

Paper given at the July 2016 Tyndale Fellowship Quadrennial Conference

Abstract

This paper looks to demonstrate that Adam and Eve’s marriage recorded in Gen 2:23 (Then the man said, “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”) occupies a different conceptual domain to that of subsequent marriages described in Gen 2:24 (“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”). And to show how the Gen 2:24 mundane marriage affinity union is employed in Eph 5:31–32 to underpin the offer of the gospel to the Gentiles and define the people of God.

1 Metaphoric Structure Mapping

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Eph 5:31-32)

This statement in Eph 5 has all the characteristics of metaphoric structure mapping, in that it equates Gen 2:24 to Christ and the church. A metaphor is when A is declared to be B when it is not literally true. A NT example is Jesus’s claim recorded in John’s gospel, “I am the door” (John 10:9). Lakoff and Johnson say “*The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another.*”¹ Kennedy believes that metaphor is the “greatest resource for the forceful expression of original thought”; and Caird that, “All, or almost all, of the language used by the Bible to refer to God is metaphor” and that comparison “comprises ... almost all the language of theology.”² Despite this, Macky claims his book is the first monograph-length investigation of biblical metaphor to be published.³

Aristotle is believed to have been the first to recognise that metaphors were a cognitive linguistic instrument but his insights were not re-visited until Richards who first

¹ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1980), 5. Emphasis/italics will be as per the original in all quotes.

² George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1984), 26; George B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980), 18, 144.

³ Peter Macky, *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: A Method for Interpreting the Bible* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1990), 1

delineated the “tenor” and “vehicle” of the metaphor;⁴ the vehicle ‘carries over’ characteristics (hence μεταφέρω from the Greek ‘to carry over’) to the tenor (from the Latin *teneo* ‘to hold’). Thus in “I am the door” the vehicle is the door that carries over characteristics to Jesus, the tenor, the complete statement forming the metaphor. Although not literally true a metaphor seeks to convey a truth, often such being left to the reader to surmise.

Metaphor theory has previously focused on these ‘pair-wise bindings’ (where ‘A’ is said to be ‘B’), but since the 1970s the exploration of large-scale metaphors has emerged as a distinct interdisciplinary field of study.⁵ This is where an initial metaphoric statement (the pair-wise ‘A is B’) can create a new area of understanding, a new conceptual domain. Linguists tend to refer to such metaphors as structure-mapping, and rather than employing the terms vehicle and tenor, speak of a source domain and a target domain.⁶ To describe the process of transferring concepts from one domain to another this paper will use the terminology cross-domain mapping, or simply cross-mapping.

An example of a large-scale structural metaphor is found in Ps 23, where the statement: “the LORD is my shepherd” forms what is called a root metaphor—a metaphoric statement that opens a new area of understanding—in this case, that God is like a shepherd to his people.⁷ This can be diagrammatically imagined like this:

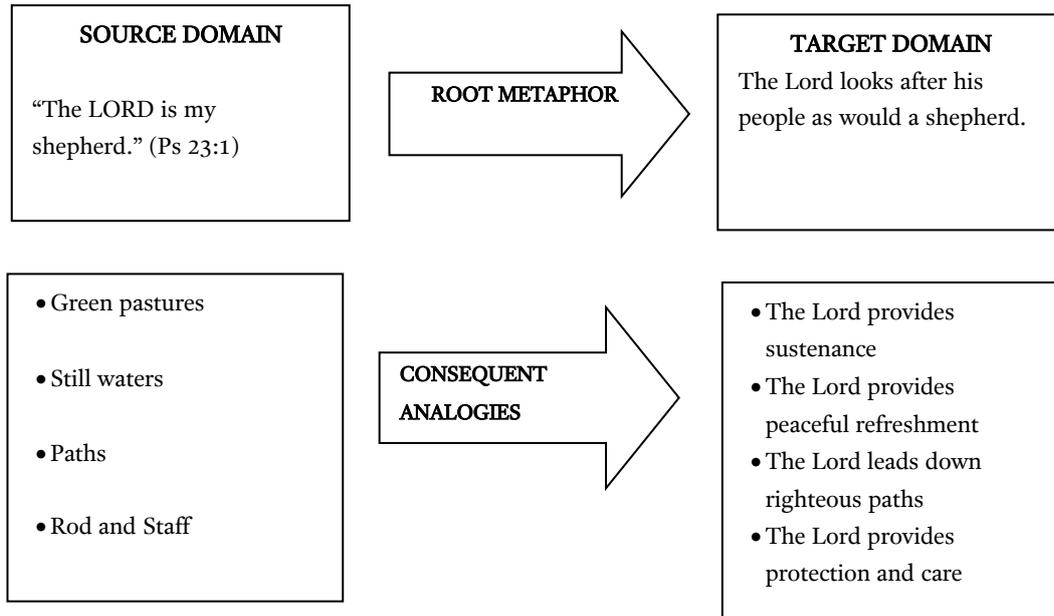
⁴ Thus: Mary Gerhart and Allan Melvin Russell, *Metaphoric Process: The Creation of Scientific and Religious Understanding* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1984), 97-101; I.A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1936), 96-97

⁵ Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, “Rethinking Metaphor,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 53; Robert Masson, *Without Metaphor, No Saving God: Theology after Cognitive Linguistics*, SPT 54 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 10-11

⁶ Gentner and Brian Bowdle, “Metaphor as Structure-Mapping,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 109

⁷ “... root metaphors ... have the ability to engender conceptual diversity ... an unlimited number of potential interpretations at a conceptual level ... They are the dominant metaphors capable of both engendering and organizing a network”: Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University, 1976), 64

