

Which Rib Did Eve Come From?

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It has been assumed by the majority of Christianity that Eve was literally created from one of Adam's ribs. If this is correct, why did God create Eve in this manner? Why wasn't she fashioned and formed in the same manner as Adam? Is there an important lesson that God is revealing by using two different methods in the creation of Adam and Eve? Is the lesson primarily physical or is it spiritual?

In order to answer these questions, it is important to examine other Biblical examples that use human anatomy to illustrate important spiritual principles. In the Genesis account of creation, a rib is used to describe the process of Eve's creation. In the book of Colossians, Paul used the human anatomy to describe an equally important creation, that of the body of Christ,

...holding fast to the Head (Jesus Christ), from whom all the body (of Christ – the church), nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase which is of God (Col. 2:19b; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

In this scripture, Paul uses the analogy of physical joints and ligaments being nourished in a human body to show that the spiritual body grows as a result of being nourished (spiritually) by its Head, which is Jesus Christ. In like manner, Eve was to be nourished by her head, Adam. This nourishment was not meant to be of physical sustenance. Instead, it was meant to show the importance of Adam's care for his wife's spiritual well-being,

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it²⁶ that he might set it apart and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,²⁷ that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.³⁰ For we are members of his body (as Eve was a member of Adam's body using the symbol of a rib), of his flesh and of his bones.³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church (Eph. 5:25-32; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Based on Paul's statement above, Adam's relationship with Eve was to symbolically picture the same care and concern that exists between Christ and his church. Had Adam fulfilled this important responsibility, he would have been willing to sacrifice whatever was necessary in order to protect Eve, just as Christ did for the church (Rom. 12:1). What better way of representing this care and concern than using the symbol of a rib that sits very close to a person's heart in the human anatomy.

For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and he (Christ) is the savior of the body (Eph. 5:23; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Unfortunately, Adam failed to fulfill the responsibility he was given. He was meant to care for his wife. Instead, he stood by and allowed her to sin by breaking a command of God, which eventually led to her death (see the study: What Tree Did Eve Eat From?),

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

So when the woman (Eve) saw that the tree (of the knowledge of good and evil) was good for food (imbibing instruction), that it was pleasant to the eyes (cf. Prov.14:12, 16:25), and a tree to make one wise (in the ways of this world, cf. Jn.14: 30), she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband (who was) with her, and he ate (went along with it) (Gen. 2:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Adam was not deceived by the Adversary and therefore should have intervened (1Tim. 2:14). Had he done so, he would have saved Eve from death (the consequence for commandment-breaking; Rom. 6:23), based on God's law regarding vows, rash utterances, and agreements, but he was not willing to make personal sacrifices in order to protect her,

But if indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, ⁷ and her husband hears it, and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. ⁸ But if her husband overrules her on the day that he hears it, he shall make void her vow which she vowed and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the Lord will forgive her (Nu. 30:6-8).

Had Adam truly loved the wife that God created for him (pictured symbolically as coming from one of his ribs), he would have acted to void the agreement she made with the individual represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and God would have forgiven her.

Thankfully, Jesus Christ is faithful to his wife, the church. He sacrificed for her so that God our Father would forgive her trespasses. The repentant church is now symbolized as a chaste virgin ready to be married to Jesus Christ when he returns to rule this planet and establish his Father's law (Isa. 2:2-4),

For I (the apostle Paul) am jealous for you (the church in Corinth) with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ (2Cor. 11:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

After Eve was created from Adam, 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 (Gen. 2:23).

At this point in time, Adam and Eve had not yet sinned and they were in the presence of God (see the study: The Tree of Life and River of Living Water). In Genesis 2:23, Adam made no mention of a body with blood. As human flesh and blood cannot exist in the heavenly realm (1Cor. 15:50), they would both have been in a different form prior to their sin (Gen. 2:7-8). At some point after their sin, they would have been translated into a flesh and blood body, which would then die (Gen. 2:17). An example of a body that can be seen and handled while not consisting of flesh and blood is described in the book of John,

The other disciples therefore said to him (Thomas), 'We have seen the Lord (Christ after his resurrection).' But he (Thomas) said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe' (Jn. 20:25; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Then he (Christ) said to Thomas, 'Reach your fingers here, and look at my hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into my side...' (Jn. 20:27a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

