Eve’s Rib Is Side, &c.

Eve created from side, not head or foot.
Harold B. Lee, Priesthood/Relief Society Manual, 2002 year (SLC: Intellectual Reserve, Inc., 2000), p.109. “Someone has observed that in the Bible account of the creation woman was not formed from a part of man’s head, suggesting that she might rule over him, nor from a part of a man’s foot that she was to be trampled under his feet. Woman was taken from a man’s side as though to emphasize the fact that she was always to be by his side as a partner and companion.” [Decisions for Successful Living (1973), pp. 174-175.]

Reynolds and Sjodahl, Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 1., p.59. The word which in the story of the creation of man is translated “rib,” (Hebrew zelah) occurs 38 times in the Old Testament. Nowhere, except in that account, is it rendered "rib." In a number of passages it is translated "side," (Ex. 25:12, 14; 26:20; 27:7; 36:25, 31; 37:35; 38:7) In 2 Samuel 16:13 it is rendered, “hillside.” And in Ezekiel 41 it occurs ten times and is rendered, “side chambers.” Why the translators of Genesis should have preferred “rib” to “side” is a mystery. “Chamber” would, in my opinion or judgment be preferable. The side chambers of the temple were used for sacred purposes. In some of them the sacred utensils and the vast treasures of the sanctuary were, no doubt, stored. But the body of Adam was a temple of God, with its side chambers, as well as main chambers, in which the main springs of life were stored. From these chambers it pleased God to draw his material for the second sacred structure, to be joined to the first. And so Adam, who was perfectly conscious of what the Lord had done during his sleep, exclaimed, as soon as he saw the new creation, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.”

Hugh Nibley, Ancient Documents and the Pearl of Great Price, p.13–14. And then there is another deep sleep. He woke from a deep sleep in the first place when he woke up being Adam after being Michael. And now he goes into another deep sleep. Then he wakes up and finds Eve there. Now it’s time to be properly married. This life ends with another sleep. Notice, it says a deep sleep, a passage. He marries Eve in the covenant, verse 22 following. They are very close, as close as you can get here. The rib in Arabic is the urka or silka. It is the expression for anything as close to you as a thing can possibly be.

What can get closer to your side than your rib. Your rib is your side. You might be able to get along without it, but the rib is about as close to a person as you can get. It is a usage. The metaphor is used in language: As close as my rib and as intimate. It means “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh,” as intimate as you can be.

Journal of Discourses, Vol.6, p.356–357, Orson Pratt, July 24, 1859. Then, again, he says, “If a woman put away her husband, she committeth adultery.” A man has not right to put away his wife, nor a woman her husband. “What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder; for in the beginning it was not so, but they twain became one flesh.”

Is this an argument against having more than one wife? For instance, Jacob and Leah were one flesh, Leah being his first wife. Jacob and Rachel were one flesh. Jacob and Bilhah were one flesh. Jacob and Zilpah were one flesh; and if he had had a thousand more, it would have been the same: each wife would have been a legitimate wife, and one flesh with Jacob; and their children would have been legitimate. This was not argument against plurality. If so, Jacob would have been found a transgressor.

In the second chapter of Genesis, it is stated that the Lord took a rib from Adam, and, by adding other materials, formed a woman, and brought her to the man, and gave her to him as a helpmeet—as a wife. “And Adam said, This I know now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore, shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife; and they
twain shall be one flesh.”

This is the saying which Jesus quoted. Now, Jacob, in taking four wives, became one flesh with each one of them; but how and in what respect? Perhaps it may be said that they became one in mind, one in understanding, one in intellect, one in judgment, &c. Their minds are to be one. But it does not say one in mind, one spiritually, but one flesh.

How are we to understand this? Paul (Eph. v. 28–31) says, “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife; and they two shall be one flesh.”

Paul makes these quotations from the second chapter of Genesis, to prove that the woman was one flesh with the man, because she was taken out of man’s body, and made out of his flesh and bones. She was one flesh in this respect—not in identity: they were two distinct persons, as much so as the Father and the Son are two distinct personages.

And again, the wife becomes one flesh with her husband in another respect: when she presents herself to the man, and gives herself to him with an everlasting covenant, one that is not to be broken, she becomes his flesh, his property, his wife, as much so as the flesh and bone of his own body.

The Father and the Son are represented to be one. “I and my Father are one,” said Jesus. Would any person pretend to say, because Jesus and his Father are one, that he could not receive a third person into the communion?—a fourth, or a fifth?—If we examine the arguments of modern Christendom, nobody but Jesus could be admitted into the union; or, in other words, they twain—that is, the Father and Son—were to be one, and no others. But Jesus says, “Father, I pray not for these alone which thou hast given me out of the world; but I pray for all them that shall believe on me through their words, (the Twelve,) that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee; that they may be made perfect in one.”