The LORD is My Shepherd



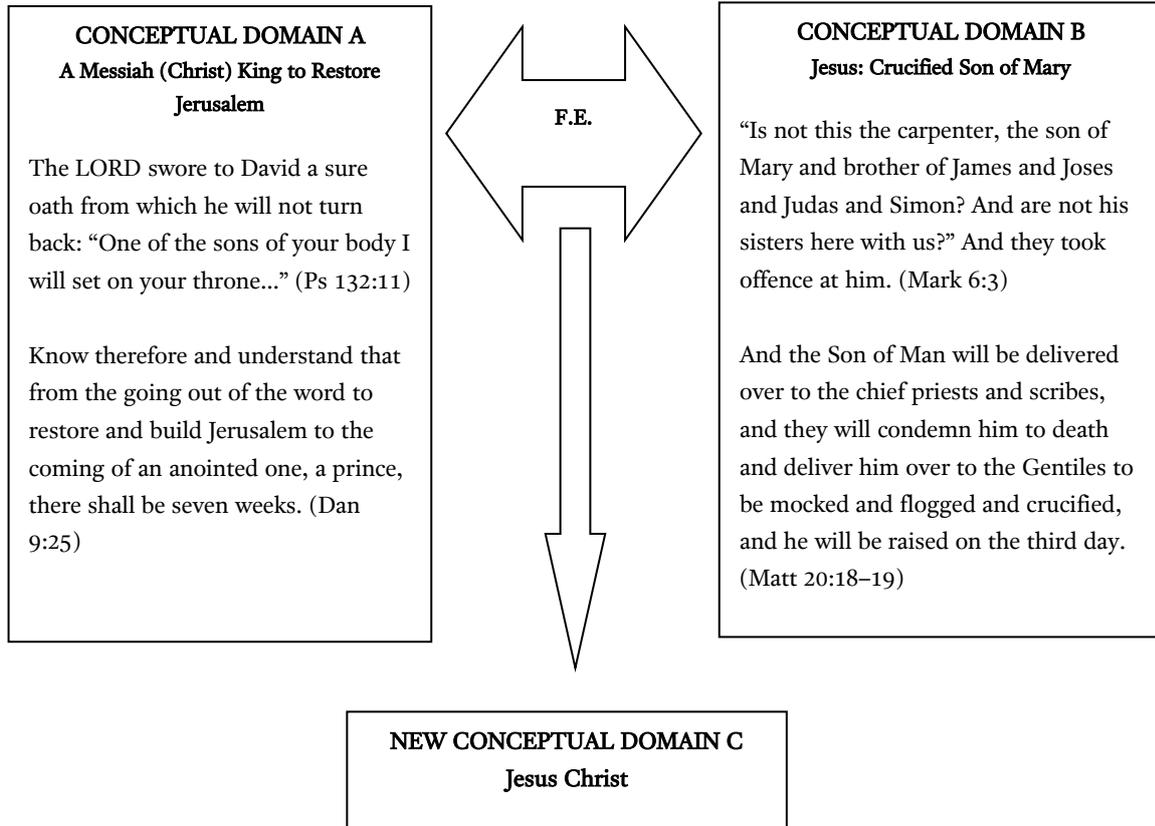
This root metaphor allows the Psalmist to exploit the new conceptual domain with consequent metaphoric expressions, for example: "he makes me lie down by green pastures ... your rod and staff they comfort me." These are not new metaphors but rather analogies that can be seen across the two domains, or as Gentner and Bowdle see it, "Once the alignment is made, further candidate inferences are spontaneously projected from base to target."⁸

Metaphoric cross-mapping can be from a source domain to a new target domain (as in Ps 23), or two existing conceptual domains can be mapped on to each other, or rather merged, to give rise to a third domain that leaves behind the original two in what Masson describes as a "tectonic reconfiguration"; his analogy is of two tectonic plates colliding giving rise to a change of the landscape. He cites as an example: "Jesus is the Messiah" where a victorious king of Israel and a crucified son of a carpenter become one in Jesus Christ having been merged in a "forced equivalence"—making possible "logical moves otherwise unavailable."⁹ The cross-mapping might be imagined like this:

⁸ Gentner and Bowdle, "Metaphor," in Gibbs, *The Cambridge Handbook*, 109-10; for discussion of metaphoric expressions: Masson, *Without Metaphor*, 13-14

⁹ Masson, *Without Metaphor*, 59-68, 186; also: Mary Gerhart and Allan Melvin Russell, *New Maps for Old: Explorations in Science and Religion* (London: Continuum, 2001), 45-60

Forced Equivalence Mapping of Jesus the Christ



F.E. = Forced Equivalence

There is now a rapidly expanding body of literature applying structure-mapping principles in a wide range of academic disciplines.¹⁰ However, Masson’s perception is that:

Recent developments in understanding ... [in] the interdisciplinary field of cognitive linguistics provide fresh ground for rethinking how God and religious beliefs are conceptualized.... These challenges of cognitive linguistics’ to standard accounts of metaphor and figurative language have not been seriously addressed in theology and religious studies.¹¹

His observation appears to be supported by the fact that *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* has 28 articles from “distinguished scholars from different

¹⁰ Raymond W. Gibbs Jr., ed., *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5

¹¹ Masson, *Without Metaphor*, 4, 16

academic fields” ranging through science, law, mathematics, psychoanalysis, music, and art, but theology is not represented.¹²

2 Genesis 2:24

Gen 2:23 & Gen 2:24 compared

[23] וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עָצָם מֵעַצְמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לִקְחָהּ זֹאת

[24] עַל־כֵּן יִעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהִיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד

[23] Then the man said, “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.”

[24] Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.¹³

It seems the virtually unanimous academic consensus is that Gen 2:24 in some way replicates the Adam and Eve relationship, and that the primal couple are the model for subsequent mundane marriages.¹⁴

However, at the heart of Gen 2:24 is a metaphoric concept—immediately after the description of the miraculous primal couple in Gen 2:23 being declared to be (literally) one flesh, Adam describing Eve as “flesh of my flesh,” we are told in subsequent marriages: “they [the couple] shall become one flesh.” The two entities are said to equate—A (the couple) is (or rather becomes) B (a one-flesh union). It is not literally true (and such a consanguineous union would be forbidden in the Pentateuch)—thus the statement has all the characteristics of a metaphor making, as Glucksberg terms it, a ‘literally false assertion.’¹⁵

¹² Gibbs, *The Cambridge Handbook*, 5

¹³ It can be seen that the man in Gen 2:24 is naturally born, and ‘leaves’ his family to go to his wife. Rabbinic interest in the verse focused on whether or not it reflected a matrilineal family structure in Jewish history: Bruce Kaye, “‘One Flesh’ and Marriage,” *Colloq 2* (May 1990), 49. Mace reviews the evidence that Hebrew patriarchy was preceded by a more remote matriarchal regime but concludes “such a view is now entirely out of the question”: David. R. Mace, *Hebrew Marriage: A Sociological Study* (London: Epworth, 1953), 76-82. Gehring suggests the husband ‘forsakes’ rather than leaves: René Gehring, *The Biblical “One Flesh” Theology of Marriage as Constituted in Genesis 2: 24* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 22-24; also: Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1987), 70

¹⁴ For a representative list of publications over the last twenty years that articulate such a view: Colin Hamer, *Marital Imagery in the Bible: An Exploration of Genesis 2:24 and its Significance for the Understanding of New Testament Divorce and Remarriage Teaching* (London: Apostolos, 2015), 67-68

