

# **EXEGESIS OF EPHESIANS 5:22-33**

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## EXEGESIS OF EPHESIANS 5:22-33

### *Interpretive Translation*

<sup>22</sup>wives being subject to their own husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>Because the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church, Himself being Savior of the body. <sup>24</sup>But as the church is subject to Christ, in the same way also wives are subject to their husbands in everything.

<sup>25</sup>Husbands, love your wives just as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her <sup>26</sup>in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the ritual washing of water with the word of God <sup>27</sup>in order that He Himself might present to Himself the exalted church, not having spot or wrinkle or any imperfection like that, instead that she might be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup>In this way also husbands are obligated to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife, loves himself. <sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, instead he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as also Christ nourishes and tenderly cares for the church <sup>30</sup>because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup>For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will be joined to his wife and the two will become one flesh. <sup>32</sup>This mystery is great but I myself am speaking with reference to Christ and to the church.

<sup>33</sup>In any case, each and every one of you must, in this way, love his own wife as himself, and that the wife should fear her husband.

### Exegetical Outline

**Central Idea:** By the filling of the Spirit, subjection should be expressed by wives' submission and by husbands' love, one to the other, as in the relationship between Christ and the church.

I. Wives should be subject to their husbands like the church is to Christ (5:22-24).

A. Wives should be subject to their husbands (5:22-23).

1. The wife should be subject to her husband (5:22a).
2. The wife should be subject as to the Lord (5:22b).
3. The husband is the head of the wife (5:23a).
4. Christ is the head of the church (5:23b).
5. Christ is the Savior of the church (5:23c).

B. The church is subject to Christ and wives are subject to their husbands (5:24).

II. Husbands must love their wives as Christ loved the church and as their own bodies (5:25-32).

A. Husbands must love wives as Christ loved and made the church holy (5:25-27).

1. Husbands must love wives as Christ (5:25).
2. Christ made the church holy (5:26).
3. Christ will bring the church to Himself in perfect condition (5:27a).
4. Christ will have made the church morally perfect (5:27b).

B. Husbands must love wives as their own bodies as Christ does the church (5:28-30).

1. Husbands must love their wives as their own bodies (5:28a)
2. Husbands, who love their wives, love themselves (5:28b).
3. People care about and for their bodies as Christ does for the church (5:29-30).
  - a. People care about and for their bodies (5:29a)
  - b. Christ also cares about and for the church (5:29b).
  - c. Christians are parts of His body, the church (5:30).
4. A man is one with his wife like Christ and the church (5:31-32).
  - a. Husband and wife become united physically (5:31).
  - b. Marriage is a mystery but is an analogy of Christ and the church (5:32).

III. A husband should love his wife and the wife should deeply respect her husband (5:33).

## Commentary

### Introduction

In laying out the nature of the church, Paul started Ephesians out with the provision of Christ to the individual believer, working his way to the corporate entity of the church and its unity and purpose. He began the second half of the book, that on the out-working of the first, with truths that effect the church more as a corporate whole. He, then, moved to truths that effect the individual more. So that the book, as a whole, is arranged in a chiastic ABBA pattern with each section starting out generally and becoming more individual and personal toward its latter half. We now reach that point in the final personal, individualistic section in chapter five. Paul, after general challenges in the last half of chapter four and the first half of chapter five, begins to address specific individual roles in the household. These proceed out of an imperative in 5:18 to be filled with the Spirit, several present participles of result spell out the normal outworking of being filled with the Spirit, the last of which is *being subject to one another*. This sets the stage for singling out important specific roles and how they should practice this mutual submission. The closest tie-in to the mutual submission instructed in verse 21 of chapter 5 is that of wives, the only role to be stated in specific terms of submission. The roles in the marriage relationship, with which we are concerned, are the most basic and most commonly experienced of all human interpersonal roles. What we find is a set of roles that in some ways are compatible with the accepted standards of the day but which far surpass them, especially the instructions laid out for the husband. Paul's concern, in Ephesians, for unity in the church and the church's testimony to the angels, finds its most practical expression in the paraenesis on Christian marriage in 5:22-33.

### **Wives subject to their husbands as the church to Christ (5:22-24).**

**Wives subject to their husbands (5:22-23).** The section begins as an extension of the paragraph immediately above, expegetical to it and dependent upon it. It extends to the end of verse 23 and contains instruction for wives to be subject to their husbands as well as the basis and a comparison/parallel for this basis.

**Wives subject (5:22a).** The verb for the first clause must be supplied from verse 21. Some form of ὑποτάσσω would be easiest. The overlapping linkage to the previous section demands consideration of it for the context of the household code, sometimes called the *Haustafel* (Luther), in 5:22-6:9 in full, but 5:22-33 for our purposes. The instructions for each member of the household addressed are intended to be carried out as a result of being filled (present passive imperative) with the Spirit (5:18). Following the imperative clause are five present participles of means to fulfilling the imperative, the last of which is ὑποτασσόμενοι, *being subject*. This subjection is general in verse 21, being to all Christians and is to be motivated and done *in fear of Christ* (sphere, cause and manner). This sets the stage for verse 22 and the verbless clause we are considering. Again, the smoothest verb form to supply is the present participle of ὑποτάσσω, extending the general submission statement of 22, now particularizing it for wives, their means of carrying out the general instruction and its previous imperative (5:18). There are some variants attested to that supply two imperative forms in two different locations each. One of these rivals the text in quality of evidence and exceeds it in number but none are to be taken because of the variations involved and the canon of addition. The editors choice of text, leaving out any verb form, is correct.

Wives in the plural are addressed in the nominative, not as a substitution for the vocative but as the subject material for the understood participle. There may be no special stress intended by using ἰδιοις with husbands instead of the more common personal pronoun (as per Best, 532) but one has to wonder why it is there. The presence of the article also seems to indicate the specific relationship between spouses is in view here and not a general instruction that would be cross-marital and inappropriate.

**As to the Lord (5:22b).** This is the first of many comparison/parallels drawn in this paraenesis for both the wives and husbands. These comparisons, drawn by several different conjunctions and combinations of conjunctions, serve to draw a straight line to the personal relationship with Christ or to Him as an example of an instruction. Here wives are to directly connect their submission to husbands and to the Lord. This serves to draw their focus to Christ, their Lord, giving them the means of obedience to Christ in this and, at the same time, a reason and purpose that would not depend on the husband but on the unchanging love of their Savior.

**Husband head of the wife (5:23a).** Verse 23a now gives us the basis for the submission instructed in verse 22, the husband is *head*, κεφαλή, of the wife. There are other ways this might have been stated, such as “the husband functions as head,” but what was inspired here is a predicative statement. This gives the headship of the husband a deeper reality than mere function or role or sociological convenience, it is part of who he is, part of his self-definition, his nature. The aspect of headship in view here, that of authority, is clear from the context of submission but there is some dissent from those who would see source as the main definition of headship and apply that in all contexts. For more on this discussion, please see Appendix D, P#1. For now it serves our purpose to note that, in addition to the immediate context, usage in Eph 1:22 and the social context of the Graeco-Roman household serve to establish the usage in verse 23a as that of authority (O’Brien, 413; Lincoln, 369). No basis is given here for the simple statement of the husband’s headship. It must have been widely known and undisputed or simply

not an issue requiring support. The husband's authority in the household structure of the contemporary culture is not at odds with the headship given here, even though it had undergone some change and wives had more independence than formerly (Lincoln, 369). There were, however, important differences in basis and description and much we don't know about contemporary use of κεφαλή (Best, 534). Paul provided the biblical basis, in 1 Cor 11: 3-12 and 1 Tim 2:11-13, as being in creation (O'Brien, 413) and the fall.

**Christ head of the church (5:23b).** A comparison is given, however, to Christ as head of the church, introducing this metaphor, a central one for the whole paraenesis. The presence of *καί*, *also*, draws a tighter parallel relationship between the two ideas. This does not give a basis for the husband's headship, it gives a meaningful parallel. The parallel is loaded with meaning to motivate and give direction to both husband and wife. Connection is drawn to the husband as head in 23a and to the wife as submissive in 24b. The association of the Christ-church relationship with marriage gives "a new christological sanction to the order of creation" (Best, 535). A sanction, that is, to the basis of creation described above and the order established by creation.

