# ‘For You One Flesh’

## Allusions to Genesis 2:4-3:24 and the Construction of Male-Female Relationships in Select Second Temple Texts

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# Contents

## *Abstract*

This thesis will be focused upon issues of intertextuality with a particular emphasis on the construction of conceptualizations of gender relations through allusions to Genesis 2:4b-3:24 in various strands of Late Second Temple Literature. The significance of traditions related to Genesis 2-3, in terms of both explicit and non-explicit usages, will be identified and explored in relation to how male-female relations are understood in select works from approximately the early third century BCE to the first century CE. There will be a specific concentration on references to the "one flesh" understanding of marriage introduced in Genesis 2:23-24, for the purposes of both explaining and justifying the purpose of marriage, as well as conceptualizing marriage as a divinely decreed, permanent, monogamous, and inseparable union.

Throughout history, countless writers have ventured to explore the myriad of questions that arise from the short but deeply enigmatic text of Genesis 1-3. In particular, the Eden narrative of Genesis 2:4b-3:24 has been cited as a major influence over Judeo-Christian understandings of gender and sexuality. Due to its prominent place in western culture, ideas relating the first woman to the origin of sin and the fallen state of mankind are engrained in our psyche, negatively influencing relations between the sexes. However, many of the common assumptions that prevail regarding this text are not to be found in the original Hebrew text itself, and instead, are a culmination of centuries of disparate interpretations arising from particular social, political, and cultural contexts. This thesis is concerned with examining how male-female relations, in particular marital relations, were explained and justified through allusions to Genesis 2-3 in its earliest interpretations, in the late Second Temple period. Four texts will be examined in greater detail—Sirach, Tobit, 4QInstruction, and Ephesians—so as to limit our investigation purely to allusions and references, rather than explicit exegesis or rewritings of the Eden narrative.

Chapter One will be concerned with first introducing the questions with which this thesis will engage, examining the questions that arise when one considers the earliest allusions and references to Genesis 2-3, and why it is necessary to address these questions. While scholarship has had a renewed interest in examining the reception history of Genesis 2-3, the earliest interpretations of some of the most significant themes are often overlooked in favour of Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity. The basis from which this thesis arose will be established by briefly outlining the growing interest in new approaches to the text and history of Genesis 2-3, and some of the methodologies used in this thesis will also be introduced.

Chapter Two will address the historical and literary parameters of this study, defining what is meant by certain terms such as “Second Temple”, in the first instance, and “Hellenism,” as well as exploring the importance of Hellenistic influences over the literature of this era. Second Temple literature reflects a Judaism which was broad and diverse, and certainly not monolithic. Forced to reckon with drastic shifts in terms of social, political, and cultural change, the writers of this era turned to Scripture, on many instances, to come to terms with the world around them, as well as with their own faith.

In Chapter Three, the Hebrew text of Genesis 2-3 will be translated, and the relevant thematic issues of this text will briefly be explored, so as to outline the aspects of the text that appeared in subsequent interpretations. Many of the themes and issues relevant to this short text have been misinterpreted as a result of both the narrative’s inherent ambiguity, and the many mistranslations which have occurred over the course of its reception history.

Chapter Four will address the work of Ben Sira, summarizing the background of this work, its relevant themes, and the text's problematic portrayal of gender and sexuality, before turning to the two key verses in which gender in Genesis 2-3 is alluded to. Sirach 25:24 is almost unanimously understood as a reference to Eve's actions in Eden, attributing to her alone the existence of sin, suffering, and death. The identification of Eve with the woman in this verse, however, does not accord with Ben Sira's understanding of Genesis 2-3 elsewhere.

In Chapter Five, the Book of Tobit and its short reference to the marriage of Adam and Eve in the prayer of Tobias and Sarah on their wedding night will be examined, as well as briefly engaging with the theme of gender relations more widely in this work. This text appears to reflect a tradition which viewed the Edenic marriage union as the ideal towards which all men and women should strive; a notable contrast to how it has been understood in Christian history in particular.

Chapter Six will explore the enigmatic text known as 4QInstruction, which alludes to the creation narratives on multiple occasions, and to the theme of male-female relations more specifically, in ways that are notable for our understanding of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians. While less than half of this text has been preserved, it clearly provides evidence as to the prominence of Adam-Eve traditions in the Second Temple period.

Ephesians will be at the forefront of Chapter Seven, in which the New Testament as a whole will be treated. The multiple references to gender in relation to Genesis 2 in particular will be outlined before we turn to the question of the New Testament Household Codes and the unusual way in which Ephesians 5:21-33 presents male-female relations with reference to Genesis 2-3. The possibility of an exegetical trend, preserved in both 4QInstruction and Ephesians 5, will be considered.

We will conclude with a short summary of the themes and issues that arose in our examinations of these texts, with a view towards contemplating the nuances of these early allusions to Genesis 2-3, especially Genesis 2:23-24, and questioning the possibility of a popular, well-established tradition in Jewish circles which saw male-female relations in Eden in a positive light.

# Chapter One

Abstract

*In this chapter, the core concerns of this thesis will be introduced, first by outlining briefly the problems that arise in reading Genesis 2:4b-3:24 through a particular lens, and the consequences that the development of the key doctrines of the 'Fall of Man' and 'Original Sin' have had on interpretations of this text. Genesis 2:4b-3:24 has historically been seen as a prooftext for the inferiority of women and has been used to defend hierarchical relations between the sexes in numerous contexts. However, the earliest interpretations of Genesis 2-3 do not appear to adhere to such readings, and instead, where this text is alluded or referred to in the late Second Temple period, it is often to show the complementary nature of marriage and to imply the indissoluble unity that marriage creates between husband and wife. The methodologies used in this thesis will also be outlined, and we will briefly establish the basis from which this thesis arose by highlighting the growing interest in alternative approaches to the Eden narrative in twentieth century scholarship.*

## Introduction

Over and above Genesis 1:1-2:4a, Genesis 2:4b-3:24 remains a validating text for those who believe that women are, by divine design, inferior to men and that as a consequence of the events portrayed within that narrative, man was set in a position of authority and leadership over the woman.[1] These chapters have served as a lens through which to view fundamental questions regarding humanity, divinity, reality, morality, sexuality, as well as the relationships between God and man, man and the natural world,

[1] Pamela J. Milne, "The Patriarchal Stamp of Scripture: The Implications of Structuralist Analyses for Feminist Hermeneutics." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* vol. 5, no. 1 (1989): 20.

and men and women. The story of creation and the Garden of Eden has undeniably been used to assert gender and sexual differences in numerous ways,[2] and as such it has been used to prove and justify the subordinate status, inferiority, and the moral weakness of women.[3] One noteworthy example of how this text was used to promote ideas that related women to sin was highlighted by Karsen, who observed that Eve functioned for Puritan interpreters as the archetypal 'witch'; because she refused to submit to male authority, she provided a model for women who threatened to topple the hierarchical social order constructed by Puritan men.[4] While cataloguing the ways in which this text has been used to assert gender-based hierarchies would be a potentially rewarding, if not immense, endeavour, Kvam et al. note that: "the history of interpretation of Genesis 1-3 is important because the text has so often provided proponents of hierarchical and egalitarian social orders justifications for their positions."[5] Paul Ricoeur rather concisely summarized the impact of the wide-reaching interpretations of this myth when he stated: "The harm that has been done to souls, during the centuries of Christianity, first by the literal interpretation of the story of Adam, and then by the confusion of this myth, treated as history, with later

[2] For an overview of some examples of the different ways in which historical interpretations of Genesis 1-3 have functioned with regards to gender and sex-based discrimination, see: William E. Phipps, *Genesis and Gender: Biblical Myths of Sexuality and Their Cultural Impact* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Lisa Maurice and Tovi Bibring, eds., *Gender, Creation Myths, and their Reception in Western Civilization: Prometheus, Pandora, Adam and Eve* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022); April D. DeConick, *Holy Misogyny: Why the Sex and Gender Conflicts in the Early Church Still Matter* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011).
[3] Dvora E. Weisberg, "Women and Torah Study in Aggadah," in *Women and Judaism: New Insights and Scholarship* (ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn; New York: New York University Press, 2009) 41–63 at 52.
[4] See: Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 167-168.
[5] Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valarie H. Ziegler, eds. *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999)

speculations, principally Augustinian, about original sin, will never be adequately told."[6]

Read as a story of origins concerned with the creation of mankind, Genesis 2:4b-3:24 has perhaps more than any other Biblical narrative influenced social and religious perceptions of gender roles, both in the public and domestic spheres, and gender relations, both familial and sexual. It has been proven on a multitude of instances that Genesis 2-3 has been interpreted in ways highly detrimental to historical women and as one feminist critic maintains: "From the Malleus Maleficarum's justifications for the persecutions of women as witches to the continued debarring of women from the Catholic priesthood to the advertising slogans for Eve's Cigarettes, the Genesis 2-3 story, as justification for misogyny, has pervaded and invaded women's lives."[7] Deeply ingrained assumptions about Genesis 2-3 have framed popular readings of the text, and perhaps the most pervasive and problematic of these is the belief that the story offers an account of the Fall of Mankind,[8] and of Original Sin.[9] How one understands the doctrines of Original Sin and the Fall heavily impacts one's comprehension of the role of woman in the Eden text and in turn, the relationship between man and woman in the narrative—whether the

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[6] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil,* trans. Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 237.

[7] Susan S. Lanser, "(Feminist) Criticism in the Garden: Inferring Genesis 2-3," *Semeia* 41 (1988): 68.

[8] Igal German, *The Fall Reconsidered: A Literary Synthesis of the Primeval Sin Narratives Against the Backdrop of Exegesis* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016), eBook. German states that it was Methodius of Olympus (260–311 CE) who first introduced the term 'fall' in its Christian hamartiological sense. Since Methodius, the term "fall" has been extensively used to describe the events of Genesis 3.

[9] See for example: Jesse Couenhoven, "St. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin," *Augustinian Studies* 36:2 (2005): 359–396. Couenhoven summarizes the core facets of Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin: its source is the primal sin, committed in the garden of Eden. All human beings share in this sin because of our solidarity with Adam. From birth, all human beings have an inherited sin which comes in the form of common guilt, disordered desire, and ignorance. The human race suffers a penalty because of sin; human powers are weakened, and we will experience death. Sin and penalty are transmitted from generation to generation; Augustine was confident that sin is not imitated, taking Psalm 51 to indicate that original sin is propagated by sexual intercourse.

consumption of the fruit and the attainment of knowledge and wisdom is seen as an act of disobedience, or as a fundamental stage in the process of human maturation.

Different interpretations of the text's many features, coupled with different emphases, has led to diverse readings of the text as a whole, and these readings are quite often at considerable distance from one another.[10] For example, while many early Christian readers saw the Genesis text as a testimony to the goodness and justice of God, others saw it as evidence of the pettiness of God.[11] In particular, interpreters of dissimilar historical, social, and religious contexts have explained and exploited the text's numerous ambiguities to condemn the character of Eve, viewed as responsible for bringing suffering, death, and pain into the realm of human experience, and in condemning her, condemning women's worth as a group.

Despite a long history of attempts at alternative interpretations, none of which triggered much impact, the close connection between Eve, women, sin, evil, and the biblical legitimization of gender hierarchy remained the dominant exegesis of Genesis 2–3 until the late twentieth century.[12] Derivative in substance and subordinate in status, she has provided a particular frame of reference for the interpretation of women's position and identity, and for the relationship between men and women, in societies influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition.[13] This

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[10] Howard N, Wallace, *The Eden Narrative,* HSM 32 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985): 22

[11] Theresa Sanders, *Approaching Eden: Adam and Eve in Popular Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 9.

[12] For a thorough outline of women's "alternative" readings of the Genesis narratives historically, see: Amanda W. Benckhuysen, *The Gospel According to Eve: A History of Women's Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Il: InterVarsity Press, 2019).

[13] Kvam et al. *Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings*, 3: It is important to remember that "Eve" plays a different role in Jewish theology than she does in Christian tradition, stating that in Jewish readings she is free from the "doctrinal baggage that accompanies" the Christian reading. This is

popular reading developed from multiple facets of the text but primarily relied upon the ambiguities surrounding the woman's creation, her conversation with the snake—which depending on the interpreter, suggested either her gullibility or her inclination towards evil—and her consumption of the fruit and decision to share it with her male companion. Nonetheless, from antiquity to modernity, the Eden narrative has been used to validate a hierarchical view of gender promulgating the association of man with reason and logic, while woman has grown to represent inferiority.[14]

What would develop into the traditional understanding of Genesis 2-3 was advanced in particular by the work of Augustine,[15] and scholars have long recognized the problems and illogical aspects of this popular interpretative tradition. It is the contention of this thesis that this interpretation, based upon the theories of the 'Fall of Mankind' and 'Original Sin,' is not original to the text. Instead, this understanding developed slowly over the course of the late Second Temple and Early Christian periods. This development was, as illustrated by Bechtel, a response to a shift in society from being predominantly 'group-oriented' to being 'individual-oriented'; a shift which came as a result of Hellenism, with the radical social, intellectual, political, and economic transformations

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due to the fact that Judaism unlike Christianity, is not based upon orthodox doctrines or creeds. Instead, they observe, her story became the rationale for different practices and instructions.

[14] Holly Morse, *Encountering Eve's Afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2-4,* (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2020),

[15] Analysing the scope of Augustine's influence on Christian tradition and subsequently on how this tradition has viewed male-female relations based on the creation narrative is beyond the scope of the present thesis. For an overview of Augustine's influence over the reception of these chapters, see: W. Otten, "The Long Shadow of Human Sin: Augustine on Adam, Eve, and the Fall," in *Out of Paradise: Eve and Adam and Their Interpreters,* ed. B. Becking and S. Hennecke (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 42. Otten states that to anyone familiar with the Christian tradition, the doctrine of original sin is irrevocably linked to Augustine (354–430 CE), which he presented in part as a moral tale about Paradise. Throughout his career Augustine commented on Genesis 1-3 in different ways, making it difficult to form a uniform view of his thoughts on Adam and Eve but he nonetheless treated the relationship between them as paradigmatic for all male-female relations. While Augustine's attempts at interpreting the Eden narrative are, as Otten remarks, "links in a larger chain of provisional and alternative readings," his theory marks a crucial turning-point in the history of Christianity as the heritage of all subsequent generations and a major influence on their psychological and political thinking.

that it enacted. [16] The doctrine of the Fall of Man is the result of what appears to be a later Christian application of selective philosophical concepts, for example Plato's story in the *Phaedrus* of the fall of the soul,[17] or aspects of Greek mythology, such as Hesiod's Pandora,[18] to the Hebrew text. The narrative of a good creation, the subsequent 'fall" of man, and cosmic reconciliation and redemption in Christ, is fundamental to Christian theology, and Eve, the symbol of all womankind, played a critical role in this narrative.[19] Reading postbiblical allusions and references to Genesis 2-3 through such a 'Christian' lens irrevocably alters one's perception of the status of women and gender relations; the status and role of women in society has been justified with reference to the responsibility of the first woman in instigating the 'Fall', but to infer woman as the instigator of the 'Fall' relies on a selective mode of reading of the Biblical account.[20]

**Genesis 2:4b-3:24 and the Garden of Eden in the Hebrew Bible**[21]

Considering the significance of this text throughout the course of Judeo-Christian interpretative history, one could easily assume that Genesis 2:4b-3:24 held a place of equal significance in ancient Israelite literature; that the 'mainstream' readings of the text have held such status since the text first emerged. However, the story is not at all prominent in the Hebrew Bible,[22] with

[16] Lyn M. Bechtel, "Genesis 2.4B-3.24: A Myth About Human Maturation," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 20, no. 67 (September 1995): 3–26
[17] Plato, *Plato's Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995)
[18] Hesiod, *Theogony and Works and Days*, trans. and ed. Catherine Schlegel and Henry Weinfield, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).
[19] Kristen E. Kvam, Linda S. Schearing, and Valarie H. Ziegler, *Eve and Adam: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings on Genesis and Gender, (*Indiana University Press, 1999), 4.
[20] Kvam et. al, *Eve and Adam,* 4.
[21] This thesis adopts the use of the term Hebrew Bible, unless quoting secondary scholarship, in order to avoid the biases suggested by the term Old Testament.
[22] Although there are references to "the garden of God" in Ezekiel 28-32, the prophet does not seem to have the Genesis Eden tale in mind.

the character of Eve herself disappearing entirely in Genesis 4. Gerhard von Rad observed this omission, noting that: "The contents of Genesis chapter 2, and especially chapter 3, are conspicuously isolated in the Old Testament. No prophet, psalm, or narrator makes any recognizable reference to the story of the Fall."[23] Other important biblical scholars agree, with Ziony Zevit assessing that: "What is not reflected in the Hebrew Bible and what was not known in ancient Israel was a Garden story that expressed the myth of a Fall."[24]

**Genesis 2:4b-3:24 and the Garden of Eden in Second Temple Literature**

References and allusions to the Genesis creation narratives do not appear in any extant literature until the so-called Second Temple period. References and allusions to the primordial couple emerged within extant Second Temple literary and theological discussions, with such literature displaying an interest in issues pertaining to Adam and Eve in Eden far beyond that which is found in the Hebrew Bible. As Collins observes, these earliest interpretations of Genesis 2–3 have received little attention in recent studies of the ancient interpretation of Adam and Eve.[25] From approximately 200 BCE to 100 CE, the Genesis creation narrative gradually became the means for revealing and defending social and religious attitudes and values, and where the story is referenced, alluded to, or retold, it is used to both articulate mankind's authority over the earth,

[23] Gerhard von Rad, Genesis: A Commentary, trans. John H. Marks, Old Testament Library (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961), 98.
[24] Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 259.
[25] John J. Collins, "Before the Fall: Earliest Interpretations of Adam and Eve" in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, edited by Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman, JSJSupp 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004): "The wide-ranging study of Gary Anderson, The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) does not deal at all with Ben Sira, 1 Enoch, or the Dead Sea Scrolls. Neither does the study of J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "The Creation of Man and Woman in Early Jewish Literature," in The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions (ed. G. P. Luttikhuizen; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 34–62, which is focused on the issue of sexual differentiation in creation."

beyond the scope of this study, and to elucidate male-female relationships, which is our present focus. Jewish writers of this period seldom directly discussed or wrote treatises pertaining to marriage, gender, or sexuality, but instead used narratives, in particular the Genesis creation narratives, as a means for exploring and justifying attitudes and values thar were related to or concerned with these issues.[26]

The question of the existence of sin, as well as the human impulse and desire towards sin, emerged as a new phenomenon for writings in the Second Temple era.[27] This growing interest in the philosophical question of the origin of human sin came predominantly as a result of the widespread influence of Hellenism during this period and as a result of the Hellenistic philosophy, Jewish literature of this era displayed an extensive interest in the dilemma of the human desire to sin. Nonetheless, while the origin of sin became a popular subject of thought and debate in this era, the idea that sin is inherited as a result of the transgressions of Eve, or of Adam, is almost impossible to explicitly decipher in extant literature until after the destruction of the Temple, namely 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra.[28] Instead, a more prevalent view of this period was that sin stemmed from the cohabitation of the angels with human women, as described in Genesis 6, which proved an attractive solution to the issue of the origins of sin and evil; with

[26] Elaine H. Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York: Random House, 1988), 3

[27] The Hebrew Bible, despite extensively naming sins and their punishments, did not address the question of why sin itself existed. The Hebrew Bible includes statements regarding the origins and nature of human sin, but these statements are not presented as "answers" to any question. When the Torah discusses the origin of sin in any capacity, it speaks of God hardening the sinner's heart; humans do not exhibit free will.

[28] It is also reflected in Apoc. Mos. 32:2, where Eve laments that her actions have caused "all sin". The Apocalypse of Moses (sometimes called the Greek Life of Adam and Eve, in relation to Vita Adae et Evae, with which its text overlaps) is considered Jewish in origin, but its dating is in doubt. Some claim that the traditions it contains can be dated to the first century of the common era; J. R. Levison, "Adam and Eve, Life of," in the *Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, vol. 1*, ed. David Noel Freedman et al. (Yale University Press, 2001), 65-66.

the introduction of evil attributed to the angels, God is not blamed for human suffering, and human beings are not considered guilty in and of themselves, either.[29] As such, the actions of the first couple in Eden as an explanation for human sinfulness is generally absent in Second Temple texts.

Although much has been written on male-female relationships in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, investigations into the earliest interpretations of gender in Genesis 2-3 is conspicuously limited in recent studies of the interpretative history of these chapters, with most scholarship assuming a negative outlook in these texts upon which the 'mainstream' reception of the text could be built. When such Second Temple literature is considered, it is often as an intermediary between the Hebrew Bible and early Christian interpretations, and rarely on its own merit. Stuckenbruck concluded that in the Second Temple era, stories such as the Eden narrative were not used to explain why people sin but were rather used to address "the social and religious circumstances with which they were acquainted."[30] With this in mind, however, one will question the purpose of alluding, referring to, or retelling, gender in Genesis 2-3 in the literature of this era. If not justifying the subordinate status of women due to Eve's transgression, what purpose do they serve? How was Genesis 2-3 used to propagate gender norms and justify gender relations in this era?

One of the most complex and certainly most intriguing aspects of the creation narrative is what has been labelled the "Edenic marriage ideal" of Genesis 2. The "one flesh" concept serves as a significant foundation in a multitude of references and allusions to Genesis 2-3 in Second Temple literature, highlighting the compatibility and unity of

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[29] Christoph Auffarth and Loren Stuckenbruck, "Introduction" in ed. *Fall of the Angels* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004), 1.
[30] Loren T. Stuckenbruck, "The Book of Jubilees and the Origin of Evil," in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah: The Evidence of Jubilees,* ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapdids: Eerdmans, 2009)

the married couple, and is the basis for the marital metaphor that emerges in the New Testament for the relationship between Christ and his early followers. Of particular interest is the "one flesh" concept of Genesis 2:24, which is both referenced and alluded to in a multitude of texts as a model for husband-wife relationships, indicating that there was burgeoning trend that saw all human marriage as patterned on the biblical primal marriage. It is suggested that in the Second Temple era, interpretations of the primordial couple intended to give rise to the teaching that in marriage there should be no polygyny or divorce, and each marriage is believed to have a supernatural dimension.

This thesis, then, focuses on the question of how Genesis 2-3 presents the male-female dynamic, and how interpretations and readings of this dynamic develop over the course of its earliest readings in the Second Temple period. It will be focused on issues of intertextuality with a particular emphasis on the influence of Genesis 2:23-24 and the idea of the married couple as "one flesh" upon depictions and discussions of social, marital, and familial relationships between men and women. Both explicit and non-explicit references and allusions to the primordial couple will be identified and explored with a view towards analysing how gender roles and relations are understood in select works from this period. The aim of this thesis is not to discover or argue for a true or objective reading of Genesis 2-3, or indeed, to engage in an in-depth study of how references to the text functioned in every Second Temple interpretation, but rather to examine how this text and some of the key themes therein were utilized in a select sample of texts in order to establish a view of a complimentary, united marriage ideal. I would posit that the earliest allusions to and references to Genesis 2-3 are not used in order to justify either the subordination of women, or

to defend hierarchical relationships between the genders. Instead, early allusions to the story of Adam and Eve are predominantly based upon the idea of the married couple as "one flesh" in Genesis 2:23-24. These references, then, appear to hint at a tradition which saw the primordial couple as complementary and co-dependent. It is quite clear that the story undergoes a significant development in terms of how many of the themes therein are read, and of relevance to this thesis is the way in which male-female relationships, in particular marriage, were portrayed with reference to the Eden narrative. There is an obvious difference between how man-woman relationships are understood in light of Genesis 2-3 in the earliest references to these chapters in the second century BCE, and those that emerge in the first century CE; there is an increasing interest in Genesis 3 and the role of Eve in the expulsion from Eden in later texts from this period. Collins appears to endorse this analysis of the literature: "The later we go in the second temple period, the more influential the text of Genesis becomes."[31]

It is hypothesised, therefore, that the literature of the Late Second Temple period displayed a growing interest in Genesis 3 in propagating ideas about gender norms and ideas about how men and women should relate to each other that can be observed and analysed, as the text underwent a dramatic shift in its interpretative history from a story concerned with human origins and the relationship between God and creation, to one concerned with sin, evil, and guilt. This growing dependence on Genesis 3 appears to have paved the way for the development of the doctrines of 'Original sin' and the 'Fall of Man' in the early Christian era, which distorted the lens through which gender in Genesis 2-3, and references to this text in various other works, were seen.

[31] J.J. Collins, "Marriage, Divorce, and Family in Second Temple Judaism," in *Families in ancient Israel*, ed. Leo G. Perdue et al. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997)

## Outline of the Texts

Our focus will be predominantly centred upon four texts: Sirach, the Book of Tobit, 4QInstruction, and the New Testament, specifically Ephesians. Due to the breadth of the literature of the Second Temple era, it is necessary to limit our study to certain texts and not the literature of this era as a whole. Our interest will be restricted mostly to allusions to Genesis 2:23-24 and the "one flesh" concept, but, where relevant to the issue of male-female relations, other allusions to the wider Eden narrative will be examined, also.

