

An Abstract of Biblical Sociology

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The Bible contains social facts which, when properly considered, add the social dimension commonly glossed when reading the biblical narrative of God's people throughout revealed history. From such a socially enhanced vantage point, Genesis records the remarkable rise of the Covenant Community and subsequent proto-tribes of Israel. This development took place among degenerating Canaanite societies predestined to the chaos of fertility cults and infant sacrifice (Genesis 15:16). Further, the "reconciliation" of Jacob and Esau, on closer study, is seen as an account of how Israel succeeded in negotiations with Edom. Jacob's sequenced gift of animals to his brother, deflected present-oriented Esau from his objective of military conquest (Genesis 32:13-20).

Biblical perspective on the origins of the family, church and state is needed to address effectively the current collapse of these social institutions. Biblical law provides a useful analytical tool for understanding our distorted free market economy. Understanding of biblical social facts also fosters a healthy skepticism for some "findings" of social science. For example, contrary to Moses (Deuteronomy 17:6-13; 19:16-21), secular social scientists have declared capital punishment to be an ineffective deterrent to crime, e.g., murder. Thus, legal activists and judges have for years moved to nullify state laws calling for the death penalty. Accordingly, it is not surprising that criminal violence has become pervasive in America.

Finally, sociology founded on biblical social facts will augment individualistic readings of revealed history by giving due consideration to the presence and work of loyal servant-saints who, by the thousands, worked triumphantly yet anonymously under leadership of our patriarch fathers. Such perspective on the origins of the Covenant Community, will help end the "too-many-chiefs" syndrome now plaguing churches in this country. And, God's people will be encouraged to reclaim their heritage of victorious dominion so clearly set forth in the Genesis record.