

The Creation Account and Same-Sex Marriage

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GENESIS 2:18-25 IN THE LIGHT OF 1:26-28

Given the swift moral and cultural transformations occurring in the Western world, such as the new definition of marriage, it has become common for biblical scholars to seek validation for these significant changes in family structure and sexuality by referencing the Bible. Nevertheless, proponents of same-sex marriage rights generally do not want to eliminate or render conventional marital rituals irrelevant. However, despite potential reinterpretations of some words pertaining to marriage, such as the definition of biblical marriage, these individuals are cautious to recognize the inherent value of heterosexual relationships as established by God in the Bible.

On the contrary, proponents of this viewpoint aim to expand or modify marriage to encompass same-sex relationships.¹ In order to bolster their argument, researchers often present a range of alleged similarities between the fight for same-sex rights and previous historical fights, such as women's rights in relation to patriarchy, slavery, women's ordination, and the admission of Gentiles in the church.² One commonly held idea is that same-sex partnerships are considered favorable and are seen as evidence of divine approval and blessings from the Spirit.³ Nevertheless, these arguments only serve to confuse the issue, and researchers who do not support the argument have demonstrated that many of these arguments are actually false dichotomies.⁴

Furthermore, plea has been made to consider societal trends and public opinion of the church as a legitimate justification for altering the definition of marriage. Indeed, in certain instances, referencing societal opinion polls that depict the church as judgmental or anti-gay is used as a strategy to advocate for change, with the aim of removing the Bible and Christianity as sources of bigotry and exclusion.⁵ These perceived characteristics, whether factual or imaginary, have the potential to harm the church's reputation for future generations if prompt

¹ Megan DeFranza, "Journeying from the Bible to Christian Ethics in Search of Common Ground," in *Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church* (ed. Preston Sprinkle; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 90, 93. Mark Achtemeier, *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage: An Evangelical's Change of Heart* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), xiii.

² Megan DeFranza, "Journeying from the Bible to Christian Ethics in Search of Common Ground," in *Two Views on Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Church* (ed. Preston Sprinkle; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 98-102; Ken Wilson, *A Letter to My Congregation* (Canton, MI: Read the Spirit, 2014), 30-35, 107-111.

³ Achtemeier, *Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage*, 14; William Stacy Johnson, *A Time to Embrace: Same-Sex Relationships in Religion, Law, and Politics* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 127-29; and Matthew Vines, *God and the Gay Christian: The Biblical Case in Support of Same-Sex Relationships* (New York: Convergent Books, 2014), 1-20. I recommend reading Michael L. Brown's rebuttal of this viewpoint in his book *Can You Be Gay and Christian? Responding with Love and Truth to Questions about Homosexuality* (Lake Mary, FL: Front Line, 2014), 186-200; For further information, see Brian Neil Peterson, *What Was the Sin of Sodom: Homosexuality, Inhospitality, or Something Else?* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016), 15-17.

⁴ Donald Fortson III and Rollin G. Grams, *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2016), 167-89, 381-85; Robert Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001), 460-69; Brown, *Can You Be Gay and Christian?*, 60-80; or Peterson, *What Was the Sin of Sodom?*, 1-13.

⁵ Achtemeier, *Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage*, xiii-xiv.

action is not taken. However, the commonly mentioned claim that the church maintains an exclusionary stance towards those with same-sex orientation is deceptive. The act of refusing to accept one's sinful behavior, whether it is related to sexuality or any other aspect, does not render a church exclusionary, but rather aligns with biblical principles.⁶ Furthermore, the claim that same-sex marriage is biblical is factually incorrect.⁷

Recently, Gen 2:18–25, has gained attention from scholars who support same-sex marriage as they seek to establish its legitimacy. The scripture clearly depicts the marital union of Adam and Eve, since they are described as becoming one flesh. Jesus himself references the passage while emphasizing the sacredness of marriage in relation to divorce (Matthew 19:5). The primary objective of Gen 2:24 was to instruct the Israelite audience (and by extension, all of mankind) of the sacredness of marriage and the ancient origins of this institution. God played a crucial role in establishing and ensuring the importance of the fundamental societal institution of family, allowing it to be created and flourish. Although the second chapter of the Bible provides clear instructions and a model for marriage, some modern exegetes have attempted to distort this section of Genesis to align with the newly established concept of same-sex marriage. The main argument can be succinctly stated as follows: Gen 2:18-25 emphasizes Adam's alone, and therefore, marriage, as shown in Gen 2, was essentially established by God to address this state of being alone. In this particular setting, marriage served the purpose of creating a family by forming strong connections based on familial relationships, rather than only for the sake of procreation, as others suggest. Therefore, any combination of persons (male-male, female-female, male-female) can fulfill the requirements outlined in Gen 2 to alleviate loneliness and form a familial relationship that represents a nuclear family.⁸ Supporters strengthen their argument by pointing out that reproduction is not a necessary condition. They argue further that the essential principle of marriage is demonstrated by the unions of infertile and/or elderly individuals, as well as couples who choose not to have children.⁹

