

God's Purpose for Women at Creation

Spiritual Life Christian Fellowship

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Scripture References:

Genesis 1:26-28 (KJV) ²⁶And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let *them* have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; *male and female* created he *them*. ²⁸And God blessed *them*, and God said unto *them*, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. (*emphasis added*)

Genesis 2:18-25 (KJV) ¹⁸And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; *I will make him an help meet for him*. ¹⁹And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. ²⁰And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; *but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him*. ²¹And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; ²²And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. ²³And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. ²⁴Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. ²⁵And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. (*emphasis added*)

Man and Woman were created in God's Image:

1. Man and woman were both created in God's image. Just as man was formed from earth, woman was formed from man. She corresponds perfectly to the man, the same flesh and blood, and in "the image of God" just as the man, equal to him in every way (Gen. 1:27). By the creative act itself, she is inseparably linked to the man. The unity of the race is assured (Gen. 1:27, 28); the woman's dignity and worth is affirmed (Gen. 2:22); the foundation for Christian marriage is set forth in a memorable way (v. 24). The woman was not an afterthought. The man was designed and created physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually with her coming creation planned and assured. In fact, God said that the man "alone" was not good; he needed the woman (v. 18). God made man from "the dust of the ground," but He made the woman from "the rib" (Heb. *tsela*, lit. "side") of the man. ¹

¹Thomas Nelson, Inc: *Woman's Study Bible*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Ge 2:24

2. The word also means “image” in the sense of essential nature. So Adam “begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth” (Gen. 5:3). Human nature in its internal and external characteristics is what is meant here rather than an exact duplicate. So, too, God made man in His own “image,” reflecting some of His own perfections: perfect in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, and with dominion over the creatures (Gen. 1:26). Being created in God’s “image” meant being created male and female, in a loving unity of more than one person (Gen. 1:27). It is noteworthy that in Gen. 1:26 (the first occurrence of the word) the “image” of God is represented by two Hebrew words (*tselem* and *demut*); by *selem* alone in Gen. 1:27 and 9:6; and by *demut* alone in Gen. 5:1. This plus the fact that in other contexts the words are used exactly the same leads to the conclusion that the use of both in passages such as Gen. 1:26 is for literary effect.²

God Creates Woman as a Counterpart for Man

1. God determines that it is not good for man to be alone. God already is Adam’s helper (but a superior helper). The animals are also Adam’s helpers (but inferior helpers).³
 - a. The word translated as “help” in the KJV version has the following meaning:
 1. עֲזָרָה m. with suff. עֲזָרָה—(1) *aid, help*; often concr. *a helper, aider*, Ps. 33:20; 70:6; 115:9; *a female helper*, Gen. 2:18, 20.⁴
 2. *azar* (עָזַר, 5826), “to help, assist, aid.” This word and its derivatives are common in both ancient and modern Hebrew. The verb occurs about 80 times in the biblical text. *Azar* is first found in the Old Testament in Jacob’s deathbed blessing of Joseph: “... The God of thy father, who shall help thee ...” (Gen. 49:25). Help or aid comes from a variety of sources: Thirty-two kings “helped” Ben-hadad (1 Kings 20:6); one city “helps” another (Josh. 10:33); even false gods are believed to be of “help” (2 Chron. 28:23). Of course, the greatest source of help is God Himself; He is “the helper of the fatherless” (Ps. 10:14). God promises: “I will help thee” (Isa. 41:10); “and the Lord shall help them, and deliver them ...” (Ps. 37:40).⁵

²Vine, W. E. ; Unger, Merrill F. ; White, William: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville : T. Nelson, 1996, S. 1:244

³Elwell, Walter A.: *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Book House, 1996, c1989 (Baker Reference Library 3), S. Ge 2:15

⁴Gesenius, Wilhelm ; Tregelles, Samuel Prideaux: *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc, 2003, S. 619

⁵Vine, W. E. ; Unger, Merrill F. ; White, William: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville : T. Nelson, 1996, S. 1:110

b. The word translated as “meet” in the KJV version has the following meaning:

1. With prepositions—(1) כִּנְגַד pr. *as over against*. Opposite to each other are set things to be compared (Isa. 40:17), those which answer to each other, those which are alike (*die Gegenstücke*), hence Gen. 2:18, “I will make for him (man) a helper כִּנְגַדָּהּ corresponding to him.” Verse 20. Well rendered by the LXX. verse 18, κατ’ αὐτόν; 20, ὁμοιος αὐτῷ.

