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**Is Genesis 2:24 a Narrative or Speech of Adam?  
On the Origin of the Family and Sonship of Jesus**

A Master Thesis for Theology Study

RES7961

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## **Abstract**

Whether or not Genesis 2:24 is part of the speech of Adam has been an argument for a long time, as original ancient Hebrew Scripture does not have quotation marks, and Genesis 2:24 locates between Adam's saying (2:23) and a narrative verse (2:25). Most scholars hold that Genesis 2:24 is a narrative ascribing to Moses (narrator). Some believe that it cannot be certain. Despite the controversy, all English translated versions exclude Genesis 2:24 from the quotation marks of Adam.

This study aims to re-examine if Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam's speech both in its immediate context and from a broader perspective of etymological and etiological study on the origin of the family and the theological meaning of the sonship of Jesus.

The paper explores the familial vocabulary etymology, the biblical meaning of male and female, the origin of human family, the origin of human speech, the origin of the covenant, and the origin of father and mother. Within the biblical account, primarily in Genesis 1-5, the paper finds that the original meaning of 'father' and 'mother' is entirely different from the sentiment in modern culture. They are polyonymous names used to infer to the same Creator God. Many pieces of evidence show that the word 'mother' is a name for the Creator God primarily reserved for woman to remember the creation of Eve being taken out of Adam. The name 'father' is a name for the Creator God primarily reserved for man to remember the creation of the first man Adam from the dust.

The study concludes that Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam's first speech. Such idea does not contradict to but are compatible with all previous theories. The quotation marks are not part

of the strokes in the Scripture, which Jesus mentioned (Mat5:18 NIV). The quotation problem is a translation issue worthy of carefully re-examining.

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## **Abbreviation**

NIV: New International Version

NLT: New Living Translation

GNT: Good News Translation

ISV: International Standard Version

GWT: God's Word Translation

## **Part One**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Understanding the Issue of Genesis 2:24**

Whether or not Genesis 2:24 is part of the speech of Adam has been an issue for a long time, as original ancient Hebrew Scripture does not have punctuation marks, and Genesis 2:24 is located between Adam's saying (2:23) and the narrative (2:25). However, in history, rare people paid attention to it until after quotation marks began to appear in Germany in 1516.<sup>1</sup> As more and more translated English Bibles began to adopt quotation marks in publication, the issue became more and more prominent. Many controversial commentaries have started to emerge since then.

So far, scholars have no consensus agreement on the quotation mark issue for Genesis 2:24. The current approach is primarily dependent upon the context analysis with limited rhetoric pattern analysis. However, as Adam's speech is a monologue rather than a dialogue. Also, there exists potential intertextuality (the shaping of a text's meaning by another text. It is the interconnection between similar or related works of literature that reflect and influence an audience's interpretation of the text).<sup>2</sup> All of these increased the difficulties and complexity of the issue.

From a logic perspective, Genesis 2:23-24 consists of three logical units in the context.

(1) this is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; (2:23a)

(2) this is called woman because of (יָצָא) (2:23b) that woman was taken out of man; (2:23c)

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas C. McMurtrie. *Concerning Quotation Marks*. New York: Private Printed, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> S. D. Giere. *A New Glimpse of Day One : Intertextuality, History of Interpretation, and Genesis 1. 1-5*. Ed. by S. D. Giere. New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2009.

(3) for this reason (על־כֵן), man shall leave father and mother to unit woman to become one flesh.  
(Gen2:24)

The majority of scholars hold narrative theory. All English Bible translations exclude Gen2:24 from the quotation marks of Adam's speech. However, the Literal Standard Version (LSV) is slightly different from others. LST not only excludes Genesis 2:24 but also excludes 2:23b and 2:23c from Adam's speech. It is as following,

<sup>2:23</sup> and the man says, "*This at last! Bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh!*" For this is called Woman, for this has been taken from Man; <sup>2:24</sup> therefore a man leaves his father and his mother, and has cleaved to his wife, and they have become one flesh. <sup>2:25</sup> And both of them are naked, the man and his wife, and they are not ashamed of themselves.  
(Gen2:23-25 LSV) <sup>3 4</sup>

So far there are three major theories about the quotation mark issue for Genesis 2:24:

- (1) Narrative Theory: It holds that Genesis 2:24 belongs to narrative.
- (2) Adam Theory: It holds that Genesis 2:24 belongs the part of speech of Adam.
- (3) Uncertain Theory: Whether or not Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam cannot be known.

Italian biblical scholar Angelo Tosato (1938-1999) was probably the first to notice the importance of the quotation issue particularly. Because "little attention have been paid to such marks." <sup>5</sup> in 1990, he published "*On Genesis 2:24*" where he first time systematically analyzed if or not Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam. For the first time, his research helped to promote attention in the Christian world.

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<sup>3</sup> Covenant Press. "*Literal Standard Version Bible*" 2020. URL:www.lsvbible.com (visited on 2021)

<sup>4</sup> <https://biblehub.com/lsv/genesis/2.htm> (visited on 2021)

<sup>5</sup> Angelo Tosato, "On Genesis 2:24" In: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. Vol. 52 Issue 3 (Jul 1990) p389

## **2. Importance of the Issue**

Whether or not Genesis 2:24 is part of the speech of Adam can directly influence our comprehensive understanding of the verse itself. If Genesis 2:24 were from Moses, then its immediate audience would be the Israelites. The verse would be placed inside the background during the exodus period; its context would be germane to the teaching about the pious life for Israelites in the wild desert. If Genesis 2:24 were from Adam's lips, then its direct audience would be God and Eve in the first meeting in Eden. Obviously, the significance of the verse is different for different speakers.

Whether or not Genesis 2:24 is part of the speech of Adam also affects our understanding of the personhood of Adam. A person's language is part of his personality. Genesis recorded three speeches of Adam in Eden: the first one before the Fall, two others after the Fall. Adam leaves no any word after being exiled from Eden. Any single word is critical to study Adam, especially before his Fall, including his worldview, his emotion, his ethos, and so on.

Today, rare Christians think that Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam. After quotation marks began to be used in Europe in the early fifteenth century, as long as the quotation marks are applied into the publication, all translated English Bibles exclude Genesis 2:24 from Adam's speech. The versions without quotation marks are edited in a way to separate Genesis 2:24 away from previous verse. Many biblical Hebrew scholars also are influenced to be prejudiced.

Genesis 2:24 is one of the most important verses in Genesis and the Bible. Jesus directly quoted the verse when debating with the Pharisees over divorce. Paul quoted the verse twice. Paul even said that the verse "is a profound mystery" when talking about Christ and the church (Eph5:31-32 NIV). Also, Genesis 2:24 is the most frequently quoted verse in his works for



patrician Origen of Alexandria (184-253). Today, Genesis 2:24 is still frequently recited in many wedding ceremonies in the church. A deeper understanding of Adam can help us know better how Adam fell and understand the sonship of Jesus better. Apostle Paul considers Jesus as the last Adam (1Co 15:22). Adam is a person that everyone must be aware of besides Jesus Christ.

Genesis 2:24 is not only about the marriage but also about the family and its origin in the beginning. It is the only verse and the earliest verse that contains familial words (father, mother, man and woman) in the Bible. It is one of the most important verses for studying the etymology of nuclear familial vocabulary.

The study of Genesis 2:24 can lead us to re-think the origin of the family, its original role, and its purpose in our life. Each Christian has his own nuclear family while he belongs to his church. The enemies attacking the church usually start with the marriage and family. A deeper understanding of the family is a key to understand better the sonship of Jesus Christ (the Son of Man and the Son of God) and the trinitarian God (the Father, the Son, and the Spirit). A better understanding of the family can help us set up a solid biblical familial view to live out a victorious missionary life. However, rare people have paid attention to this issue.

### **3. Research Methodology and Goal**

#### **A. Contextualization with Etymology and Etiology**

A significant difference between this paper and any other study on Genesis 2:24 is that the paper applies a research method integrating the contextualization approach with etymology and etiology.

Simply speaking in missiology, contextualization means an interpretation of the local cultural context into the biblical context. The opposite of contextualization is syncretism, which means reconciling and uniting the biblical context into local cultural context.

Etymology denotes a study of origination or development of any word in history. Etiology refers to a study of origination or causation of any instance or concept. Etymology and Etiology are common in that both study about origination. The difference between them is that etymology focuses on the literal word, whereas etiology focuses on the real instance. Although the two studies are in different disciplines, they are inextricably indispensable, and they emerge at the same time and complement each other.

The contextualization, etymology, and etiology have common in that they all seek the origination. The difference between them is that contextualization is a study of origination based on the Bible. In contrast, etymology or etiology is a study of origination based on archeological and historical evidence.

The human culture in history essentially is a combination of devolution and restoration processes. On the one hand, the Word of God is applied to the local culture undergoing the Gospel thriving process. On the other hand, the Word of God is mutated and misused in the local culture, undergoing a syncretism process.

From a missiological perspective, Genesis is a book of contextualization with etymological and etiological evidence. The book of Genesis aims to restore the meanings in the culture back into the original meanings when they were created.

On the one hand, people need cultural knowledge to understand the Bible. People are first raised and educated in their local culture. Human minds are first pre-occupied by the knowledge from their human culture. Because human beings and their culture are indivisible, whenever

God communicates with people, He communicates in that culture's 'cultural river' (this phrase is used by John H. Walton <sup>6</sup>). The Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses, including the book of Genesis, were written about 1500 BC, far later after the creation of the world. This evidence does not mean the Scripture is developed from the human culture. Instead, it is to allow people to know the culture first in order to know the Word of God.

On the other hand, people must give up the cultural knowledge to understand the Word of God. The first word (בְּרֵאשִׁית, *bareheth*) of the book of Genesis, which means “in the beginning”, is very important for any reader. While the word (בְּרֵאשִׁית, *bareheth*) turns back the pointer to the very original state of the world, it also requires readers to reset the mind, to clear up the pre-occupied knowledge from human culture. In terms of the soteriology, readers need to be repent and reborn, just as John the Baptist and Jesus said in Gospel, in order to know the heavenly Father.

Human cultural knowledge is harmful to man to seek the truth. Genesis 1 shows that the language was originally created by God. Even the diversity of different languages was a result of the intervention of God (Gen 11). Human beings are passively language users though they can use it actively and creatively. Due to the Fall of man, “the language is being used to subvert God” <sup>7</sup> and human culture became a culture of falling. Human civilization is essentially a devolutionary process. As the generations increased, the gap between the ancestor and its offspring became deeper and deeper, the image of the ancestors became more and more obscure, and many have been totally lost.

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<sup>6</sup> John H. Walton. *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Conceptual World of the Hebrew Bible*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Warner. "Language: Obstacle and Opportunity and Examination the Phenomenon of Human Language and the Church's Approach to the Multitude of Languages Present in the World" Master Thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2017

For example, in Chinese culture, many folk religious practitioners maintain the worship of the ambiguous ancestors. What they worshipped could be the first man Adam rather than what they knew of ancient Chinese sages. Such tradition could be traced back to Enosh, the grandson of Adam, when people began to call on the name of the Lord (Gen4:26), who were their father and mother of them. There are many archeological gaps and interruptions from Chinese culture to Adam.