¹⁵ Loader states: “בשר [flesh] can be used metaphorically in the Hebrew for one’s own kin or family”: William R. G. Loader, *The New Testament on Sexuality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 278; Glucksberg suggests converting a metaphor to a

The source domain of the Gen 2:24 metaphor is found in the one-flesh union of the primal couple and the familial one-flesh unions between birth children, their parents, and their siblings (such would have been familiar to any reader of Genesis); the target domain is the husband and wife relationship illustrated by those literal one-flesh relationships. Thus the ‘one flesh’ husband and wife relationship is a metaphoric familial one-flesh relationship. Instone-Brewer believes that in ancient Israel, “‘they shall be one flesh’ would probably have been interpreted to mean as ‘they shall be one family’” and others who take a text-based approach to the verse make similar comment.¹⁶ The term *one flesh*, or simply *flesh*, can also refer to wider kinship groupings, embracing the concept of a clan and even a national people group.¹⁷

It is clear from the narrative of the OT that although the primal couple were miraculously created and that their relationship was formed by the direct action of God, the pattern of marriage subsequently was that the man and woman were born naturally of their own parents, and any new one-family marital affinity relationship was established by the couple themselves (although this often involved their birth families to varying degrees).¹⁸ The documentary evidence contemporaneous to the redaction of the NT points to the fact that this was the understanding in Israel in NT times.¹⁹ Thus there is no reason to suggest that Gen 2:24 in its immediate context, or in ancient Israel, or in NT times, was understood to indicate a miraculous, mystical, or ontological dimension to the mundane marriage union described. In other words, in both the Jewish and

simile can facilitate comprehension. An example would be, “the couple become ‘like’ a one flesh union”: Sam Glucksberg, “How Metaphors Create Categories - Quickly,” in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought* (ed. Raymond W. Gibbs Jr.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 67–68

¹⁶ David Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 22; Skinner points out that in both the Hebrew and Arabic “flesh” is synonymous with clan or kindred group and references Lev 25:49; John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1930), 70; Kaye states: “The term ‘flesh and bone’ occurs only eight times in the Old Testament apart from Genesis 2:23. In Genesis 29:14 and 37:27 it directly and clearly means someone in a close blood relation ... In general terms the phrase has the immediate and direct sense of blood relation but, as well, is used figuratively of a close relationship.” He cites: Gen 29:14; 37:27; 2 Sam 5:1; 19:12, 13; 1 Chr 11:1; Neh 5:5; Job 2:5; Kaye, “‘One Flesh,’” 48-49

¹⁷ Skinner, *Genesis*, 70; Dunn commenting on Phil 3 states: “‘confidence in the flesh’ for Paul was confidence in belonging to the people of Israel.... It follows then that it is *sarx* as denoting membership of Israel”: James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 69

¹⁸ Anderson sees in Gen 2:23 (“This at last [עצמותי] is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”) that the use of the article ה having the force demonstrative pronoun is significant because the demonstrative pronoun “this” (זה) is also appended to the phrase (“(somewhat redundantly?)” he continues: “Targum Neophyti and Ps.-Jonathan clarify what is so emphatically important and novel about this occasion. “This time *and never again will a woman be created from a man as this one was created from me*” (italics = midrashic explanation); he further points out that the Abot de Rabbi Nathan (B) states: “This one time God acted as groomsman for Adam; from now on he must get one himself”: Gary Anderson, ‘Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden,’ *HTR* 82/2 (1989), 125-26. For family involvement in marriage see: Daniel I. Block, ‘Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,’ in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. Ken M. Campbell (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 56–58

¹⁹ Hamer, *Marital Imagery in the Bible*, 43–61, 175–87, 234–72

Christian Scriptures, Gen 2:24 was understood to mean that on marriage the couple became one family. In light of this, and the semantic domain of בשר (flesh) demonstrated in the Hebrew Bible, it is suggested the verse could be legitimately translated as:

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one family.

A widely held view in the church and among Christian scholars is that it is coitus that creates the Gen 2:24 relationship.²⁰ However, it is suggested McCarthy elucidates the situation when he says a covenant was “the means the ancient world took to extend relationships beyond the natural unity by blood.”²¹ In contrast, no covenant was required for the primal couple union, and none is articulated—they were already one flesh. (Although this paper will use the term ‘covenant’ in relation to the mundane marriage agreement it is not intended to endorse any later theological connotations of such.)²²

Genesis 2:24 does not mention any specific marriage agreement, but the readers of the Pentateuch will have been familiar with how marriages in Israel were formed—that is, with a volitional contract which was either understood, or articulated orally or in writing. This is evidenced in OT legislation, demonstrated in the narratives, and in the extant documentary evidence through to NT times.²³

Thus it seems that it is the family blood relationship that is ‘carried over’ in the Gen 2:24 metaphor to the volitional, covenantal relationship of the husband and wife, and it is that volitional, covenantal relationship which underpins the aetiology of mundane marriage—husband and wife are now perceived to be ‘kin’—the family is a cohesive unit.²⁴ This is demonstrated in the West when a woman, on marriage, takes her husband’s family name.

²⁰ For e.g.: Loader, *The New Testament on Sexuality*, 170, 172

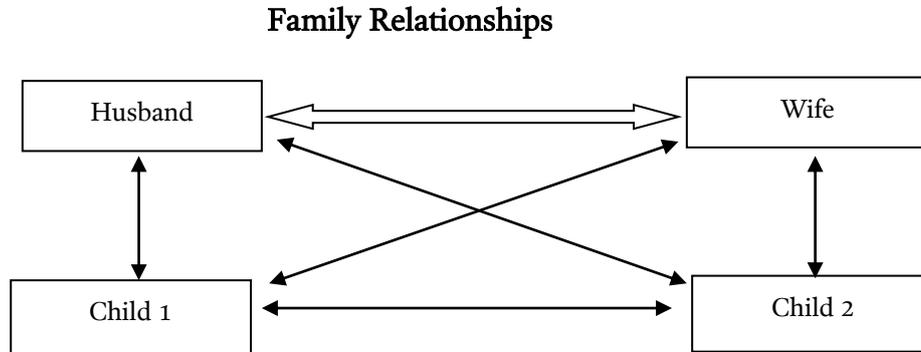
²¹ Dennis J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant: A Study in Form in the Ancient Oriental Documents and in the Old Testament* (AB 21; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1963), 175; Hugenberger sees the predominant meaning of covenant (בְּרִית) in biblical Hebrew is “an elected, as opposed to natural, relationship of obligation”: Gordon P. Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1994), 171

²² Hugenberger asserts that a marriage agreement is a covenant sworn before God, but it is suggested he fails to identify an undisputed biblical example: Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant*, 216-79; *contra* Instone-Brewer who argues persuasively that mundane marriage is a contractual relationship: Instone-Brewer, *Divorce and Remarriage*, 15-19

²³ In the legislation: Exod 21:7-11; Deut 24:1-4; in the narratives: Gen 24; 34:8-12; for documentary evidence see: Hamer, *Marital Imagery in the Bible*, 170–93

²⁴ This situation is reflected in many legal systems where the next of kin of a wife is her husband (and vice versa) even though there is no blood relationship.

