teaches some things, and one of them is that breaking a vow is something serious, while silly lies and sleeping with a prostitute (something that we consider serious, because we judge by what we see) are not things that God deals with worry.

And more interesting is the reason why it is said in this text that Samson slept with a prostitute in Gaza right before he met Delilah. Now, why did God want us to know about Samson's action? The answer is obvious: a prostitute is better than a woman who leads a man to break his vows. The latter is a reason for sin, the former is not.

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he was the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah. (Judges 11:1)

The fact that Jephthah was the son of a prostitute made his brothers hate him. However, Jephthah not only figures among the heroes of faith, but his birth and growth is proof that God did not condemn Gilead.

Let me explain: when David slept with Bathsheba, the result was the death of his son, seven days after he was born (that is, one day before he could be circumcised), so God treated David's adulterous act as so repugnant that even the son born from this relationship died. On the other hand, when David was already married to Bathsheba (after the death of her husband), God gave them Solomon, who was not born of adultery, but of a lawful relationship. The same principle should be applied to the case of Jephthah (if this does not convince you, see also Gn 19:30-38; Jg 3:12-15 [showing that the Moabites were evil]; Jg 3:13 [showing that the Ammonites were also evil] – the narrative seeks to show that children born of sin either die or are evil; could this be the case with Jephthah? Clearly not).

Therefore, Jephthah did not have "the sin of the fathers visited upon the children" because there was no sin on the part of his father.

Note: God – not us – visited the sin of the parents on the children (Ex 20:5), as is proven in the story of David and Lot's daughters, from whom wicked nations descended. In the OT God did this, as it was part of his curse on sin, however, even though God personally visited the sins of the parents on their children, he did not allow men to punish the sins of the parents on their children (Dt 24:16). However, in Jeremiah (Jer 31:29-32), God promises that such a thing would no longer occur in the NT, guaranteeing freedom from the curse that was even on believers.

1 Kings

Now, it remains to be proven that a prostitute who does not live with her father, is not married and does not honor other gods with her sex is accepted by God in his kingdom, so let's see:

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days. 15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants. 16 Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. (1 Kings 3:14-16)

After Solomon asked God for wisdom, what was used as his first test? The text is clear, two prostitutes. Here it is important to note that the focus of the text is to show that in chapter 3 of 1 Kings Solomon follows God's law, his commandments and his wisdom. Therefore, if Solomon does not kill the two prostitutes (who are in the circumstances we said above) he will be sinning against the law or, if they do not fit into this structure that we gave above, and he kills them, then he will be sinning against the law of God. But what happens?

17 And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. (1 Kings 3:17)

Now, one of the prostitutes begins by immediately saying that she does not live with her parents, but with the other prostitute in a house that is theirs alone.

Naturally, this eliminates any punishment for them linked to their father's presence in the same house. Which, obviously, would not exclude two other cases: such as being a priest's daughter

or worshiping with sex; however, the text does not address this and, therefore, we can eliminate this information, which would be extremely important to say.

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment. (1 Kings 3:28)

After Solomon's decision, what became clear? That he possessed justice and wisdom, therefore, if they were to be killed, he would be unjust. But perhaps you haven't yet noticed one detail: Solomon was a shadow of the kingdom of God, so that Israel prefigured the kingdom of God and Solomon to Christ. Thus, these two prostitutes were prostitutes under God's kingdom, clearly proving that in his kingdom this is not a sin, although it is clearly a type of dishonor.

You might say, well, Solomon didn't kill the prostitutes to show that the law is merciful to sinners. This is absurd, because the law is not merciful in a vacuum, it establishes that repentant sinners may eventually not be punished as they deserve, however, what we see are not two repentant prostitutes, because there was no reason to repent, since they did not commit sin.

But is there any penalty for the common prostitute? What can I lose with it?

26 For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. (Proverbs 6:26)

Many will say that it is a difficult text to translate, which is not exactly true. The problem is that it is difficult for translators to simply accept what the text says, since they believe that both the prostitute and the adulteress kill those they sleep with. However, even if we take it in more literal terms, what will we see?