This study seeks to explain that Gen 2:18-25 does not provide scriptural justification for same-sex marriage, but instead presents God's intention for heterosexual marriage. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that the author specifically intended procreation to be a primary objective of the union. I will reach this conclusion by presenting three lines of argumentation: Firstly, Gen 2:18–25 appears to provide additional details to complement Gen 1:26–28. Secondly, the grammar used in Gen 2:18 and 20 suggests that male and female bodies are specifically designed for sexual pleasure within the context of marriage. Lastly, the phrase “one flesh” in Gen 2:24 is not limited to kinship ties, but also encompasses the concept of procreation. I will end my analysis by quickly discussing some of the supplementary arguments pertaining to this topic.

The scholarly debate revolves around the historical-critical assertion that the two creation accounts in Gen 1:1–2:4a and 2:4b–25 originate from distinct sources and depict divergent creation narratives with distinct emphases.¹⁰ According to source theories, the initial narrative is credited to the presumed Priestly author,

⁶ Os Guinness, *Impossible People: Christian Courage and the Struggle for the Soul of Civilization* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2016), 70-75.

⁷Brian Neil Peterson, “DOES GENESIS 2 SUPPORT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE? AN EVANGELICAL RESPONSE.” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 60, no. 4 (Dec 2017, 2017/12//): 681-96, <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/does-genesis-2-support-same-sex-marriage/docview/2048068278/se-2>.

⁸Several persons have made this statement, including John J. McNeill, *Sex as God Intended: A Reflection on Human Sexuality as Play* (Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe, 2008), 23–26; Miguel A. De La Torre, *Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster, 2011), 62–63; Brownson, *Bible, Gender, Sexuality*, 32–34, 86–97; and Johnson, *Time to Embrace*, 120, 123. Johnson (p. 123) calls Gen 2:18 “the most important verse in all of Scripture for the gay marriage debate.”

⁹ Achtemeier, *Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage*, 60; and DeFranza, “Journeying,” 97–99.

¹⁰Chapter 2, specifically 2:4b–25, is the first significant part associated with the hypothetical “J” source. Source critics often categorize 2:25 as part of chapter 3 or interpret it as a comment made by the narrator. This viewpoint is supported by Hermann Gunkel in his book *Genesis* (trans. Mark E. Biddle; Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 4–14; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (trans. John J. Scullion; repr., Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 234; George W. Coats, *Genesis with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 49–60; E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; New York: Doubleday, 1964), 14–20. Alternatively, there is a viewpoint suggesting that Gen 2:4 should serve as the opening for chapters 2-4. This perspective is presented by Gordon J. Wenham in his work Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 49.

whereas the subsequent narrative is ascribed to the so-called Yahwist or “J” source.¹¹ It is said that the Priestly source emphasizes fertility, as indicated by the phrase in Gen 1:28 “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” On the other hand, the “J” source is more concerned with establishing family relationships to address loneliness, as demonstrated in Gen 2:18.¹² According to this scholarly statement, many scholars who agree with it are eager to fully support the inclusion of same-sex couples and marriage in the church. They argue that the “J” source has allowed for any marriage relationship that addresses loneliness by creating a bond of kinship.

This line of arguments is flawed on the following grounds. Firstly, endorsing the scholarly perspective that Gen. 2 is exclusively concerned with the theme of loneliness constitutes a misinterpretation and establishes an unwarranted binary. Gen. 2 emphasizes the importance of the physical compatibility between males and females for sexual satisfaction and reproduction in conjunction to presenting the marriage connection as a solution for loneliness. Secondly, it is purely conjectural and hypothetical to contend that there are two distinct writers for the two creation narratives, each with very divergent objectives. In Gen 1, God created humans with distinct genders for the specific purpose of procreation within a family or marital structure. Hence, the accounts are not giving contrasting viewpoints on procreation. Furthermore, Jesus connected his teachings on the sacredness of marriage by referencing both Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 (Matthew 19:4–6). Jesus clearly recognized a similarity between the focal points of these two texts.

