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The Figure of Marriage in Ephesians 5:21-33

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THE FIGURE OF MARRIAGE

IN EPHESIANS 5:21-33

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an investigation of the figure of marriage in Ephesians 5:21-33. The specific problem is to determine whether or not in these verses the figure exists as it does throughout Scripture. Thus this discussion necessitates establishing what characteristics, if any, are common to the figure of marriage in the Old Testament and New Testament. The ultimate question that results is, "Are Christ and the Church regarded as husband and wife in these verses?" The answer will be determined in these verses by specific statements to that effect or by the description of the relationship between Christ and the Church as a marriage. Complications arise because the human institution is very much a part of the passage, and a close comparison is made between Christ and the husband on the one hand and the Church and the wife on the other. The problem, then, will not consist of finding marital allusions but it must be an analysis of the marital language as it applies to Christ and the Church.

The implications of this investigation are two-fold. First, if Christ and the Church are married, this will affect the ethics of Christian marriage. Husband and wife will have the responsibility of being a living representation of the greater marriage of Christ and the Church. Theirs will be a responsibility and privilege more significant than that of

the unmarried person. They will have the distinction of being living symbols and types. The second implication is one that reaches into the science of language, particularly the language of imagery. In this passage one also encounters the imagery of the body. The body of Christ is indeed a significant (though controversial) contribution to the theology of the Church. If it is found that the Church is the Bride of Christ, then a problem of reality arises similar to that of the reality of the body of Christ. If, on the other hand, there is any doubt that the Church is the bride of Christ, the result would be an exhortation to careful study of the text itself before a systematic generalization is offered or accepted, which may lead to unnecessary or non-existent problems for the interpreter. The implication is that even with an image or concept that occurs throughout Scripture, the concordance is limited by the lexicon and grammar.

The Pauline authorship of the letter is assumed together with a corresponding date near the middle of the first century. Thus the Pauline parallels to marital imagery will be of particular significance.

Certain limitations must prevail also. This paper cannot be a complete and thorough exegesis of Ephesians 5:21-33; it concerns itself only with those words and constructions which shed light upon the possible occurrence of the figure of marriage. The body of Christ concept is present in the verses and is considered in the discussion only insofar as

it affects the interpretation of the marital imagery. The same qualifications hold true for the concept of the Church. It is beyond the scope of this paper to present a complete description of those cultic forms which are not relevant to the figure of marriage. There are problems raised by these verses which this discussion will not answer. The alleged conflict of this passage with I Corinthians 7 is not considered. Whether or not non-Scriptural sources influence the marital imagery is a problem that requires more space than this discussion will permit, although the conclusions drawn will in part speak to it, calling for a more careful investigation of the theology contained in the passage.

The nature of marital imagery in the Old Testament basically refers to the Sinai covenant, as the second chapter will show. Yahweh is the husband and Israel is the wife. Those who most fully utilize the figure, however, are the prophets as they emphasize the unfaithfulness of Israel, while the later wisdom literature suggests the feminine personification of the figure of wisdom.

Possible New Testament parallels to the figure of marriage are established in the third chapter. Jesus considers himself the bridegroom and is more concerned with the festal nature of the wedding than he is in the identity of the bride. The Apocalypse raises the eschatological implications of the figure of marriage, equating the wedding with the parousia. Paul, however, allows himself a certain flexibility of imagery, the interpretation of which depends

upon his particular theological concern.

The investigation of Ephesians 5:21-33 begins with the fourth chapter. After considering the implications of the grammatical constructions as well as the theme of subjection to the authority of the head in the first seven verses, the conclusion is reached that the figure of marriage does not exist to this point. However, the cultic purity of a body may be indicated in verses 25-27, with the description of Jesus' self-giving love for the Church.

The implications of the concept of the body are pursued by Paul in verses 28-33, the subject of the fifth chapter. The unity that exists both in marriage and in Christ's relationship to the Church is finally the point of comparison, relieving marriage of the burden.

The discussion reaches completion with the conclusion that the figure of marriage does not exist in Ephesians 5:21-33. The passage, to be sure, is similar to other instances of marital imagery in the Bible, but the ultimate decision rests upon the predominance of the body of Christ concept which satisfies the interpretation of the imagery without identifying Christ and the Church with husband and wife.

CHAPTER II

THE FIGURE OF MARRIAGE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND EARLY JEWISH LITERATURE

This chapter will determine the nature of the marriage figure as it was available to anyone who was familiar with the Old Testament and its traditions, presumably the writers of the New Testament.[1]

The first appearance of the nuptial idea occurs in the Pentateuch.[2] Yahweh is the husband and Israel is the bride. God chooses Israel and binds her to himself in a covenant of protection and obedience. The resemblance of the Mosaic covenant to the form of the suzerainty treaty amplifies the role

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[1] It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the background and origin of the figure. That the idea of marriage imagery is not unique to the Old Testament is apparent from the nature of other Semitic religions. The conception of sacred marriage was well known in antiquity in the fertility religions; in Canaanite temples the sacred marriage was enacted through ritual prostitution. B. H. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 243. There is, however, a unique difference between the marriage idea as it appeared in the Semitic religions and what the Old Testament writers considered it to be. Sacred prostitution, the natural result of the idea in Semitic religions, was abhorred and condemned by the very prophets who most fully developed the marriage figure, as will be shown below. Neither was there any "sensually perceptible union with the deity," or "any actualisation of this relationship." Ethelbert Stauffer, "γαμέω, γάμος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffry Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), I, 653.

[2] Claude Chavasse, The Bride of Christ (London: The Religious Book Club, 1940), p. 23. See also Num. 25:1-3; Dt. 31:16.

of Israel as bride.[3] With unwavering trust she must remain obedient to her suzerain and avoid all relationships with other countries. Although the prophets later deepen and expand the implications of the marriage, it is apparent that they are "looking back to the Exodus as the decisive time when Yahweh married Israel."[4] In the Pentateuch it is the rupture of this relationship which is most often described in marital terms (Ex. 34:15; Lev. 17:7).

> in its earliest form the image of a marriage between God and His people is reflected especially in the expressions "to go a whoring" and "whoredom" as descriptive of the rupture of that relationship by acts of idolatry.[5]

Israel's apostasy is adultery as well as idolatry, perhaps because the nature of the idolatrous practices influenced the terminology used.[6]

Hosea is the first prophet to verbalize clearly the relationship of Yahweh and Israel by the symbol of marriage. In the first three chapters Hosea describes the nation's behavior toward Yahweh in terms of the painful experiences of his own married life, which he lived at the command of Yahweh (Jos. 1:2). He married Gomer, who was constantly unfaithful. He redeemed her from her lover, and he required her to live

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[3]G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick, et al. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), I, 718-720.

[4]I. A. Muirhead, "The Bride of Christ," Scottish Journal of Theology, V (June 1952), 176.

[5]Arthur J. Crosmer, "Marriage, A Type of God's Relationship to His People," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVII (May 1956), 371. See also Paul Sevier Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 52f.

[6]O. S. Rankin, Israel's Wisdom Literature (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1954), p. 261.

under restraint. This is used as a living allegory of Israel and Yahweh. "In her unfaithfulness to her husband, Gomer is a living demonstration of Israel's spiritual adultery."[7]

The marital imagery is an interpretation of God's covenant with his people.

> Just as Gomer played the harlot, so Israel had broken the covenant. The wife whom Yahweh had chosen and betrothed to himself had become a whore.[8]

The marriage conditions referred to are those of the covenant made with Israel at Sinai. The element of marriage was restricted to the relationship of Israel to Yahweh. For when Hosea brings the nuptial character of the covenant relationship into consciousness, along with it he particularly condemns the sexual immoralities of the cultus as idolatry and adultery.[9] Marital imagery was a reinterpretation of Israel's faith in a unique manner.

> Instead of explaining the divine marriage by referring to the cycles of nature, he spoke of a historical marriage made in the wilderness between God and a people. And the meaning of this marriage was disclosed to him, not by reflecting on the marriage of a god and a goddess, but by a deep understanding of his own relationship to Gomer.[10]

A variation in the figure, both in Hosea 1:2 and Isaiah 62:4, is the marriage of Yahweh to the land, אֶרֶץ.

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[7]Crosmer, p. 374.

[8]Anderson, p. 244.

[9]Chavasse, p. 28.

[10]Anderson, p. 243.

"It may be that, as in other Semitic religions, the original marriage connexion for the Jews was between God and His Land."[11] Smith is of the differing opinion that Hosea utilized the very fact that the pagan religions considered the land to be married to a god, and the adherents to that religion the children of the marriage. Such a physical conception was having a disastrous effect on the morals of the people; therefore, Hosea breaks the physical connection completely. "Yahweh's Bride is not the Land, but the People, and His marriage with her is conceived as a moral relation."[12] This would suggest that the figure is introduced by the prophets for polemical reasons. Since their preaching against this form of adultery was so strong, there would be little chance that the Yahweh-Israel marriage figure could be confused with that perverted one rampant in Canaanite religions. This seems to support the idea of Chavasse that the figure had not appeared distinctly before Hosea because the usual representation of the divine marriage involved features that were repulsive in the extreme to the mind of the nomadic element in Israel.[13] Hosea could use the figure of marriage without any danger of confusing it with neighboring ritual, since he was emphasizing the differences between Israel's allegiance to Yahweh and her adulterous

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[11]Muirhead, p. 176.

[12]George Adam Smith, The Book of the Twelve Prophets (Revised edition; New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), I, 255.

[13]Chavasse, p. 27.

tendencies toward the fertility cults.

While the figure is used chiefly to depict Israel's adultery, there is nevertheless present a note of future restoration.

> And in that day, says the Lord, you will call me, "My husband," and no longer will you call me, "My Baal." And I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy (Hos. 2:16,19).[14]

Jeremiah utilizes the marriage imagery in a fashion similar to that of Hosea.

> I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown (Jer. 2:2).

Joachim Jeremias concludes that the marriage must be for Jeremiah the covenant made at Sinai on the basis of the context of the passage, which is the exodus from Egypt.[15] Since the marriage Israel has become a prostitute (3:1-11). Here, as in Hosea, "the nation is a harlot who has betrayed her divine husband and faces divorce."[16] Within the imagery, however, lies the promise of renewal.

> Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they

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[14] All quotes from Scripture in English are taken from the Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952).

[15] Joachim Jeremias, "νύμφη, νυμφίος," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1942), IV, 1094.

[16] Crosmer, p. 376.

> broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. (Jer. 31:31,32)

Ezekiel 16 provides evidence that during the exile the theme of Yahweh as the husband of Israel is developed even further in the description of the rise and fall of Israel as a bride turned prostitute. The flexibility of the imagery becomes apparent, with the life of the wife being traced back to her birth. "Your father was an Amorite, and your mother a Hittite" (Ezek. 16:3b). But Yahweh took care of her until she grew up to be a beautiful woman, at which time he married her.

> Yea, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord God, and you became mine. (Ezek. 16:8b).

But her beauty caused her to play the harlot and commit adultery with other nations, which would be the cause for Yahweh to give her over to them for her own destruction. In chapter 23 the imagery occurs again, with the difference being that this time there are two unfaithful wives, Oholah, which is Samaria, and Oholibah, which is Jerusalem (Ezek. 23:4). Again, their fate is destruction. "But as in Hosea, so in Ezekiel, the outraged anger of God will at last relent, and the unfaithful Wife will return in shame and be forgiven."[17]

There is a logical development of the figure of marriage in Isaiah (Is. 49:18; 54:4-7; 61:10; 62:4-5). The author sees the restoration of the remnant more strongly; therefore, this element is more predominant in his nuptial idea.

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[17]Chavasse, p. 33.

> This promise [of the restoration of the remnant] is pictured most beautifully as a marriage relationship contracted with one who was forsaken.[18]

Some see in Isaiah's imagery a profound change in its nature. Previous to this the characteristics of the bride are her frailty and unfaithfulness, but "now for the first time she is idealized, and conceived as the epitome of loving perfection."[19]

Jeremias seems to have a more precise analysis of the figure in this instance. He sees a change in the figure to be sure, but instead of the emphasis being upon the perfection of the bride, he sees predominant the joy of the bridegroom, that is, the joy of God.[20] Both alternatives are based upon Isaiah 62:5b: "And as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."

The restoration is accomplished by the husband, Yahweh. He calls and gathers to himself the forsaken wife, a widow (Is. 54:4-7).