"For the sake of a prostitute one seeks a piece of bread, and an adulteress hunts for precious life."

The logic would be simple in the parallelism that the text presents: either the prostitute looks for a piece of bread, or makes a man look for a piece of bread (as he would become poorer by spending it on sex), while the adulteress hunts for a man's life. Whichever way you interpret it, therefore, it is clear that the text not only distinguishes between a prostitute and an adulteress, but also distinguishes between the consequences: one kills, the other only makes your money spent (so it is not a sin). If this is not enough for you, note:

Common prostitute in the NT

31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. (Matthew 21:31)

It is notable that Jesus never said, "adulterers and thieves" enter the kingdom of God before you [Pharisees], for no adulterer or thief can enter the kingdom of God. However, can a publican enter the kingdom by being a publican, or do you think Zacchaeus stopped being a publican? He just stopped being a thief! (Luke 19:1-10). Now, Zacchaeus promised to return up to 4 times what he stole, according to God's law, and not to stop being a tax collector (Luke 19:8; Ex 22:1).

We should clearly note that a common prostitute (translated as "harlot" in this text) must also have the same rules. If the kingdom of God accepts a publican who collects taxes for an empire opposed to God's own people (something certainly on the threshold of right and wrong), it is obvious that a common prostitute, if she falls within the permissions of the law, cannot be condemned - she can inherit the kingdom of God together with you, who is clean, do not act like a Pharisee, who closed the kingdom to prostitutes and tax collectors. Jesus - who always acted in accordance with the Law - was showing that prostitutes and tax collectors entered heaven, even though adulterers and thieves did not enter this same heaven (1 Cor 6:10). This is the clear distinction made by the text, so that we ourselves know how to divide one thing from another.

The cases of Proverbs

Just note that when the text talks about a prostitute or "stranger" woman, it is actually talking about a married woman (Pr 2:16, 17; 7:5-19 [note the emphasis]). This case is clear in chapter 23:27, in which the term "strange" reappears pointing out a married woman who goes out to prostitute herself.

Hebrews

4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)

This text is the only one that apparently actually condemns any type of prostitution. But, in addition to the fact that it distinguishes between prostitution and adultery, it is noted that the terms are, literally, in the nominative and masculine mode (dealing only with men), that is, "however, those who are prostitutes and adulterers...". What is the meaning of an adulterer? A man who, whether single or not, sleeps with a married woman. So, naturally, he is eliminating cases that do not involve marriage with this word.

However, this does not answer anything about prostitution. The point is that everything must revolve around what has already been discussed above: what type of prostitution is condemned? If the author of the letter condemns common prostitution, then he will contradict the Law, of which he shows intense knowledge throughout the letter. On the other hand, as we talk about "prostitute" and "adulterer", in the masculine, it is clear that the author is condemning the same practice of Dt 23:17, 18, in which the man is a prostitute for worship. So, the conclusion would be:

"Marriage and the bed without stain are venerated among all" (that is, they marry to avoid cultic prostitution [cf. 1 Cor 7:2 {in the context following cultic prostitute}]). "But prostitutes" (cultists) "and adulterers" (that is, those who lie with married women), God judged. The meaning of Hebrews cannot be to add to the law of God. If the New Testament added a new law, then it ended up falling into what God's law condemns, which is that adding commandments to it is a sin (Dt 4:2).

Men say we are liberals, but when we say that divorce does not break up a marriage they say we are legalists. They want to sing while we cry and cry while we sing. This is absurd! God's law prohibits few things so that those it prohibits are actually prevented from being practiced. God's objective is not a people full of rules, but a holy people. Those who create many rules never manage to stop being hypocrites, because they end up prioritizing the smaller things and forgetting the bigger ones.

Therefore, so that they do not stop accusing us of being "liberals" (whatever that accusation means), we will still deal with pornography below.

Cultic sex is prohibited under any circumstances;

Sex in the father's house, but marrying the man or being prevented by the father is not a sin;

Sex in the father's house without his knowledge or approval is a sin (only when the girl is going to marry another man);

The priest's daughter cannot prostitute herself; (which we crossed out to point out that it is not the current meaning of the text).