**Christ is Savior (5:23c).** Appended to the comparison of the Christ-church relationship is a surprising comment about Christ being the Savior of the church. Why is this included? Some have taken the statement to be a further parallel to the husband-wife relationship with the husband being savior of his wife (Lincoln, 370 and O'Brien, 414ff for complete discussions of this view). It is difficult to understand what this means, besides the general sense of protecting and providing. Also, there is no biblical precedent, not even the application of σωτηρ to a human being, and the syntax favors the near antecedent. This statement seems to simply undergird the Christ-church relationship.

**Church is subject to Christ and wives to their husbands (5:24).** The emphatic contrast of ἀλλὰ (see Best, 537 for some discussion of a possible consecutive meaning; alternate translations are offered that preserve both aspects) serves to move the reader from the basis of the wives' submission, in verse 23, onward and backward to the simple instruction of verse 22, the focus of the section. Ὑποτασσώ returns to the text twice, once being understood, in more concrete form, as an indicative, ὑποτασσεται, present middle/passive. This directs the movement created by ἀλλὰ back to the same verb in verse 22 presenting the analogy first, this time, moving back through the Christ-church relationship of 23 to the wife-husband relationship of 22. To see a chiasmic pattern here is to impose it on the text (contra Best, 537). Although seeing it here can be understood, the intervening basis of the husband's headship and its accompanying comparison in verse 23 breaks the pattern so the order concerning the wife is only ABA. The initial ὥς looks forward, in this case, to the later οὕτως καί, to create the comparison, which is both a pattern and motivation for the wives, to the church's submission to the headship of Christ. Again, as in 23b, the presence of *καί* strengthens the parallel. This submission is pictured idealistically, in the indicative, as a reality, and the missing verb should be supplied in the indicative also (Best, 538), to maintain consistency. This idealism is consistent with Ephesians and its realized eschatology and perfectly functioning body (chapter four) and concern with the heavenly realm. It, also, gives some perspective to the final ἐν παντί of this verse, an expectation in light of the ideal love of the husband about to be commanded in 25-30. All the goals and standards of God's word break down in the struggles of everyday life but the standard, the ideal, must be maintained to present an accurate view of God and obtain the maximum achievement of man, by His grace.

**Husbands must love their wives as Christ the church and as their bodies (5:25-32).**

**Husbands must love like Christ loved, making the church holy (5:25-27).** This section turns the attention to husbands, commanding them to love their wives with an unconditional and sacrificial love. Christ is presented as the model and the opportunity is taken to expound upon His historical and eschatological purposes for the church in His love and self-sacrifice. This is where the Christian household code most deviates from the common cultural norm where rights were the husbands' concern (Best, 540) and marriage was regarded as a contractual arrangement.

***Husbands must love their wives as Christ (5:25).*** Husbands, in comparison to wives, are commanded with the imperative when their responsibility is addressed. Best (538) mentions a notation by Miletic that wives are never addressed directly about their responsibility to be submissive to their husbands. The verbs are missing and understood in both instances (verses 22 and 24). This is common, of course, and given no consequence by Best, but could there be a point of tact here in addressing the one in a more vulnerable position and one upon whom there was some social pressure contra to the instruction? No such tact is evident in Col 3:18, though. However, husbands are boldly addressed in the imperative to love their wives. One might have expected instruction about directing or ruling their wives, in light of the instruction to wives and the patriarchal concerns of contemporary culture (O'Brien, 419; Best, 540; Lincoln, 373). These concerns are linked to matters of state with the prevalent thinking dating to Plato and Aristotle who saw the common relationships in the family as important to the stability of the state. The major concerns were those of authority and obedience. Lincoln discusses the greater cultural setting extensively on pages 356-361. Husbands were not enjoined to love their wives in contemporary Greek culture nor that of Judaism and ἀγαπή is never used (Lincoln, 374; Best 540). "The patriarchal-societal code is theologically modified in the exhortation to the husband . . . Patriarchal domination is thus radically questioned . . ." (Fiorenza E. Shussler, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York: Crossroad, 1983, 269-270). God has taken this a radical step further by commanding husbands to love their wives *as also Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her*. This is "radicalizing the love" (Lincoln, 374) the apostle is calling for and serves to define it in an ultimate way. It is, however, not different than the love all Christians are called to have for one another (John 13:34-35, etc.) but it shows the extent to which it is expected. It is to penetrate even the most intimate and sensitive of human relationships. "The husband's love should still be as extensive and intensive as Christ's" (Best, 541). A special mention of the sacrificial nature of this love comes to light in the phrase *gave Himself for her*, an emphasis mentioned in verse 23 by noting Christ as Savior of the church. The love of Christ, being linked by the comparative-connective conjunction combination, serves to define the husband's love and is not simply compared to it as with the comparison of verse 23. This places a great burden on Christian husbands, one impossible to bear alone, and forces him back to the imperative that started all this, πληρουσθε ἐν πνεύματι (5:18).

***The church made holy (5:26).*** The love of Christ is the most powerful force in creation and is active and purposeful. The purpose and result of the self-sacrificing love of Christ was the sanctification of the church, making her holy. Paul now takes the opportunity to describe this great accomplishment with the first of three ascensive ἵνα clauses, *that He might sanctify her, having cleansed (her) by the washing of water with the word*. The ἵνα is generally taken here to be one of purpose and this seems most likely if only one sense is allowed. However, result must be considered and given some weight since when God purposes there is a sure result

and the purification of the church is no different. The sanctification in view here is historical, being represented by the aorist subjunctive, not that it has any temporal significance, referring to the past, but that it represents summary action and is dependent on the time frame of the aorist indicatives in verse 25 which do refer to the past, to the cross. Sanctification in its complete fulfillment is not yet finished in a temporal sense but is ongoing and future in total perspective. But all this may be spoken of as realized in summary fashion at the cross the same way salvation is viewed using other language or perspective (such as glorification). This is consistent with the realized eschatological view of Ephesians. Christ's sanctification of the church is modified by the aorist participle καθαρισας, *cleansed*, a participle of means. Most recent commentators (O'brien, 422; Lincoln, 375; Best, 542) take the participle to be one of coincidental aspect rather than antecedent as many in the past (RSV, ASV, RV, NRSV, mentioned by O'brien, 421). This is likely, given the absence of temporal perspective in verse 26 and dependence on the time frame of verse 25. This cleansing, that accomplished the sanctification, was itself accomplished by *the washing of water*, a probable figure for a cultic ritual bath or washing. This so usually taken to be baptism that both Lincoln (375) and Best (543) assume this and pass over the mention without comment or consideration. O'brien doubts baptism but gives no alternative (he is ambiguous about the pre-nuptial bath, 422f). Paul downplays baptism in his theology and practice, both Greek and Jewish sources are replete with mention of cultic washings (λουτρον is used of these, never of baptism) and cleansing and washing are linked closely numerous times in the OT (using the words we have here in the LXX). Please, see Appendix D, P#1 for a more extensive discussion and support for the previous points. Appendix C, WS#1 is helpful, as well for a more complete perspective on λουτρον for *washing*. Of course, cleansing is not accomplished by either cultic washing or baptism but by faith in the word of God, the probable meaning for ἐν ρηματι, making it the ultimate means in this clause, the washing of water is accomplished by, or with, the word.

**Presenting the church (5:27a).** The next in the string of three ἵνα clauses gives the next step in the purposes of Christ to have loved and given Himself for the church. He did so to first historically sanctify the church and then to eschatologically present the church to Himself. That this is all the work of Christ is emphasized by the intensive and reflexive pronouns (O'brien, 424) to indicate emphatically that, in that day, it will be seen to have all been His work. For the present there are intermediaries, such as Paul, who refers to himself as presenting the Corinthian church to Christ (2 Cor 11:2) from the perspective of representative human labor in the stead of Christ Himself but this is only a temporal perspective. The adjective describing the church is given in primary first position for emphasis, ἐνδοξον την ἐκκλησιαν. This word is used mainly of humans to describe that which is of the highest value, often in the LXX of leaders of the people. New Testament usage is similar to Hellenistic, of that which is lofty (please, see more on this word in Appendix C, #2). In our verse, it is defined by parallel, both negatively, as to what it (or, rather, its attributed noun, the church) is not and as to what it (by association with its attributed noun, the church) is. The church has no blemish (σπιλον, defect, or ῥυτιδα wrinkle) on it but (strong contrastive ἀλλὰ) was made *holy and blameless*, defining ἐνδοξον in this context as moral perfection. As in the reminiscent passage of Ezekiel 16, "for it (your beauty) was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you" (verse 14 NASB).