Four characteristics of the figure of marriage as it appears in the prophets have become apparent. First, the figure demands a flexibility of interpretation. While in every instance the husband is Yahweh, the identity of the wife varies. She occasionally is the land but more often is the nation. There may be two wives involved. Despite

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[18]Crosmer, p. 375.

[19]Chavasse, p. 34.

[20]Jeremias, p. 1094.

this flexibility of description, the wife ultimately is the people whom Yahweh had married by entering into a covenant relationship with them.

Second, the prophets use the figure in a negative sense, most often describing the marriage which Israel has adulterated. "It is the denial of the relationship which is stressed."[21] With the exception of Isaiah, every time the figure of marriage is mentioned, it is in the context of a broken marriage contract, broken by the wife. In Isaiah, the imagery portrays a deserted and mourning wife who will be restored.

Third, the prophets use the theme of the marriage restored. The first marriage was the Sinai covenant, now broken (Jer. 31:31,32).

> It is a Marriage Restored, however. Israel is only the Bride in the Exodus, after that she is the re-accepted Spouse. The verses of Isaiah 62 . . . , which might at first sight seem to support the alternative, do not do so more closely regarded. The joy of the Marriage Restored is to be as great as if it were a Bridegroom rejoicing over his first love.[22]

Fourth, marriage is, except for Hosea's, always a mere figure to illuminate the relationship between Yahweh and Israel. Never does the Yahweh-Israel relation serve as the basis for the ethic in the human institution of marriage.

Fifth, none of these passages, except in a general way, is Messianic. Yahweh speaks as the husband. The futuristic fulfillment in Isaiah may allow for general Messianic

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[21]Muirhead, pp. 176, 177.

[22]Ibid., p. 177.

implications, but the husband most often is clearly Yahweh.

Finally, the woman does nothing to promote the success of the marriage. Her behavior is adulterous. She is the one who breaks the covenant. The husband finally pronounces the ultimate punishment, but the guilt lies with the wife. The husband is totally responsible for the success of the marriage and the restoration of the relationship. Future happiness is the result of his effort.

The previous discussion makes specific reference to marriage as a symbol of Yahweh's covenant relationship to Israel. This was established by the witness of the text itself. Despite varying shades of interpretation, there was ultimately no question whatever that the relationship of Yahweh to his people was described in marital terms.

The following passages differ from the preceding in that there is some question as to the interpretation of the marital imagery they contain. Particular attention will be paid to the interpreters of the period during which Ephesians was written.

Psalm 45 may be another step in the development of the bridal imagery. The theme of the victorious king throughout the Psalm, the presence of the queen and the desire of the beautiful princess to please him (vv. 9-15) combine to include a feminine counterpart within a Messianic motif. Chavasse feels that the Psalm is a strong link in the gradual transference of the role of Bridegroom from Yahweh to the

Messiah.[23] Briggs has a somewhat different opinion.

> Messianic significance was given to the Psalm because of verses 7-8a, which, when applied to the king, ascribes to him godlike qualities, such as the Messiah alone was supposed to possess. But this gloss was later than the Psalm, and its Messianic interpretation later still.[24]

The Psalm speaks about a wedding, but the identity of the bridegroom is not clear. If one chooses to see the Messiah as the bridegroom, he cannot rule out the possibility that a Hebrew king is also meant, probably Jehu.[25] The relevance of the problem to this discussion, however, is that we have no clear evidence that the Psalm was interpreted Messianically by the time of Paul.

The Song of Solomon has been allegorized as the relationship of Yahweh to his people. Jeremias attributes its appearance in the canon to the fact that it was interpreted allegorically already in the first century.[26]

> Thus it now seems likely that by the time it had reached its present form Canticles was already an allegory of the love of Yahweh for His People.[27]

The allegorical interpretation, however, is on the decline, and the warning of Gottwald is pertinent.

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[23]Chavasse, p. 36.

[24]Charles Augustus Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), XV, pt. 1, 384.

[25]Ibid., p. 383.

[26]Jeremias, p. 1095.

[27]Chavasse, p. 44.

> That the affinities of man and woman often serve to mirror the relation between man and God does not mean that every poet who touches the subject intends to use symbolism.[28]

In Proverbs 1-9 we find evidence that the personification of the figure of wisdom as a woman is also a portrayal of lady wisdom as a consort or daughter of Yahweh. "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work," (Prov. 8:22) would make wisdom appear as Yahweh's daughter, but the words of verse 30 in the same chapter describe her as a consort. "Then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always." That wisdom is personified as a female is much more clear than the nuptial imagery between her and Yahweh.[29] This same imagery depicting wisdom as a woman but not as Yahweh's wife appears later in the Wisdom of Sirach 14:23. "Blessed is he that peereth into her window, and hearkeneth at her doors. . . ."

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[28]N. K. Gottwald, "Song of Songs," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick, et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, 423.

[29]The appearance of wisdom as a woman and consort of Yahweh receives two interpretations. It is the opinion of Stauffer, p. 654, that Hellenistic Judaism in this way damps the erotic impulse of the Mysteries in much the same way as the prophets removed the danger of the fertility cults by utilizing the imagery in their own theology. This would be a conscious removal of the danger by introducing the figure into Israel's theology and filling it with a proper interpretation. Rankin, p. 252, feels that its appearance was not quite so legitimate, but that it owes its origin to Iranian thought upon the Amesha Spentas, in particular to the conception of Asha. It is nothing more or less than the influence of Persian religious belief that was the prototype for the figure of wisdom as it appears in Proverbs 1-9.

Any further discussion of the wisdom figure would appear to be unnecessary on the basis that the marital imagery is extremely vague.

> But this attempt to revive for Yahweh a female Consort was, as regards the Nuptial Idea, stillborn. In Jewish tradition the Bride of Yahweh was to remain His Chosen People.[30]

When wisdom appears in the New Testament, it is separate from the figure of marriage.[31]

The rabbis extolled the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai as the marriage of Yahweh and Israel. The Torah is the marriage contract, Moses is the friend of the bridegroom, and Yahweh comes to Israel as a bridegroom to his bride.

> Pirque R El 41: Mose ging (am Tage der Gesetzgebung) hinaus ins Lager der Israeliten u. weckte sie aus ihren Schlaf: Steht auf aus eurem Schlaf; schon kommt der Bräutigam (Gott) u. verlangt nach der Braut (Israel), um sie in das Brautgemach einzuführen, u. wartet auf sie, um ihnen die Tora zu geben. Es kam der Brautführer (Mose), u. führte die Braut heraus, wie ein Mensch, der des Brautführeramts bei einem andern wartet.[32]

> M^{e}kh Ex 19,17(72b): R. Jose (um150) hat gesagt: "Jahve vom Sinai kam" Dt 33,2, um Israel zu empfangen, wie ein Brautigam, der der Braut entgegengeht.[33]

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[30]Chavasse, pp. 47, 48.

[31]There is a differing opinion which attempts to equate σοφία and ἐκκλησία on the basis of equating the femininity of both on the basis of the wisdom literature and Ephesians 5. Heinrich Schlier, Christus und die Kirche im Epheserbrief (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1930), pp. 60-75.

[32]Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1956), I, 970. This reference is from Midraschim and probably is later than the first century A.D.

[33]Ibid., p. 969.

> But the final renewal of the covenant between God and the people, intimated by the prophets, was expected by the rabbis in the days of the Messiah.[34]

They considered the present to be a period of engagement, with the day of the Messiah to be the wedding feast.[35] Jeremias admits this evidence into the argument and concludes that there is no evidence in late Jewish literature that the bridegroom allegory was applied to the Messiah. The time of the Messiah will be a festal period, but the Messiah does not replace Yahweh as the bridegroom.[36] It is impossible to reach an unqualified decision. The Messianic period is considered a wedding feast; conversely, no bride is mentioned in connection with the Messianic wedding feast. Jeremias demands a definite passage stating that the Messiah is the bridegroom of the people, and none can be found.

One more point may now be added to the six above.[37] We have, at most, allusions to the inclusion of the Messiah in the marital imagery.

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[34] Stauffer, p. 654.

[35] Strack and Billerbeck, I, 517.

[36] Jeremias, p. 1095.

[37] <u>Supra</u>, pp. 11-13.

CHAPTER III

NEW TESTAMENT PARALLELS TO THE FIGURE OF MARRIAGE

The Gospels

The figure of marriage occurs six times in the synoptics and once in the Gospel of John.[1] Three of the synoptic passages are parallel. Because the three differing instances occur in Matthew, the order of appearance in that book will be followed. The first passage is Matthew 9:15 (Mk. 2:19,20; Lk. 5:34,35).

> And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests [οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος] mourn as long as the bridegroom [ὁ νυμφίος] is with them?"

The second is Matthew 22:1-10, where Jesus tells the parable concerning the marriage feast, οἱ γάμοι, and the guest without the wedding garment.[2] The third is the parable of

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[1]The discussion will be limited to those passages which contain marital imagery. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider the possibility of the nuptial idea in such passages as the accounts of the cleansing of the temple, the last supper, and the crucifixion. For a discussion of this see Claude Chavasse, The Bride of Christ (London: The Religious Book Club, 1940), pp. 51, 63, 64. See also E. L. Mascall, Christ, the Christian, and the Church (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946), pp. 125f.

[2]A probable parallel to this account is Luke 14:16-24. However, instead of it being a wedding-feast it is merely a δεῖπνον μέγα. See H. A. A. Kennedy, "The New Testament Metaphor of the Messianic Bridal," The Expositor, Series 8, XI (1916), p. 97. He discusses the possibility that on the basis of Rabbinic literature the same Aramaic word was used for "feast" and "wedding-feast." He concludes that "in any case the imagery of the parable indicates that by the time

the five wise and five foolish virgins (Mt. 25:1-13), with a possible parallel in Luke 12:36.

None of these passages uses the complete figure of marriage. In the Matthew 9:15 passage Jesus refers to himself as the bridegroom, but the bride is not mentioned or identified. The disciples are referred to as the wedding guests. The presence of the figure of marriage in the parable of the wedding feast, Matthew 22:1-10, is not accepted by those who feel that the passage is more concerned with the Messianic feast than with nuptial imagery.[3] Muirhead feels that the reference is probably to the Messianic feast, but that Jesus' identification of himself with the Bridegroom transforms the Messianic banquet into a Messianic wedding feast.[4] The festal element as well as the marital language can both be present to complement rather than to disqualify the other. Once again there is no mention of a bride.

The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins contains, according to Stauffer, Jesus' implication that he is the bridegroom.[5] As in the two previous references, the

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the Gospel of Matthew was compiled the consummation of the Kingdom of God was portrayed as a wedding-feast."

[3]Joachim Jeremias, "νύμφη, νυμφίος," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1942), IV, 1097. Hereafter this wordbook will be referred to as TW.

[4]I. A. Muirhead, "The Bride of Christ," Scottish Journal of Theology, V (June 1952), 182.

[5]Ethelbert Stauffer, "γαμέω, γάμος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated and edited by Geoffry Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), I, 654.

bride has no role in the imagery. Any attempt to identify her is complicated by the fact that the ten virgins are without doubt the Church. "There is no room for the bride in the story because her place has been taken by the bridesmaids."[6] Despite this difficulty, Manson nevertheless considers Christ as the bridegroom to be a parallel to the Old Testament concept of God as the husband of Israel. Jeremias, however, in his interpretation of the parable, considers it to be a warning to be aware of the impending suddenness of the end. On this basis he rules out any possibility that Christ is the heavenly bridegroom.[7] I have found no other scholar who will agree that Jesus cannot be the bridegroom. The tension that may exist between Matthew 25:1-13 and the other passages is that in Matthew 25:1-13 the arrival of the bridegroom is in the future, while elsewhere the wedding festivity falls within the lifetime of Jesus.[8] It may be that the future arrival of the bridegroom is the balancing of the ethical and eschatological elements in Jesus' preaching.[9] Since Jesus uses the imagery in these two ways, a certain amount of freedom of

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[6]T. W. Manson, The Sayings of Jesus (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1949), p. 243. Manson also offers the conjecture on pp. 244f. that the bride is the Jewish church and that the ten maids are the Gentile converts.

[7]Jeremias, p. 1097

[8]Stauffer, p. 655.

[9]Kennedy, p. 106.

movement must be allowed.