A Wife prostituting herself is a sin, as it is adultery

Common Prostitution is not a sin

PORNOGRAPHY AND MASTURBATION

Socrates said to go as far as the argument takes us. We, however, have more important things than philosophical questions to deal with, and therefore we can say that not about philosophy, but about Scripture: we must go wherever the text takes us. So below we will go further, seeking to clarify this matter. Forgive us, the reader, for the content seems large, however, unfortunately, we need to move forward and fight, explaining what is necessary, although as little as possible.

Masturbation

There is nothing in scripture that condemns masturbation. However, there are basically two or three texts that are used, which we will look at briefly.

The first text is the case of Onan (Gn 38), which even generated something called "onanism", as a synonym for masturbation. However, the problem with Onan was different, see:

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. 6 And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; 9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)

The levirate law required the brother to marry the sister-in-law whose husband had just died, if the latter was the brother of the man who must practice levirate. Onan, however, at the time of doing this, threw the semen on the ground, "knowing that the offspring would not be his" (Gen 38:9). Now, in order not to die, he could have refused to take the widow, so that he would not die, but would only have his name humiliated among his family – however, he sinned by taking the vow and refusing to fulfill it.

As should be obvious, the text of Genesis shows that breaking a vow is sin, and Deuteronomy 25 wants to prevent more men from dying from inadvertently breaking such a vow. The fact that Dt 25 is found in a context that largely deals with justice, but specifically deals with male honor, should make this more interesting, since not practicing levirate only humiliates a man (just like whipping more than

necessary, or a woman stop a fight by grabbing a man by the penis, etc.). "Onanism" would be nothing more than accepting the levirate and not practicing it.

16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

In Galatians 5:20 onwards Paul says what the desires of the flesh are, and none of them include masturbation.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; (1 Peter 2:11)

Carnal desires were defined in the context of 1 Pet 2, showing that an interest in sexual violence and other men is what is in view (of course, this implies that masturbating to another man or forcing someone is a sin, not because cause of masturbation, but of sinful desire). The point is that there is no text that says masturbation is a sin, which clearly allows in the mind of an individual that prostitution can be practiced without sin, as long as they avoid what is a sin.

Note: see how ironic. Among the Greeks, masturbation was seen as something practiced by outsiders, an inferiority, incapacity and enough for a man to be despised and a woman to be untrustworthy. However, these same Greeks did not shy away from shameful sexual relations, nor from bacchanalia (festivals with food dedicated to the gods, such as Bacchus), nor from abominable idolatries, so that Socrates, considered a great sage, even asked for a sacrifice to be made to other gods for him before he died. These men who treated masturbation as a lack of self-control, themselves idolized and practiced abominable things that cannot even be compared to masturbation.

16 And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even. 17 And every garment, and every skin, whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even. 18 The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even. (Leviticus 15:16-18)

In Leviticus 15, showing that the seed (or semen) of man was impure (and therefore the Messiah could only be born virginally, since he would not be born from impurity), highlights some things on the subject. The text specifies that, when a man slept with a woman, he became impure, however, so that we do not think that sex made him impure, the text begins by saying that semen, even without sex, if it fell on something, made it unclean. Of course, we could argue for the fact that nocturnal emission exists, in which a man emits semen while sleeping and without sex. However, it would be difficult for someone to know that they released semen if they wrapped themselves in various fabrics... with the text assuming that the man knows exactly where his semen fell. Now, the text, in fact, is presupposing that the man saw where his semen fell to separate this from what is holy. The book of Leviticus, therefore, is not only willing to accept men masturbating, but even expects that it will occur naturally.

General arguments

Here I know that several men start to accuse us of defending, for example, selfishness, after all, masturbation would be selfish, wouldn't it? Do these people not know what selfishness would be? Taking from someone something that belongs to him, or depriving someone of something that is owed to him: to whom does a single boy owe his semen? Is stock limited? Worse, even in the case of a married man, is the woman willing to have sex with him every time (although she should)? By this standard, the woman would be the one being selfish. They call it selfishness because they don't see any real sin in the Bible to call it out.