Although several scholars have identified multiple approaches to interpreting the two creation narrative in Genesis.¹³ Tremper Longman III accurately argues that Gen. 2 provides a concise overview of the origin of mankind as described in Gen. 1.¹⁴ Despite the apparent contradiction in opinions, it is quite probable that the author of this account would not have been content with contradictory viewpoints.¹⁵ It suffices to say that the second narrative somehow supplemented the first account. Mc Keown finds that the two stories are “complementary,” with the second one providing more detailed coverage of specific components of the creation event. In this context, Nahum Sarna is undoubtedly accurate in pointing out the complete reliance of Gen 2 on Gen 1.¹⁶

¹¹Speiser, *Genesis*, 18–19; Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (1885; repr., Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973), 297–308.

¹²John J. McNeill, *Sex as God Intended: A Reflection on Human Sexuality as Play* (Maple Shade, NJ: Lethe, 2008), 23–26; Miguel A. De La Torre, *Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster, 2011), 62–63; Brownson, *Bible, Gender, Sexuality*, 32–34, 86–97; and Johnson, *Time to Embrace*, 120, 123.

¹³Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis* (OTL; rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1973), 76; Coats, *Genesis*, 52; John Walton, “A Historical Adam: Archetypal Creation View,” in *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (ed. Matthew Barrett and Ardel B. Caneday; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 108–11. See also the conclusion of C. John Collins, “Response from the Old Earth View,” in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 130; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 40; James McKeown, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 30; John Hartley, *Genesis* (NIBC; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 58. Gerhard von Rad distinguishes between the stories of P and J, perceiving them as originating from distinct traditions. He argues that the J source has a greater emphasis on anthropological matters. According to George Coats, chapters 1 and 2 of the book do not provide similar descriptions. Instead, they focus on distinct topics: the universe and the attainment of paradise. According to John Walton, chapter 2 can be considered a “sequel” to chapter 1 as it depicts the birth of other human beings at a later time. Although Walton asserts that Adam and Eve were real people in the distant past, his explanation of how Adam and Eve’s sin affected every living person contemporaneous with them is theologically problematic (pp. 113–15, 117). Walter Brueggemann, James McKeown, and John Hartley contend that the second creation tale should not be seen as a parallel account of creation, but rather as a distinct and different narrative. However, this viewpoint appears to be untenable given the evident linkages between the two stories.

¹⁴Tremper Longman III, *Genesis* (The Story of God Bible Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 46–47. Kenneth A. Mathews also supports this view in his book *Genesis 1–11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), pages 188–89. Bill T. Arnold, in his book *Genesis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), refers to the two stories as “synoptic” and acknowledges the editor’s skill in their presentation. 2–3 serve as a “reexamination” of chapter 1.

¹⁵Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 141–47; Richard Hess, “Genesis 1–2 in Its Literary Context,” *TynBul* 41 (1990): 143–53 at 143.

¹⁶Nahum Sarna, *Genesis* (The JPS Torah Commentary; New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 16; Russell R. Reno, *Genesis* (Brazos Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010), 66–67.

The author argues that chapter 1 of the text emphasizes the “heavens and the earth,” but chapter 2 shifts the attention to the “earth and heavens” (Gen 2:4b). This suggests that chapter 2 complements chapter 1 by specifically examining the creation and significance of humanity.¹⁷ Desmond Alexander agrees that both chapters are complimentary, with one having a wide emphasis and the other being more specific. It is clear that the objective of this specific concentration is to highlight the creation of the Garden of Eden, its animals, and the man and the wife.¹⁸ Therefore, it appears that Nahum and Alexander’s viewpoints are accurate, particularly considering that Jewish tradition also interprets Genesis 2 as a further explanation of day six in Gen 1.¹⁹ Gen 2 of the text focuses specifically on the creation of man and woman, a topic that was briefly mentioned in Genesis 1:26-28. Kenneth A. Mathews observes that the events of the sixth day, specifically the creation of man and woman and their dominion, are further elaborated upon in 2:4–25.²⁰

Mathews further highlights that this pattern of providing a general overview followed by a more detailed explanation is a common feature in creation accounts from the Ancient Near East, such as those found in Sumer and Babylon.²¹ If this trend is prevalent in ANE creation narratives, then it's perfectly logical to also expect the theme of procreation, which is a key aspect of Gen 1:26–28, to be emphasized in Gen 2. However, the way the second narrative emphasizes this, without explicitly mentioning the act of being fruitful and multiplying, is intriguing. I argue that the solution can be found in the linguistic and grammatical elements of Gen 2, aspects that proponents have previously disregarded.