The use of the known “father and mother” is another typical example. Being inspired by God, Adam invented the words ‘father’ and ‘mother’ to refer to the Creator God. However, after the terms are used on physical parents in culture, its original biblical meaning was lost. The meanings of familial terms became: (1) a biological sense, (2) a social sense, (3) a metaphorical sense (e.g. father for leader, ancestor, origin of; so descendant, follower, having the characteristic of), (4) the sense of a simile (e.g., God is like a caring father, )<sup>8</sup> However, none of these are the biblical meaning at the beginning.

## **B. Goal**

This study aims to re-examine if Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam’s speech from a perspective of etymology and etiology. The paper intends to give readers a solid, compelling conclusion.

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<sup>8</sup> Wycliffe Global Alliance, "Divine Familial Terms Translation Procedures" In: *World Evangelical Alliance* (2016)

## **Part Two**

### **Theories Reviews on Genesis 2:24**

#### **1. Narrative Theory of Genesis 2:24**

Most scholars believe that Gen2:24 came from Moses (narrator). The reasons can be summarized as following:

##### **A. Adam had no parent**

Adam, the first man, had no parents. He knew nothing about parents at that time. He could not say anything about parents. It had to be Moses, for example,

*Ellicott's Commentary* states that:

[Gen2:24] These are **evidently** the words of the narrator. Adam names this new product of creative power, as he had named others, but he knew nothing about young men leaving their father's house for the wife's sake.<sup>9</sup>

##### **B. Jesus' citation without Adam**

When Jesus quotes Genesis 2:24, He mentioned the name of Moses and God (Mat19:5, Mak10:6-9) but the name of Adam was not mentioned at all. This can prove that Genesis 2:24 is not part of speech of Adam, but from narrator Moses. For example,

*Pulpit Commentary* states that:

[Gen2:24] the statement of Christ (Matthew 19:5) does not preclude the possibility of Moses being their author; <sup>10</sup>

*Ellicott's Commentary* states that:

[Gen2:24] Moreover, in Matthew 19:5, our Lord quotes these words as spoken by God, and the simplest interpretation of this declaration is that the inspired narrator was moved

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<sup>9</sup> Charles John Ellicott. *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*. N.p., 1905.

<sup>10</sup> H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell. *The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis, Exodus - Volume I*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

by the Spirit of God to give this solemn sanction to marriage, founded upon Adam's words. The great and primary object of this part of the narrative is to set forth marriage as a Divine ordinance. The narrator describes Adam's want, pictures him as examining all animal life, and studying the habits of all creatures so carefully as to be able to give them names, but as returning from his search unsatisfied. At last one is solemnly brought to him who is his counterpart, and he calls her *Ishah*, his feminine self, and pronounces her to be his very bone and flesh. Upon this, "He who at the beginning made them male and female" pronounced the Divine marriage law that man and wife are one flesh.<sup>11</sup>

### C. The word 'therefore' (עַל־כֵּן) as a narrative mark

The word 'therefore' (עַל־כֵּן) infers that Genesis 2:24 is a narrative. They argue that many similar examples that can be found in the Bible,

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* states that,

[Gen2:24] This verse contains the comment which the narrator makes upon the words of the man in Genesis 2:23. The word 'therefore' introduces his inference. As in Genesis 10:9, Genesis 26:33, Genesis 32:32, a sentence beginning with 'therefore' supplies the application, or relation, of the ancient narrative to later times. (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*).<sup>12</sup>

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible* states that,

But it seems more probable that this sentence is the reflection of the inspired author on the special mode in which the female was formed from the male. Such remarks of the writer are frequently introduced by the word "therefore" (עַל־כֵּן kēn-‘al). It is designed to inculcate on the race that was to spring from them the inviolable sanctity of the conjugal relation.<sup>13</sup>

Scholar Angelo states that,

The initial al-ken 'therefore', in fact, certifies beyond any doubt that he intends here to explain something, presenting it as a consequence of what has been narrated in the preceding verse (issa taken from Adam). The problem rather is his specific intention; for what follows al-ken (namely, leaving father and mother on the part of ish and joining himself to his issa) gives rise to doubts as to what exactly the author intends to explain: marriage (a social institution) or 'love' (a natural drive)?<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Charles John Ellicott. *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*. N.p., 1905.

<sup>12</sup> John Perowne. *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1882. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Barnes. *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*. N.p., 1870. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

<sup>14</sup> Angelo Tosato, "On Genesis 2:24" In: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. Vol. 52 Issue 3 (Jul 1990) p389

#### **D. Structural analysis show that Gen2:24 belong to narrator**

The structural analysis of Adam's speech of Genesis 2:23 discloses the presence of a chiasmus with a repetition of words in an A-B-A configuration:

[Gen2:23] Adam said:

**A:** This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; (woman from man)

**B:** she shall be called 'woman,' (name of woman)

**A':** for she was taken out of man. (woman from man)

[Gen2:24]

**X:** For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

From a structural perspective, Genesis 2:23 and Genesis 2:24 are two different independent blocks. In rhetoric, Genesis 2:24 should be excluded from the speech of Adam.

A broader structural analysis can also conclude the same results. Angelo believes that Genesis 2:24 structurally has no connection with the previous context. This is because Genesis 2:18-23 has clearly showed the completion of man and woman. Angelo thinks that Genesis 2:24 is "an unnecessary secondary addition, an insertion, a gloss." He states that,

General consideration of the narrative's frame leads, therefore, to the conclusion that Gen2:18-23 constitutes one unit which is complete in itself, firmly structured, and artistically arranged. First of all, it discloses that the whole narrative of 18-23 (the creation of ish-ah and ish) is also an etymological etiology. In other words, with the help of the saying 2:23, the description of the creation of the woman from man (18-23) appears to be the transposition in concrete and living images of the popular etymology of ish-ah from ish. Thus there becomes more evident the deep coherence, even the interdependence, which exists between the saying and the preceding narrative. Secondly, it discloses that the narrative of 4b-8 (the creation of adam), so close to the narrative of 18-23, is also an etymological etiology. Thus the interconnection between 4b-8 and 18-23 becomes more evident. Thirdly and consequently, it discloses the presence of a chiasmus (AB-B'A') that structures the whole narrative of Genesis 2-3 and extends from the story of Genesis 2 (Creation of man and woman) to the story of Genesis 3 (fall of woman and man). Even a mediocre sensitivity to artistic literary composition should be sufficient, at this point, to recognize Gen 2:24 as a foreign body, and therefore to label it as gloss.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Angelo Tosato, "On Genesis 2:24" In: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. Vol. 52 Issue 3 (Jul 1990) p391.

## **2. Adam Theory of Genesis 2:24:**

### **A. Adam knew of parents**

Although Adam, the first man, had no parents, it cannot exclude that he could know parents. Some suggested that he could know father and mother by observing from animals (Gen2:19-20). The life of the first man before the Fall was completely different from what people can imagine today. They had special competency, capabilities and sentiment.

*Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary* states that

[Gen2:24] Our first parents needed no clothes for covering against cold or heat, for neither could hurt them: they needed none for ornament.<sup>16</sup>

*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary* states that

24. one flesh—The human pair differed from all other pairs, that by peculiar formation of Eve, they were one. And this passage is appealed to by our Lord as the divine institution of marriage (Mt 19:4, 5; Eph 5:28). Thus Adam appears as a creature formed after the image of God—showing his knowledge by giving names to the animals, his righteousness by his approval of the marriage relation, and his holiness by his principles and feelings, and finding gratification in the service and enjoyment of God.<sup>17</sup>

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible* states,

These (Gen 2:24) might be the words of the first man Genesis 2:24. As he thoroughly understood the relation between himself and the woman, there is no new difficulty in conceiving him to become acquainted at the same time with the relationship of son to father and mother, which was in fact only another form of that in which the newly-formed woman stood to himself. The latter is really more intimate and permanent than the former, and naturally therefore takes its place, especially as the practical of the filial tie, - that of being trained to maturity, - is already accomplished, when the conjugal one begins.<sup>18</sup>

### **B. Jesus' quotation cannot deny Adam**

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<sup>16</sup> Matthew Henry. *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary*. N.p., 1714.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Jamieson and Andrew Robert Fausset and David Brown. *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*. N.p., 1871. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

<sup>18</sup> Albert Barnes. *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*. N.p., 1870. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.



Although Jesus quoted Genesis 2:24 in (Mat19:5, Mak10:6-9) as spoken by God, it cannot prove that these are from narrator.

*The Pulpit Commentary* states

[Gen2:24]There is nothing in the use of such terms as father and mother, or in the fact that the sentiment is prophetic, to prevent the words from being regarded as a continuation of Adam's speech, although, on the other hand, the statement of Christ (Matthew 19:5) does not preclude the possibility of Moses being their author; but whether uttered by the first husband (Delitzsch, Macdonald) or by the historian (Calvin, Murphy), they must be viewed as an inspired declaration of the law of marriage.<sup>19</sup>

Many commentaries for Mat19:6 support Adam theory:

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers* States that:

[Mat19:6] And said, For this cause.—In Genesis 2:24 the words appear as spoken by Adam; but words so uttered, prompted by the Holy Spirit, and stamped with the divine sanction, might well be looked on as an oracle from God, the expression of a law of His appointment.

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* States that:

[Mat19:6] And said, Genesis 2:24 where they seem to be the words of Adam, though here they are ascribed to God, who made Adam and Eve; and as if they were spoken by him, when he brought them together; and which is easily reconciled by observing, that these words were spoken by Adam, under the direction of a divine revelation; showing, that there would be fathers, and mothers, and children; and that the latter, when grown up, would enter into a marriage state, and leave their parents, and cleave to their proper yoke fellows, which relations then were not in being: this therefore being the effect of a pure revelation from God, may be truly affirmed to be said by him. Some think they are the words of Moses the historian; and if they were, as they were delivered by divine inspiration, they may be rightly called the word of God.

*Meyer's NT Commentary* States that:

Matthew 19:5. Εἶπεν] God. Comp. note on 1 Corinthians 6:16. Although, no doubt, the words of Genesis 2:24 were uttered by Adam, yet, as a rule, utterances of the Old Testament, in which God's will is declared, are looked upon as the words of God, and that altogether irrespective of the persons speaking. Comp. Euthymius Zigabenus and Fritzsche on the passage.

*Pulpit Commentary* States that:

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<sup>19</sup> H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell. *The Pulpit Commentary: Genesis, Exodus - Volume I*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

[Mat19:6] And said. The words that follow are assigned to Adam in Genesis 2:23, 24, but he spake by inspiration of God, as he knew nothing of "father and mother" by personal experience, and therefore they can be rightly attributed to the Creator. It was, in fact, a prophetic utterance of which Adam was the mouthpiece; as St. Augustine says, "*Deus utique per hominem dixit quod homo prophetando praedixit.*"

### C. The word ‘therefore’

According to the statistic in the OT, we cannot find a pattern to prove that the word 'therefore' (עַל־כֵּן) always infers a narrative, for example, "He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: **therefore** it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." (Gen10:9 KJV). The word 'therefore' (עַל־כֵּן) is used for cause and effect.

According to the culture of Israelites, it is woman rather than man who should leave family after marriage. E.g., in Genesis account, the woman Tamar left family after marrying to Juda's family and had to return to her home after her husbands died (Gen 38). If the word came from Moses, the verse would contradict to the custom of the Israelites.