In John 3:29 John the Baptist describes himself as the friend of the bridegroom.[10]

> He who has the bride [τὴν νύμφην] is the bridegroom [νυμφίος]; the friend of the bridegroom [ὁ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου], who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full.

There are parallels here to ὁ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου in the rabbinic literature, where Moses is placed in this role,[11] and in II Corinthians 11:2, where Paul considers himself to have presented the church of Corinth as a bride to Christ.[12] John's concern here is that he is not the bridegroom, who is Christ, but the friend of the bridegroom, whose duty it was to escort the bride and the bridegroom to the marital chamber and stand guard there.[13] Here the bride is mentioned for the first time in the Gospels, although her identity is not clear. Stauffer sees the community implied in the role of the bride.[14] Jeremias does not allow for the presence of an analogy but

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[10]The Gospel of John, as well as the synoptic Gospels, is included in this discussion with the realization that none of these was written at the time of the writing of Ephesians. That the imagery appears in all four Gospels may indicate the connection of the imagery with Jesus was well known, however. Also, every survey of the imagery which I investigated followed this pattern.

[11]Supra, p. 16.

[12]Infra, p. 27.

[13]Jeremias, p. 1094.

[14]Stauffer, p. 655.

considers it to be merely an event from daily life used here as a picture of selfless joy.[15] Others disagree. "St. John means that his baptism is only preparatory, but that Christ's is the opening of the Nuptial Ceremonies themselves."[16] A more complete perspective is that of C. K. Barrett, who includes also the purpose of the verse in his interpretation.[17] While he in part agrees with Jeremias that it is probably a parable from daily life, he contends that John could not have been unaware that occasionally in the Old Testament Israel is the bride of God. However, Barrett restricts the implications to the relationship of Jesus and John. It is John's joy which is fulfilled, πεπλήρωται , by the voice of the bridegroom, and this joy is the predominant thought.

To summarize, when the figure of marriage appears in the Gospels, the emphasis is upon ὁ γάμος , the wedding, the feast, and the joy that accompanies it. Jesus, as Messiah, is the bridegroom; the joy expressed is the joy of the Messianic marriage feast.[18] Thus, Jesus the Bridegroom, is the fulfillment of the Jewish and rabbinic expectations of the time of

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[15]Jeremias, p. 1094.

[16]Chavasse, p. 50.

[17]C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John (London: SPCK, 1962), pp. 185f.

[18]Stig Hanson, The Unity of the Church in the New Testament (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri Ab, 1946), p. 139.

the Messiah.[19]

> Jesus moves wholly within the circle of ideas of His contemporaries when he expresses the meaning and glory of the Messianic period in the images of the wedding and wedding feast.[20]

A second emphasis of the marital imagery in the Gospels can be found in the guests at the feast, the disciples. In fact, Jeremias considers the sole contribution of the appearance of the image in the Gospels to be the fact that his disciples were already wedding-guests and living in the days of the wedding feast. The earthly ministry of Jesus is effective in the present.[21]

The marital imagery in the Gospels differs from that in the prophets where

> God's relation to Israel is invariably described as that of a husband who has long since taken her to wife, and in spite of her grievous lapses from fidelity, has not utterly repudiated her.[22]

In the Gospels there is no previous marriage to be restored. The marriage is a completely new one.

Finally, the bride never assumes identity, nor does her identity assume importance in the metaphor as it is used in the Gospels. By implication she is the community in John 3:29,

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[19] Julius H. Greenstone, "Marriage--In Rabbinical Literature," The Jewish Encyclopedia, edited by Isidore Singer, et al. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1912), VIII, 339.

[20] Stauffer, p. 654.

[21] Jeremias, p. 1098.

[22] Kennedy, p. 97.

although the analogy is never carried that far in the text.[23]

The Pauline Corpus Except Ephesians

The figure of marriage appears three times in the Pauline corpus outside of the book of Ephesians (I Cor. 6: 12-20; II Cor. 11:1-3; Rom. 7:1-6).[24]

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[23] A question that arises with the study of the figure of marriage in the Gospels is whether or not Jesus used the marital imagery deliberately. Jeremias thinks not (pp. 1095ff.), but Stauffer (p. 654), Muirhead (p. 183), and Kennedy (p. 105) are of the opinion that Jesus consciously used this terminology to gather the Old Testament and Jewish materials around himself and to identify with the Messiah-Bridegroom concept. Our purpose would be accomplished even if the compromise statement were accepted. "It appears not so much as a doctrine deliberately imparted, but in occasional references, which must have been understood by some at least of the early hearers and readers." Ernest Best, One Body in Christ (London: SPCK, 1955), pp. 169f.

[24] Gal. 4:22-31 has been included in other discussions of the figure of marriage. See Best, pp. 170f.; Chavasse, p. 67; Lucien Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, translated by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), pp. 349f. Best considers the point of comparison to be Abraham and Jesus as husband. Chavasse feels that it is a trait of Paul's early theology to keep the church separate from individuals by referring to her as a mother. Cerfaux makes the connection with the figure of marriage by regarding the mother as later becoming the bride of Christ, a development in Paul's theology. The mother-child allegory certainly has precedence over any suggestion of marital imagery. The church is represented by a heavenly Jerusalem and a woman whose motherhood is emphasized. The Old Testament context of this passage indicates that the comparison made is between the sons, Isaac and Ishmael. Paul's summary statement in v. 31, οὐκ ἐσμὲν παιδίσκης τέκνα ἀλλὰ τῆς ἐλευθέρας, shows little concern for a figure of marriage. On the Jewish hermeneutical principle which is probably involved, see J. W. Doeve, Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts (Assen, Netherlands: Koninklijke Van Gorcum & Co. N. V., 1954), pp. 109f. He offers an explanation for the comparison of terms which are made, but the marital imagery does not seem to concern him.

The marital imagery of Romans 7:1-4 is rather complicated. Sanday and Headlam consider verses 2-3 to be an example from life of the binding nature of the Law. Verse 4 is the beginning of an allegory.

> We may apply this in an allegory, in which the wife is the Christian's "self" or "ego"; the first husband, his old unregenerate state, burdened with all the penalties attaching to it.
>
> You then . . . had this old state killed in you. . . . And this death of your old self left you free to enter upon a new marriage with the same Christ. . . . Our new marriage must be fruitful, as our old marriage was.[25]

Verse 4, therefore, is the only verse which contains the figure of marriage, and the marriage consists of the union of the believers with Christ, after the death of the first husband, the old nature, has released them from the binding nature of the Law.[26]

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[25] William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans in The International Critical Commentary (Fifth edition; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), p. 171. See pp. 172-174, especially p. 174, for substantiation that the figure of marriage exists in these verses. The παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος is the first husband and Christ is the new husband to whom the believer is joined in resurrection. A dissenting opinion is voiced by Anders Nygren, Commentary on Romans, translated by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), pp. 270-273. While he admits that the verbiage "that you may belong to another" is influenced by what was said about the woman who was free to give herself to another, he is strong in his rejection of the presence of allegorical language.

[26] Muirhead, p. 180, considers the Law to be the first husband. This would introduce the verb κυριεύει of verse 1 as a pertinent element in marriage, the lordship of the husband. However, we must reject this temptation in light of the fact that it is the binding nature of the Law in marriage which is the reason for its appearance in these verses. The first husband is not the Law but the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος, which of course includes subjection to the Law.

The second reference is I Corinthians 6:12-20. Paul here contrasts one's relationship to Christ with his relationship to a prostitute. The one who unites himself with a prostitute becomes ἕν σῶμα with her, but he who unites himself with Christ becomes ἕν πνεῦμα with him. The extreme view here would be to take the union of the individual with Christ as a spiritually consummated marriage.[27] The more moderate view is the one which considers the figure of marriage to be in the background with the emphasis upon the different nature of these two relationships, the difference between one flesh and one spirit.[28] This passage will become significant in the later discussion. It quotes Genesis 2:24; κολλάομαι is used to describe both union with Christ and union with a prostitute; σῶμα appears in the discussion, as well as τὰ μελή τοῦ Χριστοῦ. The σῶμα in the marriage act becomes the property of the other participant, as Schweizer notes.[29]

II Cor. 11:2 is the first passage where Christ is clearly identified with the bridegroom, and the church, here the Corinthian church, is the bride.[30]

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[27] Chavasse, p. 83. See also Cerfaux, p. 280.

[28] Best, p. 170.

[29] Eduard Schweizer and Friedrich Baumgärtel, "σῶμα, σωματικός, σύσσωμος," TW, VII, 1060. For a more complete discussion of the significance of σῶμα in marital language see below, pp. 56-57.

[30] Jeremias, p. 1097. See also Hanson, p. 139. That the bride is a body of believers indicates close relation to Eph. 5:21-33.

> I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband.

Paul becomes the one to present the bride to the bridegroom, replacing Moses in the rabbinic tradition.[31] The use of παραστήσαι, together with the identity of the bride, makes this passage a significant parallel to Ephesians 5:21-33.[32]

Revelation[33]

The figure of marriage is used particularly in chapter 19:7-8 and chapter 21:2-9. Minear considers Revelation 21: 2-4 to be the most highly developed vision of the church as the Messiah's bride in the New Testament.[34] The bride is the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, adorned for her husband. There are certain characteristics of the image here that are of interest. In addition to the eschatological setting, the imagery is also closely parallel to the figure of the holy city, the new Jerusalem, a concept that tends to displace the analogy of marital relation.[35] There are two women contrasted, a

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[31] Supra, p. 16.

[32] The following verse (3) includes Eve in the analogy and compares the Corinthian church to her. Whether or not the church is the second Eve is beyond the scope of this paper. The discussion on pp. 61-62 implies a negative conclusion.

[33] The value of introducing the figure of marriage in Revelation is in demonstrating that it was used by an author later than Ephesians to describe the union between God's faithful and Christ, the Lamb.

[34] Paul Sevier Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 55.

[35] Ibid.

hopelessly fallen harlot (17:1-6), and a pure and lovely bride. Some see the basis for this in the Old Testament prophets, but Galatians 4:22-31 also speaks about two women and contains the heavenly city metaphor.[36] The festal nature of the wedding and the identification of the bride as God's faithful provide Crosmer with an opportunity to reconcile the figure of marriage in the Gospels where the community is identified with the wedding guests and in its Pauline use where the church is identified with the bride.

> As the bride represents the faithful people of God taken as a whole, so they which are called to the marriage supper represent the faithful followers of Christ considered individually.[37]

Regarding the use of the marital imagery in the New Testament, only one general summary statement can be made. In every passage the bridegroom or husband can be interpreted as Christ. Beyond that it varies. The wedding can be in the future or in the present. In the Gospels the emphasis is on the arrival of the bridegroom and the festal nature of the wedding. Revelation is similar to this, but it also includes the bride in the imagery. In the Pauline corpus, which shall be of more interest to us, the wedding feast is not mentioned, and the nature of the relationship between husband and wife, Christ and believers, is emphasized. The marriage must be a

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[36] Jeremias, p. 1098, and Chavasse, p. 95.

[37] Arthur J. Crosmer, "Marriage, A Type of God's Relationship to His People," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVII (May 1956), p. 382.

monogamous one, insofar as there can be only one husband, Christ. In each of the three passages Paul is concerned about perils endangering that union with Christ. That this unity be established and preserved is all-important. The bride may be an individual or a local congregation, whichever the context dictates, but the concern for uncontested unity remains consistent.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGURE OF MARRIAGE IN EPHESIANS 5:21-27[1]

Instruction to Wives

The purpose of the entire passage is ethical. The passage that follows (6:1-9) continues the Haustafel, with directions for children, fathers, slaves and masters. This indicates that Paul was thinking primarily of the proper relationship between husband and wife when he wrote verses 22-33. This pattern is not unique here. There is a striking parallelism to the patterns of Colossians 3:8-4:12; I Peter 1:1-4:11 and James 1:1-4:10.[2] Ephesians 5:22-6:9

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[1]These verses are so closely related to the preceding context that there is some difficulty in deciding whether to include v. 21 in this passage or not. The period at the end of v. 21 indicates a break, and the participle ὑποτασσόμενοι is the last in a series of five that begin in v. 19, all of which are imperatives. Heinrich Greeven, "Zu den Aussagen des Neuen Testaments über die Ehe," Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik, I (May 1957), 121. However, the lack of a verb in v. 22 makes it clear that the ὑποτασσόμενοι is understood. The period at the end of v. 21 may not have been in the ancient manuscripts. There is some evidence for the interpolation of either of two forms of the verb in v. 22, which may be the result of the necessity of a verb when it was read aloud and separated from the preceding context. J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Second edition; London: James Clarke and Company Ltd., 1904), p. 204. Our discussion of the figure of marriage will not be affected in any way by the decision regarding either the interpolation or the problem of including v. 21. We have chosen to include v. 21 because it introduces the thought of subjection.