The difference in a family with two birth children between the husband and wife relationship and that of the child/sibling relationships can be diagrammatically represented like this:



The parent/child/sibling relationships are blood relationships and occupy the same conceptual domain as that of Adam and Eve, in that these relationships are (and always were) one flesh—they are non-volitional, non-covenantal, and permanent—a reality, not construct. In contrast, the Gen 2:24 one-flesh relationship between the husband and wife is a construct of a volitional, covenantal union.²⁵

Some of the key differences between the conceptual domains of the literal one-flesh relationship of the primal couple, and the one-flesh construct of mundane marriage, can be set out thus:

Genesis 2:23

1. A miraculous man and woman.
2. Remain as they are.
3. In a literal one-flesh union.
4. Without the need for a covenant.

Genesis 2:24

1. A naturally born man and woman.
2. Choose to become what they were not.
3. In a metaphoric one-flesh union.
4. By means of a volitional, conditional covenant.

Wenham, reflecting the academic consensus and the conflation of the aetiology of marriage in the two verses, states that Gen 2:24 “is a comment by the narrator applying the principles of the first marriage to every marriage”;²⁶ however, it can be seen that the four principles of Gen 2:24 outlined here are mutually exclusive to the principles underlying Gen 2:23 and the first marriage described there. As articulated above, the

²⁵ The marital one-family construct brings the Pentateuchal prohibited degrees of affinity into force that are similar to the forbidden consanguinity degrees of sexual relationships, as outlined in Leviticus chapters 18 and 20.

²⁶ Wenham, *Genesis*, 70

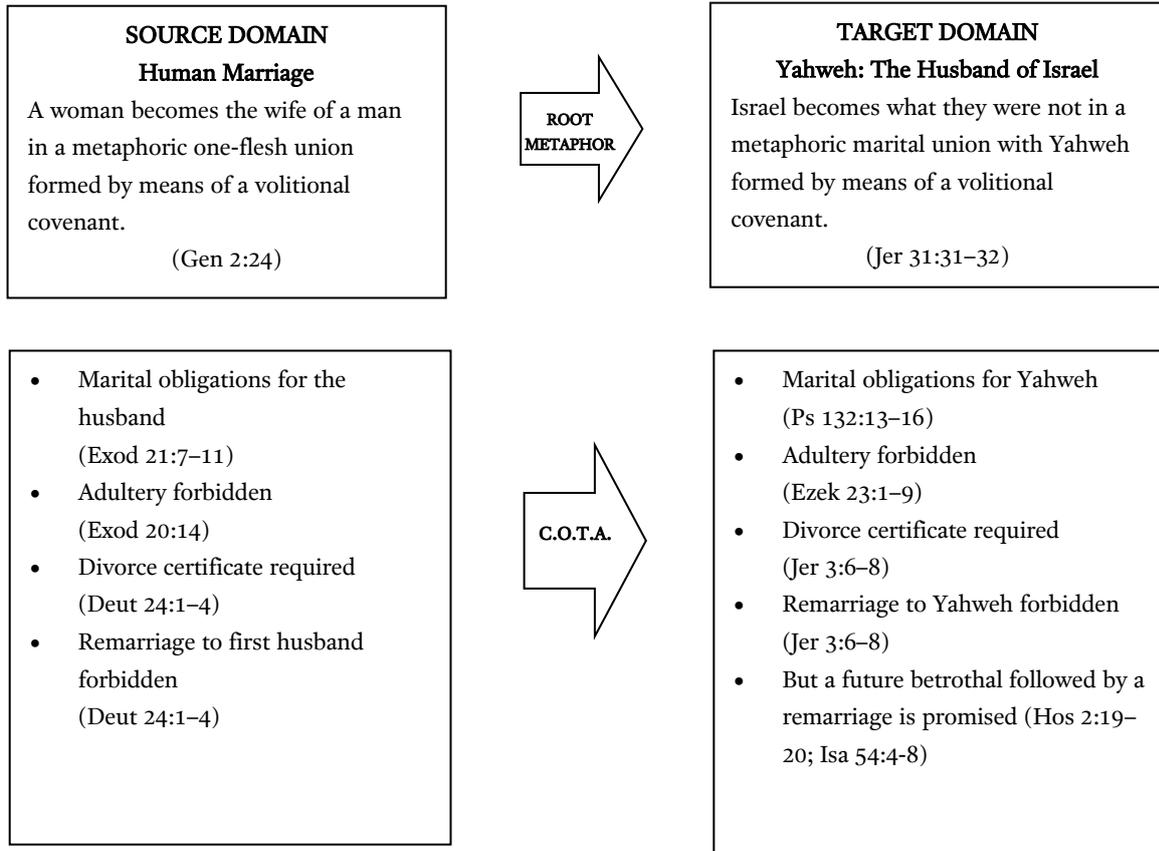
documentary evidence, and the Scripture text itself, demonstrates that in Israel the principles of Gen 2:24, not those of Gen 2:23, underpin the understanding of mundane marriage within that people group.

3 The Employment of Genesis 2:24 in the Bible's Marital and Body Imagery

Any metaphor relies on a source domain based on a reality known to the audience to illustrate the target domain that the metaphor is endeavouring to explain. Thus the source domain of metaphors in the NT—shepherds, vines, seeds—demonstrate the agricultural nature of Jewish society at that time. It follows that, as metaphor theory would lead one to expect, the cross-domain mapping in all biblical marital imagery is based on mundane marriage as outlined in Gen 2:24, and as understood in Israel—not on the Gen 2:23 miraculous marriage of the primal couple—a marriage outside their experience. Thus the root metaphor for the pervasive biblical concept that *God is a husband/Christ is a bridegroom* is based on the principles of Gen 2:24, and these are exploited by both OT and NT writers with many subsequent analogical inferences.

