



BIBLE REFLECTIONS

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This Newsletter

The purpose of this Newsletter is to provide you with answers to certain biblical facts which have been misconstrued or misunderstood.

Q: Who are our readers?

A: Anyone interested in matters of faith.

Q: What will our readers want to know?

A: Timely, helpful, problem-solving information regarding the Bible.

When it comes to Christian 'fake news', the driver of such items is a combination of fallacious propositional deductions and established traditions. These are very powerful forces and, when combined with the passage of time, are seen as immutable 'truths'. A fallacious propositional framework is what churches generally refer to as 'doctrines'. The formation of such doctrines is a fascinating process, frequently devoid of genuine biblical basis. The societal climate of the age during which these doctrines are formulated exerts a reciprocal relationship to their formation. Once 'set in stone' and, with sufficient time to maintain their 'validity', tradition is created. During this process the Bible gets reinterpreted to suit this framework and, even when it is biblically untrue, is maintained as essential orthodoxy. Below is one such doctrine.

Fake News: 'Eve was made from Adam's rib' (a relatively small bone). Most English Bible readers perpetrate this idea as it appears in most English translations (see NLT, NRSV, NKJV, NIV, GNT, ESV, etc.). This enabled patriarchy-based theologies to develop in Christianity with their insistence on male dominance and female subservience theological ideas.

Fact Check: The Hebrew Bible reads, 'Yahweh Elohim built (*banah*) a woman from the side (*tsela*) which he had taken from the man (*adam*)' (Gen 1.22). The Hebrew word *tsela* could mean 'rib' but it mostly means 'side of' or 'part of' something (NET). It is utilised 15 times in Exod 25-38 in connection with the Tabernacle and always refers to 'side of' as in part of a box, the ark, the walls, side rooms and so on. It is also used 7 times in Eze 41, in relationship to Ezekiel's futuristic Temple, again with the same usage as Exodus. It is only in Gen 2 that it is translated as 'rib'. The Greek OT (Septuagint or LXX) translates the Hebrew *tsela* with the Greek *pleura* which literally means 'side of the body'. Unfortunately, when Jerome translated the Hebrew Bible to Latin (the Vulgate) he used the Latin *costa* which literally means 'curved bone' or 'rib'. Subsequently, English translations like the KJV followed the Vulgate and it became tradition. I suggest that the best way to visualise what occurred in Genesis is to consider the analogy of a modern medical reality, 'Siamese' twins who are conjoined in every conceivable way. The commentary in Gen 2.24 that man and woman become 'one flesh' (literally 'one *basar*' or 'one skin') lends credence to this ideas as does Adam's initial response to Eve, 'Now, this is someone whose bones came from my bones, whose body came from my body' (Gen 1.23 NLT).

I am drawn to the following assertion of Paul, 'What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with my understanding.' (1 Cor 14.15 HCSB). I suggest this maxim should be our *modus operandi* when we contemplate theological and biblical truths. In a world filled with 'fake news', the Church should be the bearer of real good news not more 'fake news'.