That this presentation is eschatological rather than present (Best and Lincoln) is most likely because 1) the presentation language matches other clearly future references in Col 1:22 and 28 and 2 Cor 4:14, 2) κατενωπιον αυτου, *before Him*, in Eph 1:4 parallels Col 1:22, giving it two language ties (*before Him* and *holy and blameless*) to that futuristic reference, tying all

three *holy and blameless* passages together with a consistent futuristic meaning, 3) other conceptual parallels match (2 Cor 11:2 and Rev 21:9-11) and 4) the repeated realized eschatology of Ephesians is not required of every passage in it.

**Morally perfect (5:27b).** This final *ἵνα* clause gives “the ultimate purpose” (Best, 546) in the sequence of three purposes of Christ in loving and giving Himself. This sequence is ascensive with each being the consequence of the previous. This final “goal” (O’Brien, 424) is expressed in short, concise syntax but with several important linguistic features. The *ἀλλὰ* has already been mentioned as strongly contrastive to the blemished features in 27a but defining the sense of the imagery as moral. The *ἵνα* is unnecessary except to connect this phrase to the string above, giving it the final position of ultimate purpose and connecting it more directly to the action of Christ in verse 25. It should also be noticed that the arrangement here is predicative, making the qualities holy and blameless a part of the identity of the church, part of her essential nature (made eternal by the action and love of Christ). “Holy and blameless” serve to tie this clause to Col 1:22, a clearly futuristic reference and to Eph 1:4 because of the word links already noted between it and Col 1:22 and now Eph 5:27b, as well. This triangle gives us a perspective on the purpose of God that began before the foundation of the world, moved through time to the cross and ends when the purpose of God is achieved and we are presented, individually (Col 1:22) and together as the church (Eph 5:27) before Him (Col 1:22 and Eph 1:4) in moral perfection.

**Husbands must love wives as their own bodies (5:28-30).** The next section is parallel to the last and continues to build on the imperative beginning verse 25, the guiding force of the entire paragraph (verses 25-32). The last section drew a parallel for husbands to the love of Christ for the church at the cross. This section of the paragraph builds (with *οὕτως*) on that comparison and extends it (with *ὥς*) to include the husbands’ own bodies. This does not downgrade love, as suggested by some (e.g. Barth, 629-30), to be common and demeaning to wives, but rather gives it a real, pragmatic and very personal quality.

**Love as their own bodies (5:28a).** We are linked backward to the love of Christ in verse 25 by the initial *οὕτως* of this verse. Rather than a more forward linkage to the *ὥς*, which would set this section off more from what precedes it and attempt to build a new structure with minimal (though still existing) linkage to the previous material, this section builds upon and extends the previous one. The usage of *ἀγαπᾶν* strengthens the backward linkage to verse 25, where it appears twice. The *καί* serves to confirm the linkage but its place in the text is uncertain. When it is included, it exists in different word orders (before and after *ὁφείλουσιν*), which calls its presence into question. Internal considerations also call its presence into question but are weakened by the counter-tendency of strong Alexandrian witnesses to include. However, the external evidence for inclusion is stronger [though not as strong as supposed by Best (547)], so the decision by the editors of NA<sup>27</sup>, to include *καί*, with brackets, is correct. The combination of *ὁφείλουσιν* with *ἀγαπᾶν* carries a similar force to that of the imperative, in verse 25, this paragraph is building on and, so, serves to maintain its force now three verses later. Paul, as shown by this imperative force and the length of the paragraph, is very serious that husbands hear what is being said. He now makes the injunction to love their wives very personal, comparing them to their own bodies. Paul has already left contemporary thinking about the husband’s responsibility in marriage far behind but now he takes it a step further, although in a more pragmatic and concrete way than the love of Christ of verse 25. Plutarch (*Mor* 142E, I-II AD) does use a similar comparison of a wife to the husband’s body, but says that a husband



should rule his wife instead of saying that he should love her, as Paul. However, Plutarch is toward the end of the first century and may even have been familiar with this teaching. This, again, as in verse 25, is more than a simple equative comparison. To love as their own bodies is part and parcel of the injunction itself, defining the love that is being commanded. Gen 2:24 is probably the basis of the comparison to the husband's body here since verse 31, quoting it, is a little out of its context and probably refers to this sentence as support for it.

**Loves himself (5:28b).** Paul finishes verse 28 and the initial statement of this section with a general gnomic principle that has a proverbial flavor to it. This is an independent statement and not linked, grammatically or logically, to the flow of the truth being developed in this paragraph. A change of subject to the singular underscores this. It is a "parenthetical explanation of verse 28a" (Best, 548). The sentence restates 28a in a way that looks back on a husband who does what it enjoins and peers into his soul. This has the effect of setting up a secondary (to Christ) model husbands can aspire to. It also restates its parallel (28a) in a way that defines σωματα, body, as ἑαυτον, himself. At least linkage is shown between the way one is disposed to wife and body and self. This bears further thought.

**People and Christ value their bodies (5:29-30).**

**People value their bodies (5:29a).** The basis for the preceding injunction is now given, preceded by γαρ, *for*. This has been taken to be an emphatic conjunction (O'Brien, 427) but this would be unusual (γαρ is not listed by Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 673, as a choice for the emphatic category), not given by most commentators or translations and not necessary (ποτε is emphatic already). Γαρ may be explanatory, with the translation *you see* (NIV has *after all*), but is best taken as causal, in keeping with Paul's style and 28a needs more support to strengthen it at this point (before the Gen 2:24 quote in verse 31). Even explanatory usage would have a causal flavor to it. The statement has a gnomic or proverbial flavor to it, as 28b, and is an example of the use of general revelation in Scripture. Paul appeals to this as a commonly accepted observable fact that is not contained in the Gen 2:24 quote that also undergirds verse 28. A transition occurs in this statement from the use of σωματα (verse 28a) to σαρκα (σωμα to σαρξ). The usage continues to the quote in verse 31, of the human body, but reverts in between (verse 30) when of the body of Christ. This presents an interesting study of the two words, seeing that there is some overlap in meaning because of the substitution but still enough difference that Paul is not comfortable using σαρξ of the spiritual body of Christ. Both Lincoln (379) and Best (549) refer to the substitution at this point as being for the sake of the quote in verse 31, but make no comment why that is necessary. Why not change the quote to match σωμα? That would do no damage to the first century methodology of quotation. It is an interesting switch at this juncture. After ἐμίσησεν, *hated*, a gnomic aorist, which, along with ποτε, gives the sentence its gnomic flavor, a contrastive ἀλλὰ, sets off two very positive words, in the present indicative, describing the general nature of a person's care for their own bodies. There are exceptions to this, as in asceticism, which this may have been included to contend with (Colossae was only 100 miles away – see Col 2:16-23) or masochism but it is generally true. People *nourish*, ἐκτρέγει, and *care for*, or *cherish*, θαλπει, their bodies. Both words, are used in a variety of contexts outside the NT (Lincoln, 379) but in the NT of the care of children, in Eph 6:4 and 1 Thess 2:7, here they refer to the general care people give their bodies but their reflection is to the care a husband should give to his wife, in love. They are used together this way, in reverse order and with an additional word, in a marriage contract (Preisigke, *Worterbuch* I 665), *to cherish and to nourish and to clothe*.

*Christ values the church (5:29b).* Another comparison links to the nurture statement of humans and draws an equative line to the care given the church by Christ. This parallels the comparison of verse 25, καθως και ὁ Χριστος in both places, the first time of His sacrificial love in His death at the cross, this time of the nourishment and ongoing care (the words are omitted and understood) He gives to those He has purchased with His blood.

