

Genesis 2:18-25

When Marriage Began

This past Tuesday being tax day, CNN asked people to text or email in their most unique tax story. One of the first ones they got probably won the “Most Bizarre” award for the day.

A guy who works in the Post Office was at the counter at 11:55 PM waiting for the last of the filers. A man walks in, plops down a file folder full of W2s, receipts, and all kinds of tax info and says, “Whew, I made it. I’ll get us coffee, you can get started.”

He didn’t know whether the guy was high or didn’t have it all together upstairs, but he did know this. The man didn’t have a clue about what it means to get your taxes in by the deadline.

To me that’s a picture of so many people’s view of marriage. They know there’s something to it. They even know marriage means certain obligations. But when it comes down to trying to define marriage, when it comes down to really understanding it, they haven’t got a clue.

And that’s not just true for individuals. It’s true for our nation as a whole. The fact that our lawmakers have to spend hours debating whether marriage is between one man and one woman shows just how much confusion there is.

How refreshing it is to open up the Bible and find clear, reliable instruction on marriage. And interestingly it all is rooted in the first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis.

So many would like to attack the historicity of the book of Genesis and especially the early chapters which deal with creation and the fall of humanity but really it is here that we find out why things are the way they are in our world and how they are actually supposed to be.

We can debate about men, women and the concept of marriage all we want, but when we read Genesis chapter 2 we get God's perspective, the real perspective.

Turn to Genesis 2

Today we're going to read the first boy meets girl story, and it is one that if understood properly would save many couples from a host of problems.

I. Before God Made Eve He Prepared Adam For His Bride

Our passage begins with a statement that seems strangely out of place in the creation account we've seen so far.

Genesis 2:18 reads ...

Up until this point everything that God has done has been good.

Five times before this God had looked upon the successive steps of creation and declared that it was good. Here for the first time God sees something that is not good. Man, alone is not good. Adam didn't make that declaration but God Himself made it. God's creation had a sense of incompleteness about it. God was not finished with the creation process.

Now remember, Genesis chapter 2 is a reiteration of Chapter 1 and the creation. Only this time the focus of the lense is narrowed so one aspect of the creation is brought out in detail. The focus of chapter 2 is the man and woman.

Genesis 1:27 covers all of this with one verse *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Chapter 2 now fills in the details of what took place.

It was never God's intention for man to live alone. One of the most shattering human emotions we can experience is loneliness. Loneliness is now reckoned to be the single greatest cause of suicide in this country, and it is undoubtedly one of the most widespread sources of human misery in the world today.

God made us in such a way that we need one another. And it is clear from this passage that the chief, although not the only answer to loneliness, is marriage. One of the primary purposes of marriage is to provide companionship, a sharing of a life together.

And so God proposed to create woman as man's companion and his helper.

The Lord God said it is not good that man should be alone. *I will make him a helper comparable to him.*

The word “helper” is the Hebrew word *ezer*. In the book of I Samuel, when Samuel defeated the Philistine army he set up a stone in memorial to the fact that God gave him the victory and he called it Ebenezer. *Eben Haezer* means “stone of the help.” “Stone” is *eben*. *Ezer* means “assistance” or “help”

God was saying here, I will make an assistant, a helper for man.

The word translated “comparable” means “suitable” or “corresponding to.”

This one that God was going to make for man was going to be his counterpart in life. One of the most destructive concepts in marriage is that man has his realm of responsibility in life, such as work, and the woman has her's. Her's may include a job but it also includes the home and the children. And somehow these are so separate that there is never any sharing.

From the beginning God made man and woman to be in this thing together. They were like two halves that were to be cemented together for life. Woman was to be man's counterpart to assist him in life.

But now God's creation of Eve is given in the context of a broader series of events. The first part of that story is the preparation of Adam for Eve's arrival.

Adam has been made in the image of God. Creation was fresh and new, there was no damaging effects of sin to be suffered as there are today. Adam was the epitome of what man should be; totally healthy, strong, brilliant, and anxious to please God. This is the guy that every Christian woman would like to marry.

He wasn't hairy ape man, swinging a club and grunting. His mind was sharp and keen but still God needed to show Adam that in all the created order, with all its variety, there was still at this time, no creature suited to be his companion.

The commentator, James Boice writes, “Adam's first lesson was to learn to appreciate his wife.”

What an interesting way God chose to go about it.