[2]Archibald M. Hunter, Paul and His Predecessors (Revised edition; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 129. Davies also includes I Pet. 4:12-5:14; Heb. 12:1f. and Rom. 12:1f. W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK,

is clearly a table of duties; therefore, we cannot accept the proposal that the subject of marriage was introduced to provide "a convenient vehicle for the exposition of this new aspect of his doctrine of the Church."[3] If the figure of marriage will appear, it will do so by way of the prior thought given to the relationship between husband and wife.[4] This would indeed be unique, for the figure of marriage nowhere else in Scripture except Hosea appears in correlation to the human institution of marriage.

The first suggestion of the figure of marriage arises in verse 22, where wives are exhorted to be subject unto their husbands ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ. The interpretation of the particle ὡς

1962), 122-128. Hunter's reason for the similarity is that the writers were following a more or less accepted form of catechesis. Selwyn includes passages in I Tim. and Titus. Edward Gordon Selwyn, The First Epistle of St. Peter (Second edition; London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1952), pp. 422-426.

[3]Francis W. Beare, The Epistle to the Ephesians in The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick et al. (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), X, 716. See also G. G. Findlay, The Epistle to the Ephesians in The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), XL, 366.

[4]This is not to say that the relationship of Christ and the Church to each other is any less important. Schlier agrees that this is a table of duties, yet makes the point: "Ist das Thema unseres Abschnittes das rechte Verhalten der Eheleute zueinander, so können wir aus der Begründung, die dieses Verhalten in ihm erfährt, noch einige Gesichtspunkte zu Verständnis Christi und der Kirche gewinnen und damit die bisher gewonnenen Erkenntnisse über beide nach einer bestimmten Seite hin ergänzen." Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Epheser (Fourth edition; Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), p. 278.

offers two possibilities. The first is to consider it as establishing an identity in the eyes of the wife between Christ and the husband.

> The next sentence, and the whole statement of the relation between husband and wife in the following verse in terms of the relation between Christ and the Church, suggest that the point of the ὡς is that the wife is to regard the obedience she has to render to her husband as an obedience rendered to Christ, the Christian husband being head of the wife and representing to her Christ the Head of the whole Christian Church.[5]

While both men base their conclusions on the argument of context, the point is that they find ὡς capable of expressing more than comparison. Into this fits very well the interpretation that the husband represents or symbolizes Christ to the wife.

> Die Ehefrauen sollen sich ihren Männern unterordnen, weil sie zu ihnen in dem Verhältnis stehen, in dem die Kirche zu Christus steht, und weil also ihre Männer für sie in der Ehe den Herrn präsentieren, so wie sie für ihren Mann die Kirche darstellen.[6]

The grammatical usage of ὡς reveals that a comparison exists only in a much more qualified sense. Identity is more likely to exist between words connected by ὡς when they are in the

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[5]S. D. F. Salmond, "The Epistle to the Ephesians," The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1910), III, 366. The same opinion is expressed by Meyer. Heinrich Wilhelm August Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Ephesians in Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the fourth edition of the German by Maurice J. Evans, revised and edited by William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), VII, 509.

[6]Schlier, p. 253.

double accusative and follow verbs of opinion.[7] The example given both by Blass-Debrunner and Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich (Col. 3:23), has no corresponding object at all.[8] ὅ ἐὰν ποιῆτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ. . . . On the basis of this we may assume that ὡς at this point indicates a comparison but only in the sense that the same comparison exists when the slave is exhorted to render obedience to his master ὡς τῷ Χριστῷ (Eph. 6:5).

Τῷ κυρίῳ may bring the similarity of Christ to the husband into focus. Why should ὁ κύριος appear rather than the normally used ὁ Χριστός? The context of subjection to authority makes it plain that both the husband and Christ are in the position of authority. The common denominator of the comparison of the husband to Christ is the possession of lordship, not a marriage contract.

In verse 23 the man is κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικός as Christ is κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας. If authority is the common possession of Christ and the husband in the previous verse, κεφαλὴ indicates the point of comparison in this verse, as the investigation of the figure of marriage continues. At first glance

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[7] F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and revised from the 9th-10th German edition by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 86f., 215. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Bl-D.

[8] Bl-D, p. 219. Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted from the fourth revised and augmented edition by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 906. Hereafter this work will be referred to as A-G.

there seem to be two possible definitions: the metaphorical, "Christ the κεφαλή of the ἐκκλησία thought of as a σῶμα," as well as the figurative, which denotes superior rank.[9] Both occurrences of the word in verse 23 are given the latter definition by Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich. There is a strong argument in favor of this interpretation. It fits into the context of the preceding verse and into the larger context of the table of duties. A similar instance of this usage is I Corinthians 11:3.

One encounters greater difficulty in trying to determine whether the figurative sense alone is meant by Paul.

> At no point is the author [who speaks of Christ as head] drawing his analogies from the visual image of a human head connected by the neck to a human torso.[10]

Nevertheless, one must reckon with the appearance of σῶμα in the very next phrase, as well as its prominence in the later verses 28-32. Σῶμα does not appear in the context of I Corinthians 11:3, which makes the usage of κεφαλή in that passage less than identical to its usage here. Christ as head of the body appears also in Ephesians 1:22. In Ephesians 4:15f. Christ is the head into whom the body grows in every way.

> The word with which κεφαλή must be taken is σῶμα. The head and the body are complementary terms, and every time the headship of Christ is mentioned in

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[9] A-G, p. 431.

[10] Paul Sevier Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 207. See also Nicoll, p. 366.

> Ephesians and Colossians it is in the closest conjunction with His body, the Church. . . .[11]

κεφαλή used figuratively in the context of σωμα expands rather than limits the implications of headship.

> Mit diesem Gedanken verbindet sich aber in der Vorstellung von Christus als dem Haupt der Gemeinde in den Kolosser- und Epheserbriefen derjenige der Einheit des Leibes mit und Abhängigkeit von dem Haupte, wobei dieses also der Lebensquell des Leibes betrachtet wird; es ist vor allem dieser Gedanke, der in der Bezeichnung Christi als Haupt des Leibes (Kol 1,18; vgl. 2,19; Eph 4,15f.) und überhaupt an allen Stellen, wo Christus also das Haupt zur Gemeinde als seinem Leibe in ausdrückliche Beziehung gesetzt wird (Eph. 1,22f.; 5,23), zum Ausdruck kommt.[12]

> Headship, in the context, denotes primarily controlling authority and the right to obedience; but the control is exercised and the obedience rendered not in any external fashion, but within a living organism where the two parts are complementary each to the other.[13]

Thus headship and authority are emphasized by the unity with and dependent nature of that which is ruled, the body. This theme of unity and completeness is also supported by the fact that ἡ ἐκκλησία over which Christ rules is not a partial concept but the totality of believers. Whenever ἡ ἐκκλησία occurs in

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[11] John A. T. Robinson, The Body (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 66.

[12] Ernst Percy, Der Leib Christi (Lund: C. C. K. Gleerup, 1942), p. 8.

[13] Beare, p. 720. Also Lucien Cerfaux, The Church in the Theology of St. Paul, translated from the French by Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), p. 333. Also Ernest Findlay Scott, The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians in The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, edited by James Moffatt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), pp. 237f.

Ephesians it has reference to the Church universal.[14]

However, the unity of Christ and the ἐκκλησία is only implied and does not carry the burden of Paul's argument at this point. There is no reference to the wife as the body of the husband, whereas both Christ and the husband are ἡ κεφαλή. Σῶμα appears only in a phrase where the emphasis is strictly upon the αὐτός. The conclusion is that when Paul introduces κεφαλή into this passage he refers explicitly to the authority common both to Christ and the husband and implicitly to the unity of ruler and ruled. Christ is head, but not husband.[15]

The last phrase of verse 23, αὐτὸς σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος, raises the possibility that the comparison between Christ and the husband is temporarily disrupted. Since a basis for comparison already has been established, one would normally

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[14]Stig Hanson, The Unity of the Church in the New Testament (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri Ab, 1946), p. 127. Also Cerfaux, p. 296.

[15]Any further discussion of κεφαλή is beyond the scope of this paper. For a more complete discussion of the difference in meaning of the word as it appears in Paul's earlier epistles with its meaning as it is used in Ephesians and Colossians, see Hanson, pp. 113-118; Percy, pp. 3-8; Ernest Best, One Body in Christ (London: SPCK, 1955), p. 113; J. A. T. Robinson, pp. 65-67. The basic difference is that in I Cor. the head is one organ among many; in Ephesians it is Christ, the superior authority. The additional implication, namely, that κεφαλή is the ground for existence of the term that follows it, is proposed by Schlier, p. 254; Best, p. 172; S. F. B. Bedale, "The Theology of the Church," Studies in Ephesians, edited by F. L. Cross (London: A. R. Mowbray and Company Ltd., 1956), p. 72.

expect the comparison to continue unless there is a clear indication of a break. One aspect of σωτήρ can be made to fit the role of husband. "As Christ is the deliverer and defender of the Church which is His body, so (the implication seems to be) the husband is the protector of his wife. . . ."[16]

The reasons given for restricting σωτήρ to Christ are threefold. If σωτήρ were to be applied to the husband as well as to Christ, it would be the only occurrence where it included man. Everywhere else in the New Testament it is used of God or Jesus.[17] The weakness in this argument is that σωτήρ appears only one other time in Paul outside of the Pastoral Epistles, Philippians 3:20. As a result some turn for meaning to extra-Biblical sources.

> It became a regular title of the Roman emperors, whose rule brought to the Mediterranean world peace, order and prosperity. As Christ gives to his Church protection and the provision of her spiritual needs, so the husband must protect and provide for his wife.[18]

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[16] Frederick Fyvie Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., 1961), p. 114. This position is also assumed by Handley C. G. Moule, Ephesian Studies (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), p. 290; also Scott, p. 238. Cerfaux, p. 336, stands alone when he takes the extreme position that "Paul is trying to bring in very gently the idea that wives are saved through the intermediarity of the husbands, for their subjection to them determines their position in the Church."

[17] A-G, p. 808.

[18] John A. Allan, The Epistle to the Ephesians in Torch Bible Commentaries, edited by J. Marsh, David M. Paton, and Alan Richardson (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959), p. 129.

Despite the probable derivation of the word, if it refers to Christ, the function of Christ as σωτήρ is not balanced by a corresponding function in the role of husband, as was shown to be the case with κεφαλή.[19]

Secondly, the αὐτός applies only to its immediate antecedent, Χριστός. Paul stated clearly that Christ is head and that the husband is head. To imply that the husband is σωτήρ requires a method not used in the previous comparison. It is improbable that the singular αὐτός would refer both to Χριστός and to ἀνήρ.[20]

Thirdly, the ἀλλά with which verse 24 begins, if interpreted in its adversative sense, would indicate that the preceding phrase was not part of the comparison. The ἀλλά would introduce a parenthetical expression which would explain that despite the comparison between Christ and the husband, there still exists a difference between what Christ does as head and what the husband can do as head. Ἀλλά then indicates a return to the comparison.[21] Robinson opposes the adversative

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[19] Beare, p. 721. Also Werner Foerster and Georg Fohrer, "σωτήρ," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1964), VII, 1016. Hereafter this work will be cited by TW, with all references to Vol. I taken from the English translation of Geoffry Bromiley.

[20] Salmond, p. 366. Also T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), XXXVI, 166.

[21] Martin Dibelius, An die Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon in Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Günther Bornkamm (Third edition revised by Heinrich Greeven; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953), p. 93. Also Meyer, p. 511; Salmond, p. 366f.

sense of ἀλλά and prefers to see the comparison continue through the phrase.

> In the highest sense this function is fulfilled by Christ for the Church: in a lower sense it is fulfilled by the husband for the wife.[22]

The above argument, as well as the unqualified nature of the point of comparison up to this phrase, indicates that this phrase cannot be considered a common ground in which both the husband and Christ participate respectively in their actions toward the wife and the ἐκκλησία. In fact, because Paul does call both Christ and the husband a head, this phrase is necessary to establish the difference between Christ and the husband.