So, Christ came from heaven after his resurrection in a form that his disciples could recognize as well as touch and feel. This form would explain how Adam and Eve existed prior to their sin. They were in a form that Adam described as flesh and bone (Gen. 2:23) without the presence of blood. Therefore, it was not a body that would be associated with a human being even though it looked very similar. When Christ came to earth as a human being, he was made from a different flesh that would die,

For what the law (of animal sacrifices) could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own son (Jesus Christ) *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, on account of sin...(Rom. 8:3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Flesh and blood, of and by itself, cannot be sinful because it did not break any of God's law or commands (1Jn. 3:4). However, if its existence is associated with sin then the phrase, "likeness of sinful flesh" pictures what happened when Adam and Eve sinned. It represents the change that occurred after they broke a command of God (Gen. 3:7). They and their descendants became lower than the angels for a period of time, as did Jesus Christ in order to restore mankind to their former state,

What is man (kind) that You (Almighty God) are mindful of him (Job 7:17), or the son of man (Jesus Christ) that You take care of him? ⁷ You made him (both mankind and Jesus Christ, cf. vs 9) for a little while lower than the angels (because of Adam and Eve's sin); you crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. ⁸ You have put all things in subjection under his feet (as originally intended in Genesis 1:26 and re-affirmed in Ps. 8:4-8). For in that He (Almighty God) put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him (ultimately, following repentance). But now we do not yet see all things under him (because God's plan of salvation is not yet completed). ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was (also) made for a little while lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that he (Christ), by the grace of God (our Father), might taste death for (to cover) everyone ('s) (sins). ¹⁰ For it was fitting for Him (Almighty God), for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory (mankind through the resurrection from the dead), to make the author of

their (mankind's) salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies (sets apart after repentance of sin) and those who are being sanctified (set apart and growing spiritually) are all of one (purpose through God's plan), for which reason he (Jesus Christ) is not ashamed to call them (repentant individuals) brethren (Jn. 15:13-15), ¹² saying: "I will declare Your (Almighty God's) name to my brethren (Jn. 17:6, 26); in the midst of the (heavenly) congregation I will sing praise to You (Almighty God). ¹³ And again: 'I will put my trust in Him (God our Father).' And again: 'Here am I (Jesus Christ) and the children (of mankind) whom God (our Father) has given me (Jesus Christ).' ¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood (as the result of Adam's sin), he himself (Jesus Christ) likewise shared in the same (became flesh and blood), that through death he (Christ) might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:6-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Adam was not originally created in a form that could be described as, "subject to bondage". Instead, he rebelled against a command of God and was sentenced to death, which included being driven from God's presence (Gen. 3:22-24) and was changed into a flesh and blood human being. Adam and all his descendants are now in a form that God describes as lower than the angels for a little while (Heb. 2:6-7).

Consequently, the rib that was taken from Adam would not have been the same as a rib that is inside a human being. The rib taken out of Adam served a far greater purpose through the symbolism it represented. It was to remind Adam that his wife came from him and it was his responsibility to protect and nourish her, spiritually speaking.

The apostle Paul understood that there were different forms of fleshly bodies. So although the term flesh can be used to describe them, it does not mean they are all composed of exactly the same elements,

All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also heavenly bodies and earthy bodies; but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another (1Cor. 15:39-40).

Adam was not created in sinful flesh (and blood) because had he been created this way he was bound to die. Instead, Adam was created in a form that could be translated into flesh and blood in the event he sinned, which is exactly what occurred (Gen. 3:7). Had Adam not sinned, he would have continued in the presence of God our Father along with all the host of heaven. His helper, Eve, would also have continued with him and the rib that she was created from would have remained in a form that could be described figuratively as flesh and bone,

This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man (Gen. 2:23).

Essentially, the phrase 'flesh and bone' is used to denote the family that a living being comes from. Therefore Eve came from, and would continue to be apart of, the family of Adam just as human beings come from their physical parents,

And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab (2Sam. 19:13).

Likewise, Adam was made in the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26). The material or substance God used to create Adam is called "dust" yet God is neither made of dust or any other physical material. God used this word to describe symbolically the substance used in Adam's creation (Gen. 2:7). This aspect of creation is often misunderstood as the events are generally perceived from a literal perspective and therefore mistakenly assumed to speak only of a physical creation.

For further study on the subject of the use of symbolic language in scripture, see the articles on this website under the heading: **Symbolism**.

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