*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* states that,

[Gen2:24] It is the man who is to leave ‘father and mother,’ not ‘the woman.’ Some compare the story in Jdg 15:1, where the woman remains with her family or clan, and Samson comes to live with her. This feature has been thought to illustrate the primitive usage of ‘the matriarchate.’ But it is unlikely that the Hebrew narrative would contain a reference to such conditions.<sup>20</sup>

### D. Context structure

The immediate contextual analysis shows that Genesis 2:24 is more likely a continuity of Genesis 2:23. From a logical perspective, Genesis 2:23 and Genesis 2:24 cannot be interrupted.

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<sup>20</sup> John Perowne. *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1882. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

Both verses share common topics of man and woman, or husband and wife from a marriage perspective. Genesis 2:23 focuses on the relationship in the past. Genesis 2:24 focuses on the relationship in future mission of God. There exists a clear logical continuity from 2:22, 2:23a, 2:23b to 2:24 for family. The Genesis 2:24 is the climax of the logic. Some scholar admitted that “Ostensibly verse 24 continues Adam’s statement in verse 23.” <sup>21</sup>

### **3. Uncertainty Theory**

Some believe that whether Genesis 2:24 is from Adam or Moses cannot be certain. Although many hold one preference to another, they tend to agree that it is uncertain. E.g. *Barnes' Notes on the Bible* tends to support the narrative theory but also admits that it is ‘probable’ that it is Adam.

*Matthew Poole's Commentary* states that,

[Gen2:24] These are the words of Moses by Divine instinct, or his inference from Adam’s words. <sup>22</sup>

*Benson Commentary* states that,

[Gen2:24] It appears by Matthew 19:4-5, that it was God himself who said here, a man must leave all his relations to cleave to his wife; but whether he spoke this by Moses or by Adam, is uncertain. <sup>23</sup>

*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible* states that,

[Gen2:24] These (Gen 2:24) are thought by some to be the words of Moses, inferring from the above fact, what ought to be among men; and by others, the words of Adam under divine inspiration, as the father of mankind instructing his sons what to do, and

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<sup>21</sup> Ziony Zevit. *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?*. London, UK: Yale University Press, 2013

<sup>22</sup> Matthew Poole. *Matthew Poole's Commentary*. N.p., 1679.  
<https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Benson. *Benson Commentary*. N.p., 1821. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/genesis/2-24.htm>.

foretelling what would be done in all succeeding ages: though they rather seem to be the words of God himself, by whom marriage was now instituted;<sup>24</sup>

Ziony Zevit states that,

John Calvin's comment on the verse – written in the sixteenth century—addresses the question of the verse's relationship to v23: "It is doubted whether Moses here introduces God as speaking, or continues the discourse of Adam, or indeed, has added this in virtue of his office as teacher, in his own person. The last of these is that which I mostly approve.' Calvin argued, it must have another meaning." <sup>25</sup>

The uncertainty theory can reduce the authority and authenticity of the Scripture. It gives some biblical critics a chance to think that Genesis was written by multiple different authors in different times. It is the result of evolution in history. Genesis 2:24 could be a gloss added by someone at a time. Hence, the poor documented Bible is not reliable.

The uncertainty theory also contradicts the theological principle that the Bible is infallible and inerrant. The uncertainty is a common type of rhetorical device used in ancient text to fool people. For example, the Chinese Daoism classic book, *DaoDeJing*, is full of obscurities. "LaoZi used ambiguity to save his words."<sup>26</sup> Some may think that the uncertainty of quotation marks on Genesis 2:24 allow people to manipulate it to mislead readers to one direction or another. Therefore, the Bible is fallible and errant and cannot be trusted.

#### **4. Summary:**

Most scholars believe that Genesis 2:24 came from Moses (narrator) rather than Adam. Because Adam and Eve did not have parents, the sudden appearance of 'father' and 'mother' could only be words of Moses as the author.

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<sup>24</sup> John Gill. *Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*. N.p., 1771.

<sup>25</sup> Ziony Zevit. *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?*. London, UK: Yale University Press, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> Holmes Welch. *Taoism: The Parting of the Way*. N.p., 1957.

When Jesus quoted Genesis 2:24 in the Gospels, Jesus mentioned the name of Moses and God but He did not mention the name of Adam and Eve. This could support that Genesis 2:24 belongs to the author Moses.

The word 'therefore' can help the writer to support his inference by a few additional comments. It can support Genesis 2:24 is a narrative.

Some scholars believe that Genesis 2:24 structurally has no connection with the previous context. Because Genesis 2:18-23 has clearly showed the completion of man and woman.

In spite of the disagreements, all theories unanimously believe that Genesis 2:24 is inspired by God, though each theory is weak in its arguments.

## Part Three

### Etymological Familial Study on Genesis 2:24

#### 1. Etymology of Familial Vocabulary

Etymology here denotes a study of origination or development of any word in its history. Genesis 2:24 is an etymological verse because the verse not only shows the meaning of some familial words but also reveals how the words are related to each other. The evidence is obvious (see table: *Etymological Etiological Nuclear Familial Words*)<sup>27</sup>:

(a) The Hebraic word ‘man’ (אִישׁ **ish**) is etymologically germane to ‘woman’ (אִשָּׁה **ish-ah**) that was uttered by God first (Gen2:22), although some hold that ‘woman’ (אִשָּׁה **ish-ah**) is derived from ‘man’ (אִישׁ **ish**) to remember woman-made-of-man (Gen2:23).<sup>28</sup>

(b) The Hebraic word ‘father’ (אָב **ah-bah**) and ‘mother’ (אִמָּה **ah-mah**) are etymologically germane to each other.<sup>29</sup>

(c) The four familial words share a common letter (א **ah**) of the Hebraic word ‘woman’ (אִשָּׁה **ish-ah**).

If the identical etymological study method can be applied into all familial vocabularies in its context, more evidence can display:

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<sup>27</sup> William Wei Ding. "Hebraic Familial Vocabulary Study" 2021.  
URL: [https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc\\_files/d\\_pload/d\\_tables/tb\\_03\\_FamilialVocabulary.htm](https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc_files/d_pload/d_tables/tb_03_FamilialVocabulary.htm) (visited on 2021 )

<sup>28</sup> Angelo Tosato, "On Genesis 2:24" In: *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* Vol. 52 Issue 3 (Jul 1990) p389

<sup>29</sup> Fabre d'Olive. *The Hebraic Tongue Restored: And the True Meaning of the Hebrew Words Re-established and Proved by their Radical Analysis*. New York and London: The Rnicherbocker Press, 1921. p120.

(a) The Hebraic word ‘Adam’ (אָדָם *ah-dam*) is etymological germane to the word ‘God’ (אֱלֹהִים *El-o-him*) through common part of (א *ah*). The connection is to remember that man was created by God according to the image of God (Gen 1:26-27, 2:7).

(b) The Hebraic word ‘son’ (בֶּן, *be-n*) is etymologically germane to ‘daughter’ (בַּת *ba-th*) in that they share common pronunciation of ba (ב). But it is noticeable that the first appearance of the two words are far away each other in the context (son in Gen3:16 and daughter in Gen5:4).

(c) The Hebraic words ‘son’ (בֶּן, *be-n*) and ‘daughter’ (בַּת *ba-th*) are etymologically germane to ‘father’ (אָב *ah-bah*) in that they share common pronunciation of *ba* (ב).

(d) The Hebraic word ‘man’ (אִישׁ *ish*) and ‘woman’ (אִשָּׁה *ish-ah*) are etymologically germane to ‘adam’ (אָדָם *ah-dam*) through common part (א *ah*).

In a word, all Hebraic nuclear familial words are etymologically germane to each other. To put them all in a table (see table: *Etymological Etiological Nuclear Familial Words*)<sup>30</sup>, it will demonstrate that all words are derived from Elohim. There is one diverge from word ‘father’ that is son and daughter.

It is important to note that two fundamental familial words ‘male’ (זָכָר, *zakah*) and ‘female’ (נִקְבָּה neqebah) are out of the familial etymological table.

## **2. The Biblical Meaning of ‘Male’ and ‘Female’**

### **The Original Meaning of Male and Female**

The words ‘Male’ (זָכָר *zakar*) and ‘Female’ (נִקְבָּה *neqebah*) first appear in Genesis 1:27, then in Genesis 5:12. From a etymological perspective, it can be seen that not only do the two

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<sup>30</sup> William Wei Ding. "Hebraic Familial Vocabulary Study" 2021.  
URL: [https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc\\_files/d\\_pload/d\\_tables/tb\\_03\\_FamilialVocabulary.htm](https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc_files/d_pload/d_tables/tb_03_FamilialVocabulary.htm) (visited on 2021 )

word have no connection to each other, but also they have no connection to any word in familial vocabulary (see table: *Etymological Etiological Nuclear Familial Words*).<sup>31</sup>

Unlike the word man (אָדָם *ah-dam*) (Gen 1:26-27) that has an associated individual Adam (Gen2:7), the words ‘male’ and ‘female’ do not have any entity associated with. The Hebraic words ‘Male’(זָכָר *zakar*) and ‘Female’ (נִקְבָּה *neqebah*) are purely abstract conceptual nouns in Genesis.

The usage of the words ‘Male’(זָכָר *zakar*) and ‘Female’ (נִקְבָּה *neqebah*) in the OT is significantly different from the surrounding cultures. In English, ‘male’ and ‘female’ are the most fundamental concepts used as adjectives to define other words. I.e., ‘man’ is defined as the male person; ‘son’ is defined as the male child. However, in Hebrew, ‘Male’(זָכָר *zakar*) and ‘Female’ (נִקְבָּה *neqebah*) are never used to define any other familial term. It is totally different to the usage in the cultures that all familial word are determine by either ‘male’ or ‘female.’ In the OT, although each pair has its own special implication (see table: *The Meanings of Familial Pairs*), all Hebraic familial pairs originally are not sex or gender oriented or Hebraic male-and-female-oriented but pre-lapsarian Adam-Eve oriented.

The concept of the words ‘Male’ (זָכָר *zakar*) and ‘Female’ (נִקְבָּה *neqebah*) in the OT is also significantly different from the cultures. In human culture, ‘male’ and ‘female’ are distinguished by sex or gender. However, in Genesis, ‘Male’ (זָכָר *zakar*) and ‘Female’ (נִקְבָּה *neqebah*) are primarily determined by characteristics of pre-lapsarian Adam and Eve, which have no any connection with sex or gender. The word ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ do not exist in Hebrew vocabulary of the OT. The word ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ are words and concepts culturally mandated.

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<sup>31</sup> William Wei Ding. "Hebraic Familial Vocabulary Study" 2021.  
URL:[https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc\\_files/d\\_pload/d\\_tables/tb\\_03\\_FamilialVocabulary.htm](https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc_files/d_pload/d_tables/tb_03_FamilialVocabulary.htm) (visited on 2021 )



In the OT, there are no fundamental paired words that can be used to define other familial words as in human culture. There is no explicit description to differentiate any pair of familial vocabularies including male and female, man and woman, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister. The difference between every familial paired words is determined by the characteristics of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve play the same role in the OT as the words ‘male’ and ‘female’ do in the cultures.