For that reason, this thesis will not treat the extensive works of Philo on their own merit. Due to the broad scope of Philo's work on Genesis 1-3,[32] and because his readings of the text were explicitly exegetical and not allusions, his interpretations of this text will not be treated in the present study except for in comparison to other writings, where relevant. It should be noted, however, that his approaches to the text provided the groundwork for subsequent interpretations of gender and sexuality in Eden, and the differences and similarities between many of his arguments and those that will be addressed in this thesis will be noted. Philo's readings of Genesis encompassed both literal and allegorical modes of interpretation that were very much indebted to Platonic philosophy. The intellectual hierarchy that he espoused based upon his allegorical readings of Genesis are apparent throughout his work. While man is a representation of intellect, reason, and strength, metonymically symbolised by the first masculine archetype, Eve became, for Philo, a figure of carnality, stupidity and weakness.[33]

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[32] Genesis was one of the 'most significant books' for his exegetical work, which led him to produce forty-three treatises on the text across three commentaries, as well as numerous references throughout the rest of his corpus of writings.

[33] Holly Morse, "And God Created Woman: An Exploration of the Meaning and the Myth of Eve," (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2016)

He understood Eve to be the vehicle of sin, and he closely aligned her both literally and allegorically with weakness and lack of self-control. He thus helps to set in motion a problematic tradition of selectively reading the biblical account, focusing on certain elements from the original story to build a negative picture of the first woman and her relationship to knowledge.

## Methodologies

Examining biblical texts through the lens of historical, literary, sociological, and ideological methodologies reveals new facets of familiar stories, offering insight into not only the relevant texts but also the diverse factors that brought them into existence and ensured their transmission through time, questioning a text's author, audience, social milieu, purpose, and the techniques employed in its writing. This thesis will utilize traditional critical methods, as well as newer literary and ideological criticisms with the following questions in mind; Who wrote these texts, when were they written, and why? How are male-female relationships and gender roles both portrayed in these Second Temple texts with reference to aspects of Genesis 2:4b-3:24? What aspects of the original text are referred or alluded to, both explicitly or non-explicitly, and what functions do these references serve within the wider text? How do these texts portray the first humans, Adam and Eve; their relationship to each other and to the world around them? How does the social milieu in which the writers of these texts live influence their interpretations, and to what end? How have these texts been received, both in antiquity and with subsequent audiences?

Biblical methodologies may be grouped together in different ways. For the purposes of this study, they are grouped as such — traditional historical methodologies; literary methodologies; sociological methodologies; and ideological methodologies. These may be used in harmony with each other in order to approach the reception history

of a text such as Genesis 2:4b-3:24. Traditional historical critical methods are utilized so as to reveal the assumed historical background of these texts and their writers. The different forms of literary criticism will aid in determining the author's intent, and the literary conventions employed therein so as to meet those intentions. Social world criticism will apply discoveries from archaeology, anthropology, economics, and other sociological fields where relevant. These methodologies will be undergirded by feminist hermeneutics, which challenges the very existence of an objective reading of a text, as well as questioning the way gender is portrayed and constructed, and concern for the way the first woman was portrayed as a character in male-dominated contexts.

## Historical Criticisms

The primary goal of historical criticism is to discover the text's original context, reconstructing both the historical situation of the text's author/s and its intended recipients.[34] Historical criticism is comprised of multiple approaches, including source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, tradition criticism, and radical criticism, which will be availed of in different ways throughout this thesis.

## Literary Criticisms

'Literary Criticisms' is the overarching title given to a number of different approaches, focusing on, in particular, the plots, characters, settings, techniques, and language—such as the use of sentence structure, repetition, and word choice—of the relevant texts. Two literary criticisms in particular will be utilized in this thesis; reader-response criticism, and rhetorical criticism.

[34] Ryan Hester, *Historical Research: Theory and Methods* (London: ED-Tech Press, 2018), 239.

## Reader Response

One recent method of literary criticism, reader-response criticism, looks to biblical literature in terms of the values, attitudes, and responses of its readers.[35] It focuses on the reader's role in determining a text's meaning. In many ways, reader-response criticism challenges the notion of an objective reading based upon the premise that language is unstable that a text cannot convey meaning.[36] Meaning is produced only when a text is read, and as a result, what readers bring to a text must be taken fully concerned;[37] for example, highlighting how different readers have read Genesis 2-3 and produced a myriad of different responses, although the text itself has remained fixed throughout history. This thesis, then, heavily avails of reader-response criticism, as it looks at the responses of readers to Genesis 2-3 based upon their own values, beliefs, and ideas, and how their interpretations have further influenced subsequent ones.

### *Rhetorical criticism*

Aristotle defined rhetoric as the "faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion." This form of criticism, then, takes the text as we have it, and approaches it from the point of view of the author or editor's intent, and how it would be perceived by an audience of contemporaries.[38] This form of analysis questions how the author used certain means of persuasion to advance their agenda for their particular

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[35] Edgar McKnight, "Reader-Response Criticism," in *To Each its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Applications,* ed. Stephen R. Haynes and Steven L. McKenzie, (Louisville, Westminster John Knox Press, 1999)
[36] John C. Poirier, "Some Detracting Considerations for Reader-Response Theory," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2000): 250–63
[37] John A. Darr, "Reader-Oriented Criticism," in *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation,* ed. Stanley E. Porter (London/NY: Routledge 2007)
[38] George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism* (UNC Press Books, 2014), 4

audience by studying the effectiveness of the language in both its intended emotional impact, as much as its propositional content.[39]

## Social-Scientific Methodologies

Social-scientific approaches draw upon ideas and perspectives from social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, social psychology, and economics, employing methods from these disciplines in order to more clearly examine the relationship between texts and the societies in which they were produced. The guiding question, as posited by Gottwald, is: "What social structures and social processes are explicit and implicit in this literature, in the socioeconomic data it contains, in the political history it recounts, and in the religious beliefs and practices it attests?"[40] As with other methods, there are many sociological or social-scientific methodological approaches, and so a specific text and the questions asked of it determine which tools are best used. The texts examined in this thesis require anthropological, archaeological, and economic, approaches, among others, as, of course, the socio-cultural and political contexts of the Second Temple world in which these texts emerge heavily influenced both the writers behind them and the audiences that received them.

## Ideological Methodologies—Feminist Hermeneutics

Feminists approach biblical texts with a hermeneutics of suspicion, questioning not only the text itself but the historical reception of it. There are, of course, different feminist approaches,[41] but the common thread between them is

[39] Thomas Marshall, "Rhetorical Criticism" in *Biblical Criticism: Beyond the Basics*. Edited by Edward D. Andrews et al, (Cambridge: Christian Publishing House, 2017), 144-155
[40] Norman A. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible-A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press 1987)
[41] Sean Adams, "Feminist Approaches" in *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* ed. Stanley E. Porter (London/NY: Routledge, 2007)

the belief that there is inequality between the genders. Feminist biblical scholars were among the first not only to declare their own perspective but also to call out the androcentric and occasionally misogynist scholarship surrounding Genesis studies.[42] The value of a feminist hermeneutic goes beyond criticizing the presence or absence of women,[43] but also exposes the nexus between power and sex/gender relations in texts.

## Feminist Approaches—Overview

The very questions from which this thesis arose are indebted to the renewed interest in Genesis 1-3 and its application with regards to gender and sexual based discourse over the course of the twentieth century. The issue of whether an unbiased reading supports equality or hierarchy between the sexes has fuelled academic debate, and such a line of questioning has led to scholars, both feminist or otherwise, exploring the possibility that marginal readings which emphasize the equality and compatibility of the first couple and the positive connotations of consuming the fruit, and which portray Eve's 'character' in a more favourable light, are in fact valid interpretations of the text. While our interest is not in reclaiming or reconstructing the Eden narrative, or in questioning the impact it has had on contemporary or modern gender relations, it is nonetheless necessary to note that this study is done in light of the numerous re-readings, re-writings, and re-interpretations of this text that have been carried out throughout the 20th and 21st centuries as a result of the emergence of feminist hermeneutics as a methodology. As such, this study is grounded in, and guided by, the principles of feminist hermeneutics.

In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir recalled the story of the creation of woman in Genesis 2 as a primary text whose impact on historical perceptions of gender

[42] Barbara Deutschmann, *Creating Gender in the Garden: The Inconstant Partnership of Eve and Adam* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022), 21
[43] Deutschmann, *Creating Gender*, 21

relations cannot be overlooked.[44] While she did not devote much attention to the Bible, de Beauvoir's reading of Genesis had a profound impact on the first biblical scholars to engage in feminist criticism of the Bible. Many recent scholarly contributions have sought to refute the popular assumptions held regarding women in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, offering new perspectives and insights to challenge traditional readings. Interpretations by Phyllis Trible,[45] Mieke Bal,[46] Carol Meyers,[47] and countless others have sought to counteract the use of the Bible against women and their considerations have become part of the mainstream theological debate. Through the use of feminist hermeneutics, among other methodologies and theories, these scholars have attempted to read the Garden of Eden narrative by situating it within its original context and investigating the manner in which this text has been received and appropriated in various cultural settings. As a result of their efforts, egalitarian explanations of the story of creation are no longer marginal but have become more widely accepted and more broadly considered.

### *Phyllis Trible*

As one of the most noteworthy proponents of postmodern feminist theology, Trible's re-examination of Genesis 1-3 has been fundamental to recent attempts to offer alternative readings to the text. Trible suggested that the feminist movement "errs when it dismisses the Bible as inconsequential or condemns it as

[44] Ronald Hendel, Chana Kronfeld, and Ilana Pardes, "Gender and Sexuality" in *Reading Genesis: Ten Methods*, ed. Ronald Hendel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71.
[45] Phillis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *JAAR* 41, no. 1 (1973).
[46] Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).
[47] Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

enslaving,"[48] showing that in rejecting Scripture, women accept such readings. Her work argued that many of the most misogynistic ideas linked to the Eden narrative arose in later interpretations, and in doing so, called for further examinations of both this text and others within the Biblical tradition. Trible claims that Genesis 2 presents an egalitarian model of gender, which becomes corrupted by dominance and hierarchy in Genesis 3 as a consequence of human disobedience. By outlining the unsupported assumptions that one mistakenly reads into the text, she managed to pave the way towards a line of reading that sees Eve as an active and inquisitive character when compared to Adam, who appears in the text as a passive, unquestioning receiver, questioning assumptions about gender and sexuality in both the text and its reception historically.

### ***Mieke Bal***

Bal offers a postmodern study of the biblical text, aiming, not as Trible does, to "restore" the text to its original meaning, but rather to provide a reading that would highlight "the relative arbitrariness of all readings, including the sexist readings we have become so used to,"[49] and in doing so, she offers a critique of the misogynist and hierarchical stance that most interpretations of the text appear to share. What adds a unique dimension to her analysis is the wide scope of her examination, discussing not only academic scholarship but children's Bibles, also. Bal highlights Eve's growth to the mother of all living as the main plot in the narrative, which stands in sharp contrast to alternative readings which would view Eve's development in the narrative as a secondary issue.

[48] Trible, "Depatriarchalizing," 218.
[49] Bal, *Lethal Love*, 2

### *Carol Meyers*

Perhaps more than any other, Meyers' attempts to situate the Eden narrative within its original context so as to highlight the aetiological origins of the text, have shaped recent scholarly attempts to reckon with the central issues and themes that Genesis 2-3 raises. Meyers views Genesis 2-3 not merely as an etiological tale but also as a reflection of the life of its audience, employing an interdisciplinary approach in order to reconsider "Eden Eve" and "Everywoman Eve," who she establishes as the average Israelite woman. Meyers reorients our reading of the Eden narrative so that it may be read, to the fullest extent possible, as it was written, in the context of the Iron Age, and not through subsequent interpretations which intentionally or unintentionally "distort or misrepresent the meaning and function of the tale."[50] The main concerns of the average Iron Age Israelite woman were the acquisition of food and procreation, both seen as necessary for survival, and as such, Genesis 2-3 is a reflection and explanation of these circumstances. In her analysis of Genesis 3:16 in detail, she argues that it presents the sexual ideology from which men and women should live complementary lifestyles. The verse is concerned with male sexual control of female reproduction, which "can be understood as a cultural measure to encourage or sanction multiple pregnancies."[51]

## Chapter One—Conclusion

Over the course of its interpretive history, the text of Genesis 2.4b-3.24 has been a lens through which numerous societies have viewed fundamental issues pertaining to the human condition. However, the majority of the popular or

[50] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 60
[51] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 100

conventional Christian readings of this text have been variations on the ‘sin and fall’ theme, where it is assumed that the man and the woman are created immortal and placed in a perfect world, but through their own disobedience they fall from their state of perfection and are punished with expulsion from Paradise to live mortal lives of toil and suffering. The blame for this fall has been traditionally attributed to the first woman, Eve, seen as the prototype for all subsequent women, and this has had a significant impact on the way that men and women have related to each other, with Eve’s sin serving as proof of either the inferiority or the evil nature of women. However, the earliest allusions to this narrative, arising in the Hellenistic world of the late Second Temple period, do not portray male-female relationships in such a light. One is forced to first question the growing interest in this narrative over the course of this era, as well as how these allusions and references functioned. What purpose did they serve, with regards to gender roles and relations?

# Chapter Two

***Abstract***

*Before examining the text of Genesis 2-3 and how it was interpreted throughout the Second Temple Era with regards to gender relations, it is necessary, first, to establish what is meant by terms Second Temple and Gender in this thesis. An overview of the Second Temple era is therefore provided so as to address the historical parameters of this study. Gender relations in this period across the Mediterranean will also briefly be outlined, with a view towards avoiding making widespread statements about gender over such a broad region geographically, and a broad period, historically.*

## The Second Temple Era

It is difficult to reconstruct how images of the primordial couple influenced marriage relations in the Second Temple period, in part due to the diverse nature of Judaism at this time. The study of Second Temple Judaism has attracted sustained attention since the late 19th century as a transitional age between the ancient Israelite religion reflected in the Hebrew Bible, and the emergence of Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. Other terms are frequently used as synonyms for this this period, such as “Early Judaism.” However, this creates ambiguity since Rabbinic Judaism is alternatively also referred to as such. The “Intertestamental period” is another popular designation, but this term is even more problematic as it fails to establish any clear historical parameters, and it can lead to the assumption that this era should only be seen as a prelude to the New

Testament.[52] In more recent decades, however, this period has been studied increasingly for its own sake and on its own terms, and the widespread renewed interest in Second Temple literature can be attributed, at least in part, to the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the mid-20th century. As a result of many important advances in our understanding of late Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity in recent years, there is renewed interest in the impact of Hellenistic thought and culture on the context and religious traditions of both early Jews and Christians.

It is necessary first to define specifically what is meant by the term 'Second Temple Judaism' in order to establish the parameters of the present study. The Second Temple era is usually defined by its relation to adjacent periods, preceded by the biblical period and followed by early Christianity and the Rabbinic period. The end of the Babylonian Exile and the rebuilding of the Temple serve as markers for the beginning of this era; however, the Persian period, from approximately 539-330 BCE, offers limited extant evidence, and so most discussions regarding the Second Temple period, including our own, will focus more specifically on approximately 330 BCE onwards, following the conquests of Alexander the Great and the influx of Hellenism to the Jewish world. The end of the Second Temple period is also somewhat difficult to pin down, but it is usually dated to the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. It must be noted, however, that the dates mentioned here are somewhat arbitrary. No one, specific event marks immediate change in itself and so the destruction of the Temple did not lead to an immediate and drastic shift in the Judaism or Judaisms of the time. Many texts dating from after the Temple's destruction still display continuity with earlier texts, and so in practice, this period is more generally stretched into the second century CE. With the defeat of the Bar Kokhba War

[52] See: Jeff S. Anderson, *The Internal Diversification of Second Temple Judaism: An Intro to the Second Temple Period* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), 1-4.

by Rome, a new phase of Judaism can be marked, and so is arguably at this point that one can speak of the end of the Second Temple period.[53]

This era was marked by constant political, social, and economic turmoil, and religious persecution and defection.[54] The conquests of Alexander the Great subjected both the Jews of Judaea and those living in a rapidly expanding diaspora to radical forces of social and cultural change, enabled by the widespread influences of Hellenization. The term “Hellenistic" should be distinguished from "Hellenic", as “Hellenic” refers to Greece itself, while ‘Hellenistic’ encompasses territories under Greek influence, referring to that which is, to some degree, influenced by Greek culture. However, it must be noted that just as it is incorrect to think of Second Temple Judaism as a single, normative, Judaism, so too is it misleading to describe “ancient Greece” as an individual state when discussing the archaic or classical eras—it was not a single, identifiable ‘state’ but instead was comprised of loosely connected poleis. Prior to Alexander’s conquest, while these states and their territories shared certain cultural features—according to Herodotus, ‘common bloodlines, common language, altars to the gods and sacrifices shared in common, and common mores and habits’ (Herodotus, 8.144.2); PanHellenic identity was conceived of only when facing an outside enemy.

Hellenization is understood as the process of acculturation by which the culture, religious beliefs, ethics, society, politics, and economics of a group might

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[53] Benedikt Eckhardt, *Jewish Identity and Politics Between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba: Groups, Normativity, and Rituals* (Brill, 2011); Guenter Stemberger, “The Formation of Rabbinic Judaism, 70-640 CE” in *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* ed. by Jacob Neusner and Alan Avery-Peck (Malden, MA., Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 78-92.

[54] See, for example Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1952) I, 165-285; II, 3-128; F. V. Filson, *A New Testament History: The Story of the Emerging Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964), 1-6; Adolphe Lods, *The Prophets and the Rise of Judaism*, trans. S. H. Hooke (London: Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner and Company, 1937), 173-356; S. Zeitlin, *The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State: A Political, Social, and Religious History of the Second Commonwealth* (3 vols.; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962-1978)

be affected by the spread of Greek culture; a cultural syncretism.[55] As a result of the influences of Hellenistic culture, many Jewish writers pondered upon the extent to which such widespread social, cultural, and political change posited threats towards or endangered traditional or religious values.

The texts which have been preserved from throughout the Second Temple era are eclectic in genre, in geography, and in social context, and are varied with regards to how they depict both their own understanding of "Judaism" or Jewish life, as well as in how they depict and relate to the world around them. In particular, and relevant to our study, the books composed during this time period across the Mediterranean—the Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha/Deuterocanon, historical writings, Qumran texts, among many others—serve as a compelling insight into the myriad of ways in which gender and sexuality were constructed in antiquity. While one should be wary of reading literary depictions of these themes as presenting the realities of women in the ancient world, it is also true that they provide an opportunity to question and criticize assumed or inherited ideas about male-female relationships in antiquity.

What flourished in this era, however, was an ever-evolving religion, and not a fixed "normative" Judaism.[56] Recognition of the sheer diversity of the period poses challenges, and so it is perhaps more fitting to speak of 'Second Temple Judaisms' and not of one single community united by set practices or traditions. Tal Ilan notes that Judaism was highly heterogeneous during this period and different groups adhered to

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[55] M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. J. Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974). Hengel's impressive Judaism and Hellenism attempts to treat the influence of Hellenism upon Judaism from 330BCE to 168BCE, arguing that the distinction between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism in the first few centuries before Christ is a false disjunction, as all Judaism during this time is Hellenistic Judaism, and that the influence of Hellenism in Palestine can be detected much earlier than had previously been assumed, at least since before the Maccabean revolt. Hengel almost single-handedly made it no longer appropriate to talk about Palestinian Judaism as distinct from Hellenistic Judaism.

[56] Anderson, *Internal Diversification of Second Temple Judaism*, 5.

different versions of Jewish law,[57] but regardless of the scope of the diverse Jewish communities that could be found across the Mediterranean, it can be discerned that certain things were common to the majority of these communities. A common Torah, shared traditions about Israel as the people of God, practices that included circumcision, dietary law, Sabbath observance, and the notion of a common ancestry with an indubitable bond with Jerusalem, functioned as framing points of orientation.[58] Over the course of the Second Temple period, some of the most intrinsic aspects and characteristic that define Jewish religious experience—engagement with the Bible, institutions such as the synagogue, the notion of Judaism itself as a voluntary religious identity—but Jewish culture in this period was also quite diverse and different in many ways from the Judaism that would develop in Late Antiquity.[59]

The use of the term "Christian" is further problematic. Should our study exclude those New Testament writings, despite the fact that the earliest followers of Jesus were Jewish? There is a reluctance in Second Temple studies to use this term to describe anyone prior to the late first century CE, as the characterizing of early followers of Jesus as Christians contributes to a false dichotomization of Jews and 'Christ-followers' in the first century,[60] but this thesis will nonetheless use the term 'Christian' to describe those who followed Jesus Christ to avoid complications arising when considering the New Testament.

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[57] Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1996), 228

[58] Malka Z. Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature: The Scriptures and Stories that Shaped Early Judaism (*Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018)

[59] Simkovich, *Discovering Second Temple Literature*: "The Second Temple period contains the key to understanding how the Israelite religion of the Hebrew Bible became the normative Rabbinic religion as we know it."

[60] Bruce Chilton and Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in the New Testament: Practices and Beliefs* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 8: one should speak of the "the Judaism of the New Testament."

### *Sex and Gender?*

The distinction between biological sex and socially-determined gender has been a core facets of many important feminist analyses of early Jewish and early Christian thought.[61] Simkins outlines how these terms are understood by those who venture to study the social roles of men and women, stating that sex refers to the biological differences between males and females, especially in their roles of procreation, whereas gender refers to the culturally specific patterns that are imposed upon these biological differences.[62]

## The Place of Women under Greco-Roman Influence

The writings of this particular era and the manner in which they grapple with social and cultural change provide depictions of sexuality that allow for a nuanced insight into the construction of gender in Second Temple Judaism. Their highly divergent styles, emphases, and treatment of women reveal markedly different theologies and agendas, helping scholars reconstruct not only their views of gender relations, but also the competing varieties of Judaism, highlighting the fact that the study of gender and the status of women in antiquity is varied and complex, never monolithic.[63]

Greek, and later, Roman influences, over Jewish life, as well as Jewish literature, cannot be ignored, and while the focus of the present thesis is not the realities of life for women in antiquity, or to analyse or assess the complex ways in which gender was envisioned across the ancient Mediterranean, it is important to note that Greek and

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[61] For example, see: Adrian Thatcher, *God, Sex, and Gender: An Introduction* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2011); Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 26–33; Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), 15–19; Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (London: Routledge, 1996), 3–20; Toril Moi, *Sex, Gender and the Body* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3–120.
[62] Simkins, "Constructing Gender," 35.
[63] Sara Parks, "Women and Gender in the Apocrypha," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Apocrypha,* ed. Gerbern S. Oegema (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 479.

Roman ideas about gender, marriage, sexuality, and the family heavily influenced the cultures they interacted with—including Judaism. However, within the generally patriarchal structures that existed across the Mediterranean, women's status, as well as both gender roles and relations, varied between different cultures. One should therefore avoid the impulse to make broad, sweeping statements about these issues in the ancient world, and instead recognize the diversity of how ideas about gender and sex were realized. Nonetheless, we can still affirm the fact that all Mediterranean cultures were, to some degree, patriarchal, and the writings generated in such contexts reflect this.[64]

Entrenched in the philosophical and social theories of Greek literature were ideas of the female as inferior to the male in mind and body, famously expressed in the works of the philosopher Aristotle.[65] Aristotle felt that men and women understood and experienced virtue in different ways due to their fundamentally different natures; just as it was the virtue of the master to command wisely, and of the slave to obey diligently, so the different natures of men and women required them to express virtue in different ways.[66] Such perceptions on sex and gender, of course, social consequences; if men were considered inherently superior, and women inferior, then it was only logical that women should be excluded from the public arena and that men should take up positions of

[64] For a brief but concise outline of the status and role of women in the first century, see: Ben Witherington III, Women in the Earliest Churches (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5-23.
[65] Aristotle, "Physics," 1.9 192a20-4, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle,* ed. Jonathan Barnes, rev. Oxford translation, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1984), 1:328: "The male principle in nature is associated with active, formative and perfected characteristics, while the female is passive, material and deprived, desiring the male in order to become complete." According to Aristotle, a female was a "defective" or "mutilated" male.
[66] Aristotle Pol. 1.5.3–11, 1259b-1260b. He argues against Plato's portrayal of women's equality in the ideal society (Pol. 2.2.15, 1264b). However, it should be noted that Plato himself regarded women as inferior by nature: Wayne A. Meeks, "The Image of the Androgyne: Some Uses of a Symbol in Earliest Christianity," *History of Religions* 13, no. 3 (1974): 170

leadership, both in the home and in the state.[67] It is also necessary to note that when writers in antiquity referred to a family, they were not simply referring to blood-relatives. Greco-Roman writers typically viewed the entire household as a family unit, and did not limit discussions of "family" to blood relationships,[68] in part because the household was viewed as a microcosm of society.[69]

In the early Roman Republic, the notion that the paterfamilias, or "father of the family,"[70] possessed *patria potestas* was at the centre of Roman law. The paterfamilias had absolute power over his household. While in the later republican and imperial periods, these rules concerning property, land ownership, and inheritance were modified, granting women more extensive freedom, women's participation outside of the domestic sphere was still greatly limited. It would be misleading to suggest that societal norms across the Mediterranean and customs and laws concerning women were entirely uniform, the impact that Greco-Roman values and customs had on women in late Second Temple era is still undoubtedly extensive, and cannot be understated.

