

Christian Singleness, part one

A theological understanding of singleness

I. Man and woman in Genesis

- a. Commanded to procreate (Genesis 1:28)
- b. The two main purposes of marriage:
 - i. Companionship: intimacy and assistance - "Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." (Gen 2:18)
 - ii. Procreation - "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Gen 2:24)

II. The covenants promise offspring

a. The Adamic Covenant

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Gen 3:15)

b. The Abrahamic Covenant

"Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the **land** that I will show you. And I will make of you a **great nation**, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you **all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" (Gen 12:1-3)

I will make your **offspring** as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted. (Gen 13:16)

c. The Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19-24)

Offspring is a sign of covenantal blessing

You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today. "And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. He will love you, bless you, and **multiply you**. He will also bless the fruit of your womb ... You shall be blessed above all peoples. There shall not be male or female barren among you or among your livestock. (Deu 7:11-14)

Childlessness is a sign of cursing

But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord your God ... then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you... **Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb...**(Deut. 28:15-16, 18)

Beware lest there be among you a man or woman or clan or tribe whose heart is turning away today from the Lord our God to go and serve the gods of those nations. ...The Lord will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the Lord and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and **the Lord will blot out his name** from under heaven. And the Lord will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for calamity, in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. (Deut. 29:18-21)

Example: Jeremiah, the single and childless prophet

d. The Davidic Covenant

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever. (2 Samuel 7:16)

"In the Old Testament God was primarily building and forming his covenant people through the mechanism of physical procreation."

III. God's people are cursed by barrenness because of their disobedience

Oh that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea; your offspring would have been like the sand, and your descendants like its grains; their name would never be cut off or destroyed from before me. (Isaiah 48:18-19)

Other examples of the curse falling on people

Women have no men to marry:

"And seven women shall take hold of one man in that day, saying, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own clothes, only let us be called by your name; take away our reproach." (Isaiah. 4:1)

Children become eunuchs:

"Behold, the days are coming, when all that is in your house . . . shall be carried to Babylon. . . . And some of your own sons, who shall be born to you . . . shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." (2 Kings 20:17-18)

IV. The turning of the curse

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the **virgin shall conceive** and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, **on the throne of David and over his kingdom**, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was **cut off out of the land of the living**, stricken for the transgression of my people? Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, **he shall see his offspring**; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (Isaiah 53:8,10)

Blessing for the infertile woman

"Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the Lord.... Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called." (Isaiah 54:1,4-5)

Blessing for the Eunuch

Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 56:3-5)

V. The New Covenant

Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:29, also Romans 9:6-8)