A HELPMATE SUITABLE FOR HIM

The author of Genesis 2 demonstrates a significant interest in sexual union and procreation, as seen by the mention of this topic in verse 2:18 and later in verse 20. Following the clear absence of a suitable companion for Adam among the animals, God proclaims the first aspect of his creation that is deemed not good (לא־טוֹב). Verse 18 states that “it is not good for the man to be alone.” Scholars who support the idea of same-sex relationships as a solution to loneliness sometimes cite this verse as a key point, while minimizing the significance of any sexual aspect. However, their reasoning lacks credibility when considering the remainder of the text, particularly the depiction of God’s criteria for an appropriate partner for the man.²² The key theme in this portion of Gen 2 is the man’s loneliness, which is highlighted by the fact that the animals are incompatible with him. This emphasizes the dualism of the sexes (male and female) and the man’s complete isolation in this aspect.²³ Furthermore, Adam’s loneliness prevents him from being able to procreate, which is a clear worry for God. The Hebrew term

¹⁷Nahum Sarna, *Genesis* (The JPS Torah Commentary; New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 16; Russell R. Reno, *Genesis* (Brazos Theological Commentary; Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010), 66–67.

¹⁸T. Desmond Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land: An Introduction to the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 120. See a similar conclusion by William Barrick, “A Historical Adam: Young Earth Creation View,” in *Two Views of the Historical Adam*, 208.

¹⁹Tob 8:6; Wis 10:1; Josephus, *Ant.* 1.34. See also the comments of Collins, “Response from the Old Earth View,” 127 n. 58, and C. John Collins, “Discourse Analysis and the Interpretation of Genesis 2:4–7,” *WTJ* 61 (1999): 269–76 esp. 274.

²⁰Collins, “Historical Adam,” 156; Mathews, *Genesis I–II:26*, 189, 191.

²¹In the Sumerian primeval history, Mathews argues that the first narrative of the origin of human existence in “Enki and Ninmah” (ca. 2000 BC) involves the broad process of creating humans by shaping clay, while the second account provides a more detailed explanation of the same creation process. The Babylonian Atrahasis myth describes the initial creation as the combination of the remnants of a deity that was killed, mingled with clay. The second part of the myth further explains that the first people were produced in seven pairs by cutting off pieces of clay. The former refers to a generic situation, whereas the latter refers to a specific situation in both occasions (Genesis 1–11:26, 189). Additionally, refer to the scholarly work of Isaac M. Kikawada in his article titled “The Double Creation of Mankind in *Enki and Ninmah*, *Atrahasis I* 1–351, and Genesis 1–2,” *Iraq* 45 (1983): 43–45; Isaac M. Kikawada and A. Quinn, *Before Abraham Was: The Unity of Genesis I–II* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), 38–40.

²²Johnson (*Time to Embrace*, 124) minimizes the focus on the anatomical nature of the term, opting instead to highlight aspects of companionship.

²³James McKeown, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 34.

that pertains to the concept of sexual complementarity is עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ ('ezer k^cnegdo). עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ is used in only twice in the Hebrew Bible, and both are in Gen 2:18-20. The phrase is difficult to interpret and has been translated in different ways by modern versions: “a help meet for him” (KJV); “a helper suitable for him” (NASB; NIV); “a helper fit for him” (ESV); “a companion who will help him” (NLT); “a helper as his partner” (NRSV); and “a fitting helper for him” (NJPS). These translations focus specifically on the idea of עֵזֶר (a suitable “helper”) but fail to accurately convey the meaning of the second word in the sentence, כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (k^cnegdo). כְּנֶגְדּוֹ is a compound word formed by combining three Hebrew words: the preposition כִּי, the word נֶגַד, and the third masculine singular pronominal suffix ו. The Hebrew word כִּי can be translated as “like” or “as”, while נֶגַד can be understood as an adverb indicating location, meaning “in front of” or “opposite of.” The word ו, when functioning as the object of the clause, simply means “him.” Alternatively, if ו is interpreted as a genitive, it can be translated as “his.” When these words are combined, they convey the concept “as/like in front of him” or “as opposite of him” is formed. It appears that God is stating that the man needs a companion who, when positioned “in front of him” (negdo), is his counterpart. Therefore, the physical compatibility between a man and a woman becomes more prominent, rather than just being seen the woman as a helpmate, as most translations suggest without any sexual connotation.²⁴ Unsurprisingly, several scholars have seen a comparable interpretation.²⁵ It is evident from the context that the man has sexual needs. Nahum Sarna succinctly asserts that celibacy is undesirable.