What difference gender makes to historical narratives is a question with implications far beyond the scope of this study. It is important to note that neither the presence nor the absence of women in literary texts offers insight to the lived experiences of actual historical women. The existence of women characters in ancient literature is not to be confused with ancient women's voices. Bernadette Brooten states that it is important that "one must distinguish between the history of Jewish women and the history of Jewish

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[67] Plato, conceiving of an ideal, fictitious Republic without property, class, or traditional family structures, suggested that men and women might possess the same virtues and that in such a society, women could be educated to the standard as men to assume leadership. In real societies, however, the subordination of women remained the norm and the prescription.

[68] Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 30.

[69] Aristotle held that the state was composed of households (Pol. 1.2.1, 1253b), but disagreed with those who thought its government the same as that of the city-state (Pol. 1.1.2, 1252a).

[70] The term pater does not only denote one's biological father but instead refers to the head of the household.

men's attitudes toward women."[71] The constructions of gender in these varied texts are always mediated through male authors and male perspectives.

## Chapter Two—Conclusion

The Second Temple era spans approximately 600 years, although the dates with which we define the parameters of this era are somewhat flexible, and arbitrary in nature. The literature created during the Second Temple period bear witness to some of the most significant political, social, and cultural movements and moments in ancient history, and many texts are notably concerned with questions concerning the rise of Hellenism, and the threats that it poses to Jewish life, practices, and beliefs. The Jewish literature that survives from across the Mediterranean is complex and diverse in both the genres that evolved, as well as the questions and concerns that it reflects. As a result of this diversity, one should be cautious when speaking of issues such as gender and sexuality; not every group, at every time, experienced gender and sexuality the same way. Nonetheless, we can acknowledge the fact that Jewish societies in antiquity were, to some degree, patriarchal. Jewish social structures, however, would inevitably fall under the influence of Greco-Roman cultural conventions, and many writers, exposed to Greco-Roman philosophy, mythology, and literature, began to apply such ideas to their own work, whether they did so intentionally or not. Having outlined what is meant by "Second Temple Judaism," and having defined some of the key terms relevant to this thesis—namely "Hellenistic," "Gender," and "Christian"—it is necessary now to turn to the text of Genesis 2-3.

[71] Bernadette J. Brooten, "Jewish Women's History in the Roman Period: A Task for Christian Theology,' *HTR* 79, 1-3 (1986): 27

# Chapter Three

***Abstract***

*In order to understand how allusions and references to Genesis 2-3 and the question of male-female relationships were used in Second Temple literature, it is necessary first to examine the relevant biblical verses. The predominant understanding of the relationship between the sexes in Genesis 2-3 is typically characterized by the view that the man was, as a consequence of the events portrayed within the narrative, set in a position of authority and leadership over the woman. The Yahwist or Non-Priestly creation myth presents a portrait of the ancient Israelite understanding of gender which, although not the primary focus of the text, is nonetheless a prominent theme in the story of Adam and Eve in the garden. The central elements of the text that must be considered are as follows: man's creation and God's prohibition to the man; man's loneliness or 'aloneness' and incompatibility with the creatures already created; Eve's creation from the man; man and woman's 'one flesh' union; the serpent and the fruit, and the acquisition of knowledge; the subsequent consequences. Our outline of the Eden narrative will begin with Genesis 2:16 and God's subsequent command to the man.*

## Non-Priestly Creation Account

While there is still no agreed compositional model of the formation of the Pentateuch, there is reasonably wide consensus among scholars that the Pentateuch is made up of at least four different strands,[72] with considerable diversity of opinion as to

[72] Many biblical scholars since the nineteenth century have accepted the theory that the Pentateuch of Genesis-Deuteronomy grew through four stages or layers: the Yahwist/Non-Priestly or J source, the E or Elohist source, the Deuteronomistic or D source, and the Priestly or P source. J. Wellhausen, *Prologomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh: A. and C. Black, 1885; New York: Meridian Books, 1957); S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), 123-24; G. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, translated by E.W. Trueman Dicken (London: SCM Press, 1966),

the dating of these strands and how they were put together to form the Pentateuch as we understand it.[73] Only two of these strands are found in the 'Primaeval history' in Genesis; the 'Priestly' source of Genesis 1:1-2:4a, and the 'Non-Priestly' source of Genesis 2:4b-3:24. Throughout history, commentators have disagreed both on how to decipher the meaning of each individual creation story as well as on how to relate these two stories to one another. Ancient retellings of Genesis have survived, for example, that attempt to make sense of the different narratives by simply integrating them, and subsuming the details of one account to the other. For example, the book of Jubilees harmonized both accounts to show that the female was created along with the male in 1:27, through the use of Adam's rib: "In the first week Adam was created and also the rib, his wife. And in the second week he showed her to him. And therefore the commandment was given to observe seven days for a male, but for a female twice seven days in their impurity" (Jubilees 3.8). Gen 1.27 is therefore acknowledged, while at the same time, the text justifies purity regulations related to the birth of male and female children.[74]

The Non-Priestly creation narrative is editorially situated after the Priestly creation story, thereby juxtaposing two very different stories which defy incorporation into one unified account.[75] This study will not assume the temporal

69; M. Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions,* trans. B. Anderson (Edgewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 41-51, 229-259. For an alternative approach, arguing for four primary sources arranged by a "compiler," see: Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

[73] Jan Christian Gertz, "The Formation of the Primeval History," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 107–35.

[74] For this interpretation, see James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 85. See also: Kvam, et al. *Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Readings*, 6.

[75] Deutschmann, *Creating Gender in the Garden*, 14.

priority of one over the other, given that elements of both probably circulated in pre-canonized form.[76] While many scholars have noted the existence of two disparate traditions within the text of Genesis 2:4b-3:24, distinguishing between a base layer and its subsequent reworking based upon a juxtaposition of the optimistic tone of Genesis 2 and the negative tone in Genesis 3,[77] for our purposes, Genesis 2:4b-3:24 will be understood as one unified text.

There are differences, of course, in how these two accounts present gender and sexuality. The Priestly account is a minimal one which draws attention to the biological complementarity of the first male and female,[78] while the Non-Priestly account is, as Phyllis Bird notes, more focused upon the psychosocial relationship between the human pair.[79] In the first account (Genesis 1:1-2:4a), which dates from circa 400 BCE and is the more recent of the two, we are told that God 'created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it."' (1:27-28a).[80] Boyarin summarizes the difficulty that the coexistence of these two stories poses: "In the first story it seems clear that the original creation of the human species included both sexes, while the second suggests an original male creature for whom a female was created out of his flesh. The contradiction presents a classic hermeneutic problem."[81]

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[76] Ronald S. Hendel, "Historical Context" in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception and Interpretation*, ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 56-57

[77] Barbara Deutschmann, "One Becomes Two: The Gender Anthropology of The Eden Narrative and its Reception Journey" (PhD diss., University of Divinity, 2019), 23

[78] Deutschmann, "One Becomes Two," 25.

[79] Phyllis A. Bird, "'Male and Female He Created Them': Genesis 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation," *HTR* 74 (1981): 158

[80] For many contemporary feminist scholars, Genesis 1:27 has emerged as a text upon which an understanding of equality might be built.

[81] Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1993), 37. See also Phyllis A. Bird, "Sexual Differentiation and Divine Image," in *The Image of God: Gender Models in Judaeo-Christian Tradition,* ed. Kari Elisabeth Børresen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 5–28.

Our focus, however, is not on references or allusions to the Priestly creation, but to the Non-Priestly account. This account drew from a rich mix of genres and sources, and made use of oral material, evident in the use of features such as poetic meter and assonance within sections of the prose. There is evidence that the creation narratives of Genesis were influenced by those of Israel's neighbours, specifically the Babylonians, for example the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and *Atrahasis*.[82] However. Genesis stands out in Ancient Near Eastern literature for its unique focus on the creation and relationship between the first woman and man, with the affirmation of the full equality and mutuality of man and woman in the Genesis 2 account of creation unique amongst other creation accounts which contain no separate narration of the creation of woman.[83]

## Text and Translation

2:16וַיְצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכֹּל עֵץ־הַגָּן אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל׃

2:17וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת׃

2:18וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב הֱיוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ׃

2:19וַיִּצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה כָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מַה־יִּקְרָא־
לוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ ׃

2:20וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא־מָצָא עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ׃

2:21וַיַּפֶּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים תַּרְדֵּמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אַחַת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֹּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתֶּנָּה׃

2:22וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַצֵּלָע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדָם׃

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[82] Bernard F. Batto, "The Institution of Marriage in Genesis 2 and in 'Atrahasis," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62, no. 4 (2000): 621–31. Atrahasis is of particular significance as an influence on Genesis 2:4b-3:24, with Batto stating that "Atrahasis provides an important hermeneutical key for unlocking meaning of Gen. 2:23-24."

[83] Richard M. Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 35

2:23וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הַפַּעַם עֶצֶם מֵעֲצָמַי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקָּרֵא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לֻקֳחָה־זֹּאת׃

2:24עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזָב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד ׃

2:25וַיִּתְבֹּשָׁשׁוּ וְלֹא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ הָאָדָם עֲרוּמִּים שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיִּהְיוּ

2:16 And YHWH Elohim commanded the man saying, of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.

2:17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

2:18 And YHWH Elohim said, it is not good for the man to be by himself. I will make for him a helpmeet as his opposite.

2:19 And YHWH Elohim formed from the ground all the living beings of the field and all the fowl of the heavens, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and whatever the man called any living soul, that was its name.

2:20 And the man called names to all the livestock, and to all the fowls of the heavens, and to all the beings of the field, but for the man there was not a helpmeet as his opposite.

2:21 And YHWH Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept, and he took one from his ribs and closed up the flesh in its stead.

2:22 And YHWH Elohim built the rib, which he took from the man, for a woman, and brought her to the man.

2:23 And the man said, this now is bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh. Because of this she will be called woman, for from man she was taken.

2:24 Therefore will a man leave his father and his mother and will cleave to his wife, and they will be one flesh.

2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.

3:1 וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכֹּל עֵץ הַגָּן׃

3:2וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ־הַגָּן נֹאכֵל׃

3:3 וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגָּן אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְּעוּ בּוֹ פֶּן־תְּמֻתוּן׃

3:4 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחָשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה לֹא־מוֹת תְּמֻתוּן׃

3:5 כִּי יֹדֵעַ אֱלֹהִים כִּי בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע׃

3:6 וַתֵּרֶא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי תַאֲוָה־הוּא לָעֵינַיִם וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן

גַּם־לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכַל׃

3:7 וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֵירֻמִּם הֵם וַיִּתְפְּרוּ עֲלֵה תְאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת׃

3:8 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּגָּן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ

הַגָּן׃

3:9 וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה׃

3:10 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בַגָּן וָאִירָא כִּי־עֵירֹם אָנֹכִי וָאֵחָבֵא׃

3:11 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עֵירֹם אָתָּה הֲמִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכָל־מִמֶּנּוּ אָכָלְתָּ׃

3:12 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִוא נָתְנָה־לִּי מִן־הָעֵץ וָאֹכֵל׃

3:13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי וָאֹכֵל׃

3:14 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל־גְּחֹנְךָ תֵלֵךְ

וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃

3:15 וְאֵיבָה אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב׃

3:16 אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל־אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ וְהוּא יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ׃

3:17 וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה

בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ בְּעִצָּבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃

3:18 וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה׃

3:19 בְּזֵעַת אַפֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוּבְךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לֻקָּחְתָּ כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה וְאֶל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב׃

3:20 וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה כִּי הִוא הָיְתָה אֵם כָּל־חָי׃

3:21 וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כָּתְנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם׃

3:22 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע וְעַתָּה פֶּן־יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וָחַי לְעֹלָם:

3:23 וַיְשַׁלְּחֵהוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִגַּן־עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר לֻקַּח מִשָּׁם:

3:24 וַיְגָרֶשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגַן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֵת לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לִשְׁמֹר אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים:

3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which YHWH Elohim had made, and he said to the woman, has Elohim indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

3:2 And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat the fruit of every tree of the garden.

3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden Elohim has said you shall not eat of it nor shall you touch it lest you die.

3:4 And the serpent said to the woman surely you shall not die.

3:5 Because Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it then your eyes will be opened and you will be like Elohim knowing good and evil.

3:6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes and desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she gave also to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

3:7 And the eyes of the two of them were opened and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves coverings.[84]

3:8 And they heard the sound of YHWH Elohim walking in the garden in the breeze of the day and hid themselves, the man and his wife, from the presence of YHWH Elohim among the trees of the garden.

3:9 And YHWH Elohim called to Adam and said to him where are you?

[84] Nakedness frequently signifies in Scripture sin, shame, or misery (cf. Exodus 32:15; Ezekiel 16:36; 2 Chronicles 28:19)

3:10 And he said I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.

3:11 And he said who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree whereof I commanded you that you should not eat?

3:12 And the man said the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate.

3:13 And YHWH Elohim said to the woman what is this you have done? And the woman said the serpent beguiled me and I ate.

3:14 And YHWH Elohim said to the serpent because you have done this, you are more cursed above all the livestock and above every beast of the field. Upon your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

3:15 And enmity I will put between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

3:16 To the woman he said, greatly I will multiply your pain and your conception, in pain you shall bring forth children, and your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.

3:17 And to Adam he said, because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you saying you shall not eat of it, cursed is the ground for your sake, in sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life.

3:18 And both thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you and you shall eat the herb of the field.

3:19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken, for dust you are and to dust you shall return.

3:20 And Adam called his wife’s name Eve because she was the mother of all living.

3:21 And YHWH Elohim made for Adam and his wife tunics of skin and clothed them.

3:22 And said YHWH Elohim, behold the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, now lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat and live forever.

3:23 Therefore YHWH Elohim sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he had been taken.

3:24 So he drove the man and he placed to the east of the garden of Eden a cherubim and a turning sword of flame to guard the way to the tree of life.

## Man's Creation and God's Prohibition to the Man

The Eden narrative begins with a description of that which was absent at the time of creation: the earth was a dry, barren desert, and so YHWH formed the first man, *adam*, from the dirt to work the soil.[85] While much could be said of the man's creation, it is outside the scope of the present thesis. What is really of significance is his creation from the ground itself;[86] the man is dependent upon the land from which he was created, and the land, in turn, is dependent upon the man.[87] Having formed the first human and planted a garden in Eden, YHWH outlines a single prohibition: not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. One of the most crucial elements for the depiction of Eve, the first woman, as the cause of sin and the 'Fall and Man,' and therefore for the depiction of gender relations, appears in the text before she has been created. By

[85] Trible argues that ha'adam is an earth creature is based on the premise that, although the grammatical gender of the word is male, the term does not refer to a male, but is a generic term for humankind. She therefore translates ha'adam as `earth creature'. God creates a woman from part of this earth creature and what remains is a man.

[86] וַיִּיצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם, עָפָר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה, וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו, נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים; וַיְהִי הָאָדָם, לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה : Genesis 2:7: Then the Lord God created man from the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

[87] Scholars have noted that the creation of humans from dirt or clay is a common ANE motif; a metaphor for gestation during pregnancy. See R.A. Simkins, *Creator and Creation: Nature in the Worldview of Ancient Israel* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994).

establishing a rule that could be disobeyed, God establishes at the same time the possibility for rebellion.

Throughout the history of the interpretation of this verse, several explanations have become popular amongst interpreters in their efforts to discern what, precisely, the Knowledge of Good and Evil is; sexual knowledge, maturation, ethical or moral knowledge, or universal knowledge.[88] All that is stated in the text is that the human will die if it eats of the Tree, but even then, it is not made clear whether this is because the fruit is lethal to consume, or because God will bring about the death of the human for his disobedience. It is further unclear whether the one who eats it will die on the same day that they consume the fruit, or if they will simply become mortal and eventually die, which would imply that the first human was created immortal.[89] For some interpreters, such as Walter Moberly, the narrative is vague due to the fact that it is the fact of prohibition and not what has been prohibited that is of significance.[90] The tree is forbidden, not because of what those who eat from it might gain or lose, but because God has forbidden it, which would imply that the narrative is not concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, maturation, or wisdom.[91] However, it is clear that knowledge, as it relates to human autonomy and the capacity for free will, is a central aspect of this narrative. Early interpretations of the text that sought to reconcile the wisdom elements of Genesis 2-3 with their stances on

[88] See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Continental Commentary,* trans. John J. Scullion (Fortress Press, 1994), 243-245; Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, *The Eden Narrative: A Literary and Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 2-3* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 61-63
[89] For a short summary, see: Holly Morse, *Encountering Eve's Afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2-4* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 12
[90] R.W.L. Moberly, "Did the Serpent Get it Right?" *The Journal of Theological Studies*, Vol. 39, 1 (1988):4.
[91] Moberly, "Did the Serpent Get it Right?" 4.

autonomy and sin illustrate the significance of knowledge and wisdom to the narrative, as will be illustrated in Chapter Four with regards to Ben Sira.

Regardless of how one might understand the interdiction, it is a fundamental to the story and to how interpreters have understood the character of Eve. What is of note is that she has not yet been formed and so the prohibition is addressed to the man alone in the second person masculine singular form. While the text explicitly shows the man hearing the prohibition directly from God, the narrator does not offer any explanation as to how she came to know the fruit was prohibited. Just as attempts were made in antiquity to integrate Genesis 1 and the Eden narrative, they also strove to rewrite the narrative so that Eve would be present when the command was issued to Adam. For example, Jubilees 2-4 retells the Edenic story in a manner that demonstrates an interest in gender and sexuality that stands in sharp contrast to that shown in the original Genesis texts. The prohibition is first mentioned in the context of the woman's response to the snake: "But the Lord said to us, 'You shall not eat from the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, and you shall not touch it lest you die" (3:18). The addition of "the Lord said to us" to the woman's response effects the first of several major shifts, each of which has significant impact on the characterization of the woman in the rewritten narrative. Both characters hear the command prohibiting the fruit of the tree, and both violate it.[92]

### Man's Loneliness or Aloneness and Incompatibility with the Other Creatures

In 2:18 God says that the aloneness of the man is not good, which seems to stand in sharp contrast to the absolute goodness of creation in the Genesis 1.[93] God's words illustrate that the man's state of being alone in itself contradicts the design of the world that has been created. Anne Lerner notes that most of the 158 occurrences of this term in

[92] For an example of how early interpretations of the text overcame the problems that this posed, see: Betsy Halpern Amaru *The Empowerment of Women in the Book of Jubilees* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 13-14.
[93] Marsha M. Wilfong, "Genesis 2:18-24," *Interpretation* 42 (1988): 58-63.

the Hebrew Bible stress singularity, rather than loneliness.[94] Edward Greenstein, looking at its use in a number of other contexts,[95] notes that it is often used in relation to a task or function that cannot be performed by oneself without any help.[96] If God, similarly, is assessing the man's state with regard to a task or function, it could be argued then that creating an '*ezer kenegdo*o' would be related to sharing the man's task, and not created with the purpose of solving his loneliness.

The term '*ezer kenegdo*o' is often translated as 'helper,' 'helpmeet,' 'helper suitable to him.' Translating *ezer* to mean 'helper' is misleading for contemporary readers in that it implies inferiority or subordination, while the Hebrew term itself carries no such connotations. It is a relational term describing a beneficial relationship, but does not necessarily specify position or rank.[97] The term *ezer* is used twenty-one times in the Hebrew Bible,[98] often used in reference to God,[99] or to help received in danger. While this is not the case in Genesis 2:18, it serves as proof of how the English 'helper' may be a mistranslation of the term '*ezer*'. When no suitable companions are found amongst those already created, it becomes clear that the '*ezer*' is intended to be of equal substance and merit. Used

[94] Anne Lapidus Lerner, *Eternally Eve: Images of Eve in the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, and Modern Jewish Poetry* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2007), 67.
[95] For example; in Exodus 18:17-18, Jethro says that it is not good for Moses to be the sole judge over the Israelites, recommending that he appoint officials to help him; in Numbers 11:14 and Deuteronomy 1:9 Moses says that he cannot carry the burden of the people's problems by himself.
[96] E.L. Greenstein, "God's Golem: The Creation of the Human in Genesis 2," in *Creation in Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. by H. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman (JSOTSS, 319; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 237.
[97] Walter Brueggeman, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone (Gn 2:23a)," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 32 (1970): 532-542.
[98] Genesis 2:18–20 (twice); Exodus 18:4b; Deuteronomy 33:7; 33:26; 33:29a; Psalms 20:2; 33:20; 70:5; 89:17; 115:9–11 (three times); 121:1–2 (twice); 124:8; 146:5; Isaiah 30:5; Ezekiel 12:14; Daniel 11:34; Hosea 13:9.
[99] Exodus 18:4; Deut. 33:7, 26, 29; Psalms 33.20; 115:9; 121:2; 124:8; 146:5.

in conjunction with the prepositional *kenegdo*, this phrase indicates their mutual equality; one who is in a position or status corresponding to him.[100]

The difficulty in interpreting '*ezer kenegdo*o' has led some interpreters to suppress it altogether, translating it as 'companion' instead.[101] One is forced to question, of course, what it is that the man needs 'help' with. God has put the man in the garden to till and keep it, but the woman will not be given the task of looking after the garden and will not share the man's lot of toiling the earth in Genesis 3:17-19.[102] Clines argues that the nature of the woman's 'help' will only become evident in Genesis 3:16, where she will be assigned the role of baring children,[103] but at this stage in the narrative this has not yet been mentioned and so does not appear a satisfactory explanation. Instead, I would agree with Matskevich's analysis that while woman is not portrayed as Adam's helper in toiling the land or taking care of the garden, she undoubtedly helps him at another, more significant level; the only time in the narrative in which the woman can be seen to act, eating of the forbidden tree in Genesis 3:6, is also the only time when she 'helps' her husband to do the same.[104] This moment stands at the centre of the entire plot, and so from the perspective of the overall narrative, woman's main role is in eating of the Tree of Knowledge and ensuring that the man does the same. It has been questioned, therefore, whether this is the 'help' that God envisioned. God's final creation, then, is more than a companion, but rather serves the purpose of sharing knowledge, or wisdom, or maturity

[100] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 30.
[101] Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press: 1978); Bal, *Lethal Love*, 115.
[102] Beverly Stratton, *Out of Eden: Reading, Rhetoric, and Ideology in Genesis 2-3* (JSOT SS 208; Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 37.
[103] David J. A. Clines, "What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Irredeemably Androcentric Orientations in Genesis 1-3," in *What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament* (JSOT SS, 9. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 25-48.
[104] Karalina Matskevich, *Construction of Gender and Identity in Genesis: The Subject and the Other*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019),15

with the man, also. As Matskevich makes clear, this would imply that God intended for his prohibition to be broken.[105]

## Woman's Creation from Man

As an indication of male superiority and female inferiority, it has been argued that since woman was created from the man's rib, she has a derivative existence as well as a dependent and subordinate status.[106] However, derivation cannot imply subordination, and the very symbolism of the rib points rather to their equality rather than a hierarchy between the man and woman. Peter Lombard commented that: "Eve was not taken from the feet of Adam to be his slave, nor from his head to be his ruler, but from his side to be his beloved partner."[107] Eve's secondary creation has also been used to advance arguments that she is inferior to Adam, but examination of the structure of the text makes it clear that a hierarchy between the sexes does not stem from the fact of man's prior creation. Davidson highlights the fact that Hebrew literature often makes use of an inclusio device,[108] in which central points are placed at the beginning and end of a unit, and it has been argued that this is the case in Genesis 2, which is itself cast in the form of an inclusio or "ring construction."[109] The creation of man at the narrative's beginning and the woman's creation at the end of the narrative, then, would correspond to each other in importance. The narrator further highlights their equality, it is noted, by employing the same number of words for the description of the creation of the

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[105] Matskevich, *Construction of Gender*, 15
[106] For example, see: Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 30; Nancy Tuana and Mildred Jeanne Peterson, *The Less Noble Sex: Scientific, Religious, and Philosophical Conceptions of Woman's Nature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 9; Rick R. Marrs, "In the Beginning: Male and Female (Gen 1-3)," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity, Volume 2*, ed. Carroll D. Osburn (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2007), 19.
[107] Quoted in: Stuart B. Babbage, *Christianity and Sex* (Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1963), 10
[108] For discussion of this construction, see: James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88, No. 1 (1969): 9-10; Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," 36.
[109] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 27.

man as for the creation of the woman.[110] The movement in Genesis 2 is therefore not from superior to inferior, or from leadership to submission, but from incompleteness to completeness.[111]

## One Flesh

The man's short pronouncement in Genesis 2:23-24 stresses the unity of the two beings, emphasizing not only their common nature of man and woman but also the fact that they are one unit, not two separate units.[112] They are, in essence, one and the same, and it is for this reason that the man immediately recognizes their similarity and compatibility. Lois Bueler observes that "she is created out of his body so that he may simultaneously enjoy both identity with and primacy over her, for she makes possible the distinct, male, progenitive, dominant human figure Adam becomes."[113] From this perspective, then, the man sees the woman not so much as a partner, or as an equal, but rather as a part of himself. I would, however, disagree with this assessment. The phrase 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' indicates that the physical oneness of the couple and although much can be deduced from this expression concerning a theology of sexuality, it does not in any sense support the notion of woman's subordination to man. The man's exclamation is one of recognition.