Thus the Hebrew Bible relates how ancient Israel, a naturally born people group, became what they were not previously, the metaphoric wife of Yahweh in a volitional, covenantal relationship. This can be represented diagrammatically like this:

Yahweh: The Husband of Israel

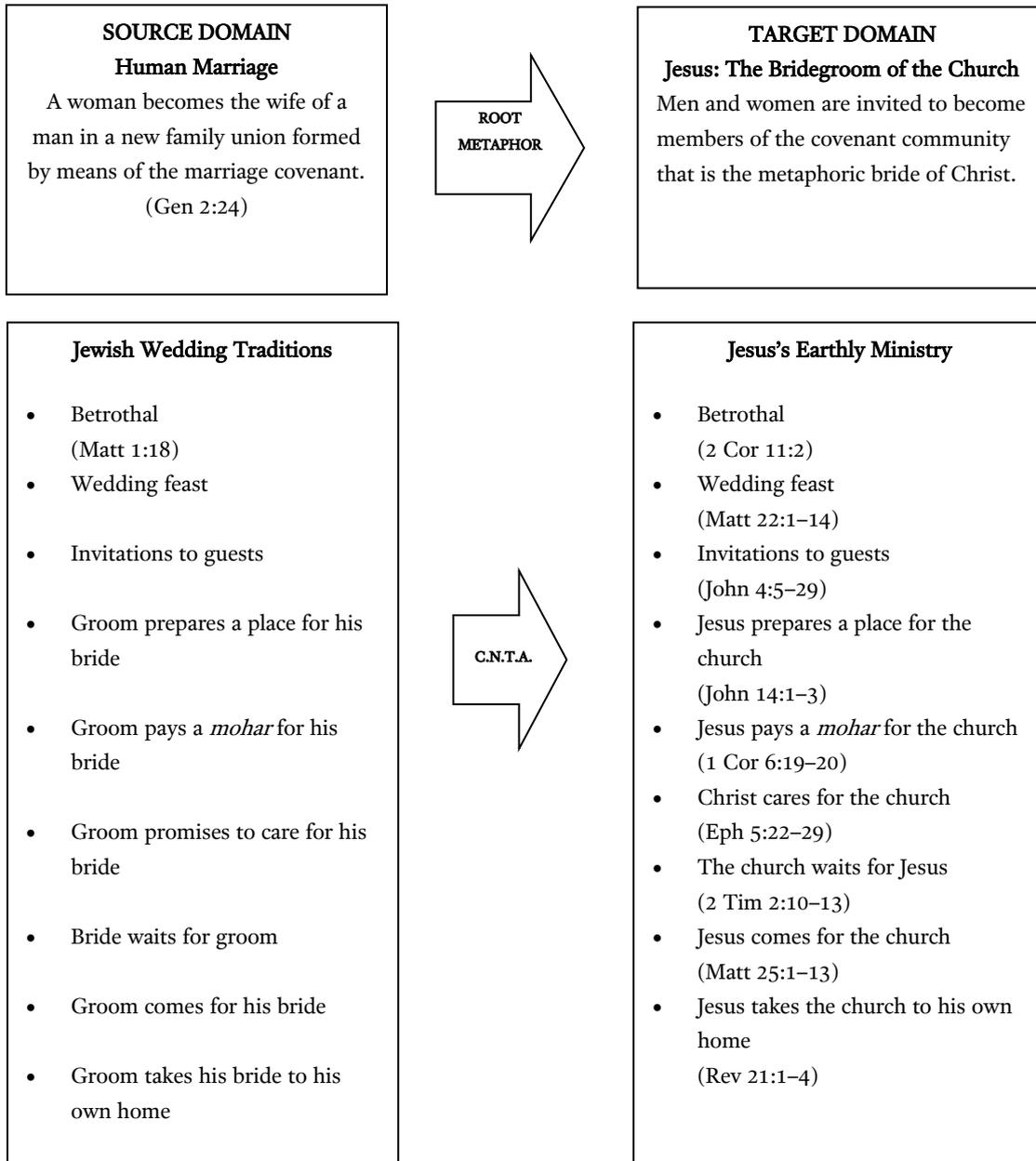


C.O.T.A. = Consequent Old Testament Analogies

In the NT, the source domain of the marital imagery remains the same, but this time the root metaphor that arises from Gen 2:24 is that *Jesus is the Bridegroom of the Church*. This gives rise to a new set of analogies, whereby traditions from contemporary Jewish weddings are exploited, primarily in the Gospels, to portray Jesus’s earthly ministry as the Jewish bridegroom’s wedding week when he anticipates his forthcoming wedding.²⁷ Thus in Jesus’s ministry all are invited to become what they are not, part of the community that forms the ‘bride’ of Christ, in a metaphoric union with him by means of a volitional covenant.

²⁷ See: Hamer, *Marital Imagery in the Bible*, 194–202

Jesus: The Bridegroom of the Church



C.N.T.A. Consequent New Testament Analogies

3.1 The Body of Christ

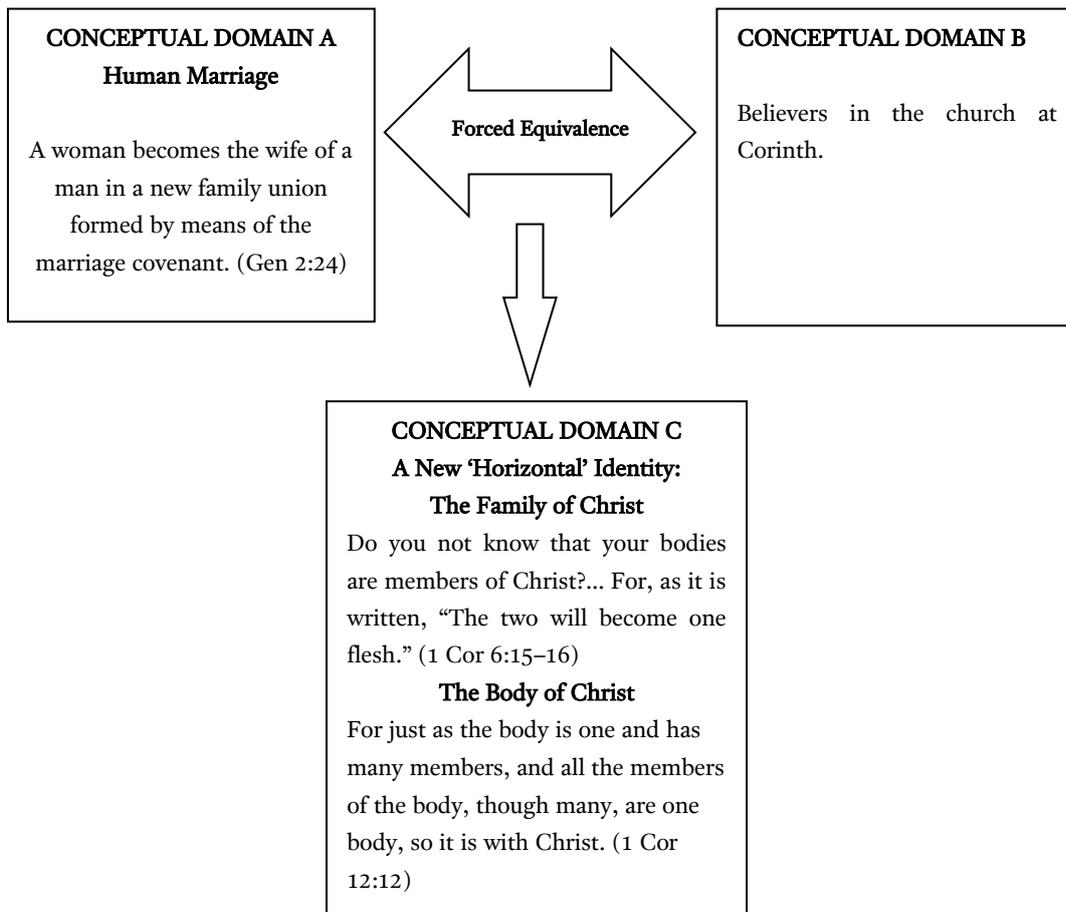
The NT cross-maps Gen 2:24 in two other ways, both unique to the Pauline corpus, to form the concept of a metaphoric body of Christ and a metaphoric body of a prostitute.

