

Bible Study Sample

Text: Genesis 2:18-25

This is a sample literary Bible study on the creation of a bride for Adam.

1

Begin with Prayer.

Focus on the Passage

2

Familiarize yourself with the passage.

Setting:

When does the passage take place?

The passage forms part of the creation narrative. It occurs on the sixth day of creation, when the Lord created humankind, both male and female.

Where does the passage take place?

The passage takes place in the garden of Eden.

Characters & Objects:

Who are the main figures in the passage?

The main figures are God, the man, and the woman.

What objects are described in the passage?

The man's rib is used to form the woman.

Action:

What happens in the passage?

1. God announces that he will create a helper suitable for the man.
2. God brings the animals before Adam in pairs, and Adam names them.
3. God causes a deep sleep to fall upon the man, opens his side to remove a rib, and creates a bride to present to the man.
4. Adam sings over his bride, composing a poem in which he names her "woman."
5. The story concludes by telling us the bridal couple is "naked and unashamed."



Look for literary devices.

Passage Structure:

1. The passage belongs to the genre of comedy (classical Greek term) or what the New Testament authors call *gospel*. Stories that belong to the genre of comedy begin low (suffering) but end high (glory), often with a wedding. This passage moves from suffering to glory, from the man suffering a wounding in the side to experiencing the glory of receiving his bride. The entire passage is moving us towards a glorious wedding.

2. The passage is a structurally composed of two parallel, but contrasting, scenes.

A. God brings the animals before Adam.

B. Adam names the animals.

C. A suitable companion is not found.

A'. God brings the woman before Adam.

B'. Adam names the woman.

C'. A suitable companion having been found,
Adam and his bride become "one flesh."

This structural pattern emphasizes God's purpose in marching the animals before Adam in pairs before presenting him with a bride. By doing this, God makes Adam aware of the solitude and loneliness that result from his lack of a suitable companion. Before God gives the man the gift of the bride, he is purposely creating in the man a longing for the bride. Of course, the structural pattern of these two parallel scenes also draws attention to the unique suitability of the woman for Adam in contrast to all other living creatures. Notice the radical difference in the way these two scenes end, but also note the contrast between Adam naming the animals without any fanfare and Adam composing a poem (a song) to name the woman.

Figures of Speech:

Repetition of Key Phrases:

1. The phrase "**a companion suitable for him**" occurs twice. In part, the narrator uses it simply to draw attention to the importance of finding a suitable companion for Adam. But in addition, the narrator uses the phrase as a frame to the story of God bringing the animals before Adam, reminding us of God's ultimate purpose in marching the animals in pairs before the man.

2. The phrase "**brought them/her (animals/woman) to the man**" occurs twice. The passage uses the precise repetition of this phrase to concretely highlight the parallel nature of these two scenes.

God Creates the Woman

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a companion suitable for him." ¹⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a companion suitable for him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said:

"This is now bone of my bones

And flesh of my flesh;

She shall be called Woman,

Because she was taken out of Man."

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.



Metaphors:

1. “**Deep sleep**” is a metaphor for death. The passage is using this metaphor to suggest that the man must suffer figurative death in order to give life to his bride.
2. The passage refers to the marital couple metaphorically as “**one flesh**.” God creates male and female in his image. God is a plurality of three in one. He therefore creates the man and woman in his image as a plurality who metaphorically become one flesh in marital union.

Passage Meaning: Themes & Symbols

A major theme of the passage is the movement from death to life. This movement is both metaphorical and literal. 1) God awakens the man from a deep sleep (*metaphorical*). 2) The bride moves from nonexistence to life (*literal*). 3) The man moves from being without a bride and thus being incapable of producing life to having a bride and thus being capable of producing life (*literal*).

Focus on the Big Picture

4

Examine the context for the passage.

How does the passage function within the context of the surrounding chapters?

1. Genesis 1 gives us a cosmic overview of the story of creation. It describes the creation of humankind on the sixth day, both male and female, in generalized terms. Genesis 2 then offers a detailed rehearsal of the incredibly significant creation of man and woman on the sixth day.
2. At every step in the creation process in Genesis 1, God evaluated his creative work as good. The repeated refrain of Genesis 1 was: “it was good.” This passage begins with God announcing that “*it is not good*” for the man to be alone.” The narrator alludes to the phrasing from Genesis 1 deliberately in order to draw our attention to the severity of this defect in Adam. Remember, though, that God has intentionally created Adam with this defect in order to instill in him an appreciation for the gift of the bride.
3. The passage concludes by noting that the man and woman were “naked...and were not ashamed.” This conclusion sets us up for the story of the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, which will end with the man and woman being “naked” and “ashamed.”

How does the passage function within the context of the Bible as a whole?

The central theme in this passage, movement from death to life, is one of the most important biblical themes in all of Scripture because it culminates in the story of the resurrection. The prominence of that theme in this passage invites us to ask if this story is somehow a *type scene* (*parallel story to*) of the resurrection. In asking this question, we should not forget that Paul explicitly calls Christ a new Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45.



We can create a list of parallels:

Adam

1. Adam was innocent and full of life.
2. God made a deep sleep come upon Adam.
3. God pierced Adam in the side, creating a bloody wound.
4. God took the substance from Adam's side and used it to create his bride.
5. God healed Adam of his wounding and awakened him in the garden to receive his bride.
6. Adam rejoiced over his bride with poetry.

Christ

1. Christ was innocent and full of life.
2. God made the deep sleep of death come upon Christ on the cross.
3. God allowed the spear to pierce Christ in the side, creating a bloody wound.
4. God took the substance from Christ's side and used it to create his bride. (God took the blood for the bride's purchase and the water for her purification. Acts 20:28; Eph 5:26.)
5. God healed Christ of his wounding and awakened him in a garden so that one day he could receive us as his bride.
6. As a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so Christ rejoices over us (Isa 62:5).

Focus on Christ

5 Determine what the passage is teaching you about Christ.

How are Adam & Christ similar?

We can clearly see why Paul identifies Christ as a new Adam. The story of the sleep of Adam for his bride anticipates the death of Christ for his bride. In addition to the parallels between those two stories, though, we can identify some further similarities between Adam and Christ.

- Each has no father except the Lord God.
- Each inaugurates the beginning of a new creation.
- Each bears a scar in his side that testifies to his love for his bride.

How is Christ greater than Adam?

Not only does Paul identify Christ as a new Adam, he identifies him as a *better* Adam. Whereas Adam fell into sin and brought death to all humankind, Christ is wholly perfect and sinless, and he offers life to all humankind. As Paul says, "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22).

Furthermore, Genesis 2 invites us to contrast the bridegroom Eve had in Adam to the Bridegroom we have in Christ.



Adam

1. Paul says that, although the serpent deceived Eve in the garden, Adam was not deceived about what he was doing (1 Tim 2:14). Adam knowingly chose to join his bride in sin.
2. Although Adam was at greater fault than Eve, he stood as her accuser before the Lord. He tried to place the blame for his own sin on his bride in order to save himself from the judgment of death.
3. The scar that Adam bore in his side, which should have testified to his willingness to suffer to the point of death for his bride, instead became a tragically ironic reminder of how far he had fallen.

Christ

1. After seeing that his bride had fallen into sin, Christ refused to join his bride in sin.
2. Although Christ remained wholly innocent of any crime, he went before the Lord God to plead for his bride. He was willing to take the blame for her sin upon himself in order to spare her from the judgment of death.
3. The scar that Christ bears in his side remains a perfect testament to his willingness to suffer death in order to give life to his bride.

How much greater a Bridegroom we have in Christ than Eve had in Adam!