> The apostle . . . emphatically calls attention to the point of difference; as if he would say: "A man is the head of his wife, even as Christ also is head of the Church, although there is a vast difference, since He is Himself the Saviour of the body, of which He is the head; but notwithstanding this difference.[23]

Verse 24 returns to the analogy with a summary statement of exhortation to wives. It includes a clear delineation of the two corresponding elements in each part of the comparison, the subjection of the wife to the husband corresponding to the subjection of the Church to Christ. This verse substantiates the assertion that there is no identity of Christ

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[22] J. Armitage Robinson, p. 124.

[23] Abbott, p. 166. Also George Stoeckhardt, Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, translated from the German by Martin S. Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), p. 241; Schlier, p. 278.

and the husband in verse 22.[24] Christ is nowhere the husband, and the Church is nowhere the bride or wife. The most that can be said for the figure of marriage is that the action of the wife toward the husband in the human institution is to be like that action the Church renders to Christ.

Instruction to Husbands

Verse 25 begins with the command to husbands to love their wives καθώς Christ loved the Church.[25] A description of what Christ did for the Church continues through verse 27. The problem is to determine whether Paul still has human marriage in mind after verse 25a or whether he is speaking of the relationship of Christ to the Church in marital imagery, or whether he makes a complete digression from all marital imagery with neither the human institution nor the figure of marriage present.

Ἀγαπάω as it occurs in the New Testament outside of these thirteen verses only once refers specifically to love between husband and wife, and that is in Colossians 3:19, already referred to as a close parallel.[26] It also appears in Romans 9:25 in a quote from Hosea 2:25, which is the context for the figure of marriage in that Old Testament book. It is

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[24] Supra, p. 33.

[25] Καθώς usually indicates comparison, occasionally cause. See Bl-D, p. 236 and A-G, p. 392.

[26] Supra, p. 30.

the equivalent to Οὐκ-ἠλεημένην in the Septuagint and רֻחָמָה לֹא in the Hebrew. The word is a participle used substantively, ἠγαπημένην, the name by which God will call Israel. Twice ἀγαπάω is used in a context which strongly resembles the context of verse 25, although there is no reference to the human institution or the figure of marriage. The first is Galatians 2:20b. "And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ."[27] The second is Ephesians 5:2. "And walk in love καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν ὑμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." Here it fits easily into the language of Christ offering himself as a sacrifice. We conclude that Paul does not use ἀγαπάω normally to stress a marital relationship. The five occurrences in Ephesians 5:21-33 where it describes the action that the husband ought to demonstrate toward his wife emphasizes an unusual aspect of the human marital relationship. The fact that Christ loved has been demonstrated apart from the marital relationship (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2). Marriage is getting a new dimension; husband is to love wife as Christ loved the Church.[28]

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[27]All quotes from Scripture in English are taken from the Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952).

[28]It is surprising that men overstep the text at this point. The imperative is directed to the husband, and Paul is not necessarily concerned about establishing a mutuality of love by these words. That interaction between husband and wife must take place within the realm of the redeeming love of

Christ does not have to be a husband in order to love the Church.

No one proposes that the analogy continues after the initial exhortation to love as Christ loved. Paul's contemplation of Christ's love for the Church leads into a digression which, for the following two and one-half verses, describes Christ's giving, sanctifying and cleansing love for the Church.[29] This digression introduces an alternative to the supposition that human marriage is the primary thought of the author. These words are motivated by more than the imperative which complements the submission of the wife; more than "subordination must be met by love."[30] In all probability Paul has brought with him into this section thoughts of Christ as head and savior as yet unsaid. Greeven notes here a logical progression beyond the thought of Christ as head by virtue of his self-giving love, which is introduced by σωτήρ and defined in verses 25-27.[31] These words far surpass what can occur within the human institution of marriage. The two themes of marital ethics and Christ's love may run parallel, but they run with a gulf between them. Holding to the conclusion that in verses

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Christ, that love is completed by mutuality in marriage are both true statements, but this is not the burden of the text. For these views see Schlier, p. 279 and I. A. Muirhead, "The Bride of Christ," Scottish Journal of Theology, V (June 1952), 187.

[29] Muirhead, p. 180.

[30] J. Armitage Robinson, p. 124.

[31] Greeven, p. 122. Also Hanson, p. 138.

21-24 there is a comparison of the submission of the wife to the husband on the one hand with the submission of the Church to Christ on the other, with no identification of either Christ or the Church as husband or wife respectively, we assume that the figure of marriage is not present in these verses. Whether the actions of Christ in verses 25-27 have marital connotations remains to be seen in the following discussion.

παραδίδωμι is generally accepted here as the giving of oneself into death.[32] It never appears in Scripture in the context of either the figure of marriage or the corresponding human institution. The word does occur in two passages which parallel this one very closely, Galatians 2:20 and Ephesians 5:2, both of which have been cited for their similarity of context in the use of ἀγαπάω. παραδίδωμι does not contribute to the interpretation of the verse in terms of either the figure of marriage or as a reflection upon the husband as such. On the contrary, its appearance in the first verses of the chapter indicates that its use here was probably prompted by the preceding ἠγάπησεν.

The next verse (26) is at first glance ambiguous.[33]

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[32] A-G, p. 620; Westcott, p. 84; Meyer, p. 512; Salmond, p. 367.

[33] There are exegetical problems in this verse which are of no consequence to the problem at hand, such as the coincidence in time of ἁγιάσῃ and καθαρίσας discussed by Moule, p. 292, and Meyer, p. 512; a grammatically precise definition of τῷ λουτρῷ, discussed by J. Armitage Robinson, pp. 205f.; the nature of ἐν ῥήματι as well as its grammatical

That ἁγιάζω means "to make holy, to consecrate, to sanctify" is generally accepted.[34] The object of this action may be a sacrifice (Matt. 23:19), or people (Acts 20:32). When people are the recipients the action may be in the cleansing nature of the water of baptism (I Cor. 6:11), or in the blood of a sacrifice, Christ being the sacrifice (Heb. 9:13,14; 10:10,14). Καθαρίζω also fits into both images. The literal definition of "to make clean, to cleanse, to purify" is not questioned.[35] It can be used in the ceremonial sense, of things (Acts 10:15), or sacramentally, of people (Tit. 2:14). With people it can be accomplished by means of water (5:26), or by the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:14), or by the offering of Christ himself (Tit. 2:14). While neither of the verbs appears anywhere else in the context of either the figure or the human institution of marriage, they may be used to denote the cleansing nature of both the sacrifice of Christ and the water of baptism.[36]

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relationship to the verse, discussed by J. Armitage Robinson, pp. 206f., and Rudolf Schnackenburg, Baptism in the Thought of St. Paul, translated from the German by G. R. Beasley-Murray (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1964), p. 6.

[34] A-G, p. 8.

[35] A-G, p. 388.

[36] In I Cor. 7:14 the spouses are sanctified by the behavior of each other, but there is no visible means. A corresponding instance in human marriage would have to refer to a bridal bath of water. Ezek. 16:9 in the midst of the account of Yahweh's marriage to Israel says, "Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you. . . ." Since the entire life of the bride from birth is recounted in three verses, this probably refers to v. 6, a description of

In light of the following phrase, τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, there is no question that the cleansing nature of baptism is meant, although the sacrament is not mentioned by name.[37] This fact, however, must not lead to the premature conclusion that the verbs carry implications of baptism only, without examining the possibilities of a connection with the sacrificial nature of the death of Christ in the preceding verse. It has been shown that the language of baptism and the language of sacrifice is not mutually exclusive. The motif of cleansing is as much at home with the sacrificial death of Christ as it is with baptism (I Cor. 1:13; Rom. 6:1ff.; and Col. 2:12).

> The Church in her totality passed with Christ through the baptism of death which he endured on her behalf. The background of this thinking lies in Jesus' own reference to his death as "a baptism" which his followers are to share.[38]

The verbs can accommodate both concepts adequately.

> Die Heiligung hat ihren Grund in der Selbsthingabe Christi, aber sie kommt zustande mit der in der Taufe geschehenen Reinigung.[39]

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her appearance on the day that she was born. "And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood. . . ." Therefore, it would not be a bridal bath.

[37]Schnackenburg, pp. 5-7; J. Armitage Robinson, p. 206; Schlier, p. 256. Some think that the entire section, Eph. 4:20-6:19, is a catechesis with baptism its Sitz-im-Leben. See Davies, p. 129 and Hunter, p. 130.

[38]Beare, p. 723. See also Minear, p. 137.

[39]Schlier, p. 256. The same progression is noted by Dibelius, p. 94, without specific reference to sacrifice, and Erich Haupt, Der Epheserbrief in Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar Über das Neue Testament (Seventh edition; Göttingen:

Not only the death of Christ but baptism itself is sometimes tinted with sacrificial implications. "Let us draw near . . . with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water," (Heb. 10:22). Schlier considers the προσφορὰ . . . εὐπρόσδεκτος, ἡγιασμένη ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ of Romans 15:16 to be a reference to Baptism.[40] It is fair to conclude that ἁγιάσῃ καθαρίσας is connected to Baptism by the structure of the sentence and refers to it, but the words are also at home in the context of the language of sacrifice, probably the death of Christ.[41]

One searching for the figure of marriage in verse 26 must consider the possibility that the washing with water, while referring primarily to Baptism, is an allusion to the ceremonial bath of the bride before the wedding. This is a widely accepted view; the majority of those who favor it do so in a rather unqualified manner. "We have thus here not simply an allusion to baptism, but a designation of the same, and an allusion to the bath of the bride before the wedding day."[42] J. Armitage Robinson disagrees by pointing out that

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Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902), VIII, 212.

[40] Schlier, p. 256.

[41] Such an argument seems to have little to do with the figure of marriage. However, if there is the possibility that another "figure" is indicated by these words, perhaps sacrifice, then such possibilities should be explored. The case for the figure of marriage in these verses is affected by the outcome, which is yet to be determined in v. 27.

[42] Meyer, p. 513. Also Abbott, p. 169; Beare, p. 722; Muirhead, p. 180; Westcott, p. 84.

there are no parallels to this in Scripture and that it never appears as a Christian ceremony "though it probably would have been retained if St. Paul had been regarded as alluding to it here."[43] It seems that a more mediating and tenable view is that it could be a bath of cleansing without reference to the pagan custom, with the emphasis upon the cleansing (of a body, perhaps), without incorporation of the ritual.

> That Paul also linked this with the pagan custom of a bridal bath is hardly likely. In any case, the execution of the picture in Eph. v. 26f. betrays his own handiwork.
>
> Everywhere the lines of actuality burst through the picture of the bath of water. ἁγιάσῃ v. 26, ἅγιος καὶ ἄμωμος v. 27, the addition ἐν ῥήματι to λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος v. 26, can only be understood in the light of the theological ideas which prompt the writer.
>
> He [the writer] then applies the image of marriage to the relationship of Christ and the Church. Baptism becomes the cleansing bath that Christ prepared for his Church.[44]

This interpretation would fit well into a figure of marriage if one were established, but for the cleansing bath to shoulder the burden of proof alone is a bit too much to ask of it.

Verse 27 does not help to alleviate the ambiguity encountered in the preceding verse. In fact, all of the possible interpretations carry over very well.

παραστήσῃ immediately recalls the marital imagery of II Corinthians 11:2, ἡρμοσάμην γὰρ ὑμᾶς ἑνὶ ἀνδρὶ παρθένον

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[43] J. Armitage Robinson, p. 207.

[44] Schnackenburg, pp. 135, 6, 5.

ἁγνὴν παραστῆσαι τῷ Χριστῷ. The majority of commentators agree that the word is used in the marital sense.[45] Windisch says this about the Corinthian passage after having cited Ephesians 5:22-33 as the most developed and complete example of the figure of marriage in Scripture:

> Aber nicht der Bräutigam spielt den Eifersüchtigen - der bleibt, orientalischer Sitte folgend, ganz im Hintergrund -, sondern er, der Brautvater oder Brautwerber, der die Verlobung in die Wege geleitet hat und zunächst die alleinige Verantwortung trägt.[46]

Yet in verse 27 it is Christ in the role of bridegroom who presents the bride to himself, a procedure quite out of line with the custom. The commentators do not speak to this problem. A possible solution is that Paul, while using marital imagery, remains true to his theological ideas at the expense of consistent marital custom.