The expression 'bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' occurs elsewhere often in the Hebrew Bible,[114] and has been called the "kinship formula."[115] The standard

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[110] Trevor Dennis, *Sarah Laughed: Women's Voices in the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 13: Genesis 2:7 and 2:21b-22 both contain sixteen words describing the creation of man and woman respectively.
[111] John L. McKenzie, "The Literary Characteristics of Genesis 2-3," *TS* 15 (1954): 559.
[112] Matskevich, *Construction of Gender and Identity*, 22.
[113] Lois E. Bueler, *The Tested Woman Plot* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2001), 17
[114] Genesis 29:14; Judges 9:2; 2 Samuel 1:26; 5:1; 19:12; 20:33-34; Amos 1:9; Psalms 133:1.
[115] For examples, see: Kvam et al., *Eve and Adam*, 30; Brueggeman, "Flesh and Bone," 538-538; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930), 70: Skinner observes that in both Hebrew and Arabic, "flesh" is synonymous with clan or kindred group.

lexicon of the Hebrew Bible includes Genesis 2:24 under the general heading that defines the word *basar* as relatives; "one flesh" means "one kinship group,"[116] and such an emphasis on *basar* communicates more than mere physicality. This phrase appears to set the couple on equal footing and demonstrates that they form an "inseparable union."[117] The statement, therefore, underlines close relational ties, which cannot be dissolved.

Although the term "marriage" does not explicitly occur in the passage, it is usually assumed creation of the two gendered beings and the recognition of their unity takes place in this specific context and in this sense, Genesis 2:24 describes the nature and purpose of marriage. Not all interpretations view this verse as relating to a normative model for marriage; several exegetes reject the idea that this narrative is concerned with establishing a foundation of monogamous marriage due to the fact that the man is described as leaving his parents and clinging to his wife, rather than the opposite.[118] In this sense, the text is simply describing an aspect of human nature, not referring to a custom or institution. As such, Von Rad insists that this passage and that the idea of man and woman's 'sameness' is intended to explain the "extremely powerful drive of the sexes to each other." Man and woman "were originally one flesh. Therefore, they must come together again and thus by destiny they belong to each other."[119] Others, meanwhile, such as Warner, argue that rather than resenting a normative definition of

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[116] Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (*Peabody: Hendrickson, 1979)
[117] R. David Freedman, "Woman, A Power Equal to Man: Translation of Woman as a 'Fit Helpmate' for Man is Questioned," Biblical Archaeology Review 9, no 1 (1983): 56-58; Ed Noort, "The Creation of Man and Woman in Biblical and Near Eastern Traditions," in *The Creation of Man and Woman: Interpretations of the Biblical Narratives in Jewish and Christian Traditions* ed. Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 12
[118] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Continental Commentary,* trans. John J. Scullion (Fortress Press, 1994) 232.
[119] Von Rad, *Genesis,* 82-83.

marriage, Genesis 2:24 is instead an acknowledgment of the attraction that causes human beings to seek relationships, in opposition to the wishes of their parents, society, and religion.[120]

I would argue, however, that the text is concerned with offering a definition of what it views as the fundamental, foundational principles for all human marriages, clearly positing an ideal model on which such relationships should be based. This is due to the fact that the text outlines a number of steps to be taken, the strands or pillars upon which the Edenic marriage ideal is built: 'leaving', 'cleaving' or 'clinging', and 'one flesh.' In this view, marriage is divinely ordained, monogamous, and permanent, and involves the union of two individuals as one flesh. As such, I believe that the narrator sums up their understanding of marriage in this simple verse, establishing their view of the institution and what it entails.[121]

The first of three actions described in this verse is that man leaves, a verb which can sometimes denote abandonment, and which is employed frequently to describe Israel's forsaking of YHWH for false gods.[122] When considering the commandment to "honour" one's parents as in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16, the idea that one should "abandon" them in marriage seems unlikely. Samuel Terrien notes that: "To honour one's father and mother was the most sacred obligation of social responsibility… By dramatic contrast, the Yahwist theologian scandalously upsets, even shockingly reverses, this deep-rooted principle of tribal morality."[123] How, then, should this verb be understood? I would argue that rather than insinuating the man ought to forsake his parents, it instead implies something deeper than physical separation from the parents. It

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[120] Megan Warner, "'Therefore a Man Leaves His Father and His Mother and Clings to His Wife': Marriage and Intermarriage in Genesis 2:24," *JBL* 136, no. 2 (2017): 269–288.
[121] David J. Atkinson, *To Have and to Hold: The Marriage Covenant and the Discipline of Divorce* (London: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 76-77.
[122] Richard M. Davidson, "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning: Genesis 1-2*," Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Vol. 26, no. 1, (1988): 20.
[123]Sam Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 14-15.

could be understood as suggesting psychological distance, as by entering a marriage a man is to leave his responsibilities towards his parents so that he may enter into a new union with his wife.

What is particularly striking in 2:24 is that it is the *man* who is to leave his parents, as, of course, in such a society in which this text was written it was typically the wife left her mother and father. In effect, it is probable the statement proposes that they both are to leave and shed the ties that would encroach upon the independence and freedom of their relationship.[124] The narrative in Genesis 2:18-24 stresses the need and loneliness of the man; he is the only active partner in the scene and so the emphasis is not on who leaves but on the act of leaving.[125]

The second of three actions described in this verse is that a man clings to his wife, a verb often used in the Hebrew Bible as a technical covenant term for the permanent bond of Israel to the Lord, which is often described in terms of love and a marriage relationship.[126] Applied to the relationship between the sexes in 2:24, then, it seems to indicate a permanent, indissoluble marriage covenant. Davidson argues that when Adam spoke of Eve in 2:23a, he was expressing marriage covenant vows with God as his witness.[127] The divine paradigm for all future marriages as set forth in Gen 2:24 stresses the ingredient of intimacy.

The third part of Genesis 2:24, then, presents the nature and goal of marriage; following the leaving and cleaving, they are enabled to become one flesh. There are many interpretations of this, but often the expression “one flesh”

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[124] Davidson, “The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning,” 21.
[125] Obiorah Mary Jerome, “Detachment as a Prerequisite for a Happy Family: A Study of Genesis 2:24,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol 7 No 4 (2016)
[126] For examples, see: Deut 10:20; 11:22; 13:5; Josh 22:5; 23:8; 2 Sam 20:3; 2 Kgs 18:6.
[127] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 45. For further discussion of the covenant language in Genesis 2, see: Brueggemann, "Of the Same Flesh and Bone," 535; John S. Grabowski, *Sex and Virtue: An Introduction to Sexual Ethics* (Catholic Moral Thought; Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 33-38

is understood in physical terms, limiting it to marital sexual relations.[128] Such a limited explanation seems unlikely, however, as it fails to capture what is fully implied in this verse, which is perhaps the most significant verse in allowing for a concrete understanding of gender relations in Genesis 2. It occurs only once in the entire Hebrew bible, so it is impossible to derive a deeper meaning by a study of the wider biblical context. As has previously been noted, 'flesh' in this instance refers both to the flesh of one's body, and to one's blood relatives, and so becoming "one flesh" connotes mutual dependence and reciprocity. 2:24 clearly explains that marriage supersedes any other relationship and so the "flesh" here is also used to describe a new family established by the marital union.[129] "Becoming one flesh" therefore alludes to the sexual union of marriage but cannot be understood as limited to it. It instead is intended to incorporate every aspect of intimacy and interdependence which render the married couple a unified entity.[130] When they become one flesh, they are not simply uniting but reuniting and so the text suggests that oonly a being made from man can be someone with whom he longs to reunite, restoring the couple to their original wholeness. So seriously is the notion of attachment and joining taken, that the marital bond between man and woman takes precedence even over the bond with their parents.[131]

Genesis 2:24 clearly implies that the paradigmatic sexual relationship envisioned by God is monogamous, to be shared between two marriage partners. Davidson suggests that this implies the exclusiveness of the relationship which is ultimately rooted in the

[128] Sometimes this is based on 1 Corinthians 6:16, where even a single, accidental sexual relation with a prostitute is said to create "one flesh."
[129] René Gehring, *The Biblical "One Flesh" Theology of Marriage as Constituted in Genesis 2:24: An Exegetical Study of this Human-Divine Covenant Pattern, Its New Testament Echoes, and Its Reception History Throughout Scripture Focusing on the Spiritual Impact of Sexuality. (*Eugene, OR: Wipf&Stock, 2013)
[130] ibid.
[131] Robert A. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 61

monotheistic nature of YHWH. Just as YHWH created humanity for fellowship with himself, so the man and the woman made in God's image were to be exclusively devoted to each other in marriage.[132]

## The Serpent and the Fruit

Much of the debate regarding the Eden narrative has centred upon the nature or essence of the transgression of the couple in Genesis 3. While an in-depth examination of this intriguing verse is beyond the scope of the present study, it must be noted that the ambiguity of the text and the multiple complexities found within, have given rise to a multitude of different interpretations. As previously mentioned, the most crucial issue is how one is supposed to understand exactly what is meant by the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the eating of its fruit. This issue is bound together with multiple other matters: the fact that the couple become like the gods when they eat of the tree, the Tree of Life;[133] the serpent, which was a multivalent symbol in the Ancient Near East;[134] the nakedness of the couple;[135] the punishment of the woman in terms of sexual desire and labour pains; the curse upon the fruitfulness of the earth; and finally, the banishment of the couple from Eden.[136] Different interpretations of some of these features together with different emphases have led scholars to a myriad of interpretations of the nature of the transgression and what exactly it entails.

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[132] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 44.
[133] Also appears in Proverbs 3:18; 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; Revelation 2:7; 22:2,14,19; as well as 2 Esdras 2:12; 8:52; and 4 Maccabees 18:16. For a review of what the Tree of Life might symbolize, see: Douglas Estes, ed. *The Tree of Life* (Leiden: Brill, 2020).
[134] J J.H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol became Christianized* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2010)
[135] A. J. Hauser, "Genesis 2-3: The Theme of Intimacy and Alienation," in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature*, eds. D.J.A. Clines et al. (JSOT SS 19; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 25.
[136] Wallace, *The Eden Narrative*, 22

Many readings across history have understood Eve's sharing of the fruit with Adam as evidence of her sexually immoral and seductive nature. However, there is nothing in the text to support such a reading. It has also been argued that the phrase 'good and evil' is a reference to sexual knowledge.[137] This is in part due to the fact that the 'nakedness' of Genesis 2:25 and 3:7 has been understood to mean 'sexuality.'[138] Such an understanding, however, is not adequate, as references to sexuality precedes the consummation of the fruit with the Edenic marriage ideal established in the previous chapter. Furthermore, she opts to eat of the Tree because it could "make one wise." The popular association between the fruit and sexual is not made explicitly clear in the text, and is instead a result of its long reception history.[139]

One of the most significant factors in the Hebrew Bible account that has contributed to the identification of Eve as the vehicle for sin and death is her conversation with the snake, which appears to function as a catalyst for her subsequent decision to eat the prohibited fruit.[140] It is to Eve that the snake speaks, and not Adam, though he is also present in the scene.[141] Interpreters have argued that it was because of Eve's inferiority or weakness that the snake addressed her,[142] but the narrator offers no such indication, with no suggestion apparent that the snake believed the woman more gullible or morally weak, easier to deceive.[143] Even still, while traditional readings have viewed Eve as weak or

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[137] See, for example: Cuthbert A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis: Introduction and Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1952), 1:485-486; Robert Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and Qumran Scrolls," *JBL* 76 (1957): 123-138.
[138] Davidson, "The Theology of Sexuality in the Beginning," 122.
[139] The writings of Augustine can perhaps be credited with popularizing such a connection.
[140] Holly Morse, "And God Created Woman: An Exploration of the Meaning and the Myth of Eve" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2016)
[141] The original text pictures "her husband with her" when the fruit was consumed, despite his silence. Furthermore, the plural verbs in the dialogue with the serpent suggest that Adam was present. See: Larry Crabb, *The Silence of Adam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995)
[142] For example, see: Philo, QG 1:33: "woman is more accustomed to be deceived than man."
[143] Stratton, *Out of Eden*, 43.

morally flawed, a symbol of anti-intellect, in both being addressed by the serpent and in choosing to consume the fruit, an early Christian writing views Adam and Eve differently to the popular reading of the text: "Why did the serpent not attack the man, rather than the woman? You say he went after her because she was the weaker of the two. On the contrary. In the transgression of the commandment, she showed herself to be the stronger... For she alone stood up to the serpent. She ate from the tree, but with resistance and dissent and after being dealt with perfidiously. But Adam partook of the fruit given by the woman, without even beginning to make a fight."[144]

**The Consequences**

The functional roles bestowed upon Adam and Eve in the divine judgements of Genesis 3 correspond to their respective primary concerns following their expulsion from Eden, but the text does not attempt to exhaustively define the full scope of either a man or woman's roles in society. Instead, it outlines their roles in that which is fundamental for their survival.[145] Regardless of how one views the relationship between the sexes in Genesis 2, there is a clear change in their relationship following their consumption of the fruit, as well as a change in the couple's relationship with God and their relationship with the world in which they live.[146] Before their transgression there was no pain or suffering, but

[144] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book 1, Chapter 10. Quoted in Scott Hahn, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* (Michigan: Servant Publications, 1998), 65.
[145] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 77
[146] Traditionally, these verses have been interpreted as outlining the punishments imposed upon the human couple for disregarding God's prohibition against eating the fruit of knowledge; for examples, see: Von Rad, *Genesis*, 91-98. For some interpretations, this is not sufficient. Simkins, "Gender Construction," 49: Simkins suggests that the structure of the narrative suggests that the social roles ascribed to the woman and to the man are the inherent consequences of their acquisition of knowledge, not to be read as punishments. God's speech, then, serves to institute the couple's social roles and explain the implications of their newfound knowledge.

in Genesis 3:16a God sets the tone for their present reality, so markedly different from the conditions in Eden.

These verses cannot be understood outside of the assumed context in which they were written. Read as an etiological narrative explaining the harsh realities of ancient Israel life, especially when in contrast with life in the more fertile and better watered areas of the Ancient Near East,[147] the statements addressed to the couple prior to their expulsion depict the realities they will face. Therefore, the roles described or prescribed in these verses reflect how the ancient Israelites' understood gender, representing their basic ideas of appropriate behaviour for Israelite men and women; the first man's role as a farmer and the first woman's role as a mother symbolize the roles that belong to all men and women.[148] The man now has the knowledge to work the land, which is the very purpose for which he was originally created.

The sentence bestowed upon the man is, compared to Genesis 3:16, rather simple. Adam's punishment reflects the reality of men's lives in ancient Israel, but with regards to the issue of gender and sexuality, it could also be taken to hint at the hierarchy of the man over his wife; his sentence of hard labour, toil, and sweat is due to his error in following the actions of his wife. Amy Kalmanofsky states that: "God condemns Adam directly for obeying his wife, who convinced him to disobey God. Adam, therefore, is guilty of subverting the appropriate hierarchy in which God rules man, and man rules woman."[149]

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[147] "Eve," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and the New Testament*, eds. Carol Meyers, Toni Craven, Ross S. Kraemer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000)
[148] Simkins, "Gender Construction"
[149] Amy Kalmanofsky, *Gender Play in the Hebrew Bible: The Way the Bible Challenges Its Gender Norms* (London/NY: Routledge, 2017), 33.

## The Woman

God's words to the woman in Genesis 3:16 are, according to Carol Meyers: "perhaps the most problematic in all the Hebrew Bible from a feminist perspective."[150] It is important to note that, despite popular reference to 'the curse of Eve', the woman is not in fact cursed by God.[151] God's statement has been traditionally understood as a penalty, sentence, or judgement imposed upon Eve because she ate from the Tree.[152] The nature of the penalty placed upon the woman, when it is understood as such, can be seen to strengthen the physical associations between femininity and transgression, and has long provided justification for viewing a hierarchy between men and women. The biblical writer intended to indicate that God's prescription was not applicable to just the first man and woman but was to extend beyond to the human race, to remain in perpetuity.[153] The fate of the woman prescribed by God is then identified as a reversal of the perfect state of humankind described in Genesis 2; this, in turn, is understood as evidence that by committing the first sin, Adam and Eve initiated a fundamental change in the human condition, a fall from the state of perfection originally envisioned and intended by God.

Some would separate the first line into two separate pronouncements and translate, "I will increase your toil and your pregnancies."[154] Others, meanwhile, such as Linda Belleville, conclude that because the second clause in the sentence

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[150] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 113.
[151] Both the man and the snake are told why they are being judged, while Eve is not: Trible, *God and the Rhetoric*, 128
[152] For some interpreters, the scene functions as a legal process or a court trial, in which a verdict is issued by God. For examples, see: Marrs, "In the Beginning," 227-28; Aubrey Malphurs, *Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: Understanding Masculinity and Femininity from God's Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1996), 99.
[153] Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 70
[154] Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 105; Richard S. Hess, "The Roles of the Woman and the Man in Genesis 3," *Themilios 18* (1993): 16.

appears to restate the first clause, the first clause is probably intended as a hendiadys:[155] ‘'I will greatly increase your toil/pain in childbearing.’”[156]

The term ‘desire’ used in this verse appears only three times in the Hebrew Bible: Genesis 3:16, 4:7, and Songs 4:7. In this verse, the bride exclaims, "I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me." Its usage there seems to indicate a welcomed desire for intimacy; something positive.[157] J. M. Sprinkle seems to agree that this verb is best understood in light of Song 7:11, as an attraction or urge that would lead a woman to marry in spite of the consequences of marriage.[158]

Morse, on the other hand, outlines how it can be translated in two ways; as ‘desire and longing,’ or as ‘driving.’ She argues that in Genesis 3:16 the term is intended to imply a power-based relationship, with the term suggesting that the woman will be ruled or enslaved by the object of her desire or driving—the man. This understanding seems to be supported by the following statement, generally translated as “and he shall rule over you.” Traditionally, this expression has justified the male-female hierarchy, and male domination-female submission. Morse notes that the Latin Vulgate intensifies male dominance over the woman further than the original Hebrew by removing the woman’s desire entirely, placing an emphasis instead on the man’s power over her.[159]

I would argue that the phrase, however, does not imply the notion of an overbearing exercise of power. There are a number of passages where it is used in reference of offering protection or care,[160] and Davidson notes that it is used also in

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[155] See: Ronald James Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, edited by John C. Beckman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 29
[156] Linda L. Belleville, *Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 194
[157] Irvin A. Busenitz, "Woman's Desire for Man: Genesis 3:16 Reconsidered,” Grace Theological Journal 7.2 (1986): 203-12
[158] Joe M. Sprinkle, "Sexuality, Sexual Ethics," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and D.W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 742
[159] Morse, *Eve’s Afterlives*, 25.
[160] 2 Sam 23:3; Prov 17:2; Isa 40: 10; 63:19; Zech 6:13

Scripture to describe the rulership of YHWH and the future Messiah.[161] Carol Meyers, meanwhile, has suggested that the man does not place the woman under unequivocal rulership, but rather that he will dominate the woman's desire in order to balance the fear she might feel about childbearing. Consequently, she suggests the translation as: "he shall predominate over you," which preserves the concept of rule yet allows for the less than absolute imposition of male will. "Predominate" manages to avoid the idea of absolute authority and instead accounts for the context in which these lines are written.[162] This, I believe, is a more realistic translation; the realities and demands of life in ancient Israel justify why the text issues an edict that the woman's sexuality is controlled by her husband.

No matter how the power balance or imbalance is understood in this verse, it is clear that the relationship prescribed in Genesis 3:16 is not presented as applicable to all man-woman relationships. The context is specifically that of marriage, and so the submission of wife to husband stated here cannot automatically be broadened into a general prescription mandating the subordination of all women to all men. Extending the husband's rule prescribed in this passage so as to refer to men's "rule" over women in general, it would be necessary to simultaneously extend the desire of the wife to include the desire of women for men in general, not just their own husband. This does not seem to be the intent of the passage. As such, broadening the prescription of 3:16, which is specific to the intimacy of the marriage relationship, to become a divinely prescribed mandate for the leadership of men over women in general, does not seem to be justified.[163] Instead, I would

[161] For example: Judg 8:23; Isa 40:10; Mic 4:14; Zech 6:13; 9:10.
[162] Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve*, 88-97
[163] See: Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 78.

argue, that when read in its context, it is entirely concerned with the sexual relationship between husband and wife. Reading the verse within its assumed Iron Age situation supports the idea that “rule” should be understood in relation to the pregnancies mentioned in the first half of the verse. A woman might resist repeated pregnancies because of the dangers of death in childbirth, but she will “desire” or be “driven” toward her partner.

## Chapter Conclusion

A close examination of Genesis 2-3 reveals that many of our inherit assumptions about the fundamental themes therein find no basis is in the text itself. In the Biblical tradition, Genesis 1 and 2 both offer differing, even conflicting, narratives on the creation of the primordial couple. In Genesis 1:26-27, there is no discernible difference between man and woman, created together and in the image of God. The Eden narrative, however, offers a far more complex and ambiguous tale concerning mankind’s creation. It is because of the text’s ambiguity that so many interpretations of this text exist, often in conflict or tension with each other. One is forced to recognize that an objective reading of the text is nearly impossible, as it is almost inevitable that one reads their own context, ideals, preconceptions, back into it. As a result, interpretations of this text will continue to evolve, as we reckon with new methodologies and hypotheses, and many more of the text’s layers will continue to be exposed. Having established the key themes and issues of Genesis 2-3, it is now possible to turn to our earliest extant references to it, outside of the Hebrew Bible.

# Chapter Four

***Abstract***

*The Book of Ben Sira is a key text in the reception history of Genesis 2-3 and the theme of gender therein, with Sirach 25:24 considered as the founding base upon which later interpretations of Eve as the cause of mankind's fall and the origin of sin were built. While it cannot be stated that a reference to Eve was not the author's intention, there is little within the text of Sirach to conclude that it was. According to Sirach 17:1-2, mortality was God's intention for creation since the beginning; he does not seem to associate sin or death with the actions of the primordial couple. The identification of Eve as the subject of this verse continues to be the topic of debate, but it is not the only reference to the primordial couple in this text as the Creation narratives are an important point of departure for many of Sira's reflections and instructions. Ben Sira does not provide a direct commentary on the Biblical text and though he does not offer a systematic theology of sin and free will, it is clear that he did believe in the reality and prevalence of sin on the one hand, and on the other, that human beings have the radical freedom of choice to be virtuous or wicked.*[164] *Human freedom ensures that there is hope even for the sinner: he can repent.*[165] *His view of knowledge and wisdom as God's gift, with free will and death part of the natural order, as in*

[164] For examples of Ben Sira's treatment of human will in light of the Genesis creation accounts, see; G.T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 19-83; Luis Alonso Schôkel, "The Vision of Man in Sirach 16:24-17:14," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. John G. Gammie et al. (Homage Series 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1978), 235-45; Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira," in *Of Scribes and and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture,* ed. Craig A. Evans (Library of Second Temple Studies 50-51; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 69-113.