*Bodily members (5:30).* The ground and basis for this nourishment and care is the close personal relationship of individuals to Christ. The causal ὅτι begins the clause, set in the indicative, as is the prevailing pragmatic and straight forward mood of the entire paragraph (22-33). The change to the first person serves to make a very personal statement about the body of Christ, usually referred to in the corporate sense in the third person. It is composed of individuals that participate in the feeding and tender care given to the church, Paul even including himself in the teaching of this letter for a moment of personal identification with his readers, out of character for Ephesians, but not for Paul (see 2 Cor 4:12; 5:13-14; 6:11-13). It should also be noticed that this personal involvement in the body of Christ is given in a predicative arrangement, making membership in the body of Christ a part of what defines a Christian, it's a part of who they (we) are.

The textual variant joined to the end of this verse was probably added early to combat some tendencies toward asceticism and/or for literary reasons. The strong and early Alexandrian witnesses, excluding the phrase, and the likelihood of intentional insertion both indicate the phrase was added later and not original. The evidence, both external and internal, points to the exclusion of ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ as being the original reading.

***Physically one like Christ and the church (5:31-32).***

*Physically united (5:31).* Verse 31 is a quote of Gen 2:24, probably from the Septuagint, since it only varies in two unimportant places (Lincoln, 380). There are two textual variants that provide some uncertainty about the original text for this verse. The first involves the presence or absence of the articles with “father” and “mother,” the presence of which are attested by the better external evidence but their absence being encouraged by strong internal evidence. The editors of the NA<sup>27</sup> are probably correct to include them but with parentheses, based on their presence in the strong Alexandrian evidence, against the tendency to add in that tradition. The second textual variant concerns the presence and composition of the first καὶ clause. The stronger external evidence suggests the inclusion of the clause but there are a number of combinations attested in the choice of words, i.e. the dative of γυνή without πρὸς, the omission of αὐτοῦ in an important manuscript and the shortened form of the verb in important manuscripts. These variations and the accompanying tendencies to harmonize with other occurrences and use memory with a familiar quotation make the more difficult text chosen by the editors of the NA<sup>27</sup>, probably, the best choice but still difficult to sort out. “All this makes it very difficult to decide what AE (author of Ephesians) actually wrote” (Best, 552).

Paul has been saying a lot about the wife-body equation in the preceding verses. Common acquaintance with the underlying support for this idea is apparent from the fact that Paul has not provided any theological support yet, only theological analogy and the support of general revelation. The verse, as quoted, comes with an introductory transition so the quote proper is not introduced and appears to be abruptly inserted. It does not appear to follow the immediately preceding material so what place does it hold in the development of the passage? O'Brien (429) does link the quote to the preceding material but without an explanation. Best (553) allows for a linkage to human marriage, the obvious surface meaning of the OT passage, but does not give its place in the flow of the context. If one steps back and looks at the flow of

the section, beginning in verse 28, it can be seen that the whole section through verse 30 has been driven by the strong *ὀφείλουσιν . . . ἀγαπᾶν* statement that is linked to the love of Christ and the initial imperative of verse 25. Everything else in this section builds on *ὀφείλουσιν . . . ἀγαπᾶν*, by providing support for it (verse 29a, with its “flesh” linkage) or a comparison for that support (verse 29b) or support for the comparison (verse 30). Therefore it seems comfortable to understand the quote of 31 as supporting what has driven the text immediately preceding it, that husbands are one flesh with their wives (verse 28a) and therefore, *ὀφείλουσιν . . . ἀγαπᾶν*, *ought to love* them. But there is another layer present.

**Great mystery (5:32).** Paul now acknowledges a great mystery to what he has just (τοῦτο) said, then, with an adversative *δε*, he returns the subject to the Christ-church relationship, a layer that has given perspective to the entire paragraph (22-33). Some see the mystery to include only the physical union of verse 31, others only the Christ-church relationship, while a third synthesizes these as a transparent layered combination (O’Brien uses the word typology but that is too strong). These are O’Brien’s categories and they are helpful to summarize a number of views. This writer has taken the simple view that the referent of “mystery” here is the immediately preceding material on the physical union of marriage. This becoming one flesh is really the only pertinent point of the quote, especially the last line, and all attempts to allegorize and utilize the whole quote independent of our context are off the mark (Lincoln, 380; Best, 553). More on the mystery puzzle may be seen in Appendix C, WS #3 and Appendix D, P #3. However, Paul returns us with *δε* to the Christ-church relationship, emphasizing, with *ἐγώ*, that he is speaking independently of the OT quote (by virtue of his apostleship of chapter three, one would assume). Other views on the emphatic personal pronoun relate to Paul asserting his apostleship and interpretation against competing teaching we can only speculate about (Best, 555; Lincoln, 382), though Lincoln does hold to the emphasis that Paul is giving his own reading of Gen 2:24. It is the apostle’s emphasis that he is, in a layered or two tracked kind of way, wanting to keep the Christ-church relationship in view while giving his straightforward teaching about the marriage relationship. An interesting parallel is drawn with unique uses of *εἰς* in 31c and 32b (*εἰς σάρκα μιαν* and *εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ υἱὲς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*, respectively). Best (554) references DiMarco for a possible sense of purpose for *εἰς* in Ephesians. The accepted translation is *with reference to*, which is good, but this is a “somewhat unusual use of *εἰς*” (Lincoln, 380) and bears more reflection.

### **Love and Respect (5:33).**

Paul now turns us quickly back, again, to the marriage relationship and the main teaching being given in this paraenesis, with *πλην καὶ*, “a summarizing resumption and conclusion” (Best, 557). He restates the instructions given above in reverse order, creating a chiasmic literary structure (Best, 558; Lincoln, 384), emphatically individualizing his instructions to husbands with a distributive phrase and using the second person singular imperative to drive home the point that each husband is responsible for loving his wife. Being in a summary context and some distance from any specific referent, *οὕτως* probably refers to all the instructions given above to the husbands (O’Brien, 436). This time *ὡς* draws the comparative line to *ἑαυτὸν* instead of *σώματα* (verse 28), but we have already noticed the connection in that verse between these two words, the reflexive being the broader of the two. This, in effect, includes the former injunction concerning the body and broadens it to include other aspects of oneself. This is very reminiscent of Lev 19:18, the second commandment our Lord used while on earth. The wife is the husband’s “nearest and dearest neighbor” (O’Brien, 436 ). She is addressed next, although

tangentially (Lincoln, 384), not as directly as the husband, with an imperative *ἵνα* instead of the normal construction. This is parallel the normal imperative used for the husbands in 33a. She is instructed here to fear, *φοβηται*, rather than submit to, her husband. This, as with the husband's instruction above, is a broader term than used in 22-24 suggesting, by these expanded, unexplained terms at the end of the paraenesis, an ever-expanding, open-ended relationship between husband and wife.

## Conclusion

Paul, we find, has laid out a masterpiece of spiritual truth on two tracks using the device of comparison. He has abandoned his familiar language of participial modification to create an indicative environment for practical instruction using the comparison as the major vehicle of literary style. He has addressed the wives deftly but clearly, in a style appropriate to the section, one of submission and voluntary compliance, using restrained language in addressing them. The husbands, on the other hand, are addressed with imperatives (verse 25 and 33) and language of obligation (verse 28), yet, in the context of the love of Christ it is never hard to hear.

Paul has laid out truth on two tracks that sets a standard for both the marriage relationship, which is the main subject of the paraenesis, and the relationship between Christ and the church. These are both ideal in their presentation and have never been achieved as presented but these teachings serve as goals and keep our eyes always forward, looking for improvement and progress.

## Application

Paul, by his plentiful use of comparison with Christ and His relationship with the church, has pointedly suggested God's desire to be involved in the deeply personal and key area of marital relationships of His people. A model has been set forth for Christian marriage in both the husband's and the wife's roles, a model that must be both instructive and motivational. Instruction must be gained from a growing understanding of the relationship of Christ with the church as Head of the body, Savior of the body (the One Who loved and gave Himself), the One Who has prepared the church and will present her beautiful and morally spotless to Himself, and, Who, in the mean time, tenderly cares for her as His own body. Thus marital growth is linked to spiritual growth and depends upon it for a growing understanding of marriage, its dependent parallel in the seen world.

Instruction should be taken, as well, from the imperative that initiated what finally became the Ephesian household code, the most complete instruction for marriage in the New Testament. None of the things advised in these verses can be done in human strength or by human wisdom. It is only by dependence upon Him and submission to the filling of His Spirit that we can possibly begin to encourage one another (verse 19) or be grateful (verse 20) or have deferring relationships with one another (verse 21-6:9). We are individually members of His body (5:30) and must realize that our place in that body is given by and made effective by His feeding and tender care (5:29b).