In the OT, the only pair that can be easily and clearly distinguished is the pair between ‘man’ (אִישׁ *ish*) and ‘woman’ (אִשָּׁה *ish-ah*). Genesis 2 shows that ‘Adam’ and ‘man’ (אִישׁ *ish*) refer to the identical individual; likewise, Eve and woman refer to the identical individual (Gen2:23, Gen 3:20). Due to the polyonymous, the differences between ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are identical to the difference between Adam and Eve (Gen 2).

The distinct between the pairs, like, ‘male and female’, ‘father and mother,’ ‘son and daughter,’ ‘brother and sister,’ is characterized by the difference between Adam and Eve, through the direct or indirect connection to Adam and Eve or their family tree (see table: *The Mankind Distinction in Pairs of Familial Vocabulary*)<sup>32</sup>. For example, ‘male’ and ‘man’ (*ish*) are first linked together through the verse, “Every male among you (Abraham) shall be circumcised.” (Gen17:10). It is through the verse that ‘male’, ‘Abraham’, ‘Adam’ and ‘man’ are connected. It is through such connection that the meaning and concept of ‘male’ becomes clearer. In Genesis, without such connection, the meaning of ‘male’ will never be known without pre-occupied cultural knowledge in mind.

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<sup>32</sup> William Wei Ding. "Hebraic Familial Vocabulary Study" 2021.  
URL:[https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc\\_files/d\\_pload/d\\_tables/tb\\_03\\_FamilialVocabulary.htm](https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/html/doc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc_files/d_pload/d_tables/tb_03_FamilialVocabulary.htm) (visited on 2021 )

There are many innate differences between Adam and Eve (see table: *Differences between Adam and Eve*)<sup>33</sup>, however, Genesis shows that, before the Fall of man, none of the characteristic is related to sex or gender. The first-time occurrence to show the difference germane to sex is when God cursed Eve with pains in childbearing after the Fall (Gen3:16) – Eve can bear child but not Adam. Although Genesis 1 does not describe how differ between male and female when created, the distinction of male and female is clearly demonstrated through the mirror of Adam and Eve in a parallel way in Genesis 2. At one hand, Adam and Eve were created according to male and female. On the other hand, male and female are represented through Adam and Eve. Although the term ‘man’ and ‘woman’ can highly abstract the characteristics of Adam and Eve through the polyonymous naming method in Genesis 2:23-24, ‘man’ and ‘woman’ cannot fully replace the role and concept of ‘male’ and ‘female’ in the beginning. In a word, before the Fall, the essential differences between ‘male’ and ‘female’ or ‘man’ and ‘woman’ are not characterized by sex or gender but by pre-lapsarian<sup>34</sup> Adam-Eve. (Pre-lapsarian refers to those before the Fall of man by Origen). Before the Fall, Adam and Eve had no shame (Gen2:25); Adam and Eve were fully matured and intelligent adult, but they had no any sense of sex or gender. The biblical Hebrew vocabulary does not have such word like ‘sex’ or ‘gender’ at all.

### **The Purpose of ‘male and female’**

(1) Genesis 2:26-27 reveals that the purpose that God created ‘male and female’ is to reflect the likeness of God. In Genesis 1:26 (make man in our image, after our likeness) can be

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Emanuela Prinzivalli, "Adam and the Soul of Christ in Origen's Commentary on Genesis. A Possible Reconstruction" In: *Adamantius* Vol. 23 (2017) p120.

expressed as: Man = image + likeness. Genesis 1:27 (the image of God created he him; male and female created them) can be expressed as: man = image + (male + female). From the two equations, it can be deducted that: likeness = male + female. That is to say, the union of 'male and female' presents the likeness of God.

All paired familial words parallel to 'male and female' are to represent the likeness of God through names. For example, God renamed Abram to Abraham meaning 'the father of nations' (Gen 17:4-5) and Sara to Sarah meaning 'the mother of nations' (Gen 17:16). Obviously, father and mother are not Abraham and Sarah in person. God uses 'father' and 'mother' to refer to Himself. The words 'father' and 'mother' parallel to 'male and female' represent the likeness of God. God uses such likeness to reveal His nation, the Israelites, and to predict the church, the kingdom of God in the NT. By renaming Sara to Sarah, it is also to disavow 'the mother of living' that Adam gave to Eve (Gen 3:20).

In the OT, the generic words, like 'parent' for 'father' or 'mother', or 'spouse' for 'man' or 'woman', do not exist because such kind of single word cannot present the duality of the male and female according to the likeness of God. Any likeness of God has to be presented through the pair of male and female. On the other hand, the duality of the male and female is different from the human pre-occupied concept of sex and gender. The pair has to be pre-lapsarian Adam-Eve based rather than sex or gender based. Just as Atkinson states that "Sexuality was excluded from the Godhead and thus, as Eichrodt noted, 'any disintegration of Godhead into male and female principles was firmly excluded.' Instead sexuality became a 'phenomenon of the creature'"

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<sup>35</sup> Joseph C. Atkinson. *Biblical and Theological Foundation of the Family*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2014.

(2) Male and female are to constitute the prototype of the family. The pair of the words 'male and female' is the first pair among all other pairs in familial vocabulary. It is the foreshadowing for Adam and Eve, and all other pairs among family members. On the one hand, the words 'male' and 'female' are abstract nouns without entities. Male and female are the conceptual foundation for the family. The human family are constituted upon the male and female concept. On the other hand, male and female are represented through the pairs of familial members. The duality of male and female is represented through the family unit. The biblical meaning of male and female according to the likeness of God are independent and free from influence of any kind of human family in the cultures.

(3) Male and female are the bless to perform the mission of God. Genesis 1:26-28 reveals that God's blessing and the mission of God cannot be divided. The God's blessing is accomplished through the duality of male and female. Without the male and female, the blessing cannot be done. The ultimate purpose of the blessing is to allow created man to perform the challenging mission of God -- to be fruitful, multiply, fill, subdue and dominion the earth (Gen1:26,1:28). Male and female are not only the conceptual foundation for the family, but also are the driven power to perform the mission of God. The human initial love primarily comes from the duality of male and female. However, after the Fall, as the concept of male and female gradually replaced by the chemical sexual effect, human love turns from the passion to be the sexual stimulating desires. Human beings turned the male and female from a powerful missionary tool of God to become the most vicious sex tool to subvert God.

## **Summary**

The words 'male' and 'female' are created by God during the creation of man (Gen2:27). Genesis 1-2 reveals that its original purpose to create male and female is to bless

people to perform the mission of God through the human family; it is to reflect the characteristic of the likeness of God to glory God. The original biblical meaning of 'male' and 'female' has nothing to do with sex or gender. The words 'sex' or 'gender' does not exist in the biblical Hebrew vocabulary.

Etymologically, the pair of male and female is the first one among all others in familial vocabulary. On the one hand, male and female are the foreshadowing of Adam and Eve; the pair of male and female is the foundation of the family and all paired familial words. On the other hand, male and female are represented by Adam and Eve and their first nuclear family. Adam and Eve and the first nuclear family are the mirror of male and female. The differentiation between male and female is totally determined by the distinction between Adam and Eve. Being different from the culture that all paired familial words are defined by 'male' and 'female', in Genesis, all paired familial words are characterized by the distinct characteristics of Adam-Eve rather than 'male' and 'female.'

There are many innate differences between Adam and Eve, however, Genesis shows that, before the Fall of man, none of the characteristic is related to sex or gender. The first-time occurrence to show the difference germane to sex is when God cursed Eve with pains in childbearing after the Fall (Gen3:16) -- Eve can bear child but Adam cannot. As the words 'male' and 'female' were applied into the human culture after the Fall, the sense of sex became stronger and stronger until the words 'male' and 'female' became fully the sex-oriented concept. Male and female were initially the likeness of God and the tool for the mission of God now become one of the most vicious sexy tools to subvert God's family to destroy the mission of God.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Etiological Familial Study on Genesis 2:24**

#### **1. Etiological Verse**

Etiology here refers a study of origination or causation of any instance or concept. Genesis 2:24 is an etiological verse because it is about the origin of the human family. The evidence is obvious: (a) The verse contains familial members: father, mother, man and woman. (b) The Hebraic words ‘father’, ‘mother’ and ‘man’ are the first-time-occurrence words according to the narrative consecutive order in Genesis. (c) The Hebraic imperfect conjugation of verbs (leave, cleave, unite) regulate the actions and the duties for each members to forms a family structure. These verbs makes the verse to be the first version of contract in the world.

In a word, no matter who said it, Genesis 2:24 is a verse about the origin of human nuclear family.

#### **2. Origin of Human Speech**

Genesis 1:3 reveals that the first speaker in the world is God; the earliest speech is from God. Therefore, it can conclude that “Language is the tool by which God creates the world.”<sup>36</sup> But due to the Fall of man, “the language is being used to subvert God.”<sup>37</sup>

For human beings, the first human speaker is Adam (Gen2:20, 2:23), who is one of the most important members in the primitive nuclear family. Adam’s linguistic capability

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<sup>36</sup> Andrew Warner. *"Language: Obstacle and Opportunity and Examination the Phenomenon of Human Language and the Church's Approach to the Multitude of Languages Present in the World"* Master Thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 2017

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

experienced two phases: naming (2:20) and expressing (2:23-24). Obviously, Adam's speech capability and the right of freedom of speech comes from God.

Adam's first speech is important. It is the only human speech in Eden before the Fall. It determines if his linguistic functionality can meet the divine quality. It is a critical factor to examine if he was mature enough to be able to leave father and mother (2:24).

Adam had naming capability (Gen2:20). God originally called the first man 'Adam' (אָדָם *adam*) but Adam called himself 'man' (אִישׁ *ish*) (Gen2:23).

Adam's first speech (Gen2:23) contains a rhetoric of chiasmus with A-B-A' configuration (see Narrative Theory in Introduction chapter). His words about Eve being taken out of man is identical to what God did in Genesis 2:22. It is a mark to indicate that Adam was a very literal person with the skill to accurately express the observations and thoughts.

Adam's first speech (Gen2:23) contains a small cause-effect logic: 23b (name of 'woman') is because of 23c (made-of-man). The logic not only gives the definition of 'woman' (אִשָּׁה *ish-ah*) but also provides the meaning of 'man' (אִישׁ *ish*) through the etymological relation with 'woman' (אִשָּׁה *ish-ah*). Physically, man is first, and woman is taken out of man; but etymologically, 'woman' (אִשָּׁה *ish-ah*) is first, and 'man' (אִישׁ *ish*) is taken from 'woman' (*ish-ah*). It implies that Adam understood the equal right relationship with Eve. The logic indicates that Adam is an intelligent scientific man.

In Adam's first speech (Gen2:23), his knowledge about Eve had to come from God. God must give some introduction or inspiration to Adam when God brought Eve to Adam (Gen2:22). Without such instruction, Adam could not know that Eve is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh because Adam was asleep during the process of creation of Eve (Gen 2:21).

Although Adam's speech (Gen2:23) shows his naming capability with the literary gift and intelligence, it seems that Adam is still a mediocre person, especially in front of God and Eve. He lacks the creative spirit. His speech in Gen2:23 has no new information but a replication of the words of God (Gen:22).