[165] W. Skehan and A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 83

*Sirach 15:11-20 and 17:1-10, seems to stand in tension with later writers who identified the sin of the Garden as the desire for wisdom, and the punishment for that sin as moral corruption and death. Nonetheless, the text of Sirach has had a fundamental influence over the reception history of Genesis 2-3, with regards to how certain themes are understood—knowledge, wisdom, mortality, morality, sin, and, of course, gender and sexuality.*

## Ben Sira—Background

The earliest datable allusions[166] to the story of Adam and Eve following Genesis are found in the wisdom book of Ben Sira. It is widely accepted that the Book of Ben Sira was written in Hebrew in Jerusalem in the early second century BCE, circa 195-175 BCE.[167] The Hebrew text was translated into Greek by the author's grandson, who identifies himself in the prologue, after his arrival in Egypt.[168] Although there are sources that testify to the use of Ben Sira by Jews during the late antique and medieval periods, because it was not canonized in the Jewish tradition,[169] the Hebrew original eventually was lost. In 1986, fragments of Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira were discovered from the Cairo Genizah, and since then, further fragments have been discovered at Qumran and Masada. The book is generally known by different titles: the Wisdom/Book of Ben Sira, or some variant of this title; Sirach, which is often used to distinguish the book from its author; Ecclesiasticus, which is found in Vulgate manuscripts.[170]

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[166] This is probably not the earliest reflection of Genesis 2–3; the Book of the Watchers in 1 Enoch 1–36 is probably earlier, or the two may be roughly contemporary. Collins, *Before the Fall*, 296

[167] D. Williams, "The Date of Ecclesiasticus," *VT* 44 (1994): 563-66; John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism from Sirach to 2 Baruch* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988).

[168] Some scholars suggest that both the translation and prologue should be dated after 117 BCE.

[169] Sirach is accepted as Canonical in some Christian tradition and is considered among the apocryphal books in others.

[170] For consistency, I will refer to the author as Ben Sira and his literary work as Sirach.

The core focus of the text is to instruct young men on how to live wisely and in accordance with the law, preparing them to become scribes, students of law, ambassadors, advisors, or to occupy similarly authoritative positions based on their wisdom, knowledge, and commitment to the law. Sirach 51:23 suggests that the setting in which this instruction took place was a school, or a centre for the study, archiving, and interpretation of biblical books.[171] Ben Sira views his work as a major influence both on his pupils and those who seek wisdom. Sheppard highlights that in the Second Temple era "wisdom became a theological category associated with understanding of canon… In this sense, wisdom became a hermeneutical construct for interpreting sacred Scripture."[172] Some scholars argue that Ben Sira brought together the wisdom tradition and the Torah as a way of recasting the wisdom framework.[173]

Compared with other Wisdom writings, it shares both similarities and differences in terms of content and language. Skehan and Di Lella categorize Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Wisdom of Solomon as examples of what is labelled 'existential wisdom,' while 'recipe wisdom' is concerned with everyday beliefs, attitudes, customs.[174] Ben Sira includes both forms of wisdom, offering practical advice that leads towards righteousness and "fear of the Lord." It is evident that Ben Sira drew on Proverbs and adapted its insights for his own context; his dependence on Proverbs can be detected throughout the text, and innumerable scholars have produced lists of parallels between Proverbs and Ben Sira.[175]

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[171] John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 30: "Ben Sira made his living by instructing the well-to-do."
[172] Sheppard, *Wisdom as Hermeneutical*, 13
[173] Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 54; E.J. Schnabel, *Law and Wisdom from Ben Sira to Paul* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1985), 25-63.
[174] Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 23-33
[175] Skehan and Di Lella, *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 43.

# Hellenism and Ben Sira

Ben Sira's attitude towards foreigners has received contradictory interpretations in critical research. Many scholars hold the view that Ben Sira was hostile towards Hellenism, but it is clear that he was familiar, to some extent, with Hellenistic social mores, as is expressed in 31:12-32:13 where he deals with appropriate conduct at banquets. Collins uses this as proof of the fact that Sira's "familiarity with, and acceptance of, Hellenistic banquets shows that he was no zealous opponent of Hellenistic culture as such."[176] His work undoubtedly exhibits at least some similarities to Hellenistic ethics, and it is undoubtedly possible that Ben Sira was to some extent influenced by Stoic ideals. While it is beyond the scope of the present work to ascertain to what degree Ben Sira was familiar with and influenced by Hellenistic philosophy, his attitudes regarding the need to control one's passions and desires bear notable resemblance to a combination of ideals characteristic of Stoic philosophy: self-sufficiency and freedom from passions.[177]

Sanders states that Ben Sira was willing to utilize and appropriate Hellenistic ideas and themes when it could be adapted to suit his purpose: "it is not that Ben Sira opposed Hellenic ideas as such and he is even able, apparently, to read and use at least one Hellenic writer; rather, he is entirely open to Hellenic thought as long as it can be Judaized. What he opposes is the dismantling of Judaism."[178] As such, despite the probable use of Greek sources and a certain familiarity with Hellenistic culture, Sira's text is thoroughly Jewish.

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[176] Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 33.
[177] Balla, Ben Sira, 6.
[178] J.T. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom* (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983), 58.

# Women in Ben Sira

Many verses in Sirach are comprised of advice pertaining to everyday issues that relate to gender relations in some capacity, including marriage, family life, self-control, desires and passions, and sexual promiscuity. Trenchard believed that Ben Sira's discussions relating to women were motivated by a personal bias against them,[179] contending that Ben Sira's comments about women "are among the most obscene and negative in ancient literature."[180] Despite writing specifically with a male audience in mind, Ben Sira pays a great deal of attention to women.[181] About 100 verses speak of them, and in such verses, women always appear in relation to a man whose role determines the nature of the relationship. Women are constructed from the viewpoint of the male and so even when he speaks of a woman in positive terms, her goodness is solely from the perspective of the man. Ben Sira gives no outward indication that a woman holds any value in and of herself. His regular point of departure for such discussions is an analysis as to what benefits or damages the different relations that a man has might bring to his person. Balla, analysing passages thematically in search of what they might express about the author's attitude to gender and sexuality, notes that Sirach provides us with a particularly valuable insight into his own complex understanding of social relations.[182]

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[179] W. C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis* (Chico: Brown Judaic Studies, 1982). See also: Claudia V. Camp, "Understanding a Patriarchy: Women in Secondary Century Jerusalem Through the Eyes of Ben Sira," in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World,* ed. L. Amy Jill (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 1-39.
[180] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 172.
[181] There are limits in the text as to the interaction between men and women. There are no instructions, for example, regarding male-female friendships or acquaintanceships.
[182] Ibolya Balla, *Ben Sira on Family, Gender, and Sexuality*, (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 2011).

Camp argued that for Ben Sira, living in an honour-shame or honour-disgrace society, women serve only to help or hinder a man's honour. A man could acquire or lose honour through the women with whom he interacted, and this was especially related to a woman's sexual conduct, or misconduct.[183]

"Mothers" are the only category of women in Sirach that escape any form of criticism, and are in fact to be honoured by their children (3:2-6). Those who anger their mothers are said to be "cursed by the Lord" (3:16), and all men must continuously keep in view the pain their births caused (7:27). Daughters, on the other hand, are continuously condemned throughout this text. Ben Sira does not speak positively of a man's daughters on a single occasion, as they are always seen to be in danger of bringing their father shame. Sirach 26:10-12 describes daughters as if their main characteristic was their sexuality, as a father must be vigilant regarding her chastity (7:24) and a father who gives his daughter away in marriage "completes a great task" (7:25). Ben Sira's concerns regarding the raising of daughters stands in sharp contrast to other Second Temple works, such as Tobit, which will be addressed in Chapter Five. While the Book of Tobit also focuses on the need to maintain sexual morality for the sake of one's family, and one's relationship to God, it displays a very different attitude to this issue than Sira does.

While mothers and daughters are both portrayed as entirely deserving of either honour and respect, or condemnation, respectively, married women are depicted with more nuance. They are divided into two basic ethical categories: good wives and bad wives. This division, made from a completely androcentric perspective, is exclusively concerned with the happiness, desires, and authority of the husband. Ben Sira writes a great deal more about the evil woman or wife (25:13-26; 26:5-12, 22-27) than about the

[183] Claudia V. Camp, "Honor and Shame in Ben Sira: Anthropological and Theological Reflections" in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference*, ed. Pancratius C. Beentjes (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997), 171-188

good one (26:1-4, 13-18). Ben Sira seems to believe destructiveness is a part of the very nature of women and in his description of the bad wife, he considers a wide variety of negative domestic scenarios ranging from drunken wives to wives who are overly talkative, from wives hard to control to those who support their husbands financially, from suppression to divorce.[184]

## Sirach 25:26

A clear allusion to Genesis 2:24 can be seen in Sira's discussion of the bad wife in 25:26, whereby he writes that if one's wife does not "walk according to your hands," one is advised to divorce her. The expression "if she does not walk according to your hands" or "walk by your hand" is somewhat open-ended, and could, arguably, encompass all "possibilities in favour of the husband, and can be understood as a broad interpretation of the legislation on divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1-4."[185] Rather than explicitly stating "divorce," however, Ben Sira uses the words, "cut her away from your flesh." This verse is not preserved in Hebrew. While most scholars agree that this verse is intended as a reference to divorce, they are not agreed on the exact meaning of "cut her away from your flesh." I would argue that the verse is very clearly intended as an allusion to Genesis 2:24 and the one flesh union found therein. It further appears to indicate Sira's understanding of marriage as a blood relationship.

This, then, would provide a clear example of an early allusion to Genesis 2:24 in the context of divorce, which bears a noteworthy contrast to the use of this verse in a discussion of divorce in the Gospel tradition. Sira does not prohibit or

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[184] Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 57

[185] Nuria Calduch-Benages, "'Cut Her Away from your Flesh.' Divorce in Ben Sira," in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira: Papers of the Third International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 83.

warn against divorce, as Jesus does, and does not use Genesis 2:24 as a prooftext against separating from one's spouse, who he still understood as part of one's own self. The indissolubility of the "one flesh" marriage union is something that is seized upon by Jesus in Mark and Matthew in his own warning against divorce but for Sira, divorce is permitted, even if it entails losing a part of one's own body.

## Sirach 25:24

מֵאִשָּׁה תְּחִלַּת עָוֹן, וּבִגְלָלָהּ גָּוְעָנוּ יַחַד

There is, in the discussion of the bad wife in Sirach 25, another potential reference to the Genesis creation narrative, commonly translated as: "In a woman was sin's beginning: on her account we all die."[186] This passage has generated a substantial debate given the context of this phrase, and how it has been understood, and misunderstood, throughout the text's history. The unnamed female in this verse is identified almost universally as the woman of the creation account, Eve,[187] and it has long been understood as a reference to her transgression in the Garden and the subsequent punishment meted by God to all mankind—sin and death.[188] Collins asserts that "there can be no doubt that Sirach 25:24 represents an interpretation of Genesis 3, and that it is the earliest extant witness to the view that Eve was responsible for the introduction of sin and death."[189]This apparent nexus between woman, sin, and death from Ben Sira's perspective has become crucial for how the portrayal of gender relations in Genesis 2-3 is interpreted as it appears

[186] RSVA translation. KJVA translates this verse as: Of the woman came the beginning of sin, and through her we all die.
[187] John R. Levison, "Is Eve to Blame? A Contextual Analysis of Sirach 25:24," CBQ 47 (1985): 617-23. Levison notes that interpreters agree with amazing unanimity that Sira attributes the origin of sin to Eve.
[188] B.L. Malina, 'Some Observations on the Origin of Sin in Judaism and St Paul', CBQ, 31 (1969): 24. Malina argues that this is the: "oldest tradition ascribing the first sin and its consequences mainly or exclusively to Eve."
[189] Malina "Some Observations," 67.

Ben Sira ignores Adam's guilt and focuses on Eve, making her the cause of mankind's eternal toil and grief.[190]

Sirach 25:24 is situated within Sira's reflection on the 'wicked woman/wife,' not as part of Ben Sira's approach to sin or to death.[191] As Kugel demonstrates, in Sira's view humankind "had always been intended for mortality, his very creation from the earth embodying his intended end after the 'numbered days and time.'"[192] Immortality comes from having virtuous descendants and a lasting good reputation (Sir 44:10–15).[193] The view that humanity was always meant to be mortal is again found in Sirach 41:4, where we are told that death is "the Lord's decree for all flesh," and not a punishment.[194] The idea of such a link between Eve and the origin of human mortality in Ben Sira is a tenuous one, given the multitude of passages within this text that affirm Sira did not believe mankind was intended for immortality, on the one hand, and which indicate he believed God created mankind with the knowledge of good and evil, on the other. If Sirach 25:24 is indeed a reference to Genesis 3, this verse strongly contradicts his view of creation elsewhere.

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[190] Ellis attributes the identification of this woman as Eve to Augustine, who used the Latin version of Sir 25:24 as a proof-text for the doctrine of original sin. Ellis, "Is Eve the Woman," 723.

[191] Collins, *Jewish Wisdom*, 80-81. On death caused by Adam's sin, see John J. Collins, "Before the Fall: The Earliest Interpretations of Adam and Eve," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honour of James L. Kugel*, ed. H. Najman and J.H. Newman (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 296-7.

[192] Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 239. Perdue notes that "unlike the negative implications of 'knowledge of good and evil'" in Genesis, for Ben Sira, "wisdom is freely given and does not bear the onus of rebellion against divine rule."

[193] Jeremy Corley, "Sirach 44:1–15 as Introduction to the Praise of the Ancestors," in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengellér (JSJSup 127; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 175–78.

[194] It has been noted that Sirach 41:3-4 strongly parallels Greek philosophical ideas concerning human life. His theology of a limited human lifespan is in line with the Stoic view of divine providence in the ordering of the world, and as such, Stoic philosophy may well have stimulated his thinking regarding the limited lifespan of human beings as part of the providential ordering of the universe. See: A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*. Vol. 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 156; Sharon L. Mattila, "Ben Sira and the Stoics: A Re-examination of the Evidence," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119 (2000): 473-501.

## Genesis 2-3 and Free Will in Ben Sira

Ben Sira paraphrases, alludes to, and rewrites selective aspects of the creation narrative but despite such references, he passes over many of the core narrative details of Genesis 2-3; references to Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the serpent, the curses, expulsion from the garden, and, of course, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.[195] Such omissions are made based on the fact that the text places an obvious emphasis on human free will, individual responsibility, and moral autonomy, rather than on divine determinism; throughout the text, it is stressed that humans are in control over their own inclinations. Klawans notes Sira's response to those who hold a more deterministic view of sin: "By denying human beings the freedom of choice – and the moral responsibility that comes along with it-Ben Sira believes his opponents implicate God in the commission of evil."[196] Ben Sira therefore uses Genesis 2-3 to assert that the ability to distinguish good and evil is an essential and divinely-given attribute. Adams notes that moral discernment is a positive gift for Ben Sira rather than a forbidden fruit and as such, Ben Sira offers a creative interpretation of Genesis 2-3 that places an emphasis on self-responsibility and human capacity to choose, as part of a greater attempt to align the Eden narrative closely with assumptions characteristic of the wisdom tradition.[197]

The most remarkable feature of his discussion of Genesis 2-3 is his statement that God granted humankind the ability to deliberate between good and evil at the moment of creation (15:14; 17:1-7), which makes it impossible to blame God for one's subsequent

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[195] Shane Berg, "Ben Sira, the Genesis Creation Accounts, and the Knowledge of God's Will," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 132, no. 1 (2013): 139–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/23488241.
[196] Jonathan Klawans, "Josephus on Fate, Free Will, and Acnient Jewish Types of Compatibilism," *Numen* 56 (2009): 52.
[197] Samuel Adams, *Wisdom in Transition: Act and Consequence in Second Temple Instructions* (Brill, 2008), 186

choices. It should be noted that the text does not appear to articulate any idea that individuals are predisposed towards good or evil, but are simply granted the ability to choose one or the other; Sira expresses a neutral state from which humans can make a choice.[198]

Sirach's positive valuation of wisdom is dialled up and any negative connotations of wisdom that may exist in Genesis 2-3 are entirely muted, aiming to highlight the elements of these chapters that support his perspective on human autonomy. As such, to read Sirach 25:24 as a reference to Eve and the Fall of Man appears to contradict the text's own arguments for individual autonomy and responsibility. Thus, ignoring most of the potentially negative elements of Genesis, Ben Sira has instead emphasized God's providential goodness towards the human race. As Collins argued, there is nothing within this interpretation that suggests Sira understood the Genesis narrative as regaling a Fall of mankind, and sin and death cannot thus be attributed to the actions of the primaeval couple.[199]

## Resolving 25:24

The supposed contradiction that exists in Sira's view on the origins of human mortality can be resolved, either by denying that Sirach 25:24 refers to Eve,[200] or by asserting that Sirach 17:1 does in fact see death as a penalty for primeval human sin in accord with Gen 3:19.[201] There are scholars who disagree with the identification of Eve with this woman, and perhaps the most prominent

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[198] Brand, *Evil Within and Without*, 102-106.
[199] Luis Alonso Schôkel, "The Vision of Man in Sirach 16:24-17:14," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. John G. Gammie et al. (Homage Series 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1978), 236–38. Collins, Jewish Wisdom, 59: "The most surprising aspect of this meditation on Genesis is that it ignores the sin of Adam completely... In chapter 17, death is not considered a punishment for sin.
[200] Levison, "Is Eve to Blame?" 617.
[201] Sheppard, *Wisdom*, 76.

dissenter is Levison, who states that "Sirach 25:24 refers not to Eve but to the evil wife."[202] Levison has interpreted Sirach 25:24, based upon the context of the verse and comparison with a poem from 4Q, that the verse refers not to Eve but to the wicked wife, reading it instead as: "From (one's) wife is the beginning of sin, and because of her we (husbands) all die."[203] As Levison notes, this forms a contrast with the good wife in 26:1, who doubles her husband's days.[204] The context of 25:24 seems to determine that Ben Sira's primary focus is on the wicked wife; this verse is not meant to reflect his primary view of sin. Death, in this verse, it appears may well be intended as a hyperbolic expression to describe the impact that a bad marriage has on the husband; a bad, wicked, or uncontrollable wife cuts short her husband's days by causing him grief.

Teresa Ann Ellis, meanwhile, concludes that due to a multitude of dissimilarities between the Hebrew and the Greek, Ben Sira was not alluding to the woman in Genesis 3.[205] She instead identifies the figure as Pandora, who, similarly to Eve, was a prominent, recognizable cultural figure, in light of Sira's Hellenistic context. She notes that while the author may have written with Pandora in mind, a growing link between Eve and Pandora may have had an impact on how the text was read.[206] While I do not agree with Ellis' argument that Pandora was the intended wicked wife in this verse, favouring, instead, Levison's contention that the woman is best understood simply as a wicked wife, the idea that the conflation of Eve with Pandora may have affected how the verse was interpreted certainly merits consideration due to the fact that while a close examination of both narratives shows them to be notably dissimilar, interpretations throughout history have

[202] Levison, "Is Eve to Blame?" 622
[203] Levison, "Is Eve to Blame?" Levison focuses on the interpretation of γυναικὸς as wife.
[204] Levison, "Is Eve to Blame?" 621.
[205] Ellis, "Is Eve the Woman," 723-742.
[206] Ibid.

attempted to combine the two myths.[207] Frederick Teggart states that the pattern of both myths is the same: "First, a state of bliss; second, the mischievous activity of the woman; third, a description of evils. Consequently, it might reasonably be inferred that Hesiod, the Greek who wrote of Pandora, used a variant of a narrative that was also utilized in the story of the Garden of Eden."[208]

While I would favour Levison's thesis, that the woman is best understood simply as an evil wife, it cannot be denied that the popular identification of Eve as the woman in this verse has provided a foundation for the tradition of Eve as initiator of sin and death. Regardless of whether a link between Eve and the bad wife was intentional on Sira's part, this is how the text has been received. As such, Ben Sira's portrayal of male-female relations, seen to be justified with intentional or unintentional allusions to Genesis, has had a significant influence on the reception of Genesis 2-3.

## Chapter Four—Conclusion

Ben Sira's allusions to the Eden narrative, considered the earliest datable references to this text, have been historically significant in forming a basis upon which later interpreters built their own readings of the Adam and Eve story. However, read on its own merits, the text appears somewhat contradictory in its portrayal of the origins of sin and death, if we accept Sirach 25:24 to be a reference to Eve as the primordial woman. Despite the popularity of such an

[207] For example, Dora and Erwin Panofsky have illustrated that early Christian writers had more interest in Pandora than pagan Roman writers. "The Fathers of the Church are more important for the transmission - and transformation-of the myth of Pandora than the secular writers; in an attempt to corroborate the doctrine of original sin by a classical parallel, yet to oppose Christian truth to pagan fable, they likened her to Eve." Dora and Erwin Panofsky, *Pandoras Box - The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 11.
[208] Frederick J. Teggart, "The Argument of Hesiod's Works and Days." *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 8, no. 1 (1947): 50

identification, there is little in the text itself to support it, and of the alternative identities that have been proposed, I would agree with Levison's proposition that the woman is simply the "wicked wife" referred to in previous verses. This verse, however, is not the only allusion to the primordial couple in Sirach. Sira's reference to divorce as the cutting off of one's flesh is, I would argue, intended as an allusion to the idea of the married couple as one flesh in Genesis 2:23-24. The context in which this allusion occurs appears to stand in contrast to other references to the "one flesh" union in late Second Temple literature, as another instance in which it appears in the context of divorce is with objective of condemning the separation of the married couple. Sira does appear to oppose divorce, even if his only endorsement of separation is when faced with an erring or unruly wife. Regardless of the unique situation in which this metaphor for marriage appears, it would suggest the possibility of an emerging tradition which considers the married couple as one flesh, one being, which other writers of this era would continue to develop.

# Chapter Five

***Abstract***

*The Deuterocanonical Book of Tobit is considered one of the "best extant examples of an ancient Semitic short story."[209] The text is primarily concerned with questions relating to life in the Diaspora, namely loyalty and commitment to God, endogamy, and righteous living. The marriage of Tobias and Sarah is one of the most central features of the plot of this narrative, offering an unparalleled insight into what could be considered the main concerns and purposes of marriage, and the manner in which the marital union was understood in the particular context in which this text originated. The couples in Tobit also illustrate how gender roles within marriage were understood. Of particular note is the emphasis that the text places on the role of God in human marriage, positing that such relationships could be divinely determined. This text also looks towards the union of Adam and Eve as the ideal towards which couples should strive, hinting at a tradition which understood the text of Genesis 2:4b-3:24 and the male-female relationship therein in a favourable light.*

## The Book of Tobit—Background

It is assumed that the Book of Tobit, named after its principal character, was composed in Aramaic or Hebrew in the late third century or early second century BCE, although the location of its composition has not been determined. Egypt, Persia, Syria, Assyria, and Palestine have all been proposed, but there is a lack of scholarly consensus.[210] perhaps emanating from orthodox circles in Egypt.

[209] H. Gross, *Tobit, Judit.* (Wurzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1987), 8.
[210] Robert J. Littman, Tobit: The Book of Tobit in Codex Sinaiticus (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), xxviii-xxix

As the Book of Tobit was not accepted as part of the canon of the Hebrew Bible it remained an 'outside book' among Jewish communities, while it did achieve varying degrees of canonicity in the Christian churches.[211] Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls,[212] the text was known only from various ancient translations. The most important of these were the versions in Greek and Latin, but the book was preserved also in ancient Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic, and Syriac translations.[213] The Tobit texts from Qumran also indicate that it was read in the late Second Temple period, both in Hebrew and in Aramaic.[214]

In recent decades, studies related to the Book of Tobit have been concerned with piecing together manuscripts and fragments in order to establish some sense of the original text.[215] Debate and speculation were ignited in the nineteenth century when the manuscript Sinaiticus was discovered in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mt. Sinai, renewing interest in Tobit. As a result of the recovery of fragments of Tobit discovered in Qumran Cave 4 in 1952, further interest in the text was again sparked, based upon a particular line of inquiry that focused upon questions of nationalism, exile, and the Diaspora, which have all played a central role in the text's re-evaluation.[216] A key aspect of the book that has been central to scholarly discussions has been the status of Tobit and his family as exiles from the land of Israel, due to the fact that the implications of their exilic status essentially drive the plot of the book. The absence of a secure Jewish home, and the uncertainty and tenuousness of life and existence in exile, serve as constant, underlying

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[211] Shalom Goldman, "Tobit and the Jewish Literary Tradition," in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Mark Bredin, (London/NY: T&T Clark, 2006), 90.
[212] Discussed in Chapter X
[213] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature; Berlin/NY: de Gruyter, 2003), 1
[214] Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 1.
[215] Mark Bredin, "Introduction," in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Mark Bredin (London/NY: T&T Clark, 2006), 2
[216] Goldman, "Tobit and the Jewish Literary Tradition," 90.

themes throughout the narrative. Bellia describes it as a work of fiction which incorporates "didactic, hymnic, and prophetic elements, recounting an edifying event in a family environment."[217] In a sense, Tobit aligns closely with wisdom literature, as part of its function appears to be in offering instruction and counsel on righteous living, in its specific Diasporic context. This, of course, would be of noteworthy relevance to text's Second Temple audience, across the Mediterranean.