Not every situation or possible problem was addressed in the paraenesis of 5:22-33, but rather an ideal was erected for Christian marriages to model themselves after ever since. Paul took the opportunity to draw some instructive parallels for the church to the most personal human relationship there is, establishing a sense of sovereignty to the Head, gratitude for His

salvation and a sense of hope and expectation for the future. The marriage relationship has probably gleaned more from these instructions than the church has appeared to down through the years but the age is not over yet. May we as His people and may our leaders grow in our experience of intimacy with the Lord Jesus and bring the church closer to the legacy and promise and potential that is hers. There are a number of lessons to be drawn, including obedience, unity as His body and the continual experiencing of His nurture and feeding by the word. There's a lot of work to do to approach the ideal laid down for us in this passage. The church, as well as Christian marriages, need to inform one another and motivate one another according to the parallels of Eph 5:22-33, stimulating "one another to love and good deeds" (Heb 10:24 NASB).

## Appendix A

### Text Critical Issues

#### Text Critical Issue #1: *καί* in Eph 5:28

Variant #1: w/*καί*: P<sup>46</sup> A B D F G P 048<sup>vid</sup>. 0285<sup>vid</sup>. 33. 629. 1175. 1505. *pc* lat sy<sup>h</sup>.

Variant #2: w/o *καί*: a Ψ 0278. 1739. 1881 M sy<sup>p</sup>

Variant #1, for including *καί* (I have included the bracketed readings as evidence for including *καί*), would go against the tendencies of its strong Alexandrian readings and along with the tendencies of its Western evidence. Variant #2, for excluding *καί*, would also go along with the tendencies of its Alexandrian readings, and counter to its Majority/Byzantine readings. Both variants score a tie here, going against one text-type and along with another, the one being in favor of its originality and the other weakening its claim. Overall, going against its strong Alexandrian readings would be in #1's favor.

Geographically, variant #1 shows clear evidence of early presence in Alexandrian areas only with not quite enough testimony from Western witnesses to establish an early presence there. Variant #2, likewise, shows evidence of early presence in Byzantine/Majority areas, only. Each has narrow geographical distribution but #1 has strong evidence from Western witnesses to tip the scale slightly in its favor.

Genealogical solidarity serves to help validate geographical presence by establishing early evidence. Variant #1 can clearly be dated to the second century for its Alexandrian testimony but is not quite strong enough in the Old Latin to push the Western date forward. Variant #2, with M, can be dated to the fourth century.

External evidence must go to variant #1 for its counter-Alexandrian testimony, attesting to the strength of its longer reading, generally, and its slightly broader geographical distribution.

Internally, the *καί* may have been accidentally dropped. It may, also, have been accidentally added, due to confusion with other “*καί* combinations.” There are three other transitional combinations in the general vicinity but they are so far apart that addition would be a stretch. There seems to be no reason to intentionally drop *καί* if it was original. A couple of reasons might be responsible for its intentional addition, though, if originally absent. The desire for parallel with the other three “*καί* combinations” mentioned above, especially οὕτως *καί* in verse 24b before αἱ γυναῖκες, would be one. The strongest pressure for inclusion, though, would be to clarify the logical sequence of the transition and give it a more certain backward linkage to the preceding material. A final thought against inclusion is the change in position of ὀφείλουσιν when *καί* is included. When *καί* has been included, ὀφείλουσιν has been moved, in some important witnesses, to a position following οἱ ἄνδρες, presumably to preserve the parallel with verse 24b and/or to move *καί* next to οὕτως, also to preserve the parallels or to a more normal position for the two conjunctions appearing together. ὀφείλουσιν should be left in the more awkward forward position. Best gives too much stress to the internal evidence, especially the changing word positions when *καί* is included. He also refers to the movement of *καί*, in relation to οἱ ἄνδρες, when it is actually ὀφείλουσιν that is in two different positions, one before *καί* οἱ ἄνδρες and the other after.

In conclusion, internally, there are several good reasons for adding the *καί* but the tendency of the strong Alexandrian testimony would militate against doing that. However, the

Byzantine readings leave it out when their tendency was to add. The external evidence points to the inclusion of *καὶ* while the internal evidence points to exclusion as the original reading. The tentative edge must go to inclusion based on the presence of the conjunction in the strong Alexandrian witnesses and their Western support.

### **Text Critical Issue #2: ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τῶν ὀστέων αὐτοῦ in Eph 5:30**

Variant #1: w/ἐκ τῆς . . . :  $\alpha^2$  D F G (K)  $\Psi$  0278. 0285<sup>vid</sup>. 1739<sup>mg</sup> M lat sy<sup>(p)</sup>

Variant #2: w/o ἐκ τῆς . . . : P<sup>46</sup>  $\alpha^*$  A B 048. 6. 33. 81. 1739\*. 1881. 2464 *pc*

Variant #1, by including the text in question, goes against the tendency of its Alexandrian witnesses and is consistent with the textual tendency of its Western and Byzantine witnesses. #2, on the other hand, is consistent with the textual tendency of its almost exclusive but overwhelming Alexandrian witnesses to present the shorter reading. An edge in quality must go to #2 for its very strong Alexandrian showing, the reading shows no need to run counter to the normal tendency there.

The Byzantine witnesses for #1 can be dated to the fourth century to attest its early presence there. Likewise, the Alexandrian testimony for #2 can be dated to the second century to attest its even earlier presence in those regions. An edge is seen here for #2 on the basis of its earlier dating but both readings are attested in only one geographical region.

The external evidence leans toward the reading for exclusion in variant #2 because of its strong showing in Alexandrian quality and early date.

Internally, the variant may have been produced, unintentionally, by homoeoteleuton, if originally present, by the scribe's eye jumping from αὐτοῦ (after σωματος) to αὐτοῦ (after ὀστέων). Actually, there are three αὐτοῦ's and a solitary variant in minuscule 1985 where the scribe almost certainly did this, omitting between the first two. The phrase could almost certainly not have been inserted accidentally, if not originally present. As for intentional change, no reason can be seen for omitting the phrase, if originally present, except because of its awkward and troublesome wording (σαρξ instead of σωμα for the body of Christ and the unusual mention of His bones) and the tendency would be to change the words and leave the phrase. At any rate the tendency of scribes was to add to the text and two strong reasons can be seen for this as an explanation. A smoother transition to verse 31 can be argued for with these additional words from the OT quotation of 31 (P. R. Rodgers, "The Allusion to Genesis 2:23 at Ephesians 5:30," *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990): 94). Scribes may have also added the phrase to combat Gnostic teaching and emphasize the human, fleshly reality of the incarnation. The Gnostic problem was large in the early centuries and these verses from Genesis were widely known. The longer version was used by Irenaeus for this very purpose. The internal evidence points to likely intentional insertion rather than unintentional deletion, giving the edge to variant #2.

The strong and early Alexandrian witnesses, excluding the phrase, and the likelihood of intentional insertion both indicate the phrase was added later and not original. Overall the evidence, both external and internal, points to variant #2 being original, excluding the phrase in question.

## Appendix B Structural Layout

- 18 ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι, . . .
- 21 ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ,
- 22 (ὑποτασσομεναι) αἱ γυναῖκες τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσιν ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ,
- 23 ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἐστὶν κεφαλὴ τῆς γυναικὸς
- ὡς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς (ἐστὶν) κεφαλὴ τῆς ἐκκλησίας,
- αὐτὸς (ὢν) σωτὴρ τοῦ σώματος·
- 24 ἀλλὰ ὡς ἡ ἐκκλησία ὑποτάσσεται τῷ Χριστῷ,
- οὕτως καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες (ὑποτάσσονται) τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἐν παντί.
- 25 Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας,
- καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἠγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν
- καὶ
- ἐαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς,
- 26 ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθάρισας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι,
- 27 ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτὸς ἐαυτῷ ἑνδοξον τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ
- [εἰχουσαν σπίλον ἢ ῥυτίδα ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ’
- ἵνα ἡ ἀγία καὶ ἄμωμος.
- 28 οὕτως ὀφείλουσιν [καὶ] οἱ ἄνδρες ἀγαπᾶν τὰς ἐαυτῶν γυναῖκας ὡς
- [τὰ ἐαυτῶν σώματα.
- ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὴν ἐαυτοῦ γυναῖκα ἐαυτὸν ἀγαπᾶ·
- 29 Οὐδεὶς γάρ ποτε τὴν ἐαυτοῦ σάρκα ἐμίσησεν ἀλλὰ ἐκτρέφει
- [καὶ θάλπει αὐτήν,
- καθὼς
- [καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς (ἐκτρέφει καὶ θάλπει) τὴν ἐκκλησίαν,
- 30 ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος
- [αὐτοῦ.
- 31 ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν]
- [μητέρα



καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ,

καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

32 τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν.

