

The Splitting of Adam

Gen. 2:21-24

Introduction:

1. This is one of the most well-known and intriguing passages of Scripture.
2. Verse 24 is quoted 4 times in the N.T.: Matt. 19:3-6; Mk. 10:6-9; 1 Cor. 6:15-17; Eph. 5:28-32
3. . . . in contexts dealing with marriage, prostitution, and Christ and the church. How can this text be used to cut across such a wide variety of areas?
4. What does it mean and what is its significance?
5. In this study we will evaluate the meaning of the text, especially this idea of being bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. We will try to make some observations about the significance of what is meant and try to draw some practical conclusions.

Discussion:

- I. There is a “splitting of Adam” that takes place (21).
 - A. It is easy for us to think in a very concrete and physical way here.
 1. The English suggests this when it refers to man’s rib and God fashioning a woman from the rib.
 2. But something more profound is taking place than mere physical construction. This is a part of it, but there is more.
 - B. I am going to describe it as “the splitting of Adam.”
 1. It is not just the taking of a rib.
 2. Man is split from one into two.
 3. They are completely unique.
 4. Different from the animals.
 5. Unique in their relationship to one another.
 - C. “What was man like before God “spilt him?” I do not know.
 1. Moses said, “God took her from the man.”
 2. From this “split” God fashioned a woman.
- II. Man’s observation was, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”
 - A. Does this mean that she is his physical complement? Yes, but the comment by Moses and the quotations of this text in the N.T. indicate that there is more to it than this physical element.
 - B. Moses said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”
 1. We tend to think concretely and physically, and interpret this to mean “a man should leave geographically his father and mother and he and his wife shall have sex.”
 2. But this probably does not capture the real meaning here.
 1. I would note that in Gen. 4:1 the text says, “The man had relations with his wife Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain.”

2. It does not say, "They became one flesh." Sex and becoming one flesh are not identical.
- C. What does it mean "to become one flesh?" The answer may be found in the man's observation, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."
1. Observe this statement is made to God, not to Eve. So Adam is not saying, "My, you are nice looking." He is not just expressing exuberance over what God has done, but recognizing that God has created a special relationship.
 2. But Moses narrows it. There is a special relationship between all men and all women. But Moses narrows the focus to one man and one woman. All men do not become one flesh with all women. One man and one woman become one flesh.
 3. Notice the instances where "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" is used.
 - a. Gen. 29:14—Jacob had fled from his father, Isaac's, household and had gone to his mother's brother, Laban. Laban observed, "You are my bone and my flesh." Meaning—they were relatives (12, 15). This meant that Laban would treat Jacob as part of his family and he would have the special privileges associated with being family. It had economic implications for Jacob. Cf. also Abraham and Lot—economic and protection (Gen. 13-14).
 - b. Judges 9:2—Jerubbaal (Gideon) spoke to the "clans of the household of his mother's father" reminding them that "I am your bone and your flesh." Instead they said, "Abimelech is our relative." They then hired reckless fellows and killed the sons of Jerubbaal.
 - 1) Jerubbaal called for allegiance on the basis of being "your bone and your flesh."
 - 2) They denied it and said, "Abimelech is our relative," and took an adversarial stance against Jerubbaal.
 - c. 2 Sam. 5:1-3; 1 Chron. 11:1—Israel identified themselves as belonging to David.
 - 1) They were saying, "We are in special relationship with you. We are together. We are on the same team."
 - 2) Note that David made a **covenant** with them. "Before the Lord." God is called on as a witness to the covenant and violating the covenant called for God's judgment against the violator. Cf. Heb. 13:4.
 - d. 2 Sam. 19:13ff—King David identifies the elders of Judah as "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh" and calls them "brothers." They joined forces "as one man." Again the idea is present of family, being on the same side, and being on the same team.

III. This give us insight into 2:24: "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife; and the shall become one flesh."

- A. For what reason? Because "this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."
- B. It involves a change in primary allegiance.
 1. From father and mother to spouse. Even though it is spoke from a male perspective it applies in both directions.
 2. The wife and the husband give primary allegiance to each other. They are joined together. They enjoy the special privileges associated with loyalty, economic

mingling, protection, and sexual mingling.

- C. There is a focus on belonging to the other. Thus they seek what benefits the other (Eph. 5:21ff).
 - 1. They are one body, one flesh (Eph. 5:28f).
 - 2. No one ever hated his own flesh. If you destroy her you destroy yourself. If you destroy him you destroy yourself.
 - 3. You do not destroy the people on your team you encourage them.
 - 4. "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does" (1 Cor. 7:4).
- D. There is a concern for familial attachment.
- E. There is an element of benefit to the other.
 - 1. It is not just about me. Each give themselves to the other.
 - 2. It is not about you and me. In a negotiated truce. Tit for tat. "I'll do this, if you do that."
 - 3. It is about us.
- F. So what is wrong with fornication and adultery? Heb. 13:4.
 - 1. It is a violation of allegiance.
 - 2. It is a violation of loyalty.
 - 3. It is an aggressive act against by people. In governments it is called "treason." Perfidy is a form of deception in which one side promises to act in good faith with the intention of breaking the good faith promise. In spiritual terms it is faithlessness. Mal 2:14 refers to "treacherously" putting away wives.
 - 4. It is not just physical sex.
 - 5. God is witness to the covenant and judges those who abandon it (cf. Matt. 19:4-6).

IV. Consider now the implications regarding our relationship with God.

- A. Prostitution is a violation (1 Cor. 6:13b-20). Cf. Prov. 2:17.
 - 1. We are "bone of Christ's bone and flesh of Christ's flesh." We are his clan, his family (Eph. 2:19). We are loyal to one another. Our allegiance belongs to each other. We are on the same team.
 - 2. To take the body that belongs to Christ and join it with a prostitute is wrong in the worst way.
- B. Idolatry/adultery is a violation (James 4:4-9; Matt. 6:24).
- C. Understand why God prohibited intermarriage between His people and the unbelievers.
 - 1. Why would one want to promise allegiance to one who served some other god?
 - 2. Consider 2 Cor. 6:14ff.
- D. Becoming one flesh is not just about physical sex. It is about allegiance. It is about loyalty. It is about family. It is about who you are, not just about what you do. Physical sex may be a sign of being one flesh in marriage, but that is not all it is.