No doubt the phrase may encompass social and psychological aspects, but it is crucial not to overlook the physical and sexual component when considering the phrase as a whole. In verse 20, the second use of the term עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ provides more evidence for the physical complementarity. During this subsequent event, following the creation and presentation of all the animals to the man for naming, God once again observes that there is no appropriate companion for the man. Undoubtedly, the author emphasizes the notion that the man needs a companion who goes beyond simple emotional connection. The man needs a partner for the dual purposes of friendship and reproduction, as well as for the enjoyment of sexual gratification.

This perspective contradicts the views of scholars who argue that if sexual intercourse was the intention, female animals may have satisfied the man’s sexual desires. However, this notion is clearly illogical in the given situation. The man’s loneliness is deemed “not good” since the animals are incapable of becoming a suitable sexual or emotional partner for him, as stated in Leviticus 18:23 and 20:15. In addition, the man would be unable to reproduce with animal species without assistance. He needed a helper that “suited him” in this sense. That is the reason why God created the woman with the ideal physical structure that would perfectly complement the man’s anatomy when they stood facing each other! The bodily complementarity is reinforced by the subsequent verses in Gen 2:24-25.

THEY SHALL BE ONE FLESH

A growing argument in the current discussion on same-sex marriage suggests that Gen 2:24 is not primarily concerned with procreation, but rather, it emphasizes the establishment of close familial bonds by becoming one flesh. Miguel De La Torre argues that if the purpose of marriage is defined as procreation, then same-sex marriage should not be permitted. However, Torre goes on, if marriage is not solely about procreation but also about establishing a familial bond, then the race, faith, ethnicity, or gender of the individuals involved becomes irrelevant.²⁶ De La Torre is presenting a misleading dichotomy by saying if marriage is not solely focused on

²⁴Contrary to DeFranza's view in “Journeying” page 97, where it’s argued that the concept of physical complementarity stems more from natural reasoning than biblical texts, this perspective fails to accurately grasp the essence of Paul’s discourse in Romans 1. For a detailed discussion supporting the physical complementarity of genders, one can refer to Gagnon's work *Bible and Homosexual Practice*, 60–62, 254, 488.

²⁵Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 68; Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002), 126; Coats, *Genesis*, 53; Arnold, *Genesis*, 60–61. Gordon Wenham observes that the phrase עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ conveys the concept of matching him, which encompasses several aspects, including the act of procreating offspring. According to Allen P. Ross, the concept of עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ refers to a harmonious connection between a man and a woman on physical, social, and spiritual dimensions. George Coats suggests that there was no suitable companion among the animals for the man, but his statement is cryptic. However, Bill Arnold accurately points out that the context of the passage implies the presence of marriage, procreation, and general companionship among humans. It is evident from the context that the man has sexual needs.

²⁶ De La Torre, *Genesis*, 63

procreation but also on creating kinship ties, then same-sex marriage should be permitted. Nevertheless, the matter at hand is not a choice between one or the other, but rather a combination of both. Based on the preceding debate, which supports the interpretation of procreation in Gen 2, verses 24 and 25 further emphasize the concept of procreation within the context of marriage.

When God introduced the woman to the man, it resulted in a marital arrangement that undeniably involved emotional and kindred ties. Nevertheless, the matter does not conclude at that point. The union between the man and the woman involves more than just a familial connection, as some scholars suggest. It also includes the sexual and procreative aspect. When analyzing the phrase *אֶחָד בָּשָׂר* “one flesh,” researchers, including those who do not support it, have often oscillated between the concepts of sexual activity and reproduction, as well as the consequent familial connections. John Hartley argues that the phrase *אֶחָד בָּשָׂר* in Gen 2:24 does not explicitly refer to sexual connection or the procreation of children, but he does acknowledge that it does not exclude these aspects of the union.²⁷ Christopher Seitz similarly concludes that becoming “one flesh” also implies sexual coupling.²⁸ In fact, sexual coupling is a significant teaching in this particular verse of Gen 2:24. Given the sexual subtleties included in verse Gen 2:24, I am unable to concur with those who argue against its inclusion of procreation. Indeed, it is true that certain individuals are unable to reproduce owing to physiological abnormalities in either the man or woman, possibly stemming from the consequences of the fall. However, this does not exclude the potential for many married couples to have children.