Another problem is "addiction", which we will see below, but, in line with this, they say that men who masturbate lose control of their ejaculation, making them ejaculate too quickly during sex. Now, besides it not being a sin to ejaculate quickly, have these people never heard of the men who use masturbation to increase the time it takes them to ejaculate? It's all a matter of control and correct training.

Pornography

It is not true that "pornography" did not exist in the time of Moses, not when it comes to the essential part of it: seeing two people having sex (Herodotus tells us of people who had sex outside home without any religious objective). The fact that this happens through a screen does not make it something new, although the medium is.

However, there was never any prohibition in the Law on seeing two people (within the permissions of the law) having sex. This is absurd. Sex is not something that needs to be hidden from view, only to the clean-cut Romans who had these concerns and passed them on to the church.

Note: in reality, until the end of the Middle Ages, sex was visible and extremely public, compared to how it became from the 19th century onwards. It was not uncommon for sex to take place outdoors, in front of servants or even in front of teenagers. What we call the "Civilizing Process" began at the end of the Middle Ages and included a restriction on life that became "private". The moment in which this begins is also the moment in which pre-feminism is said to have emerged with interests in sexual liberation. The truth is that "pre-feminism" did not emerge there, it was just people wanting to live as they had always lived.

Pornography as a block:

If that wasn't enough, everyone sees pornography as a closed block, as if what one individual does implies that the entire industry does the same. Not only is this not true, but actresses and actors (affiliated with companies) tend to have frequent exams and personal care above the national average. Of course, there is independent production, which is difficult to know much about, and which often involves captivity, abuse, among other things, but it is not true in total. Pornography is not a block, when abuse occurs in one place does not necessarily occur in another. What's more, no one can deduce that even if a producer abuses someone or someone uses "medication" to be able to perform the acts that pornography will be wrong. What dumb mentality is this that blames a complex industry for even what some company does?

However, one must be careful, because sin is just a click away: it is easy to fall into an anal sex video (a sin against the nature of the body), or with animals (something strongly condemned), etc., so it is good that there is personal control over this.

It's all Pornography's fault:

Oh, and have you blamed pornography for anything today? Every day, everyone wants to blame the world's evil on pornography. And this is nothing new, Rushdoony, in his book on the Politics of Pornography, found a way to blame even political evils on it. Deaths, murders, lack of friendship between men, abused women, etc., all factor in, as if the apparent increase in these things was due to pornography. And not only is there a lack of study that proves these things, but in general this just proves that these people are thinking about pornography and are relating it to all evils, seeking strength to overcome it (as if it were an evil). And we've seen it all: "there is no friendship between men and women because of pornography"; "men don't greet each other like they used to because of pornography"; "interpreting some acts sexually is because of pornography"... everything is pornography.

May God grant us the ability to separate one thing from another: pornography does not cause any of the evil that people accuse it of. Those who need to prove that there is a relationship between pornography and the problems attributed to it are the accusers. But of course you can make a bad use of pornography, and with this you can have problems.

False expectations:

"Pornography creates false sexual expectations"... have you ever seen a pornographic website? Most people is not beautiful or have "sumptuous" bodies, and those who do are not easy to find. Now, if you think that the "expectation" is in relation to rehearsed sex... my friend, you are the one with false expectations. Only teenagers would create false expectations because of inexperience, but an adult knows what sex is like (not to mention that most of the videos clearly warn that everything there is rehearsed or does not correspond to reality – or do you think that suddenly your teacher will stop teach and you do a class in another way?).

Imagine, now, that you have watched a video of Alexis Texas, or perhaps Madison Morgan or even Brandy Renee; who knows, maybe you saw Kesha Ortega in the hospital, or Valerie Kay in a special outfit near the pool; or more, maybe you liked Summer Hart or Susy Gala's body; do you really think that the individual will leave this video thinking that they will have sex with a woman like them under the same circumstances or similar things to what occurs in the videos? Who has their feet outside the reality are in fact those who accuse men of watching pornography.