Read verses 19 - 20

The critics of the Bible would love to find fault with these initial chapters of Genesis because it is on these truths that everything else in the Bible stands. To wipe out the truth of these chapters would be to pull the rug out from all the rest of the Bible.

And so those who would attack the Bible like to point out with glee the supposed inconsistencies of these 2 verses. The first supposed inconsistency is found in verse 19 where it appears at first glance that God made Adam first and then the animals. Chapter one clearly says it's the other way around and so this is pointed out as being a glaring contradiction.

The Hebrew language in which most of the Old Testament was written is very, very different than English. Western languages have many tenses of verbs (past, present, future, perfect, imperfect, pluperfect, etc.).

In Hebrew there are only two tenses, perfect and imperfect, and neither of them, strictly speaking, have anything to do with time. They only describe the type of action.

The perfect describes completed action, the imperfect describes uncompleted action.

Now when the prophets wrote about future events that God was going to bring to pass they used the perfect tense even though they were describing the future. And the reason they did that was because in their minds it was as good as done. So there's a lot of flexibility as to how these tenses are translated.

In verse 19 the verb "formed" is in the perfect tense. Remember all the perfect tense shows is completed action. Nothing more.

It doesn't say he formed them and then brought them to Adam.

A better translation would be "and out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field..."

Then the stress would be on the fact that the same God who had made them is the same God who has the power to bring them before Adam to be named.

If you're just going to let the Bible speak you'd say "Chapter 1 says God created animals

and then man therefore this must have a pluperfect sense - God has formed."

If you have an agenda to try to disprove the Bible then you're going to limit this to a simple past tense because then there's a contradiction and that proves your point that there is contradictions in the Bible.

It all depends on your basic presuppositions as to how you are going to approach the Word of God.

The second problem that is often brought up at this point is the fact that all of this is said to have happened on the 6th day. How did Adam ever name all those animals in just one day?

Well, first of all it was only those animals in closest proximity and most likely as theoretical candidates for companionship to man that were actually brought to Adam. These included the birds of the air, the cattle (what we might refer to as domesticated animals) and the beasts of the field, which were smaller wild animals that might live closer to man.

Those not included were the fish of the sea, the creeping things, and the beasts of the earth, which certainly could have been wild animals not living in close proximity to man.

We have no way of knowing how many kinds of animals appeared before Adam, but it wasn't such a large number of basic groups that Adam couldn't name them in 5 or 6 hours.

Dr. Henry Morris has estimated 3000 kinds could be identified during that time which would be more than adequate.

Remember, this was only day 6 of creation. There wasn't all the ultimate breeds and varieties of each animal. Those came as time went on through breeding and environmental changes. Nor did Adam have to name each breed or variation that God originally created. Adam just had to say "dog," not "German Shepherd, Basset Hound, Sheep Dog, Chihuahua, Dalmatian, Golden Retriever."

Now picture what went on during this naming process. Here is Adam and God shoulder to shoulder while this great variety of animals pass by.

And I don't believe that Adam didn't just pulled names out of his hat. The giving of a name in the Bible is the giving of a description.

As these animals passed by, Adam examined them. As he named each one he had to understand whether by the revelation of God, or by his own searching and examining, something of the character of each animal.

He was to study and categorize and see whether among this vast array of animals there might be one suitable as a helper for him. The results were negative as God knew they would be. *But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.*

As Adam watched these animals pass it was obvious that none of them had been created in the image of God, as he had.

They had bodies, they had their own personalities and yet he was unique from all of them.

We have some dog lovers in this congregation. You probably consider your dog a great companion. But all communication has to take place on the dogs level. It's usually like, "Here boy. Good doggie. Go fetch." You never sit down with your dog and have a discussion on the wisdom of investing in global markets!

If Adam was to have a companion, that companion would have to be specially created by God and in the image of God, as he was.

Henry Morris writes, "It is abundantly clear and certain that he had not recently evolved from them! If that were true and his body was still essentially an ape's body, it seems strange that he could have found nothing in common with them. On this point as on many others the notion of human evolution confronts and contradicts the plain statements of Scripture."

James Boice puts it this way: "Adam was no evolutionist, at least not after he had carefully examined the animals."

I. Before God Made Eve He Prepared Adam For His Bride

II. When God Made A Bride For Adam He Made Her From Adam's Body

Read verses 21 - 22

For those who believe that God just started things rolling and life evolved from there this is a disturbing account.