Paul also uses this verb to describe the presentation of a sacrifice in Romans 12:1, . . . παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν. Colossians 1:22 is an extremely close parallel to verse 27, so close in fact that it too is ambiguous. There is no suggestion of marriage, however. "And you . . . he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death παραστῆσαι ὑμᾶς ἁγίους καὶ ἀμώμους καὶ

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[45]Scott, p. 240, takes it in its literal sense.

[46]Hans Windisch, Der Zweite Korintherbrief, in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, edited by Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer (Ninth edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), VI, 319.

ἀνεγκλήτους κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ." Whether or not this has connotations of sacrifice language will depend upon an investigation of ἁγίους and ἀμώμους.[47] Salmond points out the difficulty with the sacrificial interpretation of παραστήσῃ: "It would be incongruous with Paul's teaching to speak of Christ as presenting an offering to Himself."[48] One also recalls that when the sacrifice motif first appeared as a possibility in these verses, Christ was the sacrifice. The substitutionary aspect of his death ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς as well as the whole of Romans 12:1 certainly indicate that the resulting purity well might be described in cultic terms.

There is yet a third interpretation of παραστήσῃ. Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich here gives it the meaning of "to render, to make," which would give it a reference in point of time coincident to ἁγιάσῃ καθαρίσας.[49] This interpretation also de-emphasizes the ceremonial presentation of something already holy and stresses what Christ has done to make the Church as pure, figuratively speaking, as the purity required of sacrifices. Schlier, while he keeps the figure of marriage primary, utilizes all three possibilities that have been discussed.

> Παριστάνειν ist also das Vorführen und Vorstellen bzw. das Darstellen der Braut. Sofern es sich bei diesem παριστάνειν von der Sache her um eine

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[47] Infra, pp. 51f.

[48] Salmond, p. 370. See also Abbott, p. 169.

[49] A-G, p. 633.

> abschliessende Entfaltung des παραστῆσαι handelt, liegt im Begriff auch dies, dass solches Vor- und Darstellen auch ein Herstellen ist. . . . Die Selbsthingabe Christi lässt diese als heilige Kirche vor Christus erscheinen.[50]

For the present the possible validity of all three interpretations, the marital, cultic, and literally "to render," will be accepted, pending the investigation of the remainder of the verse, specifically the five descriptive words, ἔνδοξον, σπίλον, ῥυτίδα, ἁγία, ἄμωμος.[51]

Ἔνδοξον, used only four times by New Testament writers, has neither marital nor sacrificial implications. The less complicated meaning of "splendid" is preferred to that interpretation which sees the glory of Christ, the husband, reflected in his wife, the Church.[52]

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[50] Schlier, p. 258.

[51] Incidence in time is the subject of most commentators' remarks on this verse. The majority say that this can be taken only eschatologically, that the presentation can occur only at the parousia. Moule, p. 293; Windisch, p. 320; Bruce, p. 117; Salmond, p. 370; Abbott, p. 169; Muirhead, p. 180. The implication, of course, is that the wedding event is still in the future, which would complicate the matter of relating the figure of marriage to husband and wife. If a figure of marriage is present in vv. 22-24, the marriage must be in force. Regardless of the terminology used, the relationship between Christ and the Church exists in the present in those verses. Perhaps tense is of no concern to Paul when he speaks of the nature of the Church. "Freilich kann man mit Bisping sagen: 'Die Frage, ob Paulus hier die gegenwärtige Kirche oder die dereinstige Kirche, wie sie bei der Wiedererscheinung Christi sein wird, im Auge hat, ist im Grunde unnütz. Die Kirche an sich ist immer die reine, fleckenlose Braut des Herrn; sie wird aber in ihrer vollen Schönheit äusserlich erst bei der Parusie ihres Bräutigams am jüngsten Tage hervortreten.' Doch setzt dieses Hervortreten eben die schon in der Gegenwart ihr zugekommene und von ihr verwahrte Schönheit voraus." Schlier, p. 285.

[52] A-G, p. 262.

Ἁγία has its roots deep in cultic imagery. On the basis of the Old Testament concept, Procksch sees a definite connection of the holy with the cultic. In the New Testament, however, ἅγιος takes on a "pneumatic" sense, specifically in the priestly character of Jesus as developed in Hebrews. In Romans 12:1 Christians should be θυσία ζῶσα ἁγία τῷ θεῷ.

> We thus see that neither in the OT nor the NT is the cultic basis of the ἅγιος concept ever denied. In both a cultic element is retained in the people of God. This is spiritualised, but can never disappear.[53]

Ἅγιος is also at home in the description of human wives. The wives of the patriarchs who were submissive to their husbands were αἱ ἅγιαι γυναῖκες (I Pet. 3:5). The virgin tries to be holy (I Cor. 7:34). In these instances, however, ἅγιος is a description of their behavior, not a condition that results from what Christ did for them, as is the case here.

Ἄμωμος has both a moral and cultic sense. Basically it refers to the "absence of defects in sacrificial animals."[54] Christ is the sacrificial lamb (I Pet. 1:19 and Heb. 9:14). All other references are probably to be taken in a moral and religious sense.

The two words ἅγιος and ἄμωμος also appear together in Ephesians 1:4 and Colossians 1:22. Both passages use the

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[53] Otto Procksch and Karl Georg Kuhn, "ἅγιος, ἁγιάζω, ἁγιασμός, ἁγιότης, ἁγιωσύνη," TW, I, 110.

[54] A-G, p. 47. See also Procksch, p. 108.

adjectives to describe the effect of God's action toward them rather than in the moral sense. At this point Beare sees the language of sacrifice.[55]

Σπίλος occurs only one other place in Scripture (II Pet. 2:13), and means "stain" or "blemish"; in this context, a spot on the body.[56] Oepke notes the cultic nature of its antonym, ἄσπιλος, and concludes: "The term illustrates the way in which the NT gives new religious and moral content to originally cultic concepts."[57]

Ῥυτίς, wrinkle, literally would fit the description of a body or bride better than a sacrifice. "Die Kirche, die Christus sich zuführt, ist immer jung."[58] This, together with σπίλος, would seem to describe the Church in terms of the body.

Conclusions are now in order. First, in these verses Christ is nowhere identified as the husband, and the Church is nowhere identified as the bride. In verses 21-24 there is a qualified parallel between husband and Christ, between wife and Church. The common ground to both husband and Christ is authority; to the husband, authority over the wife; to Christ, authority over the Church. The wife and the Church have in common the duty to obedience. Verses 25-27 are an

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[55] Beare, p. 724.

[56] A-G, p. 770.

[57] Albrecht Oepke, "ἄσπιλος," TW, I, 502.

[58] Schlier, p. 259.

extended description of Christ's saving love which exceeds the possibilities of the conjugal love of the husband.

Secondly, after the designation of Christ as κεφαλή in verse 23, the Church is identified as his σῶμα, and there are strong implications that this body imagery continues through verse 27. While verses 25-27 may be understood literally, they also fit well the body imagery. The parallel established in verses 21-24 may prompt some to see marital imagery in verses 25-27, which argument may be refuted by the fact that there are two interpretations more obvious and requiring less manipulation, the literal and the imagery of the body. Marital imagery can be made to fit, but it would be a tertiary interpretation.

Thirdly, the passage is directed to husbands and wives, but there is no attempt to utilize husband or wife to improve the description of Christ and the Church. Whatever is said of Christ and the Church in these verses is not dependent upon a marital relationship.

Finally, the figure of marriage does not exist in these verses.

CHAPTER V

THE FIGURE OF MARRIAGE IN EPHESIANS 5:28-33

Verse 28a is a transitional sentence. While it may serve as a summary statement for verses 25-27, it contains the thought which is developed in verses 28b-32.[1] Husbands ought to love their wives ὡς τὰ ἑαυτῶν σώματα. The majority of commentators interpret the ὡς as establishing

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[1]There is some difficulty in determining whether οὕτως, the first word in the verse, should be taken with the preceding καθώς of v. 25 or with the ὡς which follows in v. 28a, or perhaps with neither. The most obvious is to take it with the following ὡς, since it is in the same sentence and in acceptable grammatical form, which is what Schlier does. Heinrich Schlier, Der Brief an die Epheser (Düsseldorf: Patmos-Verlag, 1963), p. 260. The resulting interpretation is that one should love his wife in the way that he loves his own body. In light of the following context the ὡς is taken better to mean "as being" their own bodies. This means there can be no dependence of ὡς upon οὕτως. One way of alleviating this problem is to connect the οὕτως with καθώς of v. 25. S. D. F. Salmond, "The Epistle to the Ephesians, The Expositor's Greek Testament, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1910), III, 371. This is improbable because of the distance between the words as well as the fact that καθώς is not introductory in v. 25. Robinson's suggestion seems to be the best; namely, that οὕτως is used by itself to refer to what has gone before. J. Armitage Robinson, St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Second edition; London: James Clarke and Company Ltd., 1904), p. 208. See also Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted from the fourth revised and augmented edition by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 602. (Hereafter designated as A-G). The main concern of the interpreters is that an improper use of οὕτως might cause an unnecessary restriction upon ὡς to mean "in the way that," rather than "as being," which is the theme of vv. 28-30.

an identity between the wife and the husband's own body.[2] In any case, the following verses make it clear that the husband is to consider the wife to be his own body. The author is driving on to the fact that husband and wife form a unity, one whole and complete body. In fact, this is Paul's rationale. The husband should love his wife because she is his body. If the husband loves his wife, he loves himself. The assumption Paul makes in this verse is that the wife is the body of the husband.

The parallel between Christ and the husband returns in verse 29b where that which the husband demonstrates toward his σάρκα, ἐκτρέφειν and θάλπειν, is also what Christ shows for the Church. There is some question whether these verbs can apply to a husband and wife relationship or whether they describe the care of one's own flesh. Their interpretation determines the relationship of Christ to the Church.

Ἐκτρέφω means simply "to nourish" and does not disqualify either flesh or wife as an object.[3] It is used in Ephesians 6:4 in reference to the rearing of children. θάλπω has a literal meaning, "to keep warm" as well as a figurative meaning,

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[2]Robinson, p. 208; Nicoll, p. 371; Brooke Foss Westcott, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), p. 85; Heinrich Wilhelm August Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Epistle to the Ephesians in Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, translated from the fourth edition of the German by Maurice J. Evans, revised and edited by William P. Dickson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), VII, 516.

[3]A-G, p. 351.

"to cherish, to comfort."[4] While its object is children in I Thessalonians 2:7, Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich considers it here directed to women in terms of flesh. Schlier makes a conclusion on the basis of these two verbs.

> Die γυνή, um die es hier geht, ist ja die Kirche, deren Glieder immer wieder νήπιοι sind, vgl. 4, 14, und die im ganzen "wächst," vgl. 2, 21; 4, 15f.[5]

He assumes that a woman is the immediate object of ἐκτρέφει and θάλπει, an assumption which has completely overlooked or bypassed the primary object, αὐτήν, the antecedent of which is σάρκα. Because he omits one step in the comparison he leaves no other alternative than to assume that the Church is a woman. Christ acts toward the Church as the husband acts toward his own flesh. The Church is not a wife. The point of comparison is one's own flesh.

The implication that the Church is the σάρξ τοῦ Χριστοῦ rather than σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ or the bride requires an explanation. In the context σάρξ and σῶμα are used with the same meaning. Paul writes from a Hebraic background.[6] The Hebrew has no equivalent for σῶμα. The nearest word that the Hebrew

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[4] A-G, p. 351.

[5] Schlier, p. 260f.

[6] Eduard Schweizer, The Church as the Body of Christ (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 9-22; John A. T. Robinson, The Body (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), pp. 11-17; Edward Earle Ellis, Paul and His Recent Interpreters (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), pp. 31f.; Ernest Best, One Body in Christ (London: SPCK, 1955), p. 156.

can offer is נֶפֶשׁ, which stands for "the whole life-substance of men or beasts as organized in corporeal form."[7] There is no distinction between matter and form in the Hebrew mind; thus נֶפֶשׁ to the Hebrew is man in his totality.[8] He needs no word for σῶμα. Used in this basic sense σῶμα and σάρξ here may be regarded as synonymous. Paul has a motive for his use of σάρξ, the anticipation of the quote from Genesis in verse 31.[9] These two words have a synonymous use also in I Corinthians 6:15f.