Takes away desire... or increases desire:

"Porn takes away your desire for real people"... "absolutely", have you ever watched a pornographic video and felt your desire for other people diminish? Plus, everyone in a video like this is real, although they're certainly separated from you by pixels, which is a plus! After all, masturbating to pixels is much better than running the risk of being publicly judged by those who believe pornography is wrong.

Now imagine being tormented all day with the idea that pornography is bad and a sin, and then you sleep with your wife after, perhaps the day before, watching a porn video? What do you think the erectile function will be like for this man who feels guilty precisely because of sexual issues? There would be no time to explain that anxiety and stress or similar things that are supposedly the result of pornography, are nothing more than the result of guilt and feelings of impotence, based on feeling that pornography is a sin... Clearly you won't have a pleasurable relationship, being done with shame (so many triggers...)

There is no consistency between these people, because in fact masturbation linked to pornography can either decrease or increase desire, depending on how it is used. But, depending on what they want to emphasize, they will say: "desire will decrease" (to say that they will like their wife or woman less); or they will say "it will increase desire" (to say that pornography increases rape cases). These people need to make up their minds.

Effect, not cause:

It is easier to say that pornography is an effect than a cause: an effect of a world in which women are overvalued and, therefore, it is difficult to marry one, or the one who does marry has so many requirements and "buts" that it becomes impossible to have a normal night of sex. It would not be a devaluation of women that led men to pornography, but the opposite: with women becoming difficult and with much more self-love, men began to increasingly fear having relationships with them, seeking the easiest and safest means (after all, everything today is rape or can result in "payment to the woman"). Allowing pornography is even an act of mercy, as it ensures that the man does not become completely desperate about it all.

It is not uncommon for supposedly unbiased studies to be conducted using data on "erectile dysfunction" and "lack of sex drive" as proof that pornography has caused these things. However, not only are these studies lacking meta-analysis, they are also conducted under the assumption that pornography is wrong, when in fact these same studies should be conducted with the aim of concluding whether or not pornography causes harm to sexual life. While individuals' assumptions may be undeniable, they must be willing to accept that the conclusion of a study may contradict the presupposition of both those who conduct it and those who seek to consult it. We will see a little about this below.

Indictment:

When a married man, however, turns to pornography, the woman still finds a way to make him feel guilty, and he starts to martyr himself and blame himself for something that only ended (the marriage) because she wanted it to. These men do not love their wives less, which is why they suffer, but they have common needs that, if not satisfied by their wives, will require other means. Especially because, in the Bible, there is no contrast between loving one woman and another, after all, Solomon loved all women, and the book of Song, written by him, was so after many marriages - and no one will deny that this is the most romantic book in the bible.

I know there is a lot of information, but here I am just providing general information and allowing the reader to search based on what we have provided. However, we know that there is still one last argument, that pornography is addictive.

Note: among the accusations, there is always that men are rapists or traditionally rapists, especially if there is contact with pornography. Even if it were true that pornography produces a 'rape culture', that would only mean that it would be unhealthy (like so many things allowed by law that we don't indicate). But not only is there a lack of data to prove a relationship, but a brief look at the past of our own history proves the exact opposite.

Addiction

First we need to undo the mess that theologians have made with this word. "Addiction" is a philosophical concept that has been translated into a theological one and is used by scientists. What is the distinction between uses?

Philosophy: addiction in philosophy is an act that ends in pain and is not necessarily a repeated act. Among the vices ("addictions"), we can say that imprudence, inability to suffer, cowardice, among other things (note that this is not specifically about what is called sin in the Bible).

However, the worst vice is one that is practiced repeatedly, that is, someone who is reckless all the time, or who is cowardly all the time. Addiction, in philosophy, does not aim to say that a man who watches a porn video, say, twice a week is addicted, because, by what standard would one say that

something is "too much" or "too little" in this sense? Or, is it true that such an act results in pain afterwards? (only for those who feel guilty that it works).

