

Q. Did it take God two tries to make a helper for Adam? Why did God first bring the animals to Adam?

A. Good question. First, it didn't take God two times to get it right. God doesn't make mistakes. And He wasn't testing Adam to see if he might like animals. But He was teaching Adam an important lesson.

In Genesis 2:18-20, we read, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him." As I explained in the Q&A article, "What is a real marriage?" (<http://www.wordofhisgrace.org/realmarriageqa.htm>), in Genesis 2:18, the word "meet" means fitting or suitable—a counterpart. An animal wouldn't be a counterpart to Adam.

The verses about the animals can seem out of place or can give the impression that God first tried to find a helper for Adam in the animals. Neither assumption is correct. I skipped verses 19-20 in the above article because they would have taken me a little off track from my topic. But they are still important.

Notice the major points they bring out: 1) God formed the beasts and fowls out of the ground, 2) God brought them to Adam for him to name, 3) Adam's naming them was an act of authority—whatever he named them was their name, 4) None of the animals was a fitting helper for Adam.

Now let's look at verses 21-24 and see how the major points there compare with the points above: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my

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flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Here are the major points of verses 21-24: 1) God made the woman from Adam's flesh—his rib, 2) God brought the woman to Adam, 3) Adam recognized a difference in the woman—unlike the animals, she was of his own flesh, 4) Adam named the woman, 5) They were married and, thus, the woman became his fitting helper.

When we compare the major points of the two sets of verses, we see: 1) While God made the animals from the ground, He made the woman from Adam, 2) As God brought the animals to Adam, so He also brought the woman to Adam, 3) Adam seemed to recognize that the purpose of this bringing was to name, so, just as he named the animals, he named the woman, 4) Naming is an act of authority—just as by naming the animals, Adam was exercising dominion over them, so by naming the woman, Adam was exercising dominion over her, 5) Adam learned the lesson that the only fitting helper for him had to not be a beast from the ground but a creature made from his own flesh.

Obviously, God had planned this all along. He was not testing Adam to see if he would take an animal, but was teaching him that people were special, and only another human of the same flesh could be his counterpart helper. He was also teaching Adam that while he was to love as his own flesh this woman taken from his flesh (see Ephesians 5:28), he also had authority over her.

By the way, the concept of naming something as showing authority or prerogative over it is found throughout the Bible. As just a few examples, notice that, in Genesis 1, God named "day," "night," "heaven," "earth," and "seas." In Genesis 17, God renamed Abram "Abraham," and Sarai "Sarah." Pharaoh exercised his authority by renaming Joseph "Zaphenath-paneah" (Genesis 41:45), Pharaoh Neco renamed Eliakim "Jehoiakim" (2 Kings 23:34), Nebuchadnezzar renamed Mattaniah "Zedekiah" (2 Kings 24:17), acting under Nebuchadnezzar's authority the prince of the eunuchs gave names to Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1:7), Jesus named Simon "Peter" or "Cephas" (Mark 3:16; John 1:42) and James and John "Boanerges" (Mark 3:17). So the Bible gives much evidence for the right of someone to name someone else over which he holds a superior position.

So, God was teaching Adam that, man being a special creation, only someone from his own flesh was a fitting helper. Yet, this helper whom he was to love as his own flesh, was someone over whom he had authority.

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