The disciples of Jesus were not to lose their identity, because Jesus was one with the Father. The identity of Jesus was not destroyed, but he remained a distinct person, and so did all the disciples, and yet they became one; and so is every man and his wives. Because they twain—that is, Jesus and his father—were one, it did not hinder the disciples from attaining to the same oneness. And so likewise with regard to the man and his first wife: because they twain are one flesh, it does not prevent him from being one flesh with each of his other wives which he may legally take.

B. H. Roberts, The Gospel and Man’s Relationship to Deity, p.268. The Prophet Joseph Smith is credited with having said that our planet was made up of the fragments of a planet which previously existed; some mighty convulsions disrupted that creation and made it desolate. Both its animal and vegetable life forms were destroyed. And when those convulsions ceased, and the rent earth was again consolidated, and it became desirable to replenish it, the work was begun by making a mist to rise, that it might descend in gentle rain upon the barren earth, that it might again be fruitful. Then came one of the sons of God to the earth—Adam. A garden was planted in Eden and the man placed in it, and there the Lord brought to him every beast of the field and every fowl of the air, and Adam gave names to them all. Afterwards was brought to Adam his wife, whom, since she was derived from man, he named woman; and she became his help-mate, his companion and the mother of his children. In this nothing is hinted at about man being made from the dust, and woman manufactured from a rib, a story which has been a cause of much perplexity to religious people, and a source of much impious merriment to reckless unbelievers. We are informed that the Lord God made every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb before it grew on our planet. [Gen 2:4, 5.]

Footnote 22. Lest anyone should doubt that Adam was one of the sons of God, I call attention to the verse of Luke, chapter iii, where in tracing the genealogy of Jesus back to Adam, and coming to Cainan it goes on to say that “he (Cainan) was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.” [See also Moses 6:22.]
As vegetation was created or made to grow upon some older earth, and the seeds thereof or the plants themselves were brought to our earth and made to grow, so likewise man and his helpmate were brought from some other world to our own, to people it with their children. And though it is said that the “Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground”—it by no means follows that he was "formed" as one might form a brick, or form the dust of this earth. We are all “formed” of the dust of the ground, though instead of being moulded as a brick we are brought forth by the natural laws of procreation; so also was Adam and his wife in some older world. And as for the story of the rib, under it I believe the mystery of procreation is hidden.

B.H. Roberts, *The Seventy’s Course in Theology*, Second Year, p.38. 2. The Advent of Adam on Earth: The earth, “warmed and dried by the cheering rays of the now resplendent sun, is prepared for the first seeds of vegetation. A royal planter now descends from yonder world of older date, and bearing in his hand the choice needs of the older Paradise, he plants them in the virgin soil of our new born earth. They grow and flourish there, and, bearing seed, replant themselves, and thus clothed the naked earth with scenes of beauty and the air with fragrant incense. Ripening fruits and herbs at length abound. When lo! from yonder world is transferred every species of animal life. Male and female, they come, with blessings on their heads, and a voice is heard again, ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’ Earth, its mineral, vegetable and animal wealth, its paradise prepared, down comes from yonder world on high a son of God, with his beloved spouse. And thus a colony from heaven ... is transplanted on our soil. The blessings of their Father are upon them, and the first great law of heaven and earth is again repeated, ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’ Hence, the nations which have swarmed our earth. In after years, when Paradise was lost by sin; when man was driven from the face of his heavenly Father, to toil, and droop, and die; when heaven was veiled from view, and, with few exceptions, man was no longer counted worthy to retain the knowledge of his heavenly origin; then darkness veiled the past and future from the heathen mind; man neither knew himself, from whence he came, nor whither he was bound. At length a Moses came, who knew his God, and would fain have led mankind to know Him too, and see Him face to face. But they could not receive His heavenly laws or bide His presence. Thus the holy man was forced again to veil the past in mystery, and in the beginning of his history assign to man an earthly origin. Man, moulded from the earth as a brick! Woman, manufactured from a rib! Thus, parents still would fain conceal from budding manhood the mysteries of procreation, or the sources of life’s overflowing river, by relating some childish tale of new-born life, engendered in the hollow trunk of some old tree, or springing with spontaneous growth like mushrooms from out the heaps of rubbish. O man! when wilt thou cease to be a child in knowledge?” Man as we have said, is the offspring of Deity. The entire mystery of the past and future, with regard to his existence, is not yet solved by mortals. —Parley P. Pratt’s “Key to the Science of Theology” chap. VI.)