Theology: theologians, led by the Fathers of the Church, absorbed the concept of vice and expanded it to the maximum, including not only what the philosophers said, but turning everything that was also a vice into a sin. Here we see that addiction has become a merciless tool, because, at the same time, instead of seeking to organize the most politically and socially capable men, etc., it began to define what is accepted or not by God. Now, regarding the philosophical use of the term we have no problem, after all, philosophy is to be explored, however, confusion has arisen in the church, with regard to sin, because now everything is vice and vice is everything (which seems unbalanced or results in immediate evil – the exact opposite of faith, which is not guided by what it sees, but by the Word of God).

Science: here addiction has the strictest meaning. In general, addiction is still something that causes some negative effect and needs to be repetitive, however, it is accepted that, in this case, there needs to be the insertion of an external element into the body. A practical example of this case would be the use of drugs, which generate chemical dependence, making the individual an addict. In science there is no room for doubt in this case, as there must clearly be the insertion of something that is not in the body naturally.

Having explained this, it is clear that pornography cannot be an addiction in the scientific sense, as there is no insertion of anything external to the body, and nothing that is a cause of chemical dependence, although many men say that pornography causes dependence as if it were a drug inserted into the body, by making it release such and such a hormone, etc., which is still a mistake, since such hormones are frequently released even in a common sexual act, or when eating a chocolate bar, however, there is no chemical dependence, just a need of the body that has found a way to be satisfied in a more intense way.

Not without reason, articles like "*No such thing as porn 'addiction,' researchers say*" (based on "*A Review of the 'Pornography Addiction' Model*" – whose author accepts clearly impious things, but our point is only pornography) point out the lack of scientific data demonstrating any relationship between "addiction" and "pornography" or that pornography causes any specific harm. There is no systematic study that cross-references data on pornography use, making any claim that pornography produces any negative effects a true scientific falsehood. The published studies, seeking to prove that pornography is harmful, do not have meta-analyses that consider control groups that take into account religious belief (after all, feeling guilty must have an effect), family history or the individual's health. Pointing out a problem as scientifically coming from pornography is counter-scientific.

Note: the cases of those who feel guilty and those who do not feel guilty, should be considered in connection with sexual Frequency with a partner and other people. In fact, a man who goes a long time without sleeping with a woman, with or without the influence of pornography, tends to ejaculate faster. So even the lack of sexual intercourse would need to be considered in research that supposedly proves a link between premature ejaculation and pornography, since we are not made up of a single relationship or a single environment.

In addition to these studies above, there is another, which, precisely with data crossing, indicates that there is no harm to the amount of dopamine produced by the body: "*No evidence for decreased D2/3 receptor availability and frontal hypoperfusion in subjects with compulsive pornography use*".

All cases that point to an alleged loss of brain capacity or similar things are not scientific, and are based on philosophical and religious, if not cultural, assumptions that pornography causes direct harm to human beings. I understand that the feeling of freedom in relation to an enslaving "addiction" is a catharsis, and perhaps it is almost as intense as the feeling of freedom in relation to the "religious system" of those who leave neo-Pentecostalism. But the feeling of freedom is useless. Anything that

you consider a harm, whether it is or not, when you get rid of such a thing, you will feel free. It is not freedom from sin, it is the simple feeling of not being controlled by something external.

Proof that you don't need science to know if something is a sin:

It is evident that science does not say, for example, whether there are harms in adultery, and it does not need to, because adultery is a sin even if you feel good about it. And this is the big difference. Science does not need to confirm that breaking a commandment results in a problem, as it is God who says what a sin is, not science. We seek to cite the studies just to prove that this scientific argument against pornography does not make scientific sense - otherwise, not even all the scientific benefits would be enough to convince a believer that pornography is a good thing, something that does not occur, as the scripture does not condemn it. The funniest thing, however, is how on this subject of pornography and masturbation everyone almost always forgets the Bible, since the Bible doesn't talk about it - making it a philosophical subject.

It is also not possible to frame the addiction in a theological sense, because, as we have seen, nothing in the Bible points to pornography as a sin, something that would be essential for it to be an "addiction in theology". The starchy ones will continue to say that it is, of course, because for them the way they divide the world matters more than how God says things can be.