First Corinthians 6:15–16 contains the statement:

[15] Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? ... [16] ... For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” (1 Cor 6:15–16)

Paul is clearly referencing Gen 2:24 and he maps that kinship union on to the believers at Corinth. But this is not cross-mapping from a source to a target, instead he makes a forced equivalence cross-mapping of two existing conceptual domains, which gives rise to a third conceptual domain: that all believers are seen to form one family, who in turn form a new corporate entity—the ‘body of Christ.’

The Metaphoric Body of Christ



This cross-mapping also allows Paul to make (as Masson might describe it) “logical moves otherwise unavailable”;²⁸ thus Paul employs his corporate body idea extensively in the corpus to represent the church (e.g. 1 Cor 6:15; 12:12; Eph 1:22–23; 2:14–16; 3:6; Col 1:18, 24), and to represent the individual members in their ministries as forming a functioning entity (e.g. Rom 12:4–8; 1 Cor 12:14–31; Eph 4:15–16).

3.2 The Metaphoric Body of a Prostitute

The second corporate body cross-mapping is in the same pericope:

[15] Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! [16] Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” (1 Cor 6:15–16)

The academic consensus is that Paul in v. 16 is referencing coitus with a prostitute.²⁹ But I suggest that the ‘body of a prostitute’ is the precise antithesis of the ‘body of Christ,’ and that Paul is employing the same imagery that pervades the OT, when Israel in their apostasy away from Yahweh is described as *being* a prostitute.³⁰ A clear example is seen in Ezekiel, when he declares of Judah: “Therefore, O prostitute, hear the word of the LORD” (Ezek 16:35). In other words, Judah collectively, *is* the prostitute—and individual members of the tribe are, in effect, considered by Ezekiel to be members of that prostitute. It seems Paul is using that same imagery here in 1 Cor 6, when he suggests

²⁸ Masson, *Without Metaphor*, 59–68, 186

²⁹ For academic consensus see references in: Tom Holland, *Contours of Pauline Theology* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2004), 124–139; other examples include Loader: “Sexual intercourse leads people to becoming ‘one flesh’ ... Again we have to draw on Gen 2:24. I make myself a member of a prostitute by having sexual intercourse with her”: Loader, *The New Testament on Sexuality*, 170, 172; other examples include Grosheide (despite seeing that 1 Cor 6:19 might reference the corporate body of believers): “as often as a person has intercourse with a harlot, he becomes one flesh with her”: F.W. Grosheide, *Commentary on The First Epistle to the Corinthians; The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1953), 149, 151–52; J. Paul Sampley, “The First Letter to the Corinthians,” in *Acts Introduction to Epistolary Literature Romans 1 Corinthians* (ed. Leander E. Keck; vol. X of *The New Interpreter's Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*, Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2002), 862–63

³⁰ Adultery (זָנָה) and its derivatives rarely appear in connection with OT marital imagery. Abma comments that the metaphorical use of the verb ‘to prostitute’ (זָנָה) predominates, but this is “only intelligible in light of the covenant relationship between Yhwh and Israel . . . [and] has special connotations of ‘breaking away from a relationship’”; she quotes its use in Exod 34:14–16 in support of her argument that in the context of marital imagery it is used to denote Israel’s lack of faithfulness to Yahweh and is synonymous with adultery: Richtsje Abma, *Bonds of Love: Methodic Studies of Prophetic Texts with Marriage Imagery (Isaiah 50:1–3 and 54:1–10, Hosea 1–3, Jeremiah 2–3)* (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1999), 137–40; Bird sees that the root זָנָה can refer to a common prostitute or a promiscuous daughter or wife, and that the activity has, in itself, no cultic connotations, but its metaphorical employment to denote apostasy of the general population is unique to the Hebrew Bible: Phyllis Bird, “To Play the Harlot: An Enquiry into Old Testament Metaphor,” in *Gender Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1989), 76, 88–89

that some members of the church at Corinth are behaving not like Christian believers, but like a prostitute. In this imagery these church members are, like Judah, not going with prostitutes, they are the prostitute, and the individuals are members of her. Holland, although not referencing metaphor theory, persuasively argues such an exegesis.³¹ And Huber endorses the concept when commenting on the imagery of Rev 17 to 21:

The images of harlot and bride depict two possible forms of existence for the Christian community. The community can live in idolatry, as a prostitute, or the community can live in faithfulness to God, as a bride.³²

It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore this further, but the academic consensus that 1 Cor 6:16 is using Gen 2:24 to refer to a sex act with a prostitute has, I suggest, further clouded the understanding of Gen 2:24 and how it is employed in the NT.

4 Ephesians 5:31–32 and the People of God

Ephesians 5:31–32 forms the conclusion of the pericope that begins at v. 22—it is the longest sustained teaching on marriage in either the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. In light of the analysis above it can be seen that it consists of a juxtaposition of two different but related models: Christ as head of the church, his metaphoric body; and Christ as saviour of the church, his metaphoric bride.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. (Eph 5:22–24)

³¹ Holland, *Contours*, 124-39.