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω εἰς Χριστὸν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.

33 πλὴν καὶ ὑμεῖς οἱ καθ' ἓνα, ἕκαστος τὴν ἑαυτοῦ γυναῖκα οὕτως ἀγαπάτω ὡς ἑαυτόν,

ἢ δὲ γυνὴ ἵνα φοβῆται τὸν ἄνδρα.

## Appendix C Word Studies

**WS #1** – λουτρον in Eph 5:26.

Classical usage of this word, *LSJ*, shows two senses. The first is: *bath, bathing place*, seen (always plural) in Homer, *Il.* 22.444 of a hot bath. The second sense is: *water for bathing or washing*, seen in Sophocles (V B.C.) *OC*1599. The verb λυοω has the sense of *wash*, especially *wash the body* (other words being used of the hands and feet and, also of clothes), seen in Homer, *Od.* 10.361. *BDAG* adds a third sense, or perhaps a subcategory for the noun and verb, *to bathe* in a cultic manner, seen from Sophocles (V B.C.) *Ant.* 1201 to Plutarch (I-II A.D.) *Mor.* 264d and Josephus *Vi.* 11, of purification before entering a temple (also, see *TDNT* IV 296ff for extensive treatment of sacral bathing in the pagan world from Classical times through the early centuries A.D.).

A slightly special usage, with animals, is noted in the *LXX* in two instances in the Song of Songs of sheep having been washed. This doesn't change the sense at all though.

Two senses can be detected in the examples of this word in Moulton-Milligan. One is the cultic, religious sense noted above from an inscription heading in *Syll.* 653, 106 (91 B.C.), “of anointings and washings.” The other is that of a “place for bathing,” as above, seen in *OGIS* 339, 33 (c. 120 B.C.), another inscription. Another Hellenistic usage is gleaned from *LSJ* in Pollianus (II A.D.) 3.43 of water carried to a bride, presumably ritualistic. Finally, Philo uses the word in a symbolic and inward sense opposed to an external washing or bath in *Cher.* 95; *Plant.* 162; *Som.* I. 82; *Mut. Nom.* 124; etc. (*TDNT* IV 302).

New Testament usage is visible through two verb forms and the word we are concerned with, λουτρον. The root is λουω, one of the two verb forms. It is used in two senses: *bathe, wash*; of a ritual washing of the dead, Acts 9:37, washing wounds, Acts 16:33, and of washing an animal, 2 Pet 2:22; and *figuratively*, of salvation in John 13:10 and Heb 10:22. The other verb, derived from λουω, ἀπολουω, is used twice in the second sense, *figuratively* of salvation in Acts 22:16 and 1 Cor 6:11. Our word, λουτρον, is used twice in the figurative sense of salvation in Eph 5:26 and Titus 3:5.

It can be seen that Paul only uses these words figuratively in referring to salvation. Once, in Acts 22:16, there is a close association with baptism but Paul's theology is clear that no work is not responsible for “washing away one's sins” so the reference must be figurative or

symbolic. The other occurrences in Paul are clear when taken together. In this way, Titus 3:5 clarifies the meaning in Eph 5:26 that a figurative washing is in view. These, the only two uses of our word, λουτρον, are clearly parallel. The baggage the word carried had to do with subjective matters, either of therapy or, especially, of a spiritual significance from cleansing from impurity after childbirth to that caused by death. This was true in the Gentile world as well as in Judaism. The terms are never used of Christian baptism in strict, clearly referential sense, though some may have associated the word λουτρον and its relatives with it. The words were commonly used in reference to a bath that could have an ordinary sense as that when used of an animal but usually had a religious or, at least, therapeutic sense, but not often the hygienic sense of modern usage. New Testament usage follows Philo closely in emphasizing inner washing.

## WS #2 – ἐνδοξος in Eph 5:27.

The first Classical sense from *LSJ* is *held in esteem or honor, of high repute* seen in Plato *Sph.* 223b (V-IV B.C.) with other adjectives, “new, rich and ἐνδοξος.” Also used of things as being *notable*, in Aeschines 3.231(IV B.C.), *generally approved*, in Epicurus *Fr.* 513 (IV-III B.C.) and *glorious*, in Idomeneus 2.99f. A second sense listed is *resting on opinion, generally admitted*, illustrated by Aristotle *Top.* 100<sup>b</sup>21 (IV B.C.) opposite what is necessarily true, and as an adverb, -ξως, meaning *plausible*, as in Aristotle *SE* 175<sup>a</sup>31 (IV B.C.) opposite what is for sure.

The LXX contains 98 uses of the word we are working with in some form. It is used in the sense of *honorable, respected* of men, descriptively, as in 1 Sam 22:14 of David in the service of Saul and in the sense of *leader, noble, honored man*, as a substantive in I Sam 9:6, of Samuel and Psa 149:8 of nobles. ἐνδοξος is also used descriptively of God, in the sense of *exalted, awesome*, as in Gen 15:1 in the song of Miriam, that He is “highly exalted.” It is also used of the works of God, as a substantive, *miracles*, as in Gen 34:10 of God’s deeds in the Exodus. The word is used also in the sense of *valubles*, as in Judges 18:2 of personal belongings. A unique verbal form, ἐνδοξαζομαι, was coined for the LXX and used of men, but mainly to express the glorification of God, as in Isa 49:3 and Ezek 38:22 of God being glorified in His people. This verb and the related noun δοξα both are used in special connection to God in the LXX with ἐνδοξος being used more often of humans.

Hellenistic uses that are attested include *glorious*, by Plutarch in *Per.* 28 (I-II A.D.) of a thing (burial place), *conspicuous*, in *Sammelb.* 6152.22 (I B.C.) of the placement of an inscription and *conceited, proud*, by Erotianus in *Fr.* 60 (I A.D.) of not being too proud to learn.

The New Testament uses ἐνδοξος four times. The appearances in Luke carry the sense of *glorious, splendid*, of royal clothing (7:25) and the works of Jesus (13:17). The appearances in Paul carry the sense *honored, distinguished*, satirically, of the Corinthians in 1 Cor 4:10 and of the high moral position of the church in Eph 5:27. Paul and his close associate Luke contain the only appearances of the word in the New Testament.

The adjective ἐνδοξος seems to have undergone little development since the classical period. The extensive use of δοξα and ἐνδοξαζομαι by the LXX translators in connection with God and His glory seem to have been a unique use of the root but there was little carryover to the adjective as its usage in the New Testament was exclusively horizontal. This usage was elevated to a perfect moral level in Eph 5:27 by the epexegetical ἵνα clause following, ἵνα ἡ ἀγία καὶ ἄμωμος. This elevation is heightened by the contrast with normal usage of humans, even though describing the most exalted of human valuation. The church in her exaltation and honor is prepared by and presented by the King of kings to Himself, without intermediary in either

function to lessen the glory, but that she should be superlative and absolutely unique in moral honor.

**WS #3** – μυστηριον in Eph 5:32.

Four Classical senses of the word are attested by *LSJ*. The first is *mystery, secret rite*, as in Herodotus 2.51 ( V B.C.) of the mysteries of the Cabiri in Samothrace. A second sense is given as *mystic implements and ornaments*, as in Euripides *Supp.* 470 (V B.C.) of wreaths. The third sense is the metaphorical usage, illustrated by Mnesitheus 11 (IV B.C.) about the mysteries of death, and a fourth of the general sense, by Menander 695 (IV-III B.C.) of a secret between friends.