Finally, we are left with the philosophical way that, even if it proves to be the case that pornography fits (after all, there are many things, and even excess can result in a problem for you) does not prove anything against the aspect that we considered: it is not a sin.

Note: I will not discuss much about the term "passion", which also came to us through philosophy and which, in fact, was even used by the apostle Paul (pathos), however, the meaning of the term is not as broad as men think, since, in fact, "passion" is just an intense desire to break God's commandments, and not intense desires in general - something seen, for example, in Romans 1. Sin is not a passion, and not all sin involves "passion" (although Augustine believed it did). A sin is a sin because it crosses a line: desiring your neighbor's wife, stealing an item, etc., however, if I desire my neighbor's wife intensely, what we have is a passion.

So what is our final conclusion? That what is below is sin:

Sacred sex;

Sex at the father's house hiding from him or with him while maintaining the relationship

without being contrary;

~~The priest's daughter cannot prostitute herself;~~

Wife prostituting herself.

On the other hand, there are no rules for:

Sex without commitment, but outside the father's house;

Boy who has sex at his father's house;

Pornography;

Masturbation.

Other than that there is nothing more to say about the subject.

CONCLUSION

The Bible is specific in the types of sexual relations it prohibits;

Common prostitution does not fall into these types;

Therefore, common prostitution is not a sin.

Final Conclusion

Unfortunately, due to space, we will not reproduce the broader concepts of eschatology that we espouse, these concepts are better exposed in our book called "Criticism on the Westminster Confession of Faith" (it is not in English). Here we will only deal with points that can be raised because of the subject discussed above. So, the central question we are answering is: how can I use the OT so much to defend what was said above if the OT has "passed"?

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. (Matthew 5:18)

I need to explain the argument before using it: we have already said that we practice the commandments of the Law, and no longer the Law as such. The commandments are not just the ten (or 9, actually), but all the orders linked to the death penalty and that are not intertwined with the cult of the OT. This is important because the Law passed and all the 'jots' has passed, as they were the things that required compliance.

Our focus is to demonstrate that the eschatology of the OT and NT was about the End of the Law, authorities and the Hebrew people, and not about the end of the world. And this brings us to the focal text of the subject: Matthew 5:18.

Note that in order for us to no longer practice the law, that is, its rituals, heaven and earth must pass away. However, we do not practice the rituals of the law, and heaven and earth are above and below us as they always have been. Hence, the question arises: why do we get rid of parties, new moons, Saturdays and all these things if the current world still exists? The reason is simple: Jesus does not talk about visible heaven and earth, but invisible - and below I will demonstrate this to you:

6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. 7 Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. (Psalms 18:6, 7)

13 The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. 14 Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. (Psalms 18:13, 14)

Currently - unfortunately - we have a cosmological and historical view of the Bible, when we need to understand the prophetic language and visions. Now, David wrote Psalm 18 at the time of Saul's death, and it says that the earth shook and trembled, and the foundations of the mountains shook. In the record of Saul's death, not only do we not find such events (we do not even see anything about thunder in the heavens), but it is also extremely simple from a human point of view to justify such strong language as David's (1 Sam 31).

Now, was David using metaphors? It doesn't make sense, because metaphors are things that find some more direct analogy in reality. What David uses is spiritual language, saying that the death of Saul and the people with him is to make the earth shake and the heavens to thunder. Note that here David does not say that the earth has passed away, as it takes much more than the death of Saul for the earth and heaven to pass away – the death of an authority and of some of the people shakes heaven and earth, but does not dissolve them. Notice an advance in language here:

4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. 5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. (Isaiah 34:4,5)

Edom (Idumea) was destroyed by Nabonidus, around 553 BC, however, we did not see the sky dissolve, nor the stellar army fall. In reality, the Idumean authorities and people died, but we are not aware of any miraculous event in the heavens. So the question is: which sky dissolved? (see that, unlike David, Isaiah ends a heaven). The reason is simple, the end of a people with their authorities is the shaking of an entire world, but not the planet and universe. Like Elisha's servant and like Balaam, we do not see spiritual events that, although not visible, are real, however, when translated, they appear to be cosmological events, when, in fact, they are truly spiritual.