Even if you can bring yourself to believe that man evolved from ape like ancestors and that this is what the Bible means when it says that Adam was formed from the dust of the ground, there seems to be no way at all in which this account of Eve's unique beginning can be interpreted in an evolutionary context.

To make matters worse for those who believe that you can reconcile the Bible and evolution the New Testament explicitly confirms this as an historical account..

I Timothy 2:13 *For Adam was formed first, then Eve.*

I Corinthians 11:8 *For man is not from woman, but woman from man.*

All other men have been born of woman but the first woman was made from man.

How Satan would love to get rid of the truth that is being taught here. Everything we believe about our responsibility to God, everything we know about our need of a Savior, everything God has said about marriage and the family is rooted back in these initial chapters. You eliminate this truth and the result is chaos with man trying to explain his own origin and determine his own destiny.

Two weeks ago we looked at some of the supposed “missing links” that have been put out as evolutionary proof.

Hesperopithecus was an ape like man built around one tooth and it turned out to be from a wild pig. *Eoanthropus dawsoni* or *Pitldown Man* was a made up hoax but it was in our science text books for 40 years.

Pithecantrophus Erectus was a skull cap, three teeth, and a leg bone found 50 feet away but assumed to go together. Turned out not to be true.

Australopithecus is the current rage. Anthropologists and scientists can't agree whether these are African fossils of supposed pre-men or a breed of apes.

We are under a constant barrage of propaganda that starts in grade school.

Well here in verse 21 we find the first operation ever performed. God anesthetized Adam and while he slept the NKJV says he took one of his “ribs.”

The word translated “rib,” *tsela* in Hebrew, is used 35 times in the Old Testament and this is the only place where it’s translated that way. All of the other times it’s translated as “side” and that seems to be the idea here.

God certainly was able to create woman from the dust of the ground just like he did Adam. But God chose to do things a different way for a purpose.

Woman was not made inferior to man. Woman wasn't made superior to man. She was made his other half, corresponding to man.

The closest possible union between two human beings is being established. She is literally bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Even the part of the body from which she is taken is significant.

She wasn't taken from man's head to dominate him, she wasn't taken from his foot to be trampled upon. She was taken from his side to truly be his corresponding helper.

Now all of this was actual fact. It happened as Moses narrates it for us here, and we don't want to allegorize the actual event away but to me this is just filled with spiritual parallels.

Ephesians clearly establishes for us that this relationship between Adam and Eve was a picture of that greater relationship between the last Adam (Jesus) and his bride (believers).

As Adam was put to sleep, it's almost as if Adam died before there was actual death in the world, in order that he might obtain a bride to share his life.

On this side of the cross we can hardly miss the truth that God was proclaiming.

The last Adam had his side pierced on the cross. He entered into the deep sleep of death and from his life God made his bride. We have received life by the body and blood of Christ and now we're bone of his bone.

We share the life of Jesus Christ, just as Eve shared the life of the first Adam.

I. Before God Made Eve He Prepared Adam For His Bride

II. When God Made A Bride For Adam He Made Her From Adam's Body

III. God United Adam And Eve As One Flesh In The First Marriage

Read verse 23

The Hebrew is very expressive at this point. Adam looked upon this perfect woman, and remember, as he was perfect she was perfect, and he said, "This now, at last, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

"Eve" where have you been all my life." He's saying all those animals were wonderful creatures of almighty God but they were still animals. Eve was obviously different.

Now, God had said I'm going to make a helper for man. And by our fallen sinful standards we might interpret that as meaning he was going to make Eve to be man's servant.

But Adam doesn't make that mistake. Instead he immediately perceives Eve to be his equal, his corresponding companion. And so he says "This is what I was looking for - *"this bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."*

Adam understood some very important lessons through this experience that we would do well to understand today.

First he understood that woman was quintessentially and wonderfully different than the animals. There are societies where women are still traded for cows.

You know one of the complaints I've heard from women during marriage counseling is, "My husband has a lot of expectations of me but I feel like he doesn't seem to recognize me for who I am, a human being."

Another vital truth that Adam understood through this process was that a woman is not a "thing" outside of himself. Women aren't there to be used by a guy and then disposed of.

Stuart Brisco puts it this way. "Much of the current philosophy of life reflects the idea that women are nothing more than play things for men - disposable women. You use them as you would use a Kleenex and then toss them away."