LXX usage of the term is delayed until the apocryphal books written in the Hellenistic period. This does not signify that the translators did not know the term but that there were no concepts that required it until the later books were written. This excepts the unique usage in the OT book of Daniel where alone the term appears in the inspired scripture [Dan 2:18, 19, 27-30, 47, 4:9 (LXX)]. “In Daniel μυστηριον takes on for the first time a sense which is important for the further development of the word, namely that of an eschatological mystery” (G. Bornkamm, TDNT IV, 814.). This development is in terms of spiritual history or divine revelation but perhaps not chronological development since the events of Daniel, set in pre-Graeco Babylon and Persia pre-date the earliest records of the word from Greece. More study is needed to trace the respective religious development in Mesopotamia and Greece and determine the linkage and contributions of one to the other, if any. At any rate, the appearance of the word in the LXX of Daniel does lend a different sense to the word than seen so far, *secret revealed by God*. This is attested in the revelation of the meaning of the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar by Daniel, the Hebrew youth. The roots of Pauline usage may find themselves here.

Hellenistic usage finds the religious sense of *secret rite* in OGIS 331<sup>54</sup> (II B.C.), an inscription about sacrifices and attendants and mysteries [see, also Diodorus Siculus 1.29.3, 3.63.2 (I B.C.) and Cornutus 28 p. 56.22, 57.4(I A.D.)]. Also a metaphorical usage is found in Josephus, *Bell.* 1.470 (I A.D.) about the private wickedness practiced by Antipater. Not much development is seen here from Classical Greek.

New Testament usage of μυστηριον is only by Jesus and Paul and falls into four categories. The first is that of *unknown information*, that which is known only to God, as in 1 Cor 14:2, “for no one understands” (NASB). This is the only NT occurrence of this sense. The second category is that which is *difficult to understand*, as in Rom 11:25 of the eschatology of Israel and 1 Cor 15:51 of transformation to the spiritual state. This is deeper, more difficult to penetrate spiritual truth, probably necessary to accept by faith as it is revealed, rather than to be reached through logical process. Other representative scripture include 1 Cor 4:1, 13:2, Eph 5:32, 1 Thess 2:7, Rev 1:20, 10:17, and 17:5, 7. The third category of usage of μυστηριον is similar to the second. This is the *secretly revealed and particular truth* of the church age introduced by and experienced in Jesus Christ as its all-encompassing agent. This is also known only by revelation and characterized by a context of “hidden but now revealed.” Examples attesting to this are Rom 16:25-26, “the mystery . . . kept secret . . . but now is manifested” and Col 1:26-27, “the mystery which has been hidden . . . but has now been manifested” (NASB). Other Scripture falling under this category would be Matt 13:11, Mark 4:11, Luke 8:10, 1 Cor 2:7, Eph 1:9, 3:3, 3, 9, Col 2:2 and 1 Tim 3:16. This is the category unique to the New Testament. The fourth and final category follows and is related to the third. This is the usage of μυστηριον that speaks of *the message and testimony of the gospel*, characterized by the specially revealed truth of category

#3, above. It entails the general characterization of that message and is found in a context of proclamation rather than description, as in Eph 6:19, “to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” (NASB). Other passages showing this sense are 1 Cor 2:1, Col 4:3 and 1 Tim 3:9.

Μυστηριον is used only by Jesus and Paul in the New Testament, utilizing the language of the Greek mystery religions and filling it with the truth of the real ultimate reality. A separate tradition was begun by Daniel, using μυστηριον of the Living God as the revealer of truth, specifically eschatological. This ideological tradition probably predates the language of the Greek mysteries and finds its fulfillment in the words of Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul. The New Testament usage draws on this tradition. The most important usage and that unique to the New Testament is of the truth revealed in Jesus Christ, uniting all who believe in Him. There is also more general usage of the term.

## Appendix D Problem Solving

**P#1** – κεφαλη, Eph 5:23.

Used twice in Eph 5:23, κεφαλη carries important weight in the development of the truth laid out in this paraenesis. It is first used of the husband in the husband-wife relationship then, immediately following, of Christ as a parallel and comparison. The understanding of one effects the other and has bearing on expectations and proper function of both the marriage relationship and the church. There is a larger controversy over the meaning of *head* in general in Greek literature. We will focus on what is pertinent to the understanding of Ephesians chapter five.

The word is used three times by Paul in Ephesians, 1:22, 4:15 and 5:23. The first involves the universal authority effected for Christ, allusions to Phil 2:9-11 “that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,” and His position in relation to the church stated in terms of a head to its body. It will be noted that this position, whatever it means, was given to Christ by the Father. The next verse, 4:15, portrays Him as the source (“from whom”) of growth for the upbuilding of the church, again pictured as His body. The nature of His resource to the body could bear some thought since it is the body itself that also participates in the building process, “the whole body . . . causes the growth of the body.” Perhaps the resource of the head in this case serves to direct or enable the other parts of the body rather than serving as an essential reservoir of some sort to nourish the body. This function is referred to later in Eph 5:29 but is not in view as a function of the head, either in 4:15 or 5:23. The reference in 5:23 to head, includes both husband and Christ. The husband is referred to as head, without the article signifying a qualitative emphasis, in support of the instruction to the wife to be subject to him. Something deeper than identity is in view with the reference to the nature of the husband’s role, it is something he is to his wife in essence, in a deep and essential way. It is not just a matter of filling a necessary role it is more bound up in the essential nature of who the husband is. So we see in Ephesians at least two aspects of headship exposed, authority and source. Paul’s usage in Colossians is identical to that in Ephesians with the exception of 2:10 to apply the term to the universal authority mentioned in Eph 1:22a but without the use of the term. All other references in Paul are to the general sense of the head belonging to the physical body, allowing for the metaphorical nuance. The lone exception to this is 1 Cor 11:3 where man and woman are in view

in a general sense and the context provides the basis of creation, man being the original source of woman's existence. It should be remembered that he didn't make her, he only provided the raw material.

This early resource must be the basis to take κεφαλη as meaning source (Best, 535). To do so from the reference of Christ as Savior and make this parallel to the husband is forcing the analogy to far. Lincoln is correct to see a problem with the husband as the source of the wife's life, taking too far his legitimate responsibility for her welfare (369). Source is much easier to obtain from 1 Cor 11:3 since the basis in context is the original creation. It still goes too far, though, to make source the sole or even major emphasis of κεφαλη since Paul works from the same basis of original creation in 1 Tim 2:9-15 in support of the same gender roles and authority is the issue there.

Authority is also the issue in our passage and creation is nowhere in sight. The parallels drawn are to the wife's and the church's relationship with Christ. In whatever way Christ is the head of the church, the husband is also head of his wife. The basis is not of major concern, the facts of the relationships are.

**P#2** – τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι, Eph 5:26.

As Paul is describing the purpose/result of Christ loving and giving Himself for the church as sanctification, he describes the accompanying cleansing as being by the washing of, or consisting in, water (τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος), a dative of means and its qualifying genitive of apposition. The following prepositional phrase is involved, qualifying what precedes it as the means. There has been some ambiguity expressed and ensuing discussion about the exact meaning of this figurative phrase.

Context is everything so we must examine this problem in light of its place in the whole picture, especially the larger ἵνα clause where it resides. This clause is the purpose of the two preceding aorists of verse 25, *loved* and *gave*. The goal expressed here of the loving sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is that of sanctifying or setting aside the church for Himself. This is the overriding concern of the clause, setting aside of the church to Jesus Christ. Everything else in the clause expresses the means of accomplishing the overriding concern of sanctification.

This begins with the aorist participle καθαρισας which immediately follows the subjunctive main verb. The participle is taken by most commentators as coincidental to the action of the main verb. I would agree with Abbott (168) that the cleansing is logically prior to sanctification since the latter cannot occur without it, being the means of its accomplishment. However the connection is very close and no temporal reference is required from the aorist, it simply looks at the action as a whole.