Verse 30 is conclusive evidence that the ἐκκλησία is understood by Paul as the body of Christ in verses 28-30, and not as a bride. The believers are members of the body of Christ, not the bride of Christ. That all believers form one body is nothing new to Paul's theology. His earlier letters contain the same thoughts (I Cor. 12:27; Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 6:15; also Eph. 4:15f.).[10] Verse 30 is not a major segment of the argument, but it does emphasize the individual's

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[7]J. A. T. Robinson, p. 13.

[8]Schweizer, pp. 17f.

[9]J. Armitage Robinson, p. 208; Schlier, p. 260; Heinrich Greeven, "Zu den Aussagen des Neuen Testaments über die Ehe," Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik, I (May 1957), 123; Martin Dibelius, An die Kolosser, Epheser, an Philemon in Handbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Günther Bornkamm (Third edition revised by Heinrich Greeven; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953), p. 95.

[10]The emphasis in these verses is upon the body as subject to Christ the head. See footnote 15 of chapter four and discussion of κεφαλή, pp. 33-36.

role in the body of Christ.

> St. Paul does not say simply, following the language of the preceding sentence, "because the Church is His body," but he appeals to the personal experience of Christians, "because we are members of His body and know the power of His love."[11]

Once again there is an intervening common denominator which prevents the Church from being identified as the bride. As κεφαλή intervened between Christ and the husband in verses 21-24, so σῶμα comes between the Church and the wife. Σῶμα is a major concept in Paul's theology, and its implications are a key to verses 28-32.

Two questions arise in a discussion of σῶμα as it appears in this context. First, what is the nature of the σῶμα, or in other words, how real is it? Second, why should Paul use the σῶμα as the point of comparison here? The first question is of no particular concern to the author. The wife is the husband's body, yet he has a body of his own. The Church is Christ's body, and many human bodies are members of it. The implications of σῶμα, however, Paul pursues and utilizes.

The Pauline usage of σωμα is indebted to its Hebraic background and the lack of an exact Hebrew equivalent.[12] The reason for this apparent deficiency in vocabulary is that in the Hebrew there is no individuation, that principle of thought

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[11] Westcott, p. 86.

[12] <u>Supra</u>, pp. 56-57.

which distinguishes one man from another.[13]

> Thus the Hebrew is used to seeing first the nation, the people, mankind, and only afterward the individual member of that nation, people, or mankind.[14]

Σῶμα, on the other hand, is used in Greek thought to single out individuals as well as to denote completeness and unity, a self-contained sufficiency.

> However, this very feeling of being incorporated into a much larger unity finds its linguistic expression in the Greek term "body" when used in a figurative sense for organic unity, not, as originally in Greek, of the individual body, but of a larger unity like a people or even the cosmos.
>
> When speaking of the unity of Christ's people, the New Testament will bring together both the Hebrew insight that man necessarily is incorporated into his people and into God's history with his people, and the Greek term "body" depicting such a unity in the image of a human body. In this way, the New Testament will speak of the body of Christ which is not an individual body, but a body including all its different members.[15]

The unity of Christ and his body, the Church, has been the implication since verse 23, where it was subordinate to the theme of authority. Paul has been speaking of the action that occurs within the unity until verse 28. At that point the fact that husband and wife are one body becomes basic to the author's rationale. The thought which has been an undercurrent throughout is coming closer to the surface in the use

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[13] J. A. T. Robinson, p. 15.

[14] Schweizer, p. 21.

[15] Ibid., pp. 21f.

of σῶμα and its intended equivalent, σάρξ.[16]

At the end of verse 30 there is an interpolation ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ, favored by the Koine text recension, and manuscripts D and G of the major witnesses. Irenaeus adopts it also. Meyer and Chavasse are representative recent interpreters who accept its validity.[17] Despite this support, the weight of evidence is against the interpolation. None of the three major manuscripts, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Vaticanus, have it. Schlier considers it a later gloss which fits well into the polemic of Irenaeus.[18] Dibelius and Bruce, when they say the interpolation probably is not original but quite in keeping with the sense and argument of the passage, have not evaluated its significance.[19] The interpolation is a quote from Genesis 2:23, the words immediately preceding in Old Testament context the quote of verse 31, and implies much

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[16]Others that support the presence of a unity motif already in the imagery of the head are: Best, pp. 136f.; Stig Hanson, The Unity of the Church in the New Testament (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells Boktryckeri Ab, 1946), p. 141; Anders Nygren, Christ and His Church, translated by Alan Carlsten (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), pp. 95f. The unity motif is heavily stressed by Hugo Odeberg, The View of the Universe in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Lund: E. W. K. Gleerup, 1934), p. 8.

[17]Meyer, p. 519; Claude Chavasse, The Bride of Christ (London: The Religious Book Club, 1940), p. 70.

[18]Schlier, p. 261. For a more complete discussion of textual evidence substantiating the rejection of the interpolation see J. Armitage Robinson, p. 302.

[19]Dibelius, p. 95; Frederick Fyvie Bruce, The Epistle to the Ephesians (London: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., 1961), p. 119.

more than Genesis 2:24 used alone. Genesis 2:24 refers to marriage, but the preceding verse speaks of the creation of woman. It provides excellent support for the interpretation that the Church is the second Eve, the flesh and bones of Christ.[20] This is more than Paul ever intended with the use of σῶμα, σάρξ, or Genesis 2:24.

Verse 31 is a direct quote from Genesis 2:24, substantially the same as the Septuagint version.[21] The Old Testament context is the creation of woman. They follow Adam's reply to the creation of woman: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."[22] The writer in Genesis explains that the basic unity of man and woman is the reason for the desire of man for woman. In marriage this basic unity is restored, although the nature of the unity is not defined. Stauffer speaks of a "henosis of partners in which

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[20] Chavasse, p. 70.

[21] The only significant difference is the introductory ἀντὶ τούτου, where the Septuagint has ἕνεκεν τούτου. For a justification of the usage in v. 31 as equivalent to the ἕνεκεν τούτου of the Septuagint and the עַל־כֵּן of the Hebrew see J. Armitage Robinson, p. 208; also George Stoeckhardt, Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, translated from the German by Martin S. Sommer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), p. 247.

[22] All quotes from Scripture in English are taken from the Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952).

the original unity of man and woman is restored."[23] The Hebrew does not make it absolutely clear that the one flesh idea must be the sexual union of the partners. The Hebrew for "cleave" or "cling," דבק, is used here figuratively as loyalty and affection with the idea of close physical proximity, while בשר here only denotes kindred or blood-relations.[24] The nature of the union seems irrelevant to this situation, since the unity of marriage will never be identical to the original oneness of man.

Genesis 2:24 is used three times in the New Testament in addition to its appearance in Ephesians 5:31. Jesus uses it to prove the indissoluble nature of the marital union God has made (Matt. 19:5; Mk. 10:7,8). Paul uses it in abbreviated form in I Corinthians 6:16, ἔσονται γάρ, φησίν, οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν, to describe a man's relationship (κολλώμενος) to a prostitute in contrast to the ἓν πνεῦμα which is the relationship (κολλώμενος) a man has to the Lord. Once again it is the resulting unity which makes the two relationships incompatible.[25]

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[23] Ethelbert Stauffer, "γαμέω, γάμος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated from the German and edited by Geoffry W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), I, 648. Hereafter this volume as well as the German volumes II-VII will be designated as TW.

[24] Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 179, 142.

[25] I Cor. 6:16 cannot be used to support an interpretation that v. 31 indicates a sexual union between Christ and the

In the light of verse 32 the discussion will lead into the relationship of Christ and the Church to this Old Testament quote. First, however, it must be established to what degree the man and woman to whom Paul is writing are involved in verse 31. Some would leave human marriage out of the context entirely, represented by Schlier.

> Für den Apostel spricht das Zitat aus Gen 2, 24 nicht von dem einzelnen Mann und seiner Frau und ihrer Ehe, sondern von dem Verhältnis Adams zu Eva. Und Adam, der Anthropos, der an seiner γυνή hängt, ist für Paulus der Typos Christi, der die Kirche liebt.[26]

But Schlier has no evidence to substantiate the use of Eve in this way. If Jesus is the second Adam, he constitutes and represents total humanity, a concept which does not allow for a female counterpart.[27] To completely allegorize Genesis 2:24

Church in line with the figure of marriage. It disqualifies itself from the discussion by specifically making the nature of one's union with the Lord different from the nature of the sexual union with a prostitute. While the nature of the relationship is different, the unity which must exist in both instances is in conflict. Sexual intercourse is an expression of the one flesh idea because of its intimacy, but "one flesh," whenever it is used, does not necessarily require the presence of the sexual union. "There is clearly something wrong in having both an intimate relationship with Christ as a member of His body and also a relationship which is intimate in another sense with a prostitute, especially if she is a temple prostitute." Denys Edward Hugh Whiteley, The Theology of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 215. See also Erich Haupt, Der Epheserbrief in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Seventh edition; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1902), p. 223.

[26]Schlier, p. 262. Also Chavasse, p. 74; I. A. Muirhead, "The Bride of Christ," Scottish Journal of Theology, V (June 1952), 180; G. G. Findlay, The Epistle to the Ephesians in The Expositor's Bible, edited by W. Robertson Nicoll (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), XL, 377.

[27]For a further discussion of the unity motif which plays a major role in the concept of Christ as the second Adam, see

loads the words with implications very significant indeed for the development of the figure of marriage. For now the figure is parallel not to man and wife, but to Adam and Eve, the "first" man and wife. The Church becomes the second Eve, and her union with Christ for the "pre-existing, archetypal marriage."[28] A further step is logical, one which affects the whole motivation behind the marital ethic. If Christ and the Church form the archetypal marriage, Warnach thinks, then the human institution is a pattern or manifestation of it, and for that reason a husband must love his wife, and his wife must submit to him.[29]

An allegorical interpretation and its implications does violence to the passage at this point. Husband and wife would no longer be a part of the comparison; they would be replaced by Adam and Eve. As well as breaking off from the context of human marriage, allegory disrupts the σῶμα motif of unity and replaces it with the primacy and archtypal nature of the marriages of Adam and Eve, Christ and the Church. Such an involved interpretation is unwarranted, since the human institution has been so much a part of the rationale. Christ and the Church may well be related to verse 31 without the aid of allegory.

W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, 1962), pp. 36-57.

[28]Chavasse, p. 75.

[29]Heinrich Schlier and Viktor Warnach, Die Kirche im Epheserbrief (Munster Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1949), p. 26.

> It was, indeed, almost inevitable that where St. Paul was so full on the duty of the husband, he should refer to these words in Genesis in their proper original meaning. This meaning being so exactly adapted to enforce the practical precept, to take them otherwise, and to suppose that they are introduced allegorically, is to break the connexion, not to improve it.[30]

It is most unlikely that the husband and wife who are reading this should be excluded from the comparison by a secondary method of interpretation. "Das Einswerden von Mann und Frau ist aber auch die eigentliche Pointe des alttestamentlichen Zitats."[31]

Immediately following the Old Testament citation is verse 32a: τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν. Μυστήριον presents two problems: the meaning of the word and its point of reference.[32] There is little consensus on the precise meaning, but it is essential that the interpretation be compatible with verses 31 and 32b, which also are essential and contribute meaning in their own right.

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[30] T. K. Abbott, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), XXXVI, 174.

[31] Greeven, p. 123. See also J. Armitage Robinson, p. 126; Dibelius, p. 95, Haupt, p. 223, Stauffer, p. 648 for the inclusion of the human institution in the verse.

[32] It is conceivable to reverse the sequence of these two problems and thereby arrive at a different conclusion. If one has in mind that to which the μυστήριον makes reference, perhaps the "mysterious" marriage of Christ and the Church, he will have succeeded in flavoring μυστήριον primarily with a sense of the mystical, the difficult to understand, before he begins an investigation of the word. Evidence has not been established that the use of Gen. 2:24 is a proof text for the figure of marriage, much less the mystical marriage of Christ and the Church.