People say, "What's wrong with a little pornography?" Well, there's a lot of answers to that question, but one is it depersonalizes and dehumanizes women."

But see this passage of Scripture does away with all of that. Woman is to be a helper and companion corresponding exactly to man. And a husband and wife become one flesh in their marriage union.

Verse 24 reads...

Since there wasn't father or mother to leave at this point I would believe that these isn't Adam's words but God's.

This is a remarkable passage because it contains all of the concepts of marriage that you find through the rest of the Bible. Whenever Jesus or the New Testament writers dealt with questions about marriage they always quoted from Genesis 2.

And out of this highly condensed account there emerges some timeless factors essential to true marriage.

The first and most fundamental of all is that marriage includes a complete identity of the partners. Two are made one.

Adam's first reaction when he saw his wife was "this is part of me." And God speaking through Moses said It's just as true of a man and wife in marriage. The New Testament draws upon this and says that the man who hurts his wife is hurting himself. He may not feel it directly but down the line it will show in his life because she is really genuinely sharing one life with him. They become one flesh.

As one man said, "This isn't poetry, this is reality!"

This is what makes divorce so tragic. It's taking a single life and dividing it up. Our philosophy today is if there's trouble why keep working at the marriage? The reason is because in the truest sense of the word the two have become one flesh.

The second thing that is brought out here is the biblical principle of headship. Adam said, "*She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.*" Paul enlarges on this in his letter to the Corinthians to point out that man was not made for woman but woman was made for man. It's the man who is ultimately responsible before God for the nature and character of the home.

It's the man who must exercise leadership in determining the direction in which the

home should go. He will be judged by God for his leadership or lack of it. The woman's responsibility is to acknowledge and support this leadership.

One of the great tragedies of our day is that men are abdicating their role of leadership. They are refusing to be fathers to their children and husbands to their wives. They would rather be sons to another mother and have their needs met.

The third factor indicated here which characterizes true marriage is permanence. A man is to "leave" father and mother. Not sever himself completely but leave because he is establishing a new family unit and the other side of leaving father and mother is to be joined to his wife.

The word *dabaq* that's translated "joined" means to stick on there like you were glued with super glue. It literally means, "become glued."

Of course what God established we have a knack for distorting. Ecc. 7:29 says, *Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes.* Polygamy, easy divorce, adultery, promiscuity, homosexual unions and other distortions of the marriage covenant have been practiced in cultures down through history.

But as Jesus said in Matthew 19 *From the beginning it was not so.*

God intended marriage to be one man and one woman, together for one life time.

So then here we find God laying down the pattern for us to follow throughout all of this age.

Why should we honor the family? Because God instituted it. Why should we treat marriage with the greatest respect? Because God ordained it. How can we know the principles for family living and marriage? We can read them in the Bible.

But now before we leave Adam and Eve in this perfect state we notice that the Bible adds an interesting comment on the newlyweds.

Read verse 25

Adam and Eve weren't wearing any clothes. But you know it didn't bother them a bit at

this point. They weren't ashamed because there was no shame, there was no guilt, there was no sin.

They were completely exposed to one another physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Now remember something, in the next chapter, immediately after they disobey God their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked.

That wasn't a matter of physical sight at that point. Adam and Eve weren't blind before the fall. But after they sinned they saw past the physical aspect of nakedness. They saw what their nakedness now symbolized - spiritual nakedness before the eyes of that Holy God against whom they had sinned.

So, Adam and Eve stood before God fully exposed and yet shameless. They had done nothing wrong. There was nothing to be ashamed about.

That's how open we should be with our spouse in marriage.

We can't stand before God shameless though. We don't even want to try. Instead we run and hide. Adam and Eve ran after they sinned. They tried to clothe themselves in fig leaves but it took God providing a covering of animal skins to truly make them confident to stand before Him again.

God has provided a covering for each one of us. Because we're descendants of Adam we stand unclothed. But God killed a sacrifice that we might be covered over. That sacrifice was His only begotten son Jesus Christ. Through faith in Him Isaiah tells us we are covered with a robe of righteousness.

It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment. Each one of us is going to stand before the piercing eyes of God. On that day you will either be clothed in the glory of Christ or you will stand in the horror of your own spiritual nakedness and be condemned forever. God's provided the clothes, the garments of salvation. Do you have them on? Have you believed that God is your Savior?