Most commentators see λουτρῷ in our problem as referring to baptism. In fact, Best mentions this in passing, assumes it is true, that there are no alternatives and moves on without comment. However, καθαριζω, which λουτρῷ qualifies, is never used in connection with baptism in the New Testament. Καθαριζω has spiritual, inner cleansing as its emphasis with the healing of lepers in the gospels second and a minor ritualistic usage. None of this is said to be accomplished by means of baptism but rather by means of the action of Jesus Christ through faith. This is especially true in the case of the lepers in the ministry of Jesus, sometimes by His word alone (Luke 5:13). Spiritual cleansing is accomplished by spiritual means of which baptism is only incidental, being downplayed in Paul's theology though being more closely associated in Jewish contexts where the general trend is towards a more outward focus (1 Cor 1:14-17; Acts

2:38 and 1 Pet 3:21). Also, to preclude a reference to baptism, O'Brien (422) concludes, rightfully, that nowhere else is the church, as a whole, said to be baptized (see, also Snodgrass, 298). He sees the clause being more influenced by Ezek 16:1-14, the account by the Lord God of His care for the nation of Israel, and the bath referred to there. Several see the pre-nuptial bath as a secondary allusion for λουτρῳ (O'Brien, Best, Lincoln, Meyer and Bruce). Concrete information on this is hard to come by so more study is needed for the current writer to agree. O'Brien, however, makes no commitment to a referent for λουτρῳ if it is not to be baptism. However, his basic misgivings are well taken and will be shown to be valid.

If λουτρῳ does not refer to baptism, then to what? A more detailed study of the word will reveal a strong religious emphasis in both paganism and Judaism as a possibility. An emphasis on cultic washing in Judaism is clear. Even though the use of λουτρον itself is very limited in the LXX, its root verb is well attested. Please, see Appendix c, WS #1 for more on λουτρον. The main point to be gleaned is that the main association of Paul's listeners with this word would have been to a bath, usually cultic, as there was a great deal of emphasis on this (see TDNT IV, 296-302) in both the Gentile, as well as the Jewish contexts. We have also seen, already, that καθαρίζω is never used with baptism. Now it is noted that neither is λούτρον (nor its root verb) used with baptism. However in an Old Testament search, the two verbs are found closely linked in the same context nineteen times. The linkage is clear. To further cement a ritualistic referent for λουτρῳ the listing of washings as a elementary subject of instruction in Heb 6:2 is noted (the word is βαπτισμων). Further note is taken that of the references of the three cognates in the NT, eight out of nine are to salvation or ritualistic referents. The clearest support to take λουτρῳ as a ritualistic washing comes from its closest parallel in Tit 3:5, διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ ἀνακαινώσεως πνεύματος ἁγίου, "by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit," clearly referring to the means of salvation.

The final piece of syntax is the prepositional phrase, ἐν ῥηματι. Because of the complications of an unsatisfactory approach to the passage, there are numerous views of this phrase, Best lists five (543). Most commentators are trying to draw a line between "by the word" and baptism and so have problems here. Most are right to see this prepositional phrase modifying the preceding noun clause, τῷ λουτρῳ τοῦ ὕδατος, but force a connection to baptism. Lincoln sees reference to either a baptismal formula or the gospel message from ἐν ῥηματι, while Best opts for the baptismal formula but is ambiguous and has trouble with the translation (544). O'Brien notes that ῥημα is nowhere else used in relation to baptism, casting further doubt on that meaning for *washing*, but opts to join this phrase to καθάρισας to facilitate a meaning of the gospel message. He correctly sees this as consistent with the rest of Paul and Ephesians where, in 6:17, it is the sword of the Spirit. He further notes the connection of ῥημα with salvation in John 15:3, 17:7. This writer concurs and would add verse 6 to the John 17 reference and include Rom 10:8-10 and 1 Pet 1:23-25 where it is used in parallel with λογος. However, it is not necessary to join ἐν ῥηματι to the participle to preserve the meaning of the saving word of God. If joined with the noun phrase, which is preferable, it qualifies it as the means of the ritualistic washing. A means phrase following a means phrase is unusual but the figurative nature of the first requires the second to qualify it.

As we now remember, the entire phrase from the participle on is the means of the sanctification of the church, the primary concern of the ἵνα clause, the saving word of God being the ultimate means. So we may read the suggested solution to the problem of τῷ λουτρῳ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥηματι as, in context, *that He might sanctify her, having cleansed (her) by the ritualistic washing of water by means of the saving word.*

**P#3 – μυστηριον, Eph 5:32.**

Paul, after quoting Gen 2:24 following his discourse on the husband and his body and Christ and His body, says, το μυστηριον τουτο μεγα εστιν, literally, *the mystery this great is*, or more normally, *this mystery is great*. What is the mystery?

O'Brien breaks down the views on this into three categories.

First, the marriage relationship. This category subsumes two views within it. One is the, primarily Roman Catholic, view that sees marriage as a sacrament, following the rendering of *sacramentum* in the Vulgate and holding that marriage gives grace (why do their clergy not avail themselves of this?). The other sees only the human institution of marriage here with the Pauline model given as the ideal and the mention of the Christ-church relationship only incidental.

The second category of understanding μυστηριον takes the opposite view, holding that the Christ-church relationship is in view. The immediate antecedent of the Genesis quotation is noticed to be the last phrase of verse 30, “we are members of His body” and, according to this view, the greater context of Ephesians, being of Christ and the church, demands that emphasis here, as well. The statement of verse 32b “speaking with reference to Christ and the church” is seen to clarify that the subject matter.

The third category O'Brien presents is somewhat synthetic and gives the position he is most comfortable with. This view holds that the μυστηριον refers to the Christ-church relationship as a type of Christian marriage. The surface, literal sense of the Genesis quotation is acknowledged but sees the quote directly referential to the immediate antecedent, “we are members of His body.” Both tracks in the passage are covered with the marriage relationship and the Christ-church relationship being given a part in this explanation. “The typology serves Paul’s pastoral purpose of providing a model for Christian marriage which is grounded in primeval human origins and reflective of ultimate divine reality” (R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom: God’s Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology*, Leicester/Grand Rapids: Apollos/Eerdmans, 1996, 156). “The mystery is . . . the union of Christ and the church which is reflected in a truly Christian marriage” (O'Brien, 434).

Best and Lincoln provide a greater variety of views, but not as well organized, adding allegorical interpretation, a view of Jerome about Christ birthing the church and limited information about a heretical gnostic interpretation. Lincoln comes down very close to O'Brien saying that the mystery is the Christ-church mystery already revealed in Ephesians but allowing for the literal application of Gen 2:24 to the Christian marriage relationship (381). Best seems to see “mystery” in the sense of *difficult to understand*, the third of the New Testament usages of the word discussed in Appendix C, WS#3. This refers to a spiritual concept requiring deeper insight and/or revelation to be understood but not the specific Christ-church mystery of our age described in Ephesians three and Colossians 1:27. It is a “secret now revealed . . . not something which he (Paul) has thought up on his own but comes from God” (Best, 557; parenthetical mine). He sees Paul drawing together the two tracks of the teaching and taking the opportunity to go a “step further” in his explication of Christ’s relationship with the church.

This writer is comfortable with a number of the insights above, particularly the more synthetic ones of O'Brien and Best. Lincoln goes too far in saying that the mystery is confined to that already stated in Ephesians, this is not required. A word can be used in different senses within a context if the more near context requires it, near context takes priority. In light of the dramatic revelations made earlier in chapter three and the fascination with the mystery concept

too much is made of the word, at times, other times it is justified. Three different uses of the word can be identified in Ephesians, *difficult to understand*, *specific revealed and particular truth* and the *message and testimony of the gospel* (Four New Testament uses have been isolated. Please, see Appendix C, WS #3). In 6:19, for instance, the message of the gospel is all that is referred to, though surely flavored by the revelation of chapter three. Here the contrastive  $\delta\epsilon$  seems to indicate that Christ and the church are not in view in 32a and Paul wishes to restore the focus. This would indicate the mystery should refer to the immediately preceding material from Genesis on marriage, a matter still a difficult to understand in spite of the antiquity of the institution, as anyone who is married can attest. Yet, it is acknowledged that the quote of verse 31 has as its immediate referent the final clause of 30 on the body of Christ. It seems Paul continues on the two tracks he has pursued for the entire paraenesis, now drawing them together (Best, 557) in transparent layers that are difficult to separate, if we should. Attention should be paid, as well, to the development of the entire section beginning in verse 28 that "husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies." Everything said since that has been subordinate to it (see Appendix B, Structural Layout) and is concluded in verse 30 with the comparison to Christ. The quotation then fits well the progression by providing support for a husband to love his wife as his own body.

Marriage physical unity is indeed a great mystery but even more so the relationship with Christ to Whom the church is united as His own body.