Although Genesis 2:24 does not seem to fit with Genesis 2:23 structurally and logically, it is the verse Genesis 2:24 that can fully reflect who Adam was. Genesis 2:24 proves that he was a creative and active living person with a soul (נֶפֶשׁ) (Gen2:7). He is not like a robot who can only do what is commanded. In the verse Genesis 2:24, Adam not only created new words 'father' and 'mother', but also he gave a complicated and profound new idea: to leave parents to cleave to wife to be one. Being unlike 2:23 in that what Adam said is basically what God did, in Genesis 2:24, what Adam said is completely different from what God did. Genesis 2:24 fully demonstrates the personalities of Adam: he was creative, brave, self-confident, full of desire and the passion. With the following narrative that they were naked without shame (Gen2:25), it would be equivalent saying 'that is good' in Genesis 1.

Adam's first speech with Genesis 2:24 indicates that Adam is mature enough to be able to leave father and mother to cleave with Eve to be one. Hence it is a mark of the completion of man. Genesis 2:24 is not an unnecessary secondary addition but a critical portion to demonstrate that Adam had will and passion to fulfill the mission of God (Gen1:28). Adam's first speech with Genesis 2:24 is the greatest speech in human cultural history. It is also the only speech before the Fall.

### **3. Origin of Covenant**



In Genesis 2:24, the verbs ‘leave’ (יָעֲזֹב), ‘cleave’ (וַיִּדְבַּק), and ‘be’ (וַיִּהְיֶה) take the imperfect conjugation form. In contrast to perfect in Hebraic grammar, the imperfect presents an ‘open-ended’ or ‘ongoing’ or ‘incomplete’ action.<sup>38</sup> They can express at least four important functions:

- (a) Modal as a command, e.g. should, would, could: The mood can express an request, permission, advice or obligation. God uses Adam’s mouth to pass a positive command of God. From this perspective, Genesis 2:24 is the base for Mosaic Law or cultural moral law.
- (b) Future tense as an oath (be willing to do): For Adam’s speech, it can mean that Adam will do something in the future. Combined with his emotion and heart, Genesis 2:24 can mean that Adam had a will to desire to do something rather than he was forced to do it. Under the environment in front of God and Eve, Genesis 2:24 is more like an oath in a wedding ceremony to swear in front of parents and bride.
- (c) Future tense as a prediction (will do): In the near future, after the Fall, in Genesis, it would predict Abraham would leave his father’s house to begin a new family, which became the Israelites (Gen12:1-2). In the distant future, it means that God uses Adam’s mouth to predict the advent family, which is the church in the NT times.
- (d) General present tense as covenant (do): The verbs clearly specify each member’s functionalities and duties that all members agree upon. When Adam spoke Genesis 2:24, it was like a covenantal agreement from all parties without any objection.

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<sup>38</sup> Helene M. Dallaire. *Biblical Hebrew: A Living Language*. Columbia, SC: Columbia International University, 2017

Regardless of a command, an oath or a prediction, Genesis 2:24 represents an earliest agreement of multiple parties from God, Adam and Eve. Without Genesis 2:24, the relationship between Adam and Eve would be ambiguous and a disaster. Because, from the viewpoint of biological genes, Adam can be considered as a father of Eve; from a social functionality that Eve was a helper, Adam can be considered as an elder brother of Eve. Through Adam's first speech, it is by calling 'father and mother' that Adam's sonship identification legally becomes ordained. It is by swearing to 'leave' (יָצַח) and to 'cleave' (וָדָבַק) in front of the father and mother that Adam and Eve were eligible to become the first legal husband and wife. Kuruvilla states that,

the phrase (23-24) indicates more a covenant relationship between the protagonists, rather than an assertion of genetic connection. It is essentially 'an oath of abiding loyalty,' a mutual commitment of partners who obligate themselves to each other for every circumstance of life. The covenant relationship is hinted at in the 'cleaving' (24) <sup>39</sup>

Adam's first speech of the first agreement is the most significant moment in God's creation. Adam's speech is not a monologue but a promise to accept the covenant. In the agreement, Adam not only represents himself, his helper Eve, but also represents man and woman, the whole human beings and all of his descendants. The first agreement is also the greatest agreement in the world. The word 'leave' (יָצַח) not only means that Adam was willing to depart for the mission but also means that God was ready to deliver to have a rest. It is a mark that "the heavens and earth were completed in all their vast array." (2:1). It is a mark that "God had finished the work He had been doing." (2:2) It is the climax of the Creation. It is a transitional mark for the beginning of the Seventh Day.

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<sup>39</sup> Abraham Kuruvilla. *A Theological Commentary for Preachers: Genesis*. Eugene, OR: Wipf Stock Publishers, 2014.

#### **4. Origin of Family**

##### **The Primitive Family Before the Fall:**

When Genesis 2:24 is part of the speech of Adam, all the familial words would not be the empty terms, instead, they would refer to the vivid living individuals. What the verse displays from its context is not merely a pity decree but a harmonious and glorious picture of a primitive nuclear family with the father and the mother, the son and the daughter, the brother and the sister.

Although the words ‘son’ and ‘daughter’ do not appear in Genesis 2:24, through the calling of ‘father and mother,’ Adam and Eve are actually a son and daughter. Father and son are mutual relative concepts. Father or son cannot exist independently. Anyone who calls another person father or mother is indeed a son or daughter. Whom you calls father or mother, whom you are the son or daughter of.

Although the total members of the primitive family were only three due to certain identity duplication, the family is a living family full of life. The family contains the potential new father and new mother, that is, the bride and the bridegroom, the husband and the wife. The family was dynamically filled with life and hope.

Adam’s first speech not only represents the members but also means the signature of the contract. The human family is not only merely about people but also about the signed decree. Family and covenant are indivisible from the beginning.

The word ‘leave’ (יָצָא) not only means that Adams was willing to depart but also means that God was ready to deliver. Genesis 2:7 is not the mark of the completion of man but just an individual. The creation of man was not yet finished even when Adam and Eve met each other. It

is only after Adam proclaimed Genesis 2:24 when the creation of man was completed. The verb 'leave' (יָצָא) means that man can be delivered.

Genesis 2:24 is a mark of the end of the creation of man; it is also a mark of the beginning of a new primitive family; it is the moment of the climax of God's creation. From this perspective, Genesis 2:24 is not an additional narrative, optional auxiliary, or secondary gloss, instead, the verse is the continuity of Genesis 2:23 as an inextricable part of the surprising speech of Adam, which astonished and mystified all until Jesus came, who is truly the Son of Man, the Son of the Father.

### **The First Broken Human Family After the Fall:**

If Genesis 2:24 is narrative, the verse would be a very strict command or prediction inspired from God. Besides the helping duties, the relationship between Adam and Eve at that time was ambiguous; they have no clear relationship with God.

In such case, the earliest family can only be found in Genesis 4. Adam and Eve were the first father and mother; Cain, Abel and Seth were the first generation of sons in the family. Although the first nuclear family contains five members, as Cain killed Abel, this family was full of fears, hatred and bitterness. If the original nuclear human family was a tragedy, there would be no reason to keep the family. It is just as what the disciples said to Jesus, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." (Mat10:9)

Summary:

There are two results of the origin of the human family dependent on whether Genesis 2:24 is narrative or not. In narrative case, it concludes that the first family was a tragedy full of pain; there is no reason to keep it.

In another case, the primitive nuclear family is a perfect prototype. God Himself is part of the origin of the human nuclear family. God is the origin of the father and mother. The origin of the human family is the origin of the church, and the origin of the kingdom of heaven. However, it has the question: who are the father and mother?

Due to two different families, the verbs ('leave' and 'cleave') and familial words in Genesis 2:24 would have different meanings.

## **5. Origin of 'Father' and 'Mother'**

From the previous theories review, it shows that a main reason for denying Genesis 2:24 as part of speech of Adam, is because the first man did not have father and mother. The first man had no concept about father and mother. However, this study argues that the words 'father' and 'mother' in Genesis 2:24 are the names for God. The original biblical concept of father and mother is different from the concept of father and mother used in the cultures. Readers should not use the pre-occupied knowledge from human culture to examine the verse.

### **A. Adam had parent**

Luke clearly states that Adam was the son of God in the family tree of Jesus (Luk3:23-38), "the son of Kenan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of **Adam, the son of God.**" (Luk3:38 NIV) In another word, Adam and Eve are not orphans, and they have a parent who was

the Creator God. The dilemma needed to solve for the verse is how ‘father and mother’ and God are inextricably linked.

Even Genesis 2:24 is considered as a conclusive command, a standalone narrative inserted or added by Moses and inspired from God, the command has to apply to Adam and Eve too because Jesus considered that it is a global principle for whole humanity since the beginning (Mat19:6). It is still necessary to investigate who were the father and mother of Adam.

## **B. ‘Mother’ : Familial Name for the Creator**

There are evidences to show that the familial term ‘mother’ in Genesis 2:24 refers to the name of the Lord (Yehweh).

(1) ‘Eve’ and ‘Yehweh’ are closely related in Hebrew etymology (see the table: *Form of Address of God and Eve Etymology*)<sup>40</sup>. ‘Eve’ and ‘Yehweh’ share the common Hebrew root. “the story of Eve is also the story of the displacing of the Goddess whose name is taken from a form of the Hebrew verb ‘to be’ by the masculine God, Yahweh, whose name has the same derivation.”

41

(2) After the Fall, Adam renamed his wife from ‘woman’ (ish-ah) to ‘Eve’ (Gen 3:20).

The word ‘Eve’ means ‘mother of all living,’ which can be found in some human cultures referring to a goddess. Kikawada states that,

“The etiological aspect of the name *hawwab*, Eve, in Genesis 3:20 deserves another look. Jan Heller suspected that the phrase *em-kol-bay*, (mother of all living) itself could be construed as an honorific name or a title for a great lady. Heller speculated that a remote ancestor of the title, ‘mother of all the living’ may have existed in a cult of the Great

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<sup>40</sup> William Wei Ding. "Familial Vocabulary Study" 2021.  
URL:[https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/htmldoc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc\\_files/d\\_pload/d\\_tables/tb\\_03\\_FamilialVocabulary.htm](https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/htmldoc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc_files/d_pload/d_tables/tb_03_FamilialVocabulary.htm) (visited on 2021 )

<sup>41</sup> 1985 John A. Phillips. *Eve and yhwh Eve: The History of an Idea*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, Sep 1, 1984.

Mother or the Mother Goddess, although he did not provide literacy evidence from any source to support his conjecture. The recent publication of the Old Babylonian Atra-hasis epic, however, seems to give us a literal as well as a thematic parallel to the Genesis title, 'mother of all the living.'<sup>42</sup>

In an unearthed scripture at Huntillet Ajrud (9<sup>th</sup> century BC site), Eve is translated as Asherah, who is considered as wife of a god.<sup>43</sup> It "appears to represent the biblical facet of a continuously evolving effort within ancient Near Eastern culture to name and negotiate between divine and human females' power to give life."<sup>44</sup>

(3) 'Yehweh' is a name of God used by the first woman. When Eve called God after she got the first son Cain (Gen4:1), she used single name 'Yehweh' rather than the double name 'Yehweh Elohim' as the narrator used in Genesis 2 and 3. Although it is unknown how Eve got the name and why Eve use that name rather than 'Elohim,' it is clear that 'Yehweh' is the first time used name for human beings to infer to God. It is also the first time for the narrator to use 'Yehweh' in standalone after 'Yehweh' emerged and used with 'Elohim' in Genesis (Gen2:4). Several verses can confirm that people first began to call God as 'Yehweh' (Gen4:26, Gen 12:8, 13:4, 14:22). It can support that Eve was an initiator of using 'Yehweh' among human beings.