## The Book of Tobit—Sources

It is clear that the text's author was well acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. The Book of Tobit is indeed modelled on different stories found in Genesis, and especially shares much in common with aspects of the patriarchal narratives.[218] Tobit highlights the fact that what binds both the early Israelites and those of Tobit's era together is a shared a belief in YHWH as God, who established Israel as the descendants of Abraham, solidifying them as God's people, even though this belief and sentiment are expressed and articulated in different ways.[219] For an audience that, we can assume, was concerned with the influence of the cultures with which they interacted, particularly Hellenism, and the threats that these cultures posed to Jewish life, this text offered an insight into the way that their beliefs and practices could be manifested in a Diasporic context.

In this manner, the text constantly harks back to early Israel and Jewish origins in the Hebrew Bible. Soll, laying out the Biblical narratives that lie behind

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[217] Giuseppe Bellia, "From Tobit to Ben Sira: From Nostalgia to the Recovery of Fatherhood," in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, ed. Angelo Passaro (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 1

[218] See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 34-42.

[219] Pekka Pitkanen, "Family Life and Ethnicity in Early Israel and in Tobit," in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Mark Bredin, (London/NY: T&T Clark, 2006), 116

Tobit, points out that the specific tales that are chosen as sources are availed of as they are centred upon the themes of family, ancestry, endogamy, and inheritance—all fundamental concerns in Tobit's narrative.[220] Weitzman similarly draws attention to the fact that all of the Torah episodes that are alluded to or reflected in Tobit "take place outside the land of Israel."[221] Alongside the Hebrew Bible, Nickelsburg identifies other potential influences upon the Book of Tobit, suggesting that folklore,[222] tales about persecuted courtiers,[223] and the Enochic tradition,[224] in particular, serve as likely influences on Tobit.

## Marriage in the Book of Tobit

The most significant aspect of the Book of Tobit for the present study is the focus of the text on marriage relations, which is depicted as being tied closely with righteous living, family life, and endogamy.[225] With regard to righteous living, the text makes it clear that adhering to instructions given by one's parents is fundamental to one's success. Within a larger section designed to familiarize his reader with his background, Tobit describes his transition into manhood, stating that it was once he became a man that he "took a woman, a member of our family, and produced from her a son" (1:9). Tobit

[220] W. Soll, "The Family as a Scriptural and Social Construct in Tobit," in *The Function of Scripture in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition*, eds. C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders (JSNT Sup. 154; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 166-175
[221] Geoffrey D. Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 147.
[222] George W.E. Nickelsburg, "The Search for Tobit's Mixed Ancestry: A Historical and Hermeneutical Odyssey," in *George W.E. Nickelsburg in Perspective: An Ongoing Dialogue of Learning*, Volume 1, ed. Jacob Neusner, Alan J. Avery-Peck (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 244; See also Robert H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (NY: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 269-271
[223] Nickelsburg, "The Search for Tobit's Mixed Ancestry," 245; George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge: Harvard University, 1972), 48-59
[224] George E.W. Nickelsburg, "Tobit and Enoch: Distant Cousins with a Recognizable Resemblance," in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 27 (1988): 54-68.
[225] For the importance of endogamy in Tobit, see: Miller, *Marriage in Tobit*, 68-72; Pitkanen, "Family Life and Ethnicity," 104-117.

"became a man" and then he married his wife and started his family.[226] This link between righteous living, masculinity, and family, hints at the writer's main motivations in instructing his audience regarding gender roles. Because exile threatened to disintegrate longstanding kinship ties for Jewish families in both Palestine as well as eastern diasporic communities, Tobias' conduct would have been relevant regardless of his location.[227] The idea of righteous conduct linked to gender is, as such, a central theme in Tobit.

Further connected to this theme is the emphasis that the text places on righteous conduct between men and women, and proper relations between the sexes. Concern for an honourable marriage, as well as strong warnings against the threats posed by sexual immorality, is an important theme in Tobit, which of course finds an unmistakable echo in numerous Second Temple texts. Of significance to this thesis, the text points to Genesis 2 in order to espouse the sacred origins of the marriage bond and to substantiate the theological notion that God is directly responsible for bringing together and uniting—or reuniting—husband and wife, stressing divine involvement in the very foundations of marriage. Unrelated to the theme of gender, but still of relevance, the first reference to Genesis 2 appears in Tobit's prayer in Tobit 3:6 wherein the origin of mankind is alluded to. Praying for death, he asks to "depart from the face of the earth and become dust," referring to the creation of man and indicating a belief in death as a return to one's origins, as stated by God in Genesis 3:19.[228]

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[226] Thomas Scott Cason, "Is Tobias His Own Man? The Book of Tobit as a Coming-Of-Age Tale," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 34:1 (2020): 108-124, DOI: 10.1080/09018328.2020.1801945

[227] Ibid.

[228] P.J. Griffin, "The Theology and Function of Prayer in the Book of Tobit" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 1984) 117-18, 358-59.

It is in the context of Tobias' marriage to Sarah that we find the clearest and most significant, explicit reference in this text to Adam and Eve's relationship. Marriage in the Book of Tobit is clearly constructed on the theology of the creation narrative, which is alluded to in the context of a blessing on the couple's wedding night. The consummation of Tobias and Sarah's marriage happens only after the couple pray together, and their prayers allude to the union of the primordial in Genesis 2, highlighting the very creation of the institution of marriage as something that came directly from God. The primordial couple are referred to not simply to display Tobias' knowledge of Scripture but also to encourage God to be generous toward him and his new bride; such recollections of God's gracious acts feature as a common element in many prayers in the Old Testament in the hope that God will continue to bestow his favour on his people in the present.[229] Just as the divine will in the creation narrative resulted in a blessed and holy union between the first man and woman, Tobias prays for the same blessing on his own union with Sarah.[230]

The reference to Genesis 2 in Tobit 8:6 reads as follows: "You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.'"[231] The text not only sees Tobias' hopes for the future of his marriage rooted in a reference to the relationship between the primaeval couple, but Tobias also recognizes Sarah as a gift directly from God, acknowledging her as an equal and complementary partner in the marriage, one that is "like himself." In his citation of Genesis 2:18, Tobias illustrates that he sees his wife as a support, expressing his desire

[229] Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, 141.
[230] Philip L. Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments: The Sacramental Theology of Marriage from its Medieval Origins to the Council of Trent* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 117.
[231] New Revised Standard Version. The KJVA reads: "Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay: of them came mankind: thou hast said, It is not good that man should be alone; let us make unto him an aid like unto himself."

for a long life together with Sarah, who has touched his innermost self (Tobit 6:19). There is nothing here to suggest that he sees her as a subordinate partner in their relationship.

His comment that from Adam and Eve “the human race sprung” further suggests his hope for children. However, the text hints towards an understanding of marriage that goes beyond a need for procreation, instead celebrating the value of the husband-wife relationship within marriage on its own merits. It is of note that the Old Latin translation, as well as some subsequent translations of the book, formulate the prayer as a petition that God bless them with children, adding a focus on procreation that is not discernible in older versions.[232]

The book stresses the fact that the union of the married couple has been foreseen by God's providence, which introduces a divine dimension to the marriage union. In Tobit 6:18, Raphael tells Tobias that he does not need to be concerned about the challenges posed by marrying Sarah as their marriage has been pre-determined, and states that their relationship predates even their own lives: "She was set apart for you before the world was made. You will save her, and she will go with you."[233] Raguel further acknowledges that Sarah was given to Tobit “according to the ordinance of the Book of Moses, for Heaven has ordained that she be given to you" (7:11). Even the affliction of Sarah by the demon Asmodeus is related to her pre-ordained marriage, as the seven earlier suitors were removed by the demon so that she could be joined instead with Tobias.[234]

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[232] Loren Stuckenbruck, “The Book of Tobit: A Very Short Commentary with English Translation” (2008) https://www.academia.edu/19883995/Tobit_A_very_short_commentary_with_translation
[233] NRSV.
[234] Fitzmyer, *Tobit,* 48.

Miller observes that few Ancient Near Eastern texts, biblical and non-biblical, speak so directly about the role that deities play in human marriage, and no extant text displays divine intervention in a marriage as explicitly or clearly as the Book of Tobit. Beyond Genesis 2, wherein the institution of marriage is established, the most common way in which God intervenes in marriage is by enabling married couples to produce children[235]—God is rarely seen to play any part in specific human marriages apart from when granting fertility or enabling procreation.[236] God's important role in bringing together the union of Tobias and Sarah is especially unique, then, and serves to emphasize the text's dependence on the idea of the divinely ordained Edenic marriage ideal in Genesis 2. Griffin comments that there is clearly "a notable parallel between God's activity on behalf of Adam and Eve, and what he does for Tobias and Sarah."[237] God intervenes in this particular marriage in order to ensure that his people will not die out but will once again dwell in the land of their ancestors.[238]

The idea that marriage should be monogamous is never explicitly stated in Tobit, but it is quite clearly implied, in particular in association with the emphasis placed upon physical purity.[239] Purity is not just depicted as the individual's burden, or as their own personal concern, but is also related to the rest of their family; Sarah's relationship with her father obliges her to remain pure, and Tobias, similarly, is told by his father to stay clear from all lust and what is deigned to be immoral sexual behaviour (Tobit 4:12). This, as previously noted, stands as an interesting comparison to Ben Sira's focus on a father's anxieties concerning his daughter's honour. Ben Sira's fear that is connected with the

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[235] Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, 134.
[236] For example, Genesis 30:22-24; Ruth 4:13
[237] Griffin, "Theology and Function," 178.
[238] Miller, *Marriage in the Book of Tobit*, 150.
[239] Boris Beck, "The Narrative and Moral Discourse Regarding Marriage in Tobit," *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology*, Vol. 12 No. 2 (2018): 159-171 / https://doi.org/10.32862/k.12.2.3

upbringing of female children appears to be excessive even when considered on its own merits, but especially when it is shown to be in such stark contrast to the attitude that is displayed in, for example, Raguel's relationship with Sarah. Raguel's repetitious mention of Sarah's name and the emphasis that the text places on their relationship seems to highlight the strength of the familial bond between father and daughter.[240]

The text further suggests that physical purity does not only bind Tobias and Sarah in their relationship with their parents, but also in their relationship with God. The writer of Tobit uses the example of Tobias and Sarah to show that all marriages should not only be oriented on themselves and their children, but that the core mission of the marriage is maintaining and achieving godliness.[241] The importance of prayer— highlighted on numerous instances throughout Tobit, and brought to the forefront on the night of the wedding—shows that one's relationship with the divine is crucial to righteous living, and that all relationships must be observed through the lens of their relationship with God.[242] The marriage is also depicted as permanent, which is explicitly stated in the last chapter of Tobit: the couple lived to see old age together with their children.[243] Just like with the condition of monogamy, the condition of the permanence of marriage is also portrayed by the complex relationship between Tobit and Anna. The fact that the relationship between man and God should be pure, exclusive, and also permanent is thereby established as the basis upon which a marriage can be built.[244]

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[240] Renate Egger-Wenzel, "The Emotional Relationship of the Married Couple Hannah and Tobit" in Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature, ed. Angelo Passaro (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2013), 47-48
[241] Beck "Narrative and Moral Discourse," 166
[242] Beck, "Narrative and Moral Discourse," 165.
[243] Beck, "Narrative and Moral Discourse," 165.
[244] Beck, "Narrative and Moral Discourse," 165.

Satlow sees this pericope as perhaps the "first extrabiblical text to link contemporary marital practice with the primal marriage of Adam and Eve," but then comments that it "is difficult to know to what extent Tobias's prayer reflected a common understanding of a link between Gen. 2 and contemporary human marriage."[245] The notion of a permanent and monogamous marriage ideal based upon Genesis 2 is very clearly presupposed in Tobit 7:12, 8:6-8 and it is also easy to discern from this reference that the Edenic marriage was conceived of in a popular light; that the first couple were understood as complementary to each other, and an ideal towards which contemporary married couples could aim.

## Chapter Five—Conclusion

The Book of Tobit offers a compelling insight into the concerns of, what we can assume, was a Diasporic Jewish community in the late third or early second century BCE, occupied with questions regarding such themes as endogamy, Jewish values and traditions, exile, and commitment to righteous living. The most significant aspect of the Book for our purposes is the marriage of Tobias and Sarah, where the emphasis was placed on the religious character of the marriage union. The text understands marriage as a monogamous and permanent covenant which aims towards achieving godliness. These different facets of marriage are validated and ratified through an allusion to the Edenic marriage ideal of Genesis 2, which illustrates the probable existence of a tradition based upon this ideal in Jewish circles in the Second Temple era, which Tobit's audiences would appreciate and recognize as a familiar concept.

[245] Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 58-59

# Chapter Six

***Abstract***

*The purpose of this chapter is to explore references in the Qumran text entitled 4QInstruction to the married couple as 'one flesh', based upon an understanding of Genesis 2, in order to explain and justify male/female relations. I will first briefly outline how the Eden narrative more broadly is interpreted in 4QInstruction. I will then investigate references to Genesis 2:23-24 in four lines of 4Q416 2 iii-iv, before commenting on how such references may be understood.' While research has been conducted in terms of the wider question of women and wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls, little has been said with regards to the status and role of women in 4QInstruction despite the numerous references to the addressee's wife and daughters. When 4QInstruction enters such discussions it is generally in reference to what the presence of women in the text might suggest about the Qumran community.*[246] *The Ephesians Haustafel has traditionally been understood as having been influenced by Hellenistic conventions and while this text, as well as other New Testament Household Codes, were undoubtedly shaped by Hellenism, the assumption that solely Hellenistic traditions influenced their interpretations of gender through Genesis 2-3 should be re-evaluated in light of 4QInstruction to consider Jewish-Palestinian traditions also. Before considering 4QInstruction's similarities with Ephesians in Chapter Seven, however, the text's understanding of gender must first be examined.*

[246] Benjamin Wright III, "Wisdom and Women at Qumran," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 11 (2004): 258.

# 4QInstruction—Background

Since the publication of the text known as 4QInstruction,[247] the numerous references to Genesis 1-3 in this second century BCE wisdom text have become the focus of considerable scholarly attention. 4QInstruction, alternatively titled *Musar le Mebin*, or 4QSapiential Work A, is one of the most valued recent contributions to the study of the wisdom tradition discovered in Qumran. Scholars generally identify this work as dating from the late third century or early second century B.C.E. 4QInstruction was written in Hebrew and survives in at least eight manuscripts,[248] which together preserve less than half of the document. The addressee, the *mebin*, is understood as being a member of a class with elect status, which allows the *mebin* access to divine revelation and is implored to gain esoteric wisdom; the *raz nihyeh*.[249] Scholars have offered many different ways to translate this phrase but for the purposes of this study it will be understood as an enigmatic Hebrew phrase translated as "the mystery that is to be." 4QInstruction uses the expression over twenty times but the expression is not in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere is attested only three times; twice in the book of Mysteries and once in the Community Rule.[250]

Loader notes that many of the texts that were previously unknown to us and discovered in Qumran are widely recognised by scholarship as belonging to a particular sect which has much in common with ancient reports of the Essenes. As such, many see these works as the literary

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[247] J. Strugnell and D.J. Harrington, *Qumran Cave 4 XXIV: Sapiential Texts, Part 2. 4QInstruction (Musar le Mebin): 4Q415ff. With a re-edition of 1Q26* (DJD 34; Oxford: Clarendon, 1999).
[248] 1Q26, 4Q415-4Q418, 4Q423.
[249] See: John Kampen, "Reading Instruction as a Sectarian Composition," in *Understanding Texts in Early Judaism: Studies on Biblical, Qumranic, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature in Memory of Géza Xeravits,* ed. József Zsengellér (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2022), 80-81; Elisa Uusimaki, "Wisdom Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Wisdom Literature, eds. Samuel L. Adams and Matthew Goff* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 2020), 130; J. Harrington, "The Raz Nihyeh in a Qumran Wisdom Text (1Q26, 4Q415-418, 423)," *RevQ* 17 (1996): 549-553.
[250] J.J. Collins, "Wisdom Reconsidered, in Light of the Scrolls," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 4, no. 3 (1997): 265-81.

creations of that sect. Alternatively, it has been argued that some of these texts were writings collected by those who placed the scrolls in the caves but do not have a direct connection with the sect, accounting for the degree of diversity among the documents. [251] It is generally agreed that 4QInstruction should be categorized as pre-Essene, or non-Essene.[252] While the text does share conceptual and terminological links with works that have been identified as belonging to the *Yahad*, such as the Treatise of Two Spirits and the Hodayot, the opinion that the composition is a product of the *Yahad* is a minority one.[253] Although no extant copies have been preserved or discovered outside of Qumran, there is no reason to conclude that it could not have been circulated more broadly throughout the Second Temple period.

## Genesis 2-3 in 4QInstruction

The origins of women, the results of partaking from the Tree of Knowledge, the union between husband and wife, honoring one's wife, male dominion over the female, and a child's relationship to their parents, are among the themes related to women in 4QInstruction that relate to Genesis 1-3. Among the noted features of this text is an anthropology and assertion that there are different 'fleshly' and 'spiritual' types of humanity based upon Genesis 1-3 and the creation and role of Adam in these chapters.[254] While this has been a popular

[251] William Loader, *The Dead Sea Scrolls on Sexuality: Attitudes Towards Sexuality in Sectarian and Related Literature at Qumran* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), 2..
[252] B.G. Wold, "Family Ethics in 4QInstruction and the New Testament," Novum Testamentum 50, 3 (2008): 291; B.G. Wold, *Women, Men, and Angels: The Qumran Wisdom Document Musar le Mevin and its Allusions to Genesis Creation Traditions* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 7-19; Elgvin suggests that 4QInstruction may have influenced the writings that are attributed to the Qumran community. See: Torleif Elgvin, "Early Essene Eschatology: Judgment and Salvation according to Sapiental Work A," in *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Conference on the texts from the Judaean Desert*, eds. S. D Ricks and D.A Parry, (EJ Brill, 1996), 126-165
[253] Goff, "Recent Trends in the Study of Early of Jewish Wisdom Literature," 397.
[254] J. J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997): 123-125; Eibert Tigchelaar, "'Spiritual People', 'fleshly Spirit', and 'vision of Meditation': Reflections On

subject in the study of this text, it has also been observed that a running allusion to Genesis 2 is used by the author to explain and justify the relationship between a married couple. These allusions elucidate that a woman leaves her parents and is united, or reunited, with her new husband as 'one flesh', with authority over her transferring from her mother and father to him. While 4QInstruction may hint at issues of sexuality, perhaps in reference to "pregnancy" and at other times to "shame", such as 4Q416 2 iv line 13, the reflection on male and female becoming "one flesh" is motivated by a concern for the transition of authority from fathers over daughters to husbands over wives and is not sexual in nature.[255]

The manner in which these allusions are used in 4QInstruction bear noted similarities to discussions of marriage and divorce in other late Second Temple literature and as such, it is argued that this text offers us an insight into traditions that may have been appropriated or reworked by contemporary authors, perhaps hinting at a larger exegetical trend that was not available before its publication. In particular, as will be noted in Chapter Seven, it may shed new light on the husband/wife relationship in the *Haustafel* of Ephesians, clarifying its allusions to the creation narrative in by offering an insight into late Second Temple conceptualizations of marriage based upon Eve's creation. The resemblance between these texts has been noted by Jean-Sebastian Rey and Benjamin G. Wold.[256] The authors of both texts claim that the woman is the flesh of her

4QInstruction and 1 Corinthians", *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament* (2009): 103-118.

[255] This is in contrast to 1 Corinthians 6, where the "one flesh" union is sexual in nature.

[256] Benjamin G. Wold, "Family Ethics in 4QInstruction and the New Testament," Novum Testamentum, 50, 3 (2008), 286–300; Benjamin G. Wold, "Genesis 2-3 in Early Christianity and 4QInstruction," Dead Sea Discoveries, 23, 3 (2016), 329–346; Jean-Sebastian Rey, "Family Relationships in 4QInstruction And in Eph 5:21-6:4.," in Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament, ed. Florentino Garcia-Martinez (STDJ 85; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 231– 255; Jean-Sebastian Rey, "4QInstruction and its Relevance for Understanding Early Christian Writings," in Jesus, Paulus und die Texte von Qumran, ed. J. Frey and E. E. Popkes (WUNT II/390; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 359-381.

husband, and I would argue that the intention of both authors in referencing Genesis 2:23-24 is to illustrate that she should not only be understood as *similar* to her husband, as Rey notes, but as *part* of him (4Q416 2 iv 5 and Ephesians 5:29).[257]

As in contemporary literature, how the possession of knowledge and wisdom is understood and interpreted in this text heavily influences how one understands references to the relationships between men and women in light of Genesis 2 in 4QInstruction. The ability to differentiate between good and evil appears to have positive connotations in 4QInstruction. The image of wisdom as a gift may easily be discerned in the numerous invocations to the *mebin* to understand the *raz-nihyeh,* which stands at the centre of 4QInstruction's pedagogical program. Several imperatives, such as "gaze upon" and "meditate" are employed throughout the text to encourage the addressee to study this mystery, as it is the means by which the addressee obtains wisdom.[258] 4Q423 1,2 i paraphrases different portions of the Genesis creation narrative, speaking of "every fruit of every tree which is wonderful to make wise."[259] In a similar manner to Sirach 17:7, 4QInstruction ignores the prohibition of eating from the tree of knowledge in Genesis and instead indicates that God endows Adam and Eve with the knowledge of good and evil from the beginning.[260] 4QInstruction employs the Garden of Eden metaphorically for pedagogical purposes; this garden can produce knowledge for the *mebin* who is to "work it and keep it" or this same

[257] Rey, "4QInstruction and Early Christian Writings," 367. A comparison of the two texts and their use of Genesis 2:23-24 will be carried out in chapter XXXXX.
[258] Wold, "Genesis 2-3," 331-332.
[259] Matthew J. Goff, "Reading Wisdom at Qumran: 4QInstruction and the Hodayot," Dead Sea Discoveries 11, no. 3 (2004): 280-81.
[260] Wold, "Genesis 2–3," 331-332.

garden can sprout thorns and thistles for the *mebin* due to being unfaithful in this task of pursuing knowledge.[261]

While Rey states that the idea that God gave man the right to rule over woman as a 'consequence of the fall in Gen. 3"[262] is endorsed by 4QInstruction, I am inclined to disagree. I would instead argue that 4QInstruction views the order of gender relations as emanating from woman's creation, based in part on the text's positive view of wisdom, and on the absence of any explicit reference to Genesis 3:16. The rationale, therefore, as to why women are subject to their husbands is not justified with reference to Genesis 3.16; instead, women are predominantly depicted as subordinate to their male counterparts as a result of the first woman's creation *from* man and *for* man, in reference to Genesis 2.

Quite a number of surviving fragments of 4QInstruction refer to women, offering advice to fathers and husbands on how to relate to their daughters and wives, in a manner that could arguably be contrasted with the Book of Ben Sira. Male dominion and authority over the female is a recurring theme in this document (4Q415 9 7–8; 4Q418a 18 4), but so is honouring one's wife, who is called "helper of your flesh" in 4Q418a 16b, 17. The male/female relationships depicted in 4QInstruction are hierarchically conceived; husbands and fathers have explicit authority over their wives and daughters. Unlike contemporary sapiential literature which shows unambiguous disdain towards women, perhaps most notably Ben Sira, the depiction of women in 4QInstruction should not be thought of as unfavourable. While women are shown to be subordinate to the male addressee, they are still to be respected.

[261] Jeremy D. Lyon, The Genesis Creation Account in the Dead Sea Scrolls, (Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2019), 108-112.
[262]

An exegesis of the creation narrative in 4QInstruction serves as a foundation for providing instruction to the addressee based on gender relations, and reflections on both gender roles and the relationships between men and women are centred around this narrative. The part of the document that is most relevant for the present conversation is 4Q416 2 iii 21-iv 1-5. This passage belongs to the largest fragment of 4QJnstruction which preserves large parts of four columns (4Q416 2 i-iv). In the final two columns of this fragment, instruction is given pertaining to how members of the family, namely patents and children, and husbands and wives, should relate to each another. The discussion regarding marriage is preceded by instruction concerning the relationship between parents and their children, the rationale for which is found in the fifth Commandment; the *mebin* is exhorted to honour his father and his mother in an analogy to God and the angels as the parents are for the child as God is for a human. The lines that immediately follow this may be reconstructed and translated as dealing with the relationship between the *mebin* and his wife, with the author utilizing Genesis 2:23-34 and the idea of the wife as an extension of her husband's body in order to explain why the *mebin* should marry, and also to iterate the husband's authority over her.

**4Q416 2 iii Line 21 – iv Line 1**

(21) מרז נהיה בהתחברכה יחד התהלך עם עזר בשרכה

(1) את אביו ו את אמ ו ו דב

*(21) from the mystery of existence, in your being joined together walk with the helper of your flesh*

*(1) his father and mother and cl[ing]*

The final line of column iii reworks the language of Genesis to enable the

expression of the idea that the wife of the *mebin* is not only under his dominion but is, in essence, a physical part of him. This line, and its continuation in iv 1, are essential for understanding the idea that the couple are envisioned as 'one flesh' in 4QInstruction.