When Jesus says, therefore, that heaven and earth would pass away, he is showing that the Law of God would last until certain heavens and earth passed away. And to which people and their authorities was the law bound? Now, with Israel, which in the year 70 AD was destroyed, having its heavens and earth passed away. However, there are words that did not pass when the heavens and earth passed:

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. 35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Matthew 24:34, 35

Well, what a coincidental coincidence! Precisely in an "eschatological" text Christ says that that generation that listened to him would not pass away without *everything being fulfilled* (note that in Greek Matthew 24:34, 35 is very close to Matthew 5:18: because in both cases there are "compliments" and there are heavens and earth "passing away"; and in Mt 24:34 it is said that everything would occur in that generation).

What is the relevance of Jesus saying that Heaven and Earth would pass away, but his words would not? It's simple: because the law would pass after the destruction of the elements and after everything dissolved in fire (as Peter says), but the words of Christ would remain after the end of these things.

Therefore, Christ put an end to sin, not only by cleansing us from the sin that actually broke the commandments, but by taking away from the world the sins that resulted in breaking the worship of the OT. See, worship in the OT was made up of so many things that it's difficult to even give an example, but we have a very good one:

Eating an unclean animal was not a sin, as it did not result in the death penalty, however, eating an unclean animal and *then touching something holy* resulted in a penalty for the person who did so. Since there are no more sacred objects, there is no more sin against God in this way. In other words, God drastically reduced the number of things in which it is possible for a man to sin - allowing anyone to have a relationship with him, and thus giving grace to all of us, who only have the commandments of the Law, without having the law itself.

But in what sense was the law fulfilled? The issue is simple: Christ was the sacrificial lamb of Easter and was killed on Easter; the Spirit descended at Pentecost with the Church starting there; the temple was destroyed in the month of judgment, in Tishrei; etc.

Note: in John 15:25 there is an exception for the use of the word "law", expanding its meaning to the psalms. However, if you read our first text on the Law of God, you will be aware that the prophets were often referred to as law because of the explanation of the Law they gave, not because they were law.

All of these events are the fulfillments of the shadows of the OT, so that there is nothing left of the OT for us to practice, nor do we have any of the structures of ancient Israel. The "purity of worship" no longer exists as it once did. For some, this sounds very dispensational and, for others, extremely covenantal. For us it doesn't matter, because we want to practice God's commandments and not his law.

However, you, who have read this book, may be wondering if the marriage rules have passed along with the law, as well as the permissions regarding polygamy. Now, the law was complied with and suspended, not its permissions. Between the OT and NT we have fewer rules, not more rules.

Therefore, if there is a prohibition on polygamy based on the difference between the Old and New Covenants, then what is happening is an increase in laws, which biblical law itself condemns. Thus, the permissions of the Law remain the same, and even greater, in the New Covenant.

God guarantees that his law would be practiced in this New World by all people:

3 And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Is 2:3.)

4 Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. (Isaiah 51:4)

33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jeremiah 31:33)

Now, God promises that in the New Covenant the Torah would be practiced, however, Jesus (and Paul) say that it has passed. Either we have a contradiction or, in reality, we are talking about an aspect of the Torah: its shadows. None commandment or permission is a shadow of nothing. However, the rituals, festivals, Saturdays, temple, priests, government, kings, etc., are all shadows of what would come later. Polygamy, the Marriage Contract and the doctrine of divorce are not shadows, even though God can use them to describe his actions with the OT and NT Church. The objective of these laws is perennial, therefore, we need to be aware that if the Torah has passed, but it is our practice, then what we have is God's Justice in keeping marriage in the way God instituted it, and not according to our customs, sensitivities and fears or dialectical effects – and God allowed many more things than we are willing to accept, prohibiting some that, for our mentality, do not make sense to be prohibited.

Don't agree to anything less than God's Law, and don't try to surpass it. It is a guide and life for those who trust in God.