Marriage provided the necessary framework for the formation of a family. Gerhard von Rad suggests that “one flesh” refers to the union of the man and woman for the purpose of procreation, as they cling to each other and strive to become one flesh through the creation of a child.²⁹ Meredith Kline accurately observes that man, being created as male and female, was intended to procreate through sexual fertility. The reproductive commandment in Genesis 1 is expressed in straightforward utilitarian terms. Gen 2 introduces the institutional component, namely the familial aspect, by emphasizing the importance of human procreation within the context of the marriage bond. The reproductive duty of the cultural commission was to be performed within the legal troth of this marriage connection. In Gen 2:24, the marriage ordinance states that the man and woman are to become ‘one flesh’ in their covenantal union.³⁰ According to Gordon Wenham, the phrase “one flesh” in this context encompasses more than just family links. It also refers to sexual union and the creation of offspring, which are natural outcomes of the marriage bond.³¹ Hermann Gunkel as well as Sarna points out that the concept of “one flesh” is made clear by the surrounding language, indicating a sexual union.³² Considering the clear associations between the union of two individuals as one entity and the anticipated reproduction resulting from the mentioned union, it can be deduced that scholars who restrict Gen 2 to just include familial connections have indeed misinterpreted and failed to grasp the essence of the narrative.

MARRIAGE METAPHORS IN THE BIBLE

An additional theological/interpretive consequence of the argument supporting same-sex unions is the insistence by affirming scholars that the widespread metaphor of marriage between Yahweh and Israel, and Christ and the church (as seen in Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16, Hosea 1–3, Colossians 3, Ephesians 5) does not automatically exclude

²⁷Hartley, *Genesis*, 64.

²⁸ Christopher Seitz, “Human Sexuality Viewed from the Bible’s Understanding of the Human Condition,” *ThTo* 52 (1995): 244. Ellen van Wolde and Longman had reached a similar conclusion. Ellen van Wolde, *Words Become Worlds: Semantic Studies of Genesis 1–11* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 20; Longman, *Genesis*, 55.

²⁹ Von Rad, *Genesis*, 85.

³⁰ Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Oakland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000), 68–71.

³¹ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 71.

³²Gunkel, *Genesis*, 13; Sarna, *Genesis*, 23.

same-sex relationships. Within the New Testament, the marriage metaphor is specifically intended to mirror the selfless and devoted love that Christ has for his bride, who is the church. Given the recurring theme of "self-giving" love, scholars who support same-sex marriage argue that the "self-giving" love present in these unions can also align with this pattern.³³ This argument is flawed for several reasons, with the most significant one being that God specifically selected the heterosexual partnership, which occurs naturally in his perfect creation, as a symbol for the connection between God and his followers. It is illogical to think that Israel would have embraced a same-sex paradigm for their symbolic connection with God.³⁴ Furthermore, if the primary requirement for recognizing same-sex marriage as a representation of Christ's love for his bride is self-giving love, then why not extend this recognition to any type of self-giving relationship that mirrors God's relationship with his people, such as father-son, mother-daughter, or even person-pet? Undoubtedly, God selected what was inherent to his meticulously organized creation. Furthermore, one of the primary rationales for adopting the heterosexual marriage model, as opposed to alternative types of "self-giving" partnerships, was the undeniable reality that heterosexual marriages resulted in the procreation of offspring.³⁵ Similarly, just as a husband and wife come together in marriage and have children to continue their lineage, the love between Christ and his "bride" was intended to generate spiritual offspring through the dissemination of the gospel, with the aim of instilling faith in God in future generations (Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 16:15–16; Luke 24:47–48; Acts 1:8; 13:46–47; etc.). If this is not done, it would result in the church's demise within a single generation. This is seen via the utilization of the marriage metaphor in the Old Testament. Israel is reprimanded by God for engaging in idolatrous practices of child sacrifice, which results in the slaughter of his "children". In this instance, the act of procreation by the bride of Yahweh (Israel) was intended to guarantee the future existence of the Israelite people (Ezek 16:21; cf. Exod 23:26). Individuals who posed a threat to the proliferation of Israel, like Pharaoh, were subjected to strict measures. Same-sex partnerships are incapable of embodying this crucial element of the marriage metaphor. Excluding adoption, the legacy of same-sex individuals ends upon their passing—a stark contrast to the revered representation of marriage found in the Bible.