³² Lynn R. Huber, *Like a Bride Adorned: Reading Metaphor in John's Apocalypse* (EMEC; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 32; similarly Beale, pointing out the parallel between Rev 17:1-3 and Rev 21:9-10 states: "Just as Babylon symbolizes socio-economic and religious culture arrayed in antagonism to God, so the bride, portrayed as the new Jerusalem, represents the redeemed community": G.K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation* (ed. Howard I. Marshall and Donald A. Hagner; NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1999), 1064; Gehring comments that a corporate interpretation in 1 Cor 6:19-20 is possible: "thus 'leaving' the world behind, 'joining' Jesus Christ (v. 17), becoming ... 'one body' (vv. 17, 19) with him" but does not apply the concept to the "prostitute": Gehring, *The Biblical "One Flesh"*, 266-67

The metaphoric corporate body of Christ imagery is used analogically to suggest a husband has similar headship of his wife to that of Christ over the church and thus the analogy reinforces the household codes (e.g. Col 3:18–4:1; 1 Pet 2:13–3:7)—marital imagery *per se* is not employed.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25–27)

Here the metaphoric marital imagery is used analogically to suggest a husband has a similar responsibility to love his wife as Christ does the church, utilising in the imagery bridal baths and bridal purity from Jewish traditions of mundane marriage.³³

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. (Eph 5:28–30)

I suggest this is a return to corporate body imagery, and another analogy is made between that and mundane marriage, and its lessons applied to the husband. Thus the pericope up to this point has a clear A B A structure whereby the Ephesians author is seen to move from: corporate body imagery to emphasise headship; marital imagery to illustrate the sacrificial love a husband should have for his wife; and back to corporate body imagery to illustrate a husband's responsibility to nourish his wife as he might his own body.

³³ O'Brien sees v. 26 a reference to Ezek 16:8–14 and the prenuptial Jewish bathing customs (not baptism): Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 422–24; *contra* Schnackenburg: "The author is clearly thinking of Baptism": Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Helen Heron (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991), 249; Batey equates the bridal bath to baptism: Richard A. Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 28; similarly Sampley sees a reference to Ezek 16, baptism, and the bridal bath; he comments on v. 27 and the purity required of a bride and allusions to Song: J. Paul Sampley, *And the Two Shall Become One Flesh: A Study of Traditions in Ephesians 5:21–33*, SNTSMS 16 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 41–51, 131, 139

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Eph 5:31-32)

These two verses, in effect, make the classic pair-wise metaphoric A is B statement, whereby Gen 2:24 is said to refer to Christ and the church—the Ephesians author thus articulates the structure map of the NT marital imagery. However, the conflation of Gen 2:23 with Gen 2:24 in the minds of scholars, has led them to understand that the author is saying Adam and Eve refer to Christ and the church. Such seems to be the unanimous academic consensus. A recent example (2014) is that of Beale and Gladd:

the Old Testament conception of marriage properly understood finds its roots in Genesis 2:24. The Israelites were to hearken back to Adam and Eve's marriage in the garden as the fountainhead of all Israelite marriage.... Since the primeval couple's marriage [i.e. Adam and Eve] was the template for future marriages, we must keep Genesis 2:24 in mind when we study the marriage metaphor between the Lord and Israel.... Israel was to model her behaviour after Eve and remain faithful to her Adamic husband, the Lord. With the Old Testament context of Genesis 2:24 in mind, we will now return to Ephesians 5:31–32.³⁴

Thus the primal couple are read into Gen 2:24 and seen to be both the model of mundane marriage and the basis of the Bible's marital imagery. Exegetes do the same in the Matthew and Mark divorce teaching—the consensus view is that Jesus is referencing Adam and Eve's marriage, even though the Gospel writers record him as citing Gen 2:24, not Gen 2:23.³⁵

In Eph 5, because the referent of Gen 2:24 is thought to be the primal couple, and Rom 5:14 and 2 Cor 2 11:2–3 make it clear that the primal couple typologically prefigure Christ and the church, exegetes pursue a typological analysis. For example, Beale and Gladd state that, “*The revealed mystery in Ephesians 5 therefore refers to Paul's*

³⁴ G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2014), 178

³⁵ Hamer, *Marital Imagery in the Bible*, 67–68

perception that Adam and Eve’s union in marriage typologically corresponds to Christ and the church.”³⁶

However, if it is accepted that typology is when a past event prefigures a future event, one that usually has a Christological dimension, then I would maintain that Adam and Eve’s marriage typologically prefigures the final state of the Christ/church union in the marriage at the eschaton—Carmichael pointing out that at the marriage supper of the Lamb, Christ in effect ‘marries’ his own body as did Adam with Eve, fulfilling, he believes, that Edenic ideal.³⁷ The typology can be set out like this:

Adam and Eve

1. Adam, a miraculously created man.
2. Eve, miraculously made from Adam.
3. Adam marries Eve, his own body.
4. In a union formed by God.

Christ and the Church at the Eschaton

1. Christ, a miraculously conceived man.
2. The church, miraculously brought into being by the Holy Spirit.
3. Christ marries the church, his own body.
4. In a union formed by God.

In contrast, in Eph 5:31–32, it seems clear that the author is articulating the structure map of the NT *metaphoric* marital imagery. Thus the four key features of mundane marriage outlined in this paper are cross-mapped to the Christ/church relationship:

Gen 2:24

1. A naturally born man and a woman.
2. Choose to become what they are not.
3. In a metaphoric one-flesh union.
4. By means of a volitional covenant.

Christ and the Church

1. Naturally born men and women.
2. Choose to become what they are not.
3. In a metaphoric one-flesh union.
4. By means of a volitional covenant.