The phrase 'together walk with the help of your flesh' reformulates the assertion in Genesis 2:23 that the woman is the 'flesh of my flesh.' This assertion puts forward the view that the wife is the possession of the husband and that her body is essentially an extension of his own. The use of the word 'together' in 4Q416 2 iii 21 helps to express this point. The root of the verb 'walk' in the *hitphael* can denote not only motion, but also conduct and behavior and so the exhortation 'together walk with the help of your flesh' is about control; the *mebin* should understand that he possesses the wife's body. In this context, referring to the wife as the husband's helper denotes that she is to be with him in a subservient role.[263] Rather than an equal she is a 'helper' who leaves the protection of her parents only to be ruled by another (iv 7, '[she is to] walk according to your pleasure').[264] The overriding concern therefore is not simply that the bond of marriage be respected by the married couple, but also that dominion over the female be smoothly transferred from her father to her husband.

The majority of translations and reconstructions of 4Q416 2 iii 21 and iv 1 fill the lacuna with a word for word citation of Genesis 2:24. The extant portion of 4Q416 2 iv 1 accords with the language of Gen 2:24 – 'his father [and] his mother.' This suggests that the end of 4Q416 2 iii 21 originally contained the beginning portion of this verse; 'therefore a man leaves.' The parallel text 4Q418 10 5 indicates that the final word of 4Q416 2 iv is 'one.' Accordingly, the end of line 21 can be supplemented by the quotation from Gen 2:24: 'As it is written, 'therefore a man leaves.'' This, then, would be followed

[263] Matthew J. Goff, 4QInstruction, (Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 116-117.
[264] Wold, "Family Ethics", 296.

by the next line, 4Q416 2 iv 1, which begins with language from this verse: 'his father [and] his mother, so you will [cling to your wife and she will become one flesh].'[265] A direct citation of Genesis 2:24 could be understood as an expression of a husband's deep connection to his wife. It would demonstrate the leaving of one's parents to cling to one's wife in a metaphorical sense, highlighting the fact that marriage was worth such sacrifices.[266]

When accounting for 4QInstruction's use of Genesis 2 it should be noted that there is no instance of scripture citation but instead only allusions with minimal verbatim words. This popular reconstruction of 4Q416 2 iv 1 with a supplement from Gen 2:24 would be the only extensive explicit citation of a biblical source in the document, and Wold proposes that such a reconstruction is unconvincing in the wider context of the document.[267] In the biblical tradition Gen 2:24 may be interpreted as a man leaving his *patria potestas* and joining his wife's *potestas*.[268] It is probable that the author of 4QInstruction avoided an explicit use of verse 24 because he wanted to emphasize that woman leaves her parents and joins with her husband, instead. An alternate reconstruction of this fragmentary passage would therefore include lines that are concerned to instruct, contra to Genesis 2:24, that when a daughter is given in marriage she moves from her own household to her husband's and that he is the one who then has rightful authority over her.

**4Q416 2 iv Line 4**

(4) לך לבֿ שׁ ר אחד בתכה לאחרֹ יפריד ובניכה

[265] See theoretical reconstructions with verbatim citation in Goff, 4QInstruction, 92; Jean-Sébastien Rey, 4QInstruction: Sagesse et Eschatologie (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 92, 167.
[266] This verse is understood in a similar way by Philo (QG 1.27).
[267] Wold, "Genesis 2-3," 338-340.
[268] Wold, "Genesis 2-3," 338-340.

*(4) For you one flesh, your daughter for another he will separate and your sons*

The first words of 4Q416 2 iv 4 are perhaps the most important for understanding how 4QInstruction conceptualizes the wife of the *mebin*. This line reworks the biblical language of Genesis 2:24, adding the prepositional phrase לך before 'one flesh'. This is a small but significant addition, as it suggests the wife will become 'one flesh' *for* the male addressee. The author interprets the expression 'one flesh' as denoting the man's ownership of his wife's body, rather than denoting equality in marriage. The view that the man and woman come together as two distinct selves to form a united pair in marriage is not endorsed in 4QInstruction; instead, the body of the woman not only belongs to her husband but is regarded as an extension of his own body.[269] The rest of 4Q416 2 iv 4 extends the mindset of Gen 2:24 to family relationships not addressed in that original Biblical verse, namely the relationship between the *mebin* and his daughter, who will be 'separated' to another man, and the *mebin*'s son, who will be separated to the daughters of other men.[270]

4QInstruction's perspective on the husband's dominion through reference to the concept of the couple as a unified whole is similar to that of Sirach 25:26. While 4QInstruction's reference to Genesis 2:24 does not relate directly to the question of divorce, the text does make clear that the wife cannot become the possession of another, whether by adultery or by divorce and second marriage. This is evident in line 6: 'And he who would have authority over her, apart from you, would remove the landmark of his life.' In both Ben Sira and 4QInstruction husband and wife are deigned 'one flesh'—the husband's. While Sirach does not explicitly cite Genesis 2:24, it supports the view promulgated in 4QInstruction that the wife is the flesh of her husband, not in reference to

[269] Goff, 4QInstruction, 127-128.
[270] Goff, 4QInstruction, 128.

marriage, but in reference to divorce.

**4Q416 2 iv Line 5**

(5) ואתה ל י חד עם אשת כ ח י קכהה י א שאר ער

*(5) And you, you will be one with the wife of your bosom*[271] *for she is the flesh of [your] na[kedness]*

This line also attests the view that the wife is the 'flesh' of the male addressee by stressing the unity between the two. The woman does not become the flesh of the husband when they marry; rather the addressee should marry a woman because she is a natural part of his body. The line provides a rationale for the male to unify in marriage with his wife—she is already part of his flesh. Again, it does not construe the man and the woman coming together as equal partners. Line 5 calls the woman 'the wife of your bosom,' which bears similarity to 'help of your flesh' in 4Q416 2 iii 21. Both expressions describe the wife as if she were an extension of the man's body. The extant portion of line 5 ends with another assertion that the wife is the flesh of her husband, reconstructed: she is the 'flesh of [your] na[kedness].'[272] This reflects a conception of woman as subservient wife that is not based on Eve's disobedience in the garden, but rather on her having been created from the body of Adam. This would provide a sort of 'natural law' for marriage as a male-dominated institution—the wife is an extension of her husband's body because Eve was created from Adam. According to Goff, such a reading of the creation narrative, which sees Adam not only as "husband" but like a father to Eve, also, bears similarities with Philo's understanding of Genesis 2 where the idea that Eve was formed from Adam's side

[271] The expression 'the wife of your bosom' is found in Deut. 13:7; 28:54, 56 and in Sir. 9:1.
[272] Goff, 4QInstruction, 129.

should be understood as meaning that a woman should honor her husband as a father (QG 1.27).[273]

# Chapter Six—Conclusion

In conclusion, 4QInstruction presents a previously unprecedented insight into how Second Temple intellectuals and authors understood the role, purpose, function, and status of marriage, through its references to Genesis 2 and the creation of the first woman. The main concern of these references in 4QInstruction is to address the transition of authority as it moves from fathers over their daughters, to a husband over his wife, with a husband's authority derived from reflection on becoming 'one flesh' and the creation of woman from man. Various texts from the Second Temple period make references and allusions to Genesis 2 in ways that bear similarities to 4QInstruction. This use of Genesis 2 in 4QInstruction for the purposes of instructing the *mebin* about marriage might serve to suggest, as previously noted, an exegetical tradition that clarifies such references in other texts by providing evidence of an earlier tradition that later writers preserve.

[273] Goff, 4QInstruction, 130.

# Chapter Seven

***Abstract***

*The purpose of this chapter is to outline the ways in which the different texts forming the New Testament allude to Genesis 2-3, focusing on the use of such references in constructing ideas pertaining to marriage and divorce based on Genesis 2:23-24 in particular. It has been widely recognized that the creation passages of Genesis are foundational to the New Testament in setting forth the basic contours of a theology of sexuality, as many passages that are concerned with aspects of the relationship between men and women convey obvious appeals to both the creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2-3, often merged together.* These passages are fundamental for establishing not only how gender and sexuality were perceived, as both Jesus and Paul reference and allude to these verses in order to justify and explain male-female relationships, but also illustrate how various writers who composed this text perceive *the purpose and status of marriage in society, and the purpose and status of both partners within the marriage relationship itself. The central focus of this chapter will be Ephesians 5:21-33, which views the Edenic marriage ideal as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the early church, his earliest followers.*

## Gender in the New Testament—Introduction

Various facets of the New Testament have been seen to elevate women's status in radical ways.[274] This is seen in the generally favourable treatment of

[274] See: Ben Witherington III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 29-120; Clarence Boomsma, *Male and Female, One in Christ: New Testament Teaching on Women in Office* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 21-26; Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation;' in *Women in Ministry: Biblical and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Nancy Vyhmeister; Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1998),

women by Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, in the way women's roles in the earliest churches are depicted in Acts and in several of the Epistles.[275] Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza proposed that the earliest church began as a "discipleship of equals."[276] Concepts of gender are closely related to marriage in the New Testament. Beyond instructions regarding authority structures and household organization, virtues and ideals associated with marriage in the New Testament reflect deep cultural roots. The Gospel traditions presume marriage as the cornerstone of family life (Mark 1:30; John 2:1–11) and marriage sometimes takes on a symbolic significance; wedding ceremonies could be used to explain the nature of Jesus's mission (Matthew 22:1–14).[277] In a number of Pauline and Deutero-Pauline[278] letters the metaphor of marriage is used to speak about the

172-86; Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan, Women in the New Testament (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2001); John Temple Bristow, *What Paul Really Said about Women* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 1-30; Joan E. Taylor and Ilaria L.E. Ramelli, eds., *Patterns of Women's Leadership in Early Christianity* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2021); Randall D. Chesnutt, "Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman Era," in *Essays on Women in Earliest Christianity*, ed. Carroll D. Osburn, volume 1 (Joplin: College Press, 1993), 93-130; Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5-23; Tal Ilan, *Integrating Women into Second Temple History* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); Deborah F. Sawyer, *Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries* (New York: Routledge, 1996).Carol Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross S. Kraemer, eds., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000); Bonnie Ring, *Women Who Knew Jesus (*Ishpeming, Michigan: Book Venture Publishing, 2017).

[275] Paul's stance on women and gender has been a divisive subject of debate, with Daniel Boyarin concisely summing up the problem faced by readers of his epistles: "On the issue of gender... Paul seems to have produced a discourse which is so contradictory as to be almost incoherent. In Galatians, Paul seems indeed to be wiping out social differences and hierarchies between the genders, ethnic groups, and socioeconomic classes, while in Corinthians he seems to be reifying and reemphasizing precisely those gendered hierarchical differences.": Boyarin, *Radical Jew*, 183. See also: Judith M. Gundry-Volf, "Male and Female in Creation and New Creation: Interpretations of Galatians 3:28C in 1 Corinthians 7," in *To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of Robert H. Gundry*, ed. Thomas E. Schmidt and Moisés Silva (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 95–121.

[276] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: SCM, 1995).

[277] Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Kinship and Family in the New Testament World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament*, eds. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (New York/Abingdon: Routledge, 2015); Collins,

[278] For the purposes of this thesis, the authentic Pauline letters are understood as: Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Philemon. The author of these epistles will simply therefore be "Paul." The Deutero-Pauline or Pseudo-Pauline letters are: 2

Christ-believing community, showing that both the household and marriage were social structures that shaped early Christian theology. As key conceptual metaphors, marriage and household imagery were mapped onto the organization of the Church, but also onto the individual believer's relationship with God and the relationship between male and female believers.

It has been suggested that women's roles became a source of tension in these early communities after Paul's death, based upon the fact that the Pseudepigraphic letters that were written in subsequent generations sought to illustrate the similarities between Christian communities and Greco-Roman conventions, particularly in terms of gender relations.[279] The Epistle to the Ephesians stands out for the way it reimagines the marital code of Colossians 3:18-19 and the image of male-female relationships therein, and adds an insistence on the mutual subordination of married partners. Due to the fact that Ephesians has been interpreted and translated in the light of Colossians, its depiction of marriage and its contrast to traditional household ethics has been largely overlooked.[280] In particular, and of significance to this thesis, the author of Ephesians stresses this mutuality and dependency of both husband and wife, seen as a metaphor for Christ and the church, with a reference to Genesis 2:23-24.

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Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, Hebrews, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. Where possible, the author/s of these texts will be referred to as "the writer" or "the author."

[279] For an insight into how Colossians and the Pastoral Epistles texts reflect the changed status of women in the early Church, see: Joseph F. Kelly, *The World of the Early Christians* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1997), 150. Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Re-Reading Paul: Early Interpreters of Paul on Women and Gender," in *Women and Christian Origins*, eds. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D'Angelo (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 236-253.

[280] Lisa Marie Belz, "The Rhetoric of Gender in the Household of God: Ephesians 5:21-33 and Its Place in Pauline Tradition" (PhD Dissertations, 2013), viii.

# Adam and Eve in the New Testament

In the New Testament the character of Adam received a lot of attention because of his theological and Christological function as 'first man' over against the 'last man,' Jesus, with Paul Ricoeur observing that: "It was St. Paul who roused the Adamic theme from its lethargy; by means of the contrast between the 'old man' and the 'new man,' he set up the figure of Adam as the inverse of that of Christ, called the second Adam."[281] In Romans 5.12–21, Paul parallels the two figures, describing Adam as "a type of the one who was to come." The juxtaposition between Adam and Christ can also be found in 1 Corinthians 15:22: 'And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.'

Eve, in contrast, is considered to be a minor character in the New Testament writings. The name 'Eve' is mentioned twice in the New Testament, in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 and 2 Corinthians 11:2-3. In 1 Timothy 2:11-15, it is argued that women must not exercise authority over men both because Eve was last in creation and because she was first in disobedience, thereby grounding the injunctions in two key aspects of the Eden narrative. In appealing to the sequence of creation, the author of 1 Timothy justifies his prohibition against female authority over men through the stance that it was God's will for the relationship of the sexes. To further his claim, the author refers to Eve's deception in Genesis 3, appearing to exculpate Adam altogether. As a result of their inherent gullibility, it seemed to the author unwise for women to occupy positions of authority or influence within the church.[282]

In 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, meanwhile, Eve is referred to in the context of a metaphor comparing Christ and the church to an engaged bride and groom, in a manner which brings to mind Ephesians 5:22-33. Within the metaphor of engagement, Paul sees

[281] Paul Ricouer, *The Symbolism of Evil,* trans. Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 238.
[282] Kvam et al, *Eve and Adam,* 444.

himself as "father of the bride" who has brought together Christ and his bride, the community in Corinth. General consensus exists that 2 Corinthians was written by Paul himself and that it is composed of a number of different letters or letter fragments later assembled by a redactor.[283] Its subject concerns Paul's opposition to certain "false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ" (11:13).[284] Within this context, Eve stands for the whole community, both male and female. He cites Eve as an example or cautionary type for the leading astray of the Corinthian community and compares the serpent's deception of Eve to the community's deception by the false apostles. Paul does not use the reference to Eve to make any profound theological point,[285] nor to apply this opinion of Eve to any particular woman, or to women in general.

These verses are indisputably significant in establishing the view held by early Christians towards Genesis 2-3, and the development of an exegetical trend which read Eve's actions in Eden as hinting towards either her tendency towards sin, or her gullibility. For the purpose of this study, however, our focus will be on Ephesians 5:22-33, where the "one flesh" union comes to the fore.

## Jesus' Reference to the One Flesh Union

Before considering the Ephesian Household Code and its depiction of the creation narrative, it is necessary to note the other significant reference to the "one flesh" idea in the New Testament. In the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, the

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[283] Francis T. Fallon, *2 Corinthians* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1980), 6; C.K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973) 5-21.

[284] The identity of these "false apostles" or "super-apostles" continues to be debated. See Jerry L. Sumney, "Identifying Paul's Opponents: The Question of Method in 2 Corinthians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement,* 40 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990).

[285] Bruce J. Malina, "Some Observations on the Origin of Sin and Death in Judaism and St. Paul," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 31(1969): 18-34.

Genesis 2:24 quote is placed in the context of questions about divorce, as Jesus refutes the Pharisees' interpretation of divorce as set forth in, for example Deuteronomy 24:1. Jesus combines references to both Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 in order to demonstrate that God created man and woman for each other and that, when they united, they were "no longer two, but one." Such appeals to Genesis 2:24 in the context of divorce appear elsewhere in Second Temple literature. A comparison between these verses and 4Q416 iii-iv should be noted, as Jesus' appeal to Genesis 2 as the basis of his teaching on marriage and divorce indicates that the garden established a paradigm for marital behaviour,[286] and 4QInstruction offers further evidence of this exegetical tradition. In both texts, the fact that man and wife are 'one flesh' has legal implications and any human intervention in that union is considered a grievous sin. While the similarities and differences between these two texts has not been the subject of extensive study, comparisons between the Markan divorce pericope and the statements regarding marriage and polygamy in CD 4–5 have been more thoroughly investigated, with 4QInstruction's contribution to the discussion noted.[287]

Jesus' reference to the primordial couple also bears witness to Tobit 8:6, where the institution of marriage is seen to be rooted in creation and in the very origin of mankind. The "one flesh" union between the married couple creates an indissoluble unity between them, which, as previously noted, contrasts sharply with Ben Sira's approval of divorce, even if it is to be understood as cutting off one's own flesh, in the context of a disobedient wife. God permanently joins the two individuals in such a way that they must no longer be separated. Jesus demonstrates through this reference to Genesis 2 that marriage was intended to be permanent and explicitly prohibits divorce, and as such,

[286] K. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26,* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 222.
[287] L. Doering, "Marriage and Creation in Mark 10 and CD 4-5", in ed. Florentino Garcia Martinez, *Echoes from the Caves: Qumran and the New Testament,* (Brill, 2010).

rejects Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Jesus' teachings on marriage and divorce are informative, therefore, not only because they because they shed light on the use of marriage symbolism employed elsewhere in the New Testament, but also because in contrasting the Law of Moses, which permits divorce, to the ideals determined by God in Eden, where divorce is not intended, calls for a return to this original understanding of marriage as a one flesh, indissoluble union.[288]

## New Testament Household Codes

It is undoubtedly Ephesians 5:22–33 where marriage is given the greatest symbolic significance in the New Testament. Christ is typologically portrayed as the new Adam and the Church typologically as the new Eve, and their marriage is seen to signify a restoration of humanity to the original, intended state of Eden. Ephesians 5:22–33 refutes any doubts that one might have concerning the role of marriage in the life of the community. While marriage might sometimes be portrayed as a less favourable choice than celibacy, several passages throughout the New Testament suggest that many followers of Jesus and members of the earliest Christian communities simply continued with the usual customs and practices with respect to marriage associated with their previous life.[289]

A number of the New Testament letters contain lists of the obligations that members of the household owe to each other, and since the early sixteenth century, these lists have been generically labelled the "household code," or "house-table," based on the heading *Haustafel* used by Martin Luther.[290] Barton

[288] Andre Villeneuve, *Nuptial Symbolism in Second Temple Writings, the New Testament, and Rabbinic Literature* (Boston: Brill, 2016), 113.
[289] Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Kinship and Family in the New Testament World," in *Understanding the Social World of the New Testament,* eds. Dietmar Neufeld and Richard E. DeMaris (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), 34.
[290] James P. Hering, *The Colossian and Ephesian Haustafeln in Theological Context: An Analysis of their Origins, Relationship, and Message* (Germany: Peter Lang, 2007), 1.

states that: "Any reflection on a Christian theology of family is bound to take into account the testimony of the *Haustafeln* in the New Testament."[291] These codes offer standardized rules or instructions for members of the household but are modified for Christian use, viewing familial relationships as determinative of wider social realities, which is made especially clear by the metaphorical comparison of marriage to the interaction between Christ and the community in Ephesians.

Colossians 3:18–4:1 and Ephesians 5:21–6:9 are usually understood to offer the clearest examples of this genre in the New Testament, with other works drawing on household management themes more loosely, for example 1 Peter 2:18–3:7; 1 Timothy 2:8–15; 5:1–2; 6:1–2; Titus 2:1–10. What makes Colossians and Ephesians unique in standing somewhat apart from the other New Testament epistles is the fact that both follow a set form of directions that are given to paired members of the household: wives-husbands, children-parents, and slaves-masters. In these two codes, the image of Christ as husband, father, and master are bound together in order to construct the ideological image of Christ as paterfamilias, which is deeply embedded into the Household Codes.

With regards to the sources that lie behind the formation of the *Haustafel*n, there are several prominent schools of thought about their origin, as well as their purpose and intention. In the early 20th century, it was observed that there were noticeable parallels between the New Testament Household Codes, and instructions concerning household management in Greco-Roman literature. For example, there were similarities between instructions given in Colossians to husbands and wives, and Plutarch's counsels to newly married couples.[292] Furthermore, Dionysius of Halicarnassus discusses the same three pairs as Colossians and Ephesians, and in the same order (Roman Antiquities 2.24.3-

[291] Stephen C. Barton, *The Family: in Theological Perspective* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark 2001), 43.
[292] Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1909).

2.27.2), while Seneca, a contemporary of Paul, also depicts domestic relations in a similar manner (Epistle 94.1).[293] Some scholars have focused more specifically on the Hellenistic Jewish traditions behind New Testament Household Codes,[294] while others have contended that the New Testament Household Codes are a uniquely Christian creation. It is quite evident that while they are not exclusively 'Christian' creations, they are unique in the manner in which they apply Christology to domestic and social relations. These Household Codes, it would appear, are common in first-century Judaism and different articulations of these codes can be found across the Hellenistic world. Early Christian codes, however, are unique in that they are based on Jewish scripture,[295] and are Christologically reshaped, evidenced by the prevalence of phrases such as "to the Lord."[296]

## Ephesians 5:21-6:9

According to John Elliott, there is "a tendency to treat all the New Testament Household Codes en bloc rather than to inquire concerning a specific function of a code within a specific document."[297] Our thesis, however, is concerned primarily with a passage in only one *Haustafel*; that of Ephesians.

[293] Robert F. Hull Jr., "The Family of Flesh and the Family of Faith: Reflections on the New Testament Household Codes," *Leaven*, Vol. 9:1: Article 6 (2001): 23.
[294] J. Paul Sampley, *'And the Two Shall Become One Flesh': A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21-33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); James E. Crouch, *The Origin and Intention of the Colossian Haustafel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972).
[295] The scriptural citations in Ephesians include Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31 and Exodus 20:12/Deuteronomy 5:16 in Ephesians 6:2-3
[296] The Christological reshaping is evident in the qualifying phrases: wives are instructed to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (5:22), children to obey their parents in the Lord (6:1), and slaves to obey their earthly masters as to Christ (Lord) and as servants of Christ (6:5-6). Likewise, husbands are instructed to love their wives as Christ loved the church (5:25), parents to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (6:4), and masters to treat their slaves with good will, knowing that they also have a master in heaven, that is, Christ (6:9).
[297] John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (London: SCM, 1981) 208.