Compare לִנְגַד Neh. 12:9. In the Rabbinic כִּנְגַד is often used in speaking of things which are like one another (see Lud. de Dieu ad h. l.), compare Pers. برابر over against, like, suitable.⁶

2. *neged* (נִּגְדָּה, 5048), “before; in the presence of; in the sight of; in front of; in one’s estimation; straight ahead.” This word occurs 156 times in biblical Hebrew as a preposition and an adverb. Basically the word indicates that its object is immediately “before” something or someone. It is used in Gen. 2:18, where God said He would make Adam “a help meet for him,” or someone to correspond to him, just as the males and females of the animals corresponded to (matched) one another.⁷

3. The Hebrew word:

suggests something that completes a polarity, as the north pole is “suitable” to the south pole. One without the other is incomplete.⁸

4. God decided to **make a helper suitable** (lit., “a helper corresponding to him,” or “a corresponding helper”) **for** the man (v. 18). “Helper” is not a demeaning term; it is often used in Scripture to describe God Almighty (e.g., Pss. 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, where it is trans. “help” in the NIV). The description of her as “corresponding to him” means basically that what was said about him in Genesis 2:7 was also true of her. They both had the same nature. But what man lacked (his aloneness was not good) she supplied, and what she lacked he supplied. The culmination was **one flesh** (v. 24)—the complete unity of man and woman in marriage. Since Adam

⁶Gesenius, Wilhelm ; Tregelles, Samuel Prideaux: *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc, 2003, S. 530

⁷Vine, W. E. ; Unger, Merrill F. ; White, William: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*. Nashville : T. Nelson, 1996, S. 1:258

⁸Elwell, Walter A.: *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*. Grand Rapids, Mich. : Baker Book House, 1996, c1989 (Baker Reference Library 3), S. Ge 2:15

lit. literal, literally

v. verse

e.g. *exempli gratia*, for example

trans. translation, translator, translated

and Eve were a spiritual unity, living in integrity without sin, there was no need for instruction here on headship.⁹

5. Man needs a wife who is a **help**. If man is to achieve his objectives in life, he needs the help of his mate in every way. Her position is further defined by the expression, “like him,” literally, “as agreeing to him or his counterpart.” She is the kind of help man needs, agreeing with him mentally, physically, spiritually; but she is not an inferior being.¹⁰
6. Adam had no human person-to-person relationships, so God made a “companion who will help him” (2:18), one who was nearly a mirror image of him. The female was not inferior, she was, literally, “one corresponding to him”—like an image in a mirror. By saying, “she will be called ‘woman’ ” (2:23), Adam discerned her character. Of everything created, only woman was qualified to be called by a term related to the Hebrew word for man, *ish*. The word “woman” is formed simply by adding the feminine ending *ah*, thus making *ishah*, or “woman.”¹¹
7. God identified Himself as a “Helper” (Heb. *ezer*) to Israel (18:4; Deut. 33:7). The word does not imply inferiority. It describes function rather than worth. No one loses value in humbly assuming the role of helper. As a “helper” to the man, the woman became his partner spiritually in the overwhelming task of obedience to God and dominion over the earth. She was also to be a vital part of extending the generations (Gen. 1:28). The woman, as ultimate friend to the man, would bring him comfort and fellowship (Gen. 1:23, 24). No one else could encourage and inspire him as she was created to do. The phrase “comparable to him” (Heb. *kenegdo*, lit. “corresponding to what is in front of him”) occurs only here and in verse 20, emphasizing the commonality of the man and the woman. Designed as the perfect counterpart for the man, the woman was neither inferior nor superior, but she was alike and equal to the man in her personhood while different and unique in her function.¹²

Conclusions:

1. God created both male and female in His image.
2. Eve was created in a unique act of creation as she was taken from Adam. This has significance on of itself.
3. Women were created as a counterpart to men and were given the same instruction from God as men in Gen. 1:28

⁹Walvoord, John F. ; Zuck, Roy B. ; Dallas Theological Seminary: *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1983-c1985, S. 1:31

¹⁰*KJV Bible Commentary*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994, S. 18

¹¹Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl ; Hughes, Robert B.: *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001 (The Tyndale Reference Library), S. 11

¹²Thomas Nelson, Inc: *Woman's Study Bible* . Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995, S. Ge 2:24

4. The same Hebrew word describing women as a “helper” is used elsewhere in the OT to describe God. Therefore, we cannot interpret the word to mean inferior or under the rule of