(4) When Eve called Yehweh, she in particular uses a controversial preposition 'et-' which emphasized the connection between Eve and Yehweh. Kikawada states that,

"Further evidence may be adduced in support of the view that Eve is a fusion of two characters. The second and the only other time the name Eve appears in the OT is Genesis 4:1, where Eve conceived and bore Cain and she said, *qamiti-is-et-Yhweb*, normally translated, 'I have gained a man *et-Yhwh*.' The usage of the grammatical element

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<sup>42</sup> Isaac M. Kikawada, "Two Notes on Eve" In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 91, No. 1 (Mar., 1972) pp. 33-37

<sup>43</sup> Theodore J. Lewis. *The Origin and Character of God: Ancient Israelite Religion*. Marquis, Canada: Oxford University Press, 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Holly Morse. *Encountering Eve's Afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2-4*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020.

*et-* in the phrase *et-Yhwh* has caused no little controversy. But I believe that new light may now be shed on it.”<sup>45</sup>

(5) God used the word ‘mother’ to rename Sara to Sarah, meaning ‘mother of nations.’

God did not mean Sarah is a goddess; “mother of nations is to infer the nations of God, which is the kingdom of heaven in the NT.

(6) Many evidences shows that the Bible has Eve-Mother-Yehweh motif. As a contrast, Genesis does not have ‘female-mother’ linking pattern in the text. These evidences shows that ‘mother’ is a name for God, which is germane to the relationship between the Creator and woman Eve.

### **C. ‘Father’ : Familial Name for Creator**

Although the creation of man and woman in Gen2 is an expansion of the creation on Day6 (1:26-27)<sup>46</sup>, especially, Gen2:18-25 can be considered as “the painting fuller picture of Gen 1:26-28”<sup>47</sup>, a significant difference between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 is that Genesis 1 uses the single word ‘Elohim’ to refer to God, whereas in Genesis 2-3, talking about the Adam and Eve, the double words ‘Yehweh’ and ‘Elohim’ are always used together to present God, and literally translated as the ‘Lord God.’

Another significant difference between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 is that Genesis 2 extensively depicts man in pairs: Adam and Eve, man (*ish*) and woman (*ishah*), husband and

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<sup>45</sup> Isaac M. Kikawada, "Two Notes on Eve" In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 91, No. 1 (Mar., 1972) pp. 33-37

<sup>46</sup> Abraham Kuruvilla. *A Theological Commentary for Preachers: Genesis*. Eugene, OR: Wipf Stock Publishers, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> Peterson Brian Neil, "Does Genesis 2 Support Same Sex Marriage An Evangelical Response" In: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Soc* Vol. 60 Issue 4 (Dec2017) p681-696



wife, particularly including ‘father and mother.’ In the pair of the word, if one applies to God, then the other will be related to God. If ‘mother’ infers ‘Yehweh,’ then ‘father’ likely infers ‘Elohim.’

In the OT, the double words ‘Yehweh Elohim’ occurs 20 times.<sup>48</sup> The double words are seldomly used together outside the story of Adam and Eve. The differentiation between the words ‘Yehweh’ and ‘Elohim’ is same obscure as the words between ‘male’ and ‘female’ as well as ‘father’ and ‘mother.’ Such parallel concurrence underlines the inner relationship between ‘father and mother’ and God (Yehweh Elohim).

After the Fall of man, the word ‘father’ was first used in Cain’s offspring (Gen4:20-21), then used with Ham’s offspring Canaan (Gen9:18, Gen9:22-23). Although Adam and ‘father’ are connected through the negative family, from Genesis 2:26-27 (Elohim-Adam), it shows a pattern: Adam-father-Elohim. ‘Father’ is related to the meaning of ‘creator or initiator’ like God.

In the NT, it can be noticed that Jesus is called “the Son of God.” Notice that Jesus was never called ‘the Son of the Lord.’ Jesus himself always used ‘Father’ to refer to ‘God’ rather than the ‘Lord.’ There exists a pattern: Jesus-Father-God in the NT.

Also, the NT calls Jesus both the "last Adam" and the "second Man" (1Co15:45-48). As compared between Adam-father-Elohim and Jesus-Father-God, the perfect match can infer that the ‘father’ that Adam inferred to in Genesis 2:24 is identical to what Jesus inferred to; they all refer to the same God (Elohim).

The symmetric map between Adam-father-Elohim and Eve-mother-Yehweh could be

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<sup>48</sup> Nathaniel Schmidt, "Yahwe Elohim" In: *Journal of Biblical Literature* Vol. 33, No. 1 (Mar., 1914) pp. 25-47

also a plausible reason to explain why Jesus never call God ‘mother’ because the familial term was first used by Eve and reserved by Adam to infer a god of all living after the Fall.

Compared with the word ‘son’ that was from God’s saying (Gen3:16) and the word ‘father’ that was from the mouth of Adam, the two words sounds like a dialog between Adam and God -- Adam said: ‘father’; God said: ‘son.’

When God created the first man, God immediately gave him a name ‘Adam.’ But God never told Adam his name. Adam did not know his name. This is the reason Adam called himself ‘man’ (אִישׁ *ish*) derived from ‘woman’ (אִשָּׁה *ish-ah*). When God first called Adam, God said אִיכָּהּ which means ‘where (אֵי) are you (כָּה)?’ (Gen3:9) rather than אָדָם (adam) or man (אִישׁ *ish*). God first revealed his name to Abraham as אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי (I am God Almighty) (Gen17:1) where God use singular form of ‘God’ (אֵל).

#### **D. ‘Father and Mother’ : One God with Different Names and Implications.**

Adam’s calling God 'father' and 'mother' does not necessarily mean two persons, nor one personal God with two different gender characters. The Scripture reiterates that there is only one God (Deu6:4). In Hebrew, ‘God’ (Elohim) takes masculine attributes.

‘Father and mother’ could be different names with different implications but refer to one God. The polyonymous phenomenon is common and reasonable in the Bible. The first man has two names: God called him ‘Adam’ with implication of dust (Gen2:7), but Adam called himself ‘man’ (*ish*) as contrast to ‘woman’ (*ishah*) (Gen 2:23). The first lady also has two names: God called her ‘woman’ (*ishah*) with implication of helper (Gen2:22), but Adam called her ‘Eve’ later after the Fall (Gen3:20) which implied ‘mother of all living.’ There are at least three most

frequently used names for God (Elohim, Yehweh, Adonai) in the OT (See table: *Form of Address of God*)<sup>49</sup>. Jesus referred to himself with at least seven different names in the Gospels.

There also exists evidence from the other cultures. For example, in Islam and the Quran, some scholars found that God was revealed as father-mother.<sup>50</sup>

In Genesis 2:24, the word ‘father’ could refer to God implying that Adam was first created from the dust of the ground. The word ‘mother’ could refer to God implying that Eve was created from the ribs of Adam. The association between ‘Yehweh’ and ‘Eve’ and ‘mother of living things’ infers that the word ‘mother’ is a name referring to the God of Eve. Similarly, ‘father’ is a name referring the God of Adam.

When Adam was saying ‘father and mother,’ he was representing both himself and Eve (man and woman) to talk with Creator God. Adam’s calling God mother is equivalent to calling someone the father-in-law – it was respectful to Eve and an honor of God. Genesis 2:24 indicates that Adam had a good sense in personhood and identity among himself, Eve and the trinitarian God.

People have difficulties expecting ‘father’ and ‘mother’ as two names for one God before the Fall of man, because, after the Fall of man, ‘father’ and ‘mother’ in human culture always refer to two individuals. Such a cultural mandate is so strong that many are driven to think of one God as two: god and goddess, or heavenly father and heavenly mother.

## **E. ‘Father and Mother’ : Adam’s Right and Capability from God**

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<sup>49</sup> William Wei Ding. "*Hebraic Familial Vocabulary Study*" 2021.  
URL:[https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/htmldoc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc\\_files/d\\_pload/d\\_tables/tb\\_03\\_FamilialVocabulary.htm](https://wdingbox.github.io/pubs/thesis/weid/htmldoc/proj/TheFamilialVocabulary/doc_files/d_pload/d_tables/tb_03_FamilialVocabulary.htm) (visited on 2021 )

<sup>50</sup> Nancy Roberts, "God as Father-Mother, and More" In: *Muslim World*. Vol. 99 Issue 1 (Jan2009) p102-123. 22p

God called the first man 'Adam' (Gen2:7, Gen3:9), but Adam called himself as 'man' (ish). God did not tell Adam the name of God, but God gave Adam the capability of naming and the right of freedom of speech. Before 'father and mother' first used in Genesis 2:24, Adam had already given many names for all kinds of animals (2:20). To call God as 'father and mother' has no any legal or moral issue for Adam.

In Genesis 2, the description of how Adam gave names of animals (Gen2:19-20), was inserted between the verses about the need for a helper (2:8) and the verse about how the helper was created (Gen2:21-22). The familial vocabularies 'father', 'mother', 'man' (ish) and 'woman' (ishah) appeared after the helper was created. These familial terms were never used before in Genesis. Such a kind of structure suggests that familial vocabulary 'father and mother' were invented and given by Adam, even though it was possibly under the inspiration of God.

#### **F. 'Father and Mother' : intimate relationship between Adam and God**

Right before Adam began to disclose his first speech, it was God who brought Eve to Adam (Gen2:23). Hence, God was the middleman between Adam and Eve; God organized the meeting; God was the host. It was the most special moment in human history when Adam first time spoke in front of both God and Eve. In such an important event, it would be plausible for Adam to speak something related to three of them (Adam, Eve and God)

It's not hard to find that Adam's speech (Gen2:23) was inspired by God. Genesis 2:21 shows that when God was creating Eve, Adam was asleep. Without the inspiration or instruction of God, Adam was not able to say that the woman was from his ribs and flesh (2:23). Likewise, without the inspiration or instruction of God, Adam was not able to say his father and mother (2:24).

Genesis 2 shows that Adam was directly created and educated by God (Gen2:16-17). Obviously Adam was not only created earlier than Eve, but also knew more than Eve. More accurately, Adam knew God more than anyone else among all human beings.

The words ‘father and mother’ could be a reaction of the satisfaction of Adam after God gave him the helper (2:22). The words ‘father and mother’ in Adam’s speech reflected an intimate lovely relationship between God and Adam. Unfortunately, it was the last speech for Adam before the Fall. Among creatures, only Adam had such privilege right from God to call God ‘father’, and only Adam had such intimate relationship with God.

### **G. Summary of Origin of Father and Mother**

The Hebraic words ‘father and mother’ (Gen 2:24) only appears once before the Fall. Although, its meanings are obscure before the Fall, the first usages after the Fall shows that ‘father’ and ‘mother’ originally refer to the Creator God. The phrase ‘mother of the living’ (3:20) refers to a goddess in human culture. For ‘father of those who live tent and raise stock’(4:20 NIV) and ‘father of those who play harp and flute’ (4:21 NIV), some versions translate ‘father’ into ‘the first’ (NLT, NET) or ‘first person’ (GWR) or ‘ancestor’ (GNT, ISV). None of those refers to biological parents.