It is commonly assumed that Ephesians and Colossians were written pseudonymously a generation after Paul.[298] The dominant scholarly position is that Ephesians was based upon the letter to Colossians, and it is widely held that its author was someone who was thoroughly acquainted with both Colossians as well as Paul's undisputed letters.[299] However, the differences between the two Household Codes are significant enough that one should refrain from reading Ephesians in the light of Colossians. Most scholars regard the *Haustafel* to have an apologetic thrust in Ephesians, viewing it as an attempt to shield the new Christian movement from the suspicion that it might undermine contemporary social structures. Its primary aim, in this case, would be to is to pacify the concerns of those who suspected the new Christian communities of being a subversive movement. [300] Craig Keener claims that groups or movements that were accused of undermining the moral fabric of Roman society sometimes protested that they conformed to traditional Roman values by producing lists such as Household Codes that highlighted their conformity.[301] David Balch argues, with reference to 1 Peter 2:13–3:9, that both Philo and Josephus used such a strategy when facing accusations that Jewish proselytism was ruining the social fabric of Roman society.[302] Margaret MacDonald argues that the *Haustafel* appears in Ephesians with the same intention, in

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[298] Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Sacra Pagina: Colossians and Ephesians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), 6-18.
[299] Morna D. Hooker, "Colossians," in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D.G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: William Eerdmans, 2003), 1404. Although there is debate surrounding whether or not Colossians is itself a Pauline document, the majority position is that it, too, has too markedly different a style, vocabulary, and theology, that it cannot have the same author as the undisputed Pauline letters: Richard I. Pervo, *The Making of Paul – Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 60.
[300] John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (BNTC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 278; Margaret Y. MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches: A Socio-historical Study of Institutionalization in the Pauline and DeuteroPauline Writings* (SNTSMS 60; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 109; Timothy G. Gombis, "A Radically New Humanity: The Function of the *Haustafel* in Ephesians," *JETS* 48/2 (2005): 317.
[301] Craig Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992) 145–46.
[302] David L. Balch, *Let Wives Be Submissive: The Domestic Code in 1 Peter* (SBLMS 26; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981).

order to reduce or indeed eliminate growing tensions between the newly formed community and outsiders.[303]

It is notable, however, that while the household code tradition that exists predominantly reflected contemporary notions regarding the inferiority of women and the secondary status of the wife in relation to her husband, this is absent from the *Haustafel* in Ephesians. Many scholars maintain that Ephesians bears witness to Christian attempts to subordinate women to men, and as such the position of women within the text has been a core focus of scholarly debate.[304] For example, Schüssler Fiorenza argues that where the text expresses the relationship between Christ and the church as a paradigm for marriage, and vice versa, that it is reinforcing the "cultural-patriarchal pattern of subordination."[305] In this view, Ephesians 5:21-33 asserts a wife's submission to her husband as her duty. While Schüssler Fiorenza notes that the text modifies the cultural-patriarchal code and calls for husband's to love their wives, the social roles of wives remain unchanged and as such, the author of Ephesians does not seek to challenge such norms. Instead, such social structures are theologized and therefore reinforced.[306] Beattie similarly acknowledges that while the instruction given to husbands in this text to love their wives diverge from social norms, the author of Ephesians reinforces and fails to challenge prominent norms for female behaviour.[307] Such interpretations of Ephesians 5:21-33 appear to recognise the unique way in which the text

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[303] MacDonald, *The Pauline Churches*, 109.
[304] Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 266-270; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990); Thorsten Moritz, *A Profound Mystery: The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); J. Paul Sampley, *'And the Two Shall Become One Flesh': A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21- 33* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971).
[305] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory*, 268.
[306] Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory*, 270.
[307] Gillian Beattie, *Women and Marriage in Paul and His Early Interpreters* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 76-82.

transcends contemporary marriage conventions but ultimately view the text as affirming such conventions, advocating for a hierarchical relationship between husbands and wives that remains consistent with wider social norms.

I would argue, however, that the text goes against established social norms in emphasizing the mutual dependency of the sexes as well as their compatibility, and does not regard women as lesser. While the text recognizes the cultural convention of the man "at the head" of the household, and he exhorts wives to subordinate themselves willingly to their husbands' headship, the author of the text treats the marital union positively and denies that the subordinate position of women in the domestic sphere is based on any alleged inferiority. Different members of the household are, in these verses, reminded to reflect upon their relationships and mutual submission is the stressed attitude among the parties, irrespective of social order. The idea of mutual subordination would not only be novel and unnatural but could possibly even be seen as a potential threat to established societal order.

The Ephesian *Haustafel*, which runs from 5:21-6:9, is divided into three parts. The rights and responsibilities of married men and women are set out in 5:21-33; while children and parents are addressed in 6:1-4, and slaves and masters in 6:5-9. Paul addresses first in each section the socially "inferior" member of the pair; the wife, children, and slaves.[308] As such, Paul's approach subverts the idea that the household order benefits the male head in particular; rather, it benefits all. This emphasis on complementarity and reciprocity is made clear from the start, as the Ephesian *Haustafel* opens with a call to mutual submission. The code thus begins: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

[308] Gombis, "A Radically New Humanity," 325.

The author reinterprets ideas such as a wife's subordination and a husband's headship in ways which seem counter to, if not entirely contradictory to, Greco-Roman cultural convention. However, it would be misleading to suggest that the text entirely erases the idea of hierarchy or gender roles entirely within the marriage union. There is clearly reference to the husband as "head" in these verses, and there is an explicit command to the wife to submit. While there is a mutuality of submission, this is described as working itself out in ways that involve an ordering of relationships, and different exhortations according to expected gender roles when it comes to marriage.[309] I would argue that while the rationale given in 5:23 for a wife's subordination is the idea that a husband is head of his wife,[310] 5:24 is somewhat unique in the justification that it offers as to why women should submit. Namely that the Christ-Church relationship is the model for a wife's subordination in everything. This is the only reason provided as to why a woman should submit to her husband.

Having outlined the responsibilities of husbands and wives towards each other, the writer briefly addresses the question of unity in marriage. By quoting Genesis 2:24 he alludes to an ideal depiction of marriage, assuming his audience's familiarity with this tradition, before returning to his central idea and the very purpose of the *Haustafel*—the unity of Christ and the Church. Sampley suggests that because the author lacked any intimate knowledge of his intended audience, it was necessary to draw upon "materials and ideas that he has reason to assume will be known to his readers."[311] His addressees are therefore assumed to have some understanding of the unity that the writer is demonstrating through the phrase "one

[309] Witherington, *Earliest Churches,* 56.
[310] This idea is also found in 1 Cor. 11:3.
[311] Sampley 'And the Two Shall Become One Flesh.'

flesh." While the author clearly stresses the compatibility of the married couple and the strength of the marriage union, the focus of the allusion is to conceive of Genesis 2:24 Christologically, as the reference to the "mystery" in 5:32 makes clear. Gregory Dawes suggests that the purpose of the allusion to Genesis 2:24 is to "bridge the gap" between both traditional and Christological-ecclesiological interpretations, "providing the 'missing link' in the chain of reasoning… developed in vv. 28-30" so that v. 31 takes on a "two-fold function."[312] As such, this "mystery" is more than a reference to the union of husband and wife referred to in the citation of Genesis 2:24; it is a reference to the union of Christ and Church, which is depicted as the lens through which all human relationships should be seen.

Members of the Church are understood through this metaphor as being literally incorporated into Christ, thereby forming "one flesh" with him. The Church is Christ's "flesh and bones" just as Eve was the bone of Adam's bones and flesh of his flesh. The Church, the New Eve, has not only been redeemed by the New Adam but has in fact been created out of him and for him, just as Eve was formed from Adam's side.[313] Through a citation of Genesis 2:24, then, the author refers to the tradition of interpretation in which Genesis 2:24 is alluded to as an example of a married couple's unity.

The union of Genesis 2-3 is, of course, understood as a reunion, and so the application of this metaphor to Christ and the Church suggests that they too were originally one. Adam's joyous recognition of Eve as a part of himself, as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" is implicitly echoed in Christ beholding of the Church, who he recognizing as being a part of him from the very beginning.[314] Theologians and

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[312] Gregory W. Dawes, *The Body in Question: Metaphor and Meaning in the Interpretation of Ephesians 5:21-33* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 1998), 103.
[313] Andre Villeneuve, *Divine Marriage from Eden to the End of Days: Communion with God as Nuptial Mystery in the Story of Salvation* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2021), 273
[314] Villeneuve, *Divine Marriage from Eden to the End of Days,* 274.

commentators have at times seen this idea of the Church's origin as the foundation of the idea that the Church is an "extended incarnation of Christ."[315] Their union, in this sense, evokes all of salvation history; Since Christ chose the elect "in him before the foundation of the world" (1:4), the Church is pre-existent.[316] The marriage between Christ and the Church is rooted in his self-sacrifice at the cross (1:7; 2:16; 5:25) which can be viewed upon as evidence for "the width and length and depth and height" of his love for his bride (3:18).[317]

The author of this text very clearly presupposes the tradition of an ideal, first marriage, and presupposes the familiarity of his audience with this tradition. While a prohibition against divorce is not made explicit in these verses, there is no doubt that the virtue of permanency clearly undergirds the idealized image of marriage, revealing the nature of the infinite relationship between Christ and the Church. While a prohibition against divorce is not made explicit in Ephesians 5:22–33, permanency in marriage is implied by the permanent nature of the relationship between Christ and Church.

Much of the scholarly debate on the source and origin of the New Testament Household Codes has been centered upon their comparisons with Stoic moral philosophy, whether they were a distinctively Christian creation, or were mediated to early Christianity from Hellenistic Judaism.[318] As such, allusions and references to the Genesis tradition in justifying family relations in the New Testament have been almost universally accepted as being influenced by purely Hellenistic traditions. While they were undoubtedly coloured by their interaction

[315] Villeneuve, *Divine Marriage from Eden to the End of Days,* 274
[316] Villeneuve, *Divine Marriage from Eden to the End of Days,* 274
[317] Villeneuve, *Divine Marriage from Eden to the End of Days,* 274
[318] Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians,* (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1999).

with the Hellenistic world, the assumption that strictly Hellenistic sources underlie these texts should be re-evaluated in light of the discovery of 4QInstruction to consider works that were, we assume, Jewish Palestinian influences, also.[319] The relevant pericope of 4QInstruction shares with Ephesians 5 many similarities, with both texts insisting on a particular domestic order that sanctions male authority. This, of course, is not particularly unique; similar motifs can be found throughout the literature of the ancient Mediterranean world. What is far more original is the affirmation by both authors that a woman is "the flesh" of her husband and that she is not simply like him, but part of him—an extension of him. The idea of the married couple as a united whole is not uncommon in Second Temple literature, but it is significant that these texts share a common understanding of this idea based upon a particular interpretation of Genesis 2:23-24.

The use of the Hebrew Bible is greater in Ephesians 5-6 than in any other *Haustafeln* in the New Testament. There are a number of parallels between the family code of Ephesians 5:21-6:4 and 4Q416 iii-iv, with regard to both parent-child and husband-wife relations. While it has essentially been proven that Ephesians is inspired by Colossians 3:18–21, or by a closely related version of this text, the author also draws from another source that appears to share inherent similarities to 4QInstruction;[320] where the Ephesians household code differs from Colossians, those differences can be explained through 4QInstruction.[321] Shared ideas between 4QInstruction and thus Epistle illustrate that the Decalogue and Genesis 2 were both significant in forming traditions about the ordering of relations between members of the family. Both authors, in similar contexts, quote in succession these two same passages to build similar arguments.[322] Genesis 2 and

[319] Wold, "Family Ethics," 286.
[320] Rey, "4QInstruction and Early Christian," 567.
[321] Rey, "Family relationships," 254.
[322] Ibid.

the commandment to honour parents from the Decalogue (Exod. 20:12) occur together when teaching about the order of the household in Ephesians, though it is in reverse order to the order in which they appear in 4QInstruction.[323]

The common elements between these texts are numerous and are especially noteworthy in their shared use of Genesis 2:23-24. If 4Q416 2 iv 1 does cite Genesis 2:24, as noted above, then perhaps the most important common element is the direct quotation of this verse in both 4Q416 2 iv 1 and Ephesians 5:31. The author of 4QInstruction illustrates that God' s revelation of the *raz nihyeh*—as stated in 4Q416 2 iv 1—to the *mebin* and the *mebin*'s continued study of it will help him to understand the nature of family relations and marital relations in particular. Ephesians 5:21-33, in a similar way, connects the mutual relation between husband and wife with the "mystery" of Christ and the church.[324]

Both authors assert that woman is 'the flesh' of man; a wife is not simply on equal terms with her husband or similar to him, but instead a part of him. However, in 4QInstruction it is the man instructed to dominate his wife while in Ephesians it is the wife instructed to submit to her husband. Paul exhorts wives to submit to their husbands (5:22, 24b) as the church submits to Christ (5:24a). Paul does not exhort husbands to rule over their wives; they are invited to love their wives sacrificially as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, and they are to nourish and cherish them because their wives are their own bodies just as believers are members of Christ's body (5:29-30).[325]

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[323] In the Epistle to the Ephesians, unlike 4QInstruction, the recommendations to husbands and wives precede those addressed to parent and child.
[324] T. Elgvin, *An Analysis of 4QInstruction,* (Ph.D. Dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), 157.
[325] Rey, "Family Relationships," 251.

The use of Genesis 2:23-34 in both 4QInstruction and Ephesians is in stark contrast to Paul's reference to the "one flesh" idea in 1 Corinthians 6:16 as part of a discussion concerning sexual relations with a prostitute. Paul alludes to the Genesis 2-3 narrative in two contrasting ways in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul he argued that women should cover or veil their heads in church in order to acknowledge their subordination to men as a kind of divine order given in nature.[326] 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 considers a sequence of authority—man does not need to cover his head because he was made in God's glory and image, but because woman is the glory of man, she should cover her head while in prayer or prophecy. However, although woman was created by man and for him originally, now he cannot exist without her. Therefore, while he has authority over her, through Christ they are equally dependent on each other. The idea that Adam produced Eve, but woman now bears man, is seemingly seized upon by Paul to stress the interdependence of the sexes.

The context of the allusion to Genesis 2:24 that occurs in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, however, is perhaps more significant, in that it is entirely unique and distinct when compared to all other references to this verse in contemporary literature, as Paul's interest is not in questions of marriage or divorce, but in what he views as sexual immorality and prostitution. He grounds his ideas of sexual ethics in the creation narrative, basing his admonition to avoid prostitution on a creative use of the "one flesh" idea.[327] He strongly warns the Corinthians not to act or behave as if their bodies are only their own, as they have already entered into a union with Christ and their bodies were considered "members

[326] Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, 133.
[327] Klara Butting, "Pauline Variations on Genesis 2:24: Speaking of the Body of Christ in the Context of the Discussion of Lifestyles", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 79 (2000): 79-90

of Christ." To become "one flesh" with the aforementioned prostitutes meant to create a union which was incompatible with their union with Christ.

From this passage, it is clear that for Paul "one flesh" is not synonymous with marriage but is rather the consequence of sexual relations. We may conclude that, for Paul, extra-marital sexual relationships disrupt the "one flesh" relationship of marriage in the same way that they disrupt the "one spirit" relationship of Christ and the Christ-follower. This reference to Genesis 2:24, then, stands in stark contrast to other references and allusions which function to illustrate, on the one hand, the strength and compatibility of a monogamous marriage, and to warn against divorce, on the other. Nowhere else does the idea of becoming "one flesh" appear to imply only sexual relations. While discussion of 1 Corinthians' use of Genesis 2-3 is beyond the scope of this study, it is necessary to highlight the implications of Paul's allusion in this verse. Rather than negate the argument that the "one flesh" union of marriage was understood as more than a physical, sexual union in the Second Temple era, Paul's reference to Genesis 2:24 in his warning to the Corinthians instead highlights the prominence of traditions surrounding the Eden narrative in this era. It could also further suggest common traditions used by the authors of texts such as Ephesians, 4QInstruction, and Tobit, which understand marriage relationships based on Genesis 2-3 to be compatible, complementary, indissoluble, and beyond purely physical relations.

While it is beyond the scope of the present study to analyse further similarities between 4QInstruction and Ephesians, or indeed other New Testament Household Codes, it is clear that these similarities are of significance in

understanding how Genesis 2 was interpreted in the late Second Temple period.[328] The discovery of 4QInstruction has not only suggested that the New Testament *Haustafeln*, particularly Ephesians, may have more of a Jewish intellectual history than is currently acknowledged, but may also suggest a previously unknown exegetical tradition concerning the Eden narrative. The parallels between both texts are undeniable in their use of Genesis 2:23-24 and may shed new light on the origin and formation of the family code of Ephesians.

## Chapter Seven—Conclusion

The texts that compile the New Testament offer a complex and multi-dimensional insight into the construction of gender roles and relations in the early Christian, or early Jesus, movement. As with any text carrying such a long history of reception, we are indebted to centuries worth of interpretation of its various themes, and so it is difficult, if not impossible, to deconstruct the original authors' intentions in depicting women, sexuality, marriage, and male-female relationships more generally, in the manner that they do. Nonetheless, it is clear that many New Testament passages bear witness to an exegetical trend which understood the creation narrative as the typological basis for all human relationships, both with other humans, and with God and Christ. With regards to gender and to marriage more specifically, there is an understanding in this text that the ideal marriage was that which existed in Eden, predating Mosaic Law and the very notion of "divorce." Jesus in the Gospels, as well as the author of Ephesians, both looked to the primordial couple as an example of what all human marriages should be; permanent, divinely decreed, and monogamous.

[328] 1 Tim 2:11-15 is another passage that could be considered, as it also refers to the origin of men and women to instruct relations between the genders (1 Tim 2:13), and bases male authority on Gen 2 (1 Tim 2:12).

While the origins of the Ephesians household code, offering instructions towards righteous living within the domestic sphere, is still subject to debate, it is evident that its depiction of marriage is somewhat radical. Through their submission to Christ, and to each other, all members of the household, regardless of social hierarchy, are restored to God's intended view for humankind. The application of the Genesis creation narratives throughout the New Testament is multi-faceted and indicates its widespread usage in the late Second Temple period. There is also evidence within the New Testament, based upon the typological identification of Christ as the New Adam, the foundations of an understanding of Genesis 2-3 as depicting a Fall from Paradise, which would be restored by Christ. This of course would develop over the course of subsequent generations into the fully-fledged doctrines of Original Sin and the Fall of Man, with a growing tendency to attribute humanity's fallen state to Eve, and to all women. As previously noted, this idea of salvation history is at the nucleus of Christian theology.

# "For You One Flesh" — Conclusion

Genesis 2:4b-3:24, taken as a unified and separate narrative from Genesis 1-2:4a, has traditionally been read as a story concerned with the 'Fall' of the first humans, telling how they, in disobeying God, brought disharmony and chaos into a formerly perfect universe. The blame for mankind's fallen state, as well as the very existence of sin, death, evil, and suffering, has been laid at the feet of the first woman, Eve, who led her male counterpart astray and condemned both him and all subsequent humans to the mortal realm. Regarded as derivative in substance and subordinate in status, she has served as a prototype for all women; her disobedient nature has served to justify female subordination and rationalize conceptualizations of all females as weak and gullible, in the one instance, or inclined towards evil and sexual immortality, on the other. Her creation from Adam's side, her creation to serve as his helper, and, more significantly, her culpability in sin, legitimize and vindicate patriarchal structures both in the domestic sphere, and the public sphere.

This has been the common interpretation of the Eden narrative for centuries, and as such, one could easily assume that the text has always been understood as such. The many and varied elements of the story are at once clues to the history of the narrative and at the same time an intricate part of its present form.[329] While scholarship has long sought to solve the difficulties of Judeo-Christian ideas of marriage, divorce, and sexuality with little consensus, this is an ever-evolving question due to the variability in both biblical and parabiblical literature, as well as constant revisions in our own theories and methodologies. While a completely "objective" reading of any biblical text is essentially impossible, it is clear that many of our inherited assumptions about the male-female relationship as portrayed in Genesis 2-3, are not objectively apparent in the text.

[329] Wallace, Eden, 22.

Developments in the field of feminist hermeneutics and other related methods has led to a re-examination of the original text, which in turn inspires a re-examination of its reception history.

Chapter One established the basis upon which this thesis was built by introducing first our main objective. Since readings of different themes of the Eden narrative have obscured our vision of the original text itself, we are compelled to return to the earliest extant interpretations of the text in order to reconceive of how we understand the interpretative history of many of its themes. For our purposes, this theme was gender relations, and the period was the late Second Temple era. A select section of texts from different backgrounds and of different genres were selected, which allude to Genesis 2-3 in order to construct ideas about male-female relations. Chapter One then described the methodologies that this thesis would utilize, before briefly surveying the way that feminist scholarship has inspired such efforts to return to the text.

Chapter Two drew up the parameters of this thesis by defining what is meant by Second Temple Judaism, and highlighting the diversity and variability of Judaism across the Mediterranean at this time. It was acknowledged that where possible it is necessary to avoid making sweeping statements about Second Temple or Greco-Roman society as if the ancient world and its understanding of gender and sexuality was monolithic or uniform. We also defined what we mean by “gender.”

In Chapter Three was the text of Genesis itself was examined so as to introduce the key themes and issues therein. A close examination of the Hebrew used and how it has been translated and mistranslated revealed that there is, revealed that these short chapters, foundational for Judeo-Christian societies

across history, are deeply ambiguous. It became clear that although the text itself does not outline any theories of Original Sin or the Fall of Man, a manipulation of the text could easily provide a basis for those doctrines. It was also noted that the depiction of the character of "Eve" within the Eden narrative does not bear many similarities to the "Eve" that exists in our common psyche. One of the focus points of this Chapter was an examination of Genesis 2:24 as relating to a normative model of marriage. Although not all exegetes view Genesis 2:24 to refer to the institution or custom of marriage, this argument finds a strong basis in this verse due to the emphasis that is placed on the acts of leaving, cleaving, and becoming one flesh.

In Chapter Four, an examination of the Book of Ben Sira revealed that readings of Genesis 2-3 that see it as depicting a tragic Fall from grace into the mortal realm are not in line with its original interpretation. Sira conceives of wisdom and knowledge positively and seems to believe that death was God's original intention for humankind. A key aspect of this text is human free will and individual autonomy and as such, Ben Sira interprets the wisdom elements of Genesis 2-3 in such a way that the knowledge of good and evil was granted to humankind at the moment of creation. Ben Sira's allusion to the "one flesh" union is arguably quite obscure. He does not outright prohibit divorce but instead permits it when faced with a defiant or rebellious wife. However, the fact that he describes it as the cutting off of one's flesh would suggest that he does not permit it lightly. It is still the loss of an intrinsic part of one's being, even if it seen to be for the best—from the husband's perspective, of course. Whether Ben Sira refers intentionally to Genesis 2-3 elsewhere in Sirach 25:24 is impossible to verify, but I would argue that he does not, based upon his wider understanding of the Eden narrative.

Chapter Five, concerned with the Book of Tobit, provided an example of how the Edenic marriage ideal served as an example for couples to aim towards. Tobit referred to

the union of Adam and Eve in order to establish the divine and holy nature of marriage, as well as to affirm the idea of the marriage relationship as complementary. Marriage was viewed upon as being decreed by God, and also both permanent and monogamous. This Chapter also highlighted the first example of an audience's assumed familiarity with the Eden narrative.

In Chapter Six, the enigmatic wisdom text 4QInstruction used the idea of becoming "one flesh" to instruct its audience, the *mebin*, to view marriage from a positive stance. This text viewed the marriage union not merely as joining the two individuals together but in fact joining a wife to the husband, reuniting what had been a missing part of him. For that reason, he has authority over her, but the *mebin* is reminded constantly to treat his wife favourably and with respect. As with Sirach, 4QInstruction also treated the attainment of wisdom and knowledge in Eden in a positive manner, although with different objectives in mind.

Chapter Seven examined the way in which gender and sexuality are both complex themes within the New Testament. Although the New Testament writers utilize the Genesis creation narratives in a myriad of ways, our concern was with regard to the way that it conceived of male-female relationships. While Tobit, 4QInstruction, and Ephesians 5 implicitly condemn divorce through their conceptualizations of marriage as a one flesh union, the Synoptic Gospels use this idea to explicitly condemn divorce; for followers of Jesus, divorce is not only prohibited, but impossible. This Chapter also turned to Ephesians 5:21-33 in order to illustrate another way in which the Eden marriage was availed of, in order to serve as a metaphor for the relationship between Christ and the Church. Significantly, although the New Testament Household Codes are generally assumed to have been written in order to highlight the similarities between Jewish

domestic life and Greco-Roman culture, this text exhorts members of the household, regardless of their "social status," to submit to one another in Christ.

When writers, both historically and today, choose to refer to, allude to, interpret, retell, or reimagine the way that the creation of marriage and the male-female relationship first introduced in Genesis 2-3 are portrayed, they do so in manner that provides an insight not into their own objectives and thought-processes, but also into the socio-cultural and historical milieu in which they are writing. As we have seen, some of the earliest Jewish interpretations of the relationship between Adam and Eve do not hint at such defences for female inferiority. The association of Eve with sin and death, it is contended, does not become clear until the latest stages of the Second Temple era, with, on the one hand, the application of Greek philosophical and mythological ideas, as well as the burgeoning emergence of a particular Christian conceptualization of salvation history and the necessity of a Fall of Mankind to the genesis of such a theology. Based upon this reading, through this Christian lens, the text of Genesis 2-3 came to attest the subjugation of women to men and endorse perceptions of women as inherently inferior.

These early interpretations appear instead to bear witness to a widespread tradition that saw the creation of the institution of marriage in Genesis 2:23-24 as something which constructed an indissoluble and divinely decreed union between a husband and wife. Shared ideas between these texts illustrate that Genesis 2-3 was significant in forming traditions about male-female relationships, specifically marriage, but that such relationships were not negatively construed, in the way one commonly understands the Adam-Eve relationship.

Many of the issues introduced in this thesis merit further consideration by scholarship, particularly in light of the many developments in the field of Second Temple studies as a result of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the emerging interest in

examining this era on its own merits and not merely as “intertestamental” or “pre-Christian/pre-Rabbinic Judaism.” Beyond allusions to Genesis 2-3, many of the texts produced in this era also interpret other Torah narratives in ways that may inspire further re-examinations of biblical ideas that relate in some capacity to gender, namely the Abraham cycle. Because of the long reception traditions of these narratives and texts, they constantly demand fresh interpretations and analyses which can allow, even now, new discoveries and novel theories about their origins, sources, intentions, milieu, and contexts.

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