So the mystery now revealed lies not as some believe, in mundane marriage itself;³⁸ or in the Christ/church union;³⁹ or, as with Beale and Gladd, that Adam and Eve’s relationship corresponds to Christ and the church—the mystery is rather in the identity

³⁶ Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 181

³⁷ Calum M. Carmichael, ‘Marriage and the Samaritan Woman,’ *NTS* 26 (1980), 341–42

³⁸ For example: Stephen Clark, ‘Union with Christ: Towards a Biblical and Systematic Theological Framework for Practical Living,’ in *In Christ Alone* (ed. Stephen Clark and Matthew Evans; Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 258

³⁹ For example: Schnackenburg, *Ephesians*, 254–55

of the members of the body of Christ, in that they include a people who were considered to be outside God's covenant, but who now can become what they were not, the people of God. Sampley points out that the author is developing this theme from chapter two;⁴⁰ vv. 15-16 state:

... that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. (Eph 2: 15–16)

And Sampley suggests:

When a substantive like *μυστήριον* is used six times in such crucial places as it is in Ephesians, there is considerable probability of some lines of continuity of meaning between the uses in the different contexts.⁴¹

But Sampley, as with most scholars, does not reference any metaphoric concepts, and believes that Gen 2:24 refers to the primal couple, and in so doing acknowledges the struggle that many exegetes, including himself, have in establishing the meaning of the reference to Gen 2:24. Nonetheless Sampley sees, in line with the position taken in this paper, that the *μυστήριον* of Eph 5:32 is the incorporation of Gentile and Jew into the one body;⁴² he comments: “The recipients of Ephesians are urged to recognise that they, together with Jews, share in God's cosmic purposes.”⁴³

Thus I suggest that Eph 5:31–32 links the Christ/church relationship and the inclusion of the Gentiles with the mundane marital affinity relationship of Gen 2:24, whereby a non-consanguineous couple on marriage can be counted as being in one family.

Galatians 3:16 states:

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your offspring,” who is Christ.

⁴⁰ Sampley, *And the Two*, 92–94, 161–62

⁴¹ Sampley, *And the Two*, 91; *μυστήριον* actually appears seven times in Ephesians: Eph 1:9; 3:3, 4, 6, 9; 5:32; 6:19.

⁴² Sampley, *And the Two*, 90–96; similarly, Lincoln: ‘In the other five references in Ephesians ... “mystery” involves ... the coming together in Christ of Jews and Gentiles in the one Church.... Is it not most likely that ... here in 5:32 the writer has this same Christ-event in view’: Andrew T. Lincoln, ‘The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians,’ *JSNW Testament* 14 (1982), 32–33; however Barth, accepting that *mystery* elsewhere in the letter is a reference to the Jew/Gentile union in Christ favours the view that *mystery* in Eph 5:32 ‘indicates that the Scripture passage quoted ... is to be understood in an allegorical or typological way’: Markus Barth, *Ephesians 4–6: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary by Markus Barth*, AB 34A. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 641–44; similarly Coppens specifically rejects *mystery* as a reference to the Jew/Gentile union in Eph 5:32 and states: ‘In Eph 5:32 the mystery concerns the relations of Christ with the Church’: Joseph Coppens, “‘Mystery’ in the Theology of Saint Paul and its Parallels at Qumran,” in *Paul and Qumran: Studies in New Testament Exegesis*, ed. Jerome Murphy-O’Connor (London: Chapman, 1968), 142, 150

⁴³ Sampley, *And the Two*, 162

It is clear Paul sees that the promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Christ, thus when the believing community becomes the bride of Christ they, by means of the Gen 2:24 affinity union, become a member of Christ's family. Thus Gal 3:29 says: "if we are Christ's we are Abraham's offspring—heirs according to promise"—that is, not by blood. This contrasts with Israel, who Paul explains in his Gal 4:21–31 'allegory,' was like Hagar, "born according to the flesh"—that is, she represents an understanding of a blood relationship with Abraham.⁴⁴

Israel's hope was in that consanguineous union with Abraham—their boast was that they came *from* Abraham.⁴⁵ But here in Ephesians the Gentile hope is declared to be in the conceptual domain of Gen 2:24—just as a married couple come *into* their one-flesh union, so it is that the Gentiles can become what they were not, and come into a relationship with Christ, Abraham's promised seed.⁴⁶ The clash of concepts runs through the NT and is clearly seen in Jesus's exchange with the Pharisees as recorded in John 8.

Like a wife in a mundane marriage who, although not a blood relation of her husband, is *counted as* being a member of his family by means of the marital covenantal union (symbolised when a bride changes her family name)—so it is that the members of Christ's bridal community are counted as being in Abraham's family. Romans 9:8 explains it this way: "This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring."

The argument is further strengthened when it is considered that in Rom 9:22–29 the inclusion of the Gentiles is linked to the promised 'remarriage' in the marital imagery as foretold by Hosea: "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people.'" This, it is argued in this paper, is how the promise to Abraham's offspring is reconciled with the Old Testament promises to include the Gentiles, and is the profound mystery referenced in Eph 5:32.

It follows from this analysis that the Eph 5 pericope is bringing together the two metaphoric images which belong together: the one-flesh corporate body imagery and the

⁴⁴ For a detailed consideration of this allegory consonant with the position taken in this paper see: Karen H. Jobes, 'Jerusalem, Our Mother: Metalepsis and Intertextuality in Galatians 4:21-31,' *WTJ* 55 (1993)

⁴⁵ Although others could be counted as belonging to God's people, for example, Rahab (Josh 6), and some who were in a consanguineous line with Jacob were excluded, for example, Achan (Josh 7), nonetheless the principle was that those descended from Israel were automatically included in the Sinaitic covenant.

⁴⁶ Such appears to be underpinned by the Hebrew text. Gen 2:23 has the phrase *בְּשָׂרִי מִבְּשָׂרִי* employing the inseparable preposition *מ* ('from') and thus might be translated as 'flesh from my flesh' as per the ISV (even though most Bible versions opt for "flesh of my flesh" which would normally require a construct phrase). This can be contrasted with Gen 2:24 where the inseparable preposition *ל* ('into') is used (*לְבָשָׂר*). I am grateful to David Instone-Brewer for drawing my attention to this.

one-flesh marital imagery, and in so doing portrays Jew and Gentile together forming one body (with Christ as the head) and one bride (with Christ as the bridegroom) in a marriage to be consummated at the eschaton where they will become one flesh with their 'husband.' Thus the author of Ephesians sees a *sensus plenior* in Gen 2:24 foreshadowing redemptive history and the inclusion of the Gentiles.⁴⁷

Conclusion

In conclusion, I suggest the confidence of national Israel was rooted in the conceptual domain of Gen 2:23—their hope being based on a consanguineous union with Abraham via his seed Jacob, but that this union was only an earthly picture of the Gen 2:24 affinity union of the elect with Abraham's promised seed, Jesus Christ. It is this affinity union that defines the people of God, and each mundane marriage is a picture of that, as Eph 5:31–32 articulates. Thus the New Exodus is led by the seed of Abraham, the Bridegroom Messiah, taking his bridal community with him to a new Edenic bliss—believing Jew and Gentile, bound to him by means of that Gen 2:24 union.

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⁴⁷ Accepting that *sensus plenior* differs from typology in that the meaning is in the words rather than the people or the event.

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