God uses ‘father’ and ‘mother’ to refer to Himself. Sarah, “mother of nations” (Gen 17:16) and Abraham, ‘father of nations” (17:4-5) refer to the nations of God, the kingdom of heaven, the church of Jesus. The initial words ‘father’ and ‘mother’ have nothing to do with biological parents.

The motifs of Adam-father-Elohim and Eve-Mother-Yehweh found in Genesis reveal that ‘father’ and ‘mother’ are polyonymous for one God with different implications: the word ‘father’

implies that Adam was first created from the dust of the ground; the word ‘mother’ implies that Eve was created from the ribs of Adam. The word ‘mother’ is a name reserved for woman Eve; ‘father’ is a name deserved for man Adam.

The paired symmetric motifs, which are parallel to ‘male and female’ and the double name of God (Yehweh Elohim), are the characteristics of the likeness of God and have nothing to do with gender or sex.

Adam’s total three speeches (2:23, 3:10, 12) reveal that Adam does not know God’s name and his name. ‘Adam’ is a name used for narrative and audience. Adam and God use pronouns to call each other (3:9-12). But they know and use the name ‘woman’ (ishah) in their conversation, which is given by God. The word ‘man’ (ish), ‘father’ (aba) and ‘mother’ (amah) are etymologically derived from ‘woman’ (ishah). If the name ‘man’ is given by Adam, it’s plausible that ‘his father and mother’ are given by Adam. If the words man and woman refer to Adam and Eve, the words father and mother have to refer to their creator.

Human beings began to use ‘Yhwh’ (יהוה, yhwy) to infer God’s name after Seth begot a son Enosh when man began to call on God’s name (יהוה, yhwy) (Gen 4:26). The first person whom God revealed his name to is Abraham. God said to Abraham, אֲנִי־אֵל שָׁדַי (I am God Almighty) (Gen17:1), where God used singular form of ‘God’ (אֵל El).

Adam is the only one who has both the naming capability and the privilege to give names for the Creator due to his close relationship with God. All other people are not eligible even they have naming capability. In genesis 2:24, Adam uses the third person single masculine pronoun (his father: אָבִי and his mother: אִמִּי) to infer the Creator not only of himself, but also of Eve and all humanity. No other people has such right.

The different Hebraic pronominal suffix ('his', י and י) implies a subtle difference in relationship between the two motif lines: 'Adam-Father' and 'Eve-Mother' as 'Adam's Father' and 'Eve's Mother.' Adam's calling mother is a little bit like calling the mother-in-law for marriage ordinance.

## **6. Summary of Etiological study**

Etymology and Etiology are common in that both are a study about the origination. The difference between them is that etymology focuses on the literal word, whereas etiology focuses on the real instance. Although the two studies are in different disciplines, they are inextricably indispensable and they emerge at the same time and complement to each other.

Etymological and Etiological study on Genesis 1-2 reveals that, before God created man, God prepared the light, air, time, food and all necessities. During the creation of man, God also created helper. Moreover, not only God created the first nuclear family, but also God joint the first family and authorized the first man to have signed the first covenant that is Genesis 2:24.

The above study can conclude that Genesis 2:24 is one of the most significant verses in Genesis and the Bible. It is not only the climax in the Adam's first speech but also the climax in God's creation among the seven days. It is a real mark of the end of the creation of man and woman. It is also a mark of the beginning of the first nuclear family in the world, which is the prototype of the church and the kingdom of heaven of Jesus. Adam's first speech is not only the first speech of man, but also the first inspired prediction in the world. Adam can be considered as the first prophet among human beings. Genesis 2:24 can be considered as the first covenant between God and man, the initial version of the Mosaic familial law and constitution, the first

love and oath between man and woman, the first missiological commission for God, the initial version of Jesus' great commission command.



## Chapter Five Jesus' Exegesis on Genesis 2:24

### **1. About Marriage**

(1) Command of God: In the Gospel, when Jesus quoted the Genesis 2:24, Jesus connected Genesis 2:24 to Genesis 1:27 together. He stated that **at the beginning of creation**, God 'made them male and female' (Mak10:6 NIV, Mat19:4). Jesus stressed that husband and wife are no longer two, but one, *therefore* **what God has joined together**, let man not separate (Mat19:6, Mak10:8-9).

What Jesus implied 'God joined them together' is an abbreviation of 'to leave father and mother to cleave to wife to be one.' (Gen2:24). The relationship between God and man in Jesus' speech is identical to the relationship between 'father/mother' and 'Adam/Eve' in Adam's speech. Jesus' word provides a strong evidence that 'father and mother' in Adam's first speech refer to God.

(2) The Beginning: If Genesis 2:24 was the word of Moses, it would conflict with the Mosaic Laws, in which Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away (Mak10:4, Mat19:7). Jesus replied to the Pharisees, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way **from the beginning**." (Mat19:8, Mak10:5). It implies that Genesis 2:24 was written down by Moses, but the original words were not from Moses.

Jesus articulated 'the beginning' to lead people to recall the period before the Fall. The close relationship between God and Adam before the Fall further enhance the theory that Adam is the first man to call God father. Jesus is not the first one to call God as Father. Just as that Jesus took over John the Baptist's ministry.

(3) The Importance of the Obedience: Compared with Adam's first speech with Jesus citation in the Gospel, although they spoke different languages: one is Hebrew and another is Greek, both of them used a conclusive word 'therefore' word within a same structure:

Jesus: Gen1:27 therefore Gen2:24

Adam: Gen2:23 therefore Gen2:24

On the one hand, the word 'therefore' undermines the continuity theory between 2:23 and 2:24 for Adam. Jesus seems to mean that Genesis 2:24 is the continuity of Genesis 1:27. On the other hand, Jesus emphasizes the Genesis 2:24. The most significant word of Adam is Genesis 2:24, it is inspired by the Spirit of God. It seems to Jesus that whether or not Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam is not important. The most important thing is to abide the command of Genesis 2:24, the first covenant between God and Adam, the Father and the son.

(4) The Great Commission: When the Pharisees test Jesus on divorce issue, Jesus quotes the full verse of Genes 2:24. It means that 'man shall leave father and mother' and marriage are indivisible.

If Gen2:24 were considered as a gloss from Moses or the narrator, then 'father and mother,' 'man and woman' would be a generic concept limited within its local Israelite or Egyptian cultures. It would bring issues:

(a) Contradict to Culture: At the time of exodus, 'to leave parents' would be an inappropriate command to Israelites. It contradicted to their patriarch system custom.

(b) Contradict to Mosaic Law: It would be subject to conflict to the human virtue of a parents filial responsibility related to the fifth of the Ten Commandments in the OT: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

(c) Contradict to etiology: It would lead to a mystery to find the origin of the human

family from human culture. Etiology assumes that anything has its origin rather than myth.

It should be shameful that the Pharisees merely argue over the divorce rather than above contradicting issues. Jesus wanted Pharisees to focus on the mission of God.

(5) The quotation mark problem is a translation issue, which is not the stroke of the Scripture mentioned by Jesus, “I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” (Mat5:18 NIV) Certainly, the stroke of a pen is not including the quotation mark.

Although Jesus’ exegesis on Gen2:24 merely focused on the divorce issue rather the whole verse, He gave us a guide or direction: a solution chain of the issue from divorce to marriage, to man and woman, to father and mother, to cultural family, to the origin of family, to the mission of family, to the creation of the world in the beginning, and to the command of God. God’s family was lost in human culture.

## **2. Family and Sex**

Although Jesus quoted Gen2:24, He did not make exegesis of the whole verse but merely focused on the marriage issue in the human family to respond the challenge over divorce from the Pharisees. Particularly, Jesus mentioned about the sex role in the family. He stated that “For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.” (Mat19:12 NIV) From Jesus’s word, it can be found that sex is personal and optional in family life but the kingdom of heaven is the ultimate public goal. It is consistent with

the evidence that ‘male and female,’ ‘father and mother,’ ‘man and woman,’ ‘son and daughter,’ ‘brother and sister’ in Genesis are the pre-lapsarian Adam-Eve oriented and have no connection to sex.

### **3. Family and the Kingdom of God**

What Jesus said about the kingdom of heaven (Mat19:12) is indeed identical to what Genesis 2:24 proclaimed, the initial human family of Adam before the Fall. From the word of Jesus in other places in the Gospel, it can be found that Jesus’s view on the human family is consistent with the original nuclear family of Genesis 2:24 spoken by Adam before the Fall.

When a disciple said to Jesus to first let him go and bury his father, Jesus replied to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (Mat8:22 NIV).

Jesus once said, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (Mat12:48-50 NIV).

In Jesus’s mind, the familial terms, male and female, father and mother, brother and sister, husband and wife, son and daughter, are not about the biological or social ones in the culture on the earth but the members of the nuclear family of Adam before the Fall, which was the origin of the human family.

The ‘Father’ that Jesus called God is identical to what Adam called before the Fall. ‘Father’ is not a metaphor or title as some discussed, but the original familial term invented by Adam inspired by God with the original meaning understood by Adam before the Fall. After the Fall, the original family was broken. The only one who can save the family is Jesus. The Son of God is not a title or metaphor. Jesus is the real Son of God the Son of Man. Jesus took over the lost mission of Adam and fulfilled the redemption.

It is not that Jesus borrowed the familial terms used from the human culture, instead, God created the familial terms and allowed human beings to use them to remember the original love relationship with God just as Adam said before the Fall. God wanted the original family to multiply to fill over the earth. It is through the family that man can honor and glory God to accomplish the mission of God.

#### **4. Family and the Great Commission**

Jesus' connection from Genesis 2:24 to Genesis 1:27 can bring a broader contextual connection between Genesis 2:23-24 and Gen1:26-28. From the 'complementary' relationship between the two, it shows that the goal of family is not merely to enjoy the family love, instead, it is blessed to accomplish the mission of God, that is, to be fruitful, to multiply, to fill, to subdue and to have dominion over the earth (Gen1:26b, 1:28).

The first important verb in Genesis 2:24 is 'leave.' Originally it means to **extend** the first nuclear family, to **reach out** to fill over the earth. After Adam failed to leave, the word 'leave' means to split, to cut off, to disconnect to the world, just as what the Lord said to Abraham, "leave your country, your people and your father's house to go to the land I will show you" (Gen12:1) In the NT times, from a perspective of soteriology, "leave" simply means "be reborn." From missiology, "leave" means to leave the comfort zone, to reach out to go to the fields until the end of the earth.

The verb "cleave" in Genesis 2:24 originally means to **unite** with the helper to be one to fulfill the mission of God. After Adam failed to cleave, the union of two became one of the most vicious tools to subvert God. Human beings totally lost its capability to cleave until Jesus came and was crucified on the cross. After the resurrection, Jesus promised that He would take over

Adam's failed mission to cleave to His people (the Bride) as long as they could obey Him until the end of Day.