The Bible exclusively supports the "majority" paradigm of male-female marriage, which is shown in Gen 1 and 2. Proposing the inclusion of alternative paradigms might be considered an argument from silence. Furthermore, while the Bible documents many forms of marriage such as polygamous, patriarchal, and war brides, it is important to note that these human-created marital arrangements were not always considered God's ideal. Jesus explicitly acknowledges this truth while discussing divorce (see Matthew 19; Mark 10). Furthermore, although the fall of mankind has undoubtedly obscured our understanding of marriage, this does not justify further obscuring it by allowing church-sanctioned same-sex unions. The biblical authors unambiguously justify marriage based on procreative, physical, or psychological complementarity as found in the rhetorical elements found in the Bible, particularly in the book of Genesis. As previously seen, all of these attributes are encompassed within the Gen 2 narrative. It is clearly incorrect to argue that the authors of the Bible did not support marriage based on procreative activity. We frequently see mentions of married couples desiring children while facing infertility or other challenges (such as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Tamar, Hannah, Samson's mother, Ruth, Elizabeth, etc.). Sarah, Rachel, Leah, and Hannah all justified their marriages and asserted their value as women by emphasizing their capacity to bear children (e.g. Gen 25:21; 29:31–32; 30:1–2; 1 Sam 1:11), particularly when God removes the curse of infertility (Gen 29:32–35). Undoubtedly, these women recognized the close connection between marriage and childbearing. For them, companionship, although significant, was often considered a secondary matter.

CONCLUSION

In many countries/states, Court decision to legalize same-sex marriage has presented a complex challenge for pastors and counselors. They now find themselves grappling with the predicament of how to address the situation when same-sex married individuals either embrace Christianity or are already Christians and choose to marry.

³³ Achtemeier, *Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage*, 58.

³⁴ Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 468–69.

³⁵ Guinness, *Impossible People*, 186–89, 220.

This problem serves as strong proof of the consequences of living in a corrupted environment. I do not claim to possess all the solutions, but I am grateful that we have the Scriptures as a reliable source of guidance. In this situation, I would prioritize the authority of the Bible's authorship over human feeling.

To address the current challenge of same-sex marriage among Christians, the most effective approach is to rely on correct biblical interpretation rather than emotional appeals and societal changes. As I have demonstrated in this article, it is crucial to interpret Gen 2:18–25 by considering Gen 1:26–28 and the broader context of the creation accounts. The Bible establishes procreation and heterosexual coupling as the exclusive model for marriage, and we are not entitled to modify, supplement, reinterpret, or alter it to suit our cultural circumstances and preferences. Once we deviate from the explicit teachings of the Bible, we lose all ethical foundations and instead rely on the always changing influences of culture and its prejudices, which contrast with the scriptural denouncement of sin.³⁶ In the contemporary post-modern era where absolutes are disregarded, it is no longer socially acceptable to label certain actions as “sin”. However, if we consistently change the standards for dealing with sin, Christians may as well abandon our unique beliefs and assimilate into society. Eventually, there will be no discernible distinction between us and others.

In this context, I conclude the church is the only barrier preventing the world from achieving success in several areas, particularly in matters related to sexuality. It is important for biblical scholars to pay careful attention. Repeatedly, I have a sense of fear or unease when I encounter some weak and unconvincing arguments. They may get praise and admiration from supporters of the sexual revolution for a short period of time, as they align themselves with the broader society that opposes the explicit teachings of Jesus and the Bible. However, the sexual revolution does not genuinely care about Christians, and they will be disregarded and left behind as the revolution rapidly progresses. However, that is insignificant when compared to the true calamity faced by incorrect interpretation of Scripture. Challenging the authority of Jesus and his Scriptures is a serious matter that should not be taken lightly by anybody.

³⁶Sigurd Grindheim, “Biblical Authority: What Is It Good For? Why the Apostles Insisted on a High View of Scripture,” *JETS* 59 (2016): 791–803, esp. 803.