The μέγα in the clause sheds first light upon the meaning of μυστήριον. Men whose final interpretations of the passage are different agree upon the force of μέγα. It does not give μυστήριον the sense of "very mysterious, very difficult to understand"; rather,

> it retains its proper meaning of importance or significance: so that "a great mystery" means "an important or far-reaching mystery."[33]

This eliminates the emphasis upon "dark, exceedingly mysterious, extremely difficult or impossible to understand" from the meaning of μέγα.[34]

The basic meaning of μυστήριον comes from something secret, but

> our lit. uses it to mean the secret thoughts, plans and dispensations of God which are hidden fr. the human reason, . . . and hence must be revealed to those for whom they are intended.[35]

It occurs five times in Ephesians in addition to verse 32, and each time it is in a context which describes the μυστήριον as belonging to God but now in the process of being made known to men, 1:9; 3:3,4,9; 6:19. It may be as specific as

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[33] J. Armitage Robinson, p. 126. Schlier, p. 262, also refers it to "das Gewicht des Geheimnisses, nicht etwa seine Dunkelheit."

[34] For statements which interpret μέγα in this way see Paul Sevier Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 219; Ernest Findlay Scott, The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians in The Moffatt New Testament Commentary, edited by James Moffatt (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), XI, 241.

[35] A-G, p. 532.

the inclusion of the Gentiles into the Church, 3:6, or as general as 1:9,10:

> For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι) all things in him. . . .

Always μυστήριον is in the context of the plan of God, which is unity of all things in Christ.

Quite clearly the use of the word in verse 32 is not identical to its use in the rest of the book.[36] The eschatological emphasis may be stronger here, that is, the lack of full realization of the μυστήριον in the present. There is, however, no disagreement with its being in the plan of God or having to do with the motif of unity. The limitations that the context places upon the word then brings it into focus.[37]

Verse 32a is immediately followed by ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω. Here ἐγώ is the personal pronoun which contrasts the subject with the speaker.[38] If there is a contrast in any way between

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[36] J. Armitage Robinson, pp. 238f. Also Günther Bornkamm, "μυστήριον, μυέω," TW, IV, 829f. Those who distinguish its use in v. 32 do not make the distinction so great as to encompass the view that it came directly from the hellenistic mystery cults, the view of Wilfred L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of the Gentiles (Cambridge: University Press, 1939), p. 183.

[37] A complete discussion of μυστήριον is beyond the scope of this paper. It is relevant only to the extent to which it can shed light upon the figure of marriage.

[38] F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and revised from the 9th-10th German edition by Robert W. Funk

the preceding and what Paul says, then the μυστήριον to which he refers cannot be normally understood to mean Christ and the Church. Even if the contrast is understood as intensifying what has preceded, explaining something unclear or something that may have more than one interpretation, the reference to Christ and the Church is not assumed and must be interjected with the words of verse 32b.[39]

The λέγω εἰς is also very significant in relating Christ and the Church to the preceding. Εἰς in this instance can mean only "with respect to, with reference to."[40] Whether λεγω has the simple force of "to speak" or the more intricate sense of "to interpret" makes no difference in light of the εἰς . Paul is speaking "in respect to" Christ and the Church; therefore, Christ and the Church cannot be the "meaning" of the μυστήριον. If Paul had "meant" Christ and the Church he would have used λέγω with the direct accusative, omitting the εἰς .[41] Nothing has been equated to Christ and

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(Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 145. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Bl-D. Also Salmond, p. 374.

[39]Schlier, p. 262, favors the possibility of more than one interpretation. Also Scott, p. 242; Bornkamm, p. 830. The following take ἐγώ to intensify what has preceded: Haupt, p. 224; Abbott, p. 175; Chavasse, p. 76.

[40]A-G, p. 229. Salmond, p. 374, regards it as a preposition of ethical direction, indicating that towards which the mind is looking, "with reference to Christ." See also Greeven, p. 123; J. Armitage Robinson, p. 209; Handley C. G. Moule, Ephesian Studies (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), p. 295.

[41]A-G, p. 469, cites examples in I Cor. 10:29; Gal. 3:17, et al.

the Church. Something has been said with respect to Christ and the Church.

On the basis of this evidence in verse 32 a pattern begins to take shape. Coming on the heels of the quote from Genesis 2:24, the μυστήριον has something in common with the human institution of marriage; yet it must be something about marriage which can be spoken with reference to Christ and the Church. The μυστήριον must be far-reaching and most significant, about marriage, yet not known without God making it known. The answer must be the unity which is common both to marriage and to the relationship of Christ to the Church. The one flesh idea, the proximity of the σῶμα concept to which the husband-wife, Christ-Church relationships run parallel, the use of μυστήριον elsewhere in Ephesians to denote God's plan of unity all combine to make the μυστήριον the unity of which Paul has been speaking with reference to Christ and the Church.

> The sense therefore, is this--"the truth of which I have spoken, the relation of husband and wife as one flesh, is a revelation of profound importance; but let me explain that, in speaking of it as I have done, my meaning is to direct your minds to that higher relation between Christ and His Church, in its likeness to which lies its deepest significance.[42]

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[42] Salmond, p. 374. The position that μυστήριον refers to the unity of the human institution is held also by Greeven, p. 123; Stauffer, p. 656; Francis W. Beare, The Epistle to the Ephesians in The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick et al. (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), X, 726. This is slightly more restrictive than the view which sees thoughts of the unity of Christ, and the Church latent in μυστήριον and intensified by the ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω, supported by Haupt, pp. 223f.; Scott, p. 243; Hanson, p. 140; Dibelius, p. 95; Stoeckhardt, p. 247.

The introduction of the figure of marriage at this point is unnecessary and is done upon the initiative of the interpreter, not Paul. Even Schlier agrees that μυστήριον has the general connotation of something hidden that is being revealed,[43] but to make the marriage of Christ and the Church the point of comparison raises questions which tend to obscure rather than reveal.[44] It hardly seems likely that Paul would mask the very relationship that he has been using to elucidate the significance of human marriage.

Verse 33, a summary statement of exhortation, brings to an end the section directed to husbands and wives. The first word, πλήν, breaks off the discussion and emphasizes what is important, with the sense of "only, in any case, however."[45] The point is well taken that most important to the author has been the desired result that the husband love his wife and that the wife respect her husband. Despite the possible digression in verses 25b-27, verse 33 proves that Paul's

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[43]Schlier, p. 263.

[44]If Knox, p. 201, insists that the mystical marriage was in the mind of the author and that "the passage depends for its point on the correspondence between the action of Jesus in leaving His Father for the sake of the Church and of a man in leaving his father for the sake of his wife," then who is the mother? The imagery of Paul is not adequate enough to satisfy the conditions of a marriage between Christ and the Church. Knox also feels that this marriage took place at the Incarnation. Muirhead, p. 181, and Joachim Jeremias, "νύμφη, νυμφίος," TW, IV, 1098, place the marriage in the future, at the parousia. But Paul has created a tension between past and future; therefore, the tense cannot be isolated to something so rigid as specific time.

[45]A-G, p. 675. Also Bl-D, p. 234; Salmond, p. 374; Stoeckhardt, p. 247.

immediate objective is not to describe a new facet of the doctrine of the Church or of the body of Christ but to establish a Christian ethic of marriage. This is certainly to allow for new insight into the body of Christ since the comparison of the human institution to Christ and the Church is so close, but the reader is supposed to glean primarily in the field of marital ethics.

The search for the figure of marriage in verses 28-33 may be summarized in four thoughts. First, the wife is the body of the husband; therefore, husband and wife constitute a unity, substantiated by the one flesh idea of Genesis 2:24. Second, the Church is the body of Christ; therefore, a unity exists also between Christ and the Church. Third, the unity of husband and wife as one body is so much like the unity of Christ and the Church that the words which describe the unity of marriage may be spoken in reference to the unity of Christ and the Church. Fourth, the figure of marriage is not in these verses. Nowhere does the language force Christ into the role of the husband or the Church into the role of the wife. A parallel or comparison exists for Paul to utilize, which he does by using the perfect relationship between Christ and the Church as an example for husband and wife to follow, but a comparison does not constitute identity.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Ephesians 5:21-33

In Ephesians 5:21-33 Christ corresponds very closely to the husband, and the Church corresponds very closely to the wife. However, Paul does not call Christ the husband nor does he call the Church the bride or wife of Christ in the relationship that exists between them; neither does the language, particularly the verbs, force either Christ or the Church into the role of husband or wife, although at times the line of difference becomes quite a fine one, as in verses 25-27. The point of comparison throughout is the imagery of the body. Christ is the head and the husband is the head; therefore, they each have authority in their respective positions as head. The Church is a body and the wife is a body, and each submits to the authority of her respective head. Thus, the unity that exists in the completeness of the one body exists in the other. The body imagery and its implications are very prevalent in the verses, and this proves to be the common denominator between the human institution of marriage and the union of Christ and the Church.

These verses are directed to husbands and wives. Paul's immediate aim is to establish a Christian ethic of marriage.

Primary is the relationship between husband and wife; basic is the relationship of Christ and the Church. The latter is assumed with the intent to improve the former. Thus one could assume that the purpose of the comparison here is didactic, to enlighten husbands and wives, to illuminate their relationship to each other, to teach them to live as Christian husbands and wives. There is no doubt that Paul demonstrates the fine adaptability of what all has gone before the resulting unity of Christ and the Church to what must happen within the unity of the Christian marriage. But we conclude that the figure of marriage is absent in Ephesians 5:21-33.

Ephesians 5:21-33 and the Figure of Marriage

Beginning with the figure of marriage in the Pauline corpus one is able to distinguish the different nature of those passages where Christ is the husband. Invariably Paul's concern in the passage is that the relationship of an individual or group to the Lord is in danger. The ideal union of Christ and the Church is not an example, but the believers' part in this union is in jeopardy. There is no need for establishing a comparison because Paul is not concerned with their marital ethics but with their unadulterated union with Christ, that the law (Rom. 7:4), a prostitute (I Cor. 6:15-17), or seduction by Satan (II Cor. 11:2) does not make impossible their union with Christ.

In these passages Paul betrays the didactic nature of

his use of the imagery common with that in Ephesians. He uses it to shed light on the situation, not to recall a pre-existent marriage of Christ and the Church. The statement is based upon Paul's lack of hesitation to bend the imagery to serve the particular theological point he is making at that moment. The union may consist of Christ and an individual believer or a congregation or the universal Church. It may be marriage with a virgin or with a widow. Paul is concerned about a theological point, not about keeping a consistent figure of marriage.

The figure of marriage in the Gospels is completely different from the comparison in Ephesians. The marital union is not important, neither the identity of the bride. The marital imagery serves only to emphasize the fact that the arrival of the Messiah brings joy and initiates the messianic feast. There is none of this in Ephesians.

What is basic to the figure of marriage in the Old Testament is basic to the comparison in Ephesians, although the purpose of its appearance in the Old Testament is different. The ideal union of Christ and the Church that can serve as an example finds its Old Testament equivalent in the covenant marriage which Israel, the adulterous wife, has broken. But as in the Pauline instances outside of Ephesians, the use of the figure portrays the people's relationship to God, in this case the faithlessness of Israel in the face of overwhelming mercy. While there is no ethical application in the Old Testament figure in contrast to the comparison in

Ephesians, the nature of the relationships are much alike. The union of Christ and the Church, as the covenant between God and Israel, is the result of the effort of Christ alone and God alone. Israel and the Church alike are passive recipients. Israel went on to break the covenant, at which point the prophets are heard utilizing the imagery. While the marriage between God and Israel is very much similar to the union of Christ and the Church in Ephesians, the difference which cannot be overlooked is that God is called the husband and Israel is called the wife while Christ and the Church can only serve as an example for husband and wife.

Unanswered Questions

Certainly questions have been raised, some more significant than others, which must be left for future investigation. This passage is undoubtedly a contribution to imagery of the body. Can the body figure express more than unity and cohesive growth of its members? Another is Paul's concept of reality. It is quite obvious and well-known that the interpretations of the "body of Christ" are many. Which is the "real" body of Christ? Why does Paul not hesitate to call Christ the head and the Church the body but yet avoids identifying Christ as husband and Church as wife? Of course, there remains the question of source. Ephesians is today linked with Qumran, yet there is not a trace either of the "figure" of marriage or marital ethics in the literature of that society. Must this passage come from an extra-biblical

source known also to Gnosticism, or is there enough Old Testament evidence to warrant this somewhat mild language compared to Gnostic sources? The answers lie in further study.

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Bible, Holy. Revised Standard Version.

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