Jesus's Great Commission is not something new that Jesus invented Himself. Essentially it is identical to the first covenant in Adam's first speech before the Fall. "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mat28:19-20) The new family that Jesus built, which is the kingdom of God, will never ever fail like Adam did.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Missiology of Genesis 2:24**

Gen 2:24 is one of the most important verses in Genesis and in the Bible. Among all verses in Genesis, Gen2:24 is the one most quoted in the NT, in which it was quoted four times, and two times in the Gospels. Jesus directly quoted the verse (Mat 19:6, Mak 10:6), and Paul also quoted the verse twice (Eph5:31, 1Co6:16). Also, Genesis 2:24 is the verse most cited by Origen (184-254).<sup>51</sup>

#### **1. Better understanding our ancestor Adam**

Whether Genesis 2:24 is the speech of Adam can significantly affect our understanding of who Adam was before the Fall. Without Genesis 2:24, Genesis 2:23 would be less logical. How could ‘the bones of bones and flesh of flesh’ leads to a result that she should be called ‘woman’? Genesis 2:23 alone cannot give a clear and comprehensive understanding of the personhood of Adam before the Fall.

Even Genesis 2:24 is considered as a standalone command from God, it applies not only to whole humanity, but also to Adam. With Genesis 2:24 from the mouth of Adam, it would enrich the information about the personality of Adam. Genesis 2:24 allow people to see the inside heart of Adam, his living soul, his independent thought and his inner deep desire before the Fall. It can totally change the view of Adam, that is, who he originally was.

Adam and Eve are the only two persons who ever were once to be in a clean naive state. They are the only persons who ever tasted the forbidden fruit and experienced the changing process of the Fall from the Spirit driven man to become the chemical hormone driven man.

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<sup>51</sup> Emanuela Prinzivalli, "Adam and the Soul of Christ in Origen's Commentary on Genesis. A Possible Reconstruction" In: *Adamantius* Vol. 23 (2017) p119-129

Among more than three thousands of named persons in the Bible<sup>52</sup>, Adam was the most important person for all generations to always remember and think of besides Jesus Christ. Through better understanding of Adam's personhood, it can help to better understand how Adam failed, and thereafter to better understand his role and his responsibility in the Fall, and so it can help to better understand the sonship of Jesus and His salvation.

As the paper revealed early, Adam was once a special person before the Fall -- he was an intelligent, knowledgeable and compassion adult but without sense of sex or gender, without shame and fear, and without any coverup. His life experience, especially the period before the Fall, is necessarily a must for everyone to know besides Jesus Christ.

## **2. Better understanding the family**

Genesis 2:24 is the only verse in the Bible and the solid archeological evidence in the world that accurately revealed the origin of the human family. By understanding the origin of the human nuclear family, it can help to better understand the original purpose, meaning and characteristics of the human family. The whole Bible is about the family, from original nuclear family, to Adam's family, to Noah's family, to Abraham's family, to Isaac's family, to Israelites and to Jesus' family, which the church, the kingdom of God. Family is not only about the relationship but also about the covenant, the mission and the glory of God. Man and family are indivisible. Man lives in family. Man is meaningless without family.

On the other hand, God not only created man and the human family, God also joint the first nuclear family. God is the initiator of the Family. The family belongs to both man and God. God, man and family are indivisible.

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<sup>52</sup> Herbert Lockyer. *All the Men of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016



Paul pointed out that the verse Gen2:24 has a significant beyond the marriage: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery -- but I am talking about Christ and the church." (Eph5:31-32 NIV)

After the Fall, the first nuclear family was destroyed. Adam began to hide himself from God – Adam excluded God from the first family.

It was not until Jesus came to the world, was born in the Adam's family when the broken family began to be renewed. Through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, through His trinitarian relationship and through his Sonship of Jesus, the Father God can be connected to the broken family again. The salvation and redemption are essentially about the family with the Son of Man and the Son of God living in it. "But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit." (1Co6:17 NIV)

### **3. Better understanding the sonship of Jesus.**

The sonship of Jesus refers to the term "the Son of God" and "the Son of Man" for Jesus in the Gospels. The term "the Son of Man" occurs about 80 times<sup>53</sup> or 50 times if parallels are not counted.<sup>54</sup> The term "the Son of God" occurs at least 47 times in the Bible in KJV, 28 times in the Gospels.

The etymological and etiological familial vocabulary study shows that the word 'son' is a familial term and concept created by God. When God created the man, God also created the

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<sup>53</sup> Samuel Whitefield. *Son of Man: The Gospel of Daniel 7*. N.p., 2019.

<sup>54</sup> Mogens Muller. *The Expression 'Son of Man' and the Development of Christology: A History of Interpretation*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2012.

family of the man. What the ‘male’ and ‘female’ originally meant to God in Genesis 1:27 is not about the sex or gender but about the human family. God created man and family in the same sixth day in the same creation process. Man and family are indivisible in the beginning. These results can be a key to understanding the theological meaning of the sonship of Jesus is to understand the human family.

First, the word ‘son’ used for Jesus is not about the title or parable <sup>55</sup> but about the indivisible relationship within God. The Son of God refers to the triune God (the Son and the Father and the Spirit); the triune God is both the Family of God and God Himself.

Second, the Son of Man refers to the son of Adam before the Fall. He is what God expected to fulfil the mission of God through Adam. The Fall of Adam cannot fail the will of God until Jesus was born. Through Jesus, God redeemed the children of Adam back to the Family of God.

The familial study of Genesis 2:24 concluded that God designed and ordained the complicated and strict familial structure and the relationship. The purpose of the family is to prepare for Jesus to fulfill the mission of God. The nuclear familial terms are not borrowed from the human culture; instead, they are borrowed from the word of God to be used among human beings in the world in order to allow human beings to be able to trace back to Him and to glorify almighty God. The terms, ‘the Son of God’ or ‘Son of Man’ or ‘the heavenly Father,’ are not symbolic titles or metaphors or any kind of literal device, but the real members of the real family with a passionate relationship and binding.

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<sup>55</sup> D. A. Carson. *Jesus the Son of God: A Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*. Ed. by D. A. Carson. N.p., 2012.

The essence of the sonship of Jesus is that Jesus is the true Son of the true Man of the true Father in the true Family. The true Man are those to whom God sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, and the Spirit calls out, 'Abba (αββα), Father.' " (Gal4:6 NIV) The true Man are those who received the Spirit of sonship. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Rom8:15 NIV)

Since the familial word 'father' (אב, *abah*) was first used by Adam (Gen2:24), although its uses have been changed among all nations from the Hebrew word (אב), to the Greek (αββα), to the English (pa), to Sino (*ba*), its root accent is still there keeping in the vowel letter א (aleph) until today. Although human beings misused the familial words and even to apply it on the animals, the original holy meaning of 'father' embedded in Genesis 2:24 has never ever changed. It is the Father rather than the father who begot man. It is the Father's house rather than the father's house where man came from and destined to. It is the Father's mission rather than the father's chore that man need to accomplish. The sonship and fathership are indivisible from the beginning. The essence of the sonship of Jesus is about the fathership of God.

Although the Scripture shows that God loves both Adam and Jesus, a significant difference is that God did not reply to Adam's speech in Eden. As a contrast, God immediately responded to Jesus as soon as he came out of water, 'This is my beloved Son. with whom I am well pleased ' (Mat 3:17). Later on, the similar words are repeated for seven times in the NT (Mat 17:5, Mak 1:11, Mak 9:7, Luk 3:22, Luk 9:35, 2Pe 1:17). In another word, God did not accept Adam as the first son. Paul said, "So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a lifegiving spirit." (1Co15:45 NIV). This implies that God created Adam from the dust of the ground to prepare for Jesus Christ who was the Son whom God expected.

"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (Psm8:4, 144:3, Heb 2:6 NIV)

While man was created for the Son of God, the Son of God was prepared for man. Without cleaving to Jesus and uniting with Christ, no one can be the son of the Father. "for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."" (Rom10:13 NIV) Anyone who believe in Him will be greater than Adam. Anyone who does not believe in Him will be lower than the animal.

A goal for Jesus came into the world is to restore the original meaning of familial vocabulary, original nuclear family, and soul of the family members. Such restoration started with the sonship of Jesus inside of the triune God.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusion**

(1) Whether or not Genesis 2:24 is part of the speech of Adam has been an issue for a long time, as original ancient Hebrew Scripture does not have punctuation marks, and Genesis 2:24 locates between Adam's saying (2:23) and a narrative verse (2:25). The paper summarizes that there are three distinct theories: (1) Narrative theory, (2) Adam theory, (3) Uncertainty theory. The paper concludes that none of them is compelling so far.

(2) From a perspective of etymology and etiology, the paper studies the origin of the human family primarily within the biblical account of Genesis 1-5. The paper explores the familial vocabulary etymology, the biblical meaning of male and female, the origin of the family, the origin of the human speech, the origin of the covenant, and the origin of father and mother. The paper concludes that, during God's creation process, the biblical meaning of male and female has nothing to do with sex or gender. The words 'sex' or 'gender' does not exist in the biblical Hebrew vocabulary. Human culture made the original meaning of 'male' and 'female' fully tinted with sex and gender. The paper reveals that God created the words 'male' and 'female' for man to characterize a likeness of God. The purpose of the male and female is to constitute the human family. The purpose of the human family is to perform the mission of God.

Likewise, as the reflection of the mirror from the biblical male and female to characterize a likeness of God, the original meaning of father and mother has nothing to do with gender or sex. The words 'father' and 'mother' given by Adam, are polyonymous names used to infer to the Creator God. Many pieces of evidence show that the word 'mother' is a name for God primarily reserved for woman to remember the creation of Eve being taken out of Adam; the name 'father' is a name for God primarily reserved for man to remember the creation of the first man Adam from the dust.

In Adam's first speech (Gen2:23-24), Adam's calling of God 'mother' represents Eve to legalize his familial marriage relationship. It is also a way respectful to Eve. For Adam, the name 'mother' seems equivalent to the 'father-in-law.'

The first human nuclear family was Adam's family when he released his first speech (Gen 2:23-24). Adam's first speech is the first human speech; it is also the first covenant for all parties, including God, Adam, and Eve; it is the foundation of Mosaic laws; it is also the initial draft for Jesus' Great Commission command. It marks the beginning of the first family; it marks that the end of the creation of man and woman; it marks that the heavens and the earth were completed; it marks that God finished His work to rest. It is the climax of God's Creation.

The paper finds that man and the family are created concurrently on the same day. Man and the family are inseparable. Man's missionary work and God's redemption and salvation are accomplished through the family. The family is a key to better understanding the theological meaning of the trinitarian God and the sonship of Jesus, the Son of man and the Son of God.

(3) The paper also analyzes Jesus' quotation over Genesis 2:24. When arguing with the Pharisees over the divorce, Jesus connected God to 'male and female' and 'father and mother' to convince them that God joined together, let man not separate. Jesus' familial view is identical to the initial first nuclear family concept before the Fall, which is entirely different from the Jewish familial view in Jewish culture. The paper concludes that Genesis 2:24 quoted by Jesus, is essentially identical to the Great Commission given by Jesus after the resurrection.

(4) Finally, the study concludes that Genesis 2:24 belongs to Adam's first speech. The ideas in the paper do not contradict but are compatible with all previous theories. The quotation marks are not part of the strokes in the Scripture, which Jesus mentioned (Mat5:18 NIV). The quotation problem is a translation issue worthy of carefully reexamining.

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