

Genesis 2:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Analysis

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall... This passage continues the detailed account of Eden, human creation, and God's design for human flourishing. Genesis 2 complements chapter 1 by providing intimate details about human origins, the garden setting, marriage institution, and humanity's vocation as priest-kings in God's sanctuary-garden.

The narrative emphasizes God's personal involvement, careful preparation of human habitation, clear communication of covenant requirements, and provision for human needs including work, rest, relationship, and worship. The garden of Eden represents perfect environment where heaven and earth intersect, God dwells with humanity, and everything needed for life and blessing exists.

Key theological themes include human dignity as divine image-bearers, work as divine calling (not curse), marriage as covenant partnership, moral freedom with accountability, and the necessity of obedience for blessing. The detailed geography and placement of Eden in historical space-time (rivers, lands) presents this as real history, not mythology. These foundational truths establish the pattern for understanding humanity's purpose, relationships, and destiny throughout Scripture.

Historical Context

Genesis 2 provides a detailed account of human creation and Eden's establishment, using different literary style than chapter 1. Ancient Near Eastern parallels include the Sumerian Paradise myth and the Gilgamesh Epic's plant of life, but Genesis transforms these motifs within strict monotheism. The garden sanctuary with its rivers, trees, and divine presence parallels ancient temple theology where gods dwelt in sacred spaces.

The geographical references (Pishon, Gihon, Hiddekel/Tigris, Euphrates) ground the narrative in historical space-time rather than mythological timelessness. While the exact location of Eden remains debated, the inclusion of identifiable rivers presents this as real geography, not allegory. The Mesopotamian setting connects to humanity's ancient origins in that region, confirmed by archaeology.

Ancient audiences would have recognized marriage's divine institution as countercultural, elevating women beyond their typical status as property. The intimate account of woman's creation from man's side presented revolutionary equality and partnership. The garden-temple imagery established patterns for Israel's tabernacle and temple, where God would again dwell with His people in sacred space requiring holiness and obedience.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this verse deepen our understanding of God's character and His relationship with creation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?
3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

Interlinear Text

עַל	כֵּן	יַעֲזֹב	אֵשׁ	אֶת	אָבִיו	אֶת	אִמּוֹ
H5921	Therefore	leave	shall a man	H853	his father	H853	and his mother
	H3651	H5800	H376		H1		H517
וְדָבַק	בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ	וְהָיָה	לְבָשָׁר	אֶחָד:			
and shall cleave	unto his wife	H1961	flesh	and they shall be one			
H1692	H802		H1320	H259			

Additional Cross-References

Romans 7:2 (Parallel theme): For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Proverbs 31:10 (Parallel theme): Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

Proverbs 12:4 (Parallel theme): A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

Psalms 45:10 (Parallel theme): Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;

1 Timothy 5:14 (Parallel theme): I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.