

BIBLICAL ISSUES

- Where did Cain get his wife?

Skeptics have used Cain's wife time and again to try to discredit the Book of Genesis as a true historical record. Why is it important that we know the answer? Many skeptics have claimed that, for Cain to find a wife, there must have been other “races” of people on the earth who were not descendants of Adam and Eve. To many people, this question is a stumbling block to accepting the creation account in Genesis and its record of only one man and woman at the beginning of history—a record on which many Old and New Testament doctrines depend. Defenders of the gospel must be able to show that all human beings are descendants of one man and one woman (Adam and Eve)—as only those people who are descendants of Adam and Eve can be saved. Thus, believers need to be able to account for Cain's wife and show clearly that she was a descendant of Adam and Eve. Before we answer this question, we will first show how important it is to the meaning of the gospel.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

God did not start by making a whole group of men. The Bible makes it clear that only the descendants of Adam can be saved. Romans 5 teaches that we sin because Adam sinned. The death penalty, which Adam received as judgment for his sin of rebellion, also passed on to all his descendants. Since Adam was the head of the human race when he “fell,” we who were in the loins of Adam “fell,” also. Thus, we are all separated from God. The final consequence of sin would be separation from God in our sinful state forever. However, the good news is that there is a way for us to return to God!

Because a man brought sin and death into the world, all the descendants of Adam need a sinless Man to pay the penalty for sin and the resulting judgment of death. However, the Bible teaches that “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23). What is the solution? God provided the solution—a way to deliver man from his wretched state. Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15 that God provided another Adam! The Son of God took on a human nature in addition to His full divinity, becoming a perfect God-man—Jesus Christ. In His humanity, He was a descendant of Adam (through Noah, Abraham and David)—He thus became our relation! He is called “the last Adam” because he took the place of the first Adam. He became the new head, and, because he was sinless, He was able to pay the penalty for sin:

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Since the Bible describes all human beings as sinners, except the God-Man Jesus, and we are all related, the gospel makes sense only on the basis that all humans alive and all who have ever lived are descendants of the first man Adam. If this were not so, then the gospel could not be explained or defended.

Acts 17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Thus, only descendants of the first man Adam can be saved. There was only one man at the beginning, he sinned, he got us all in trouble with God – but God provided a remedy for the sin of Adam’s descendants. Every other human being descended from Adam, and Eve – the first woman – was taken out of his side. This must mean that Cain's wife was a descendant of Adam. She could not have come from another “race” of people and must be one of Adam's descendants. Cain was the first child of Adam and Eve recorded in Scripture (Genesis 4:1). His brothers, Abel (Genesis 4:2) and Seth (Genesis 4:25), were part of the first generation of children ever born on this earth. Even though only these three males are mentioned by name, Adam and Eve had other children.

Genesis 5:4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:

This does not say when they were born. Many could have been born in the 130 years (Genesis 5:3) before Seth was born. During their lives, Adam and Eve had a number of male and female children. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that, “The number of Adam's children, as says the old tradition, was thirty-three sons and twenty-three daughters.” The Bible does not tell us how many children were born to Adam and Eve. However, considering their long life spans (Adam lived for 930 years—Genesis 5:5), it would seem reasonable to suggest there were many! Remember, They were commanded to “Be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1:28).

If we now work totally from Scripture, without any personal prejudices or other extra-biblical ideas, then back at the beginning, when there was only the first generation, brothers would have had to have married sisters or there would be no more generations! Many people immediately reject the conclusion that Adam and Eve's sons and daughters married each other by appealing to the law against brother-sister intermarriage. But think about this: A wife is related to her husband even before they marry because all people are descendants of Adam and Eve—all are of “one blood.” The law forbidding marriage between close relatives was not given until the time of Moses (Leviticus 18-20). Provided marriage was one man to one woman for life (based on Genesis 1 and 2), there was no disobedience to God's law originally when close relatives married each other. Remember that Abraham married his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). God blessed this union to produce the Hebrew people through Isaac and Jacob. It was not until some 400 years later that God gave Moses laws that forbade such marriages.

Today, brothers and sisters (and half-brothers and half-sisters, etc.) are not permitted by law to marry because their children have an unacceptably high risk of being deformed. The more closely the parents are related, the more likely it is that any offspring will be deformed. There is a very sound genetic reason for such laws that is easy to understand. Every person has two sets of genes, there being some 130,000 pairs that specify how a person is put together and functions. Each person inherits one gene of each pair from each parent. Unfortunately, genes today contain many mistakes (because of sin and the Curse), and these mistakes show up in a variety of ways. The more distantly related parents are, the more likely it is that they will have different mistakes in their genes. Children, inheriting one set of genes from each parent, are likely to end up with pairs of genes containing a maximum of one bad gene in each pair. The good gene tends to override the bad so that a deformity (a serious one, anyway) does not occur. (Overall, though, the human race is slowly degenerating as mistakes accumulate, generation after generation.) However, the more closely related two people are, the more likely it is that they will have similar mistakes in their genes, since these have been inherited from the same parents. Therefore, a brother and a sister are more likely to have similar mistakes in their genes. A child of a union between such siblings could inherit the same bad gene on the same gene pair from both, resulting in two bad copies of the gene and serious defects.

Adam and Eve did not have accumulated genetic mistakes. When the first two people were created, they were physically perfect. Everything God made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31), so their genes were perfect—no mistakes! But, when sin entered the world (because of Adam—Genesis 3:6, Romans 5:12), God cursed the world so that the perfect creation then began to degenerate, that is, suffer death and decay (Romans 8:22). Over thousands of years, this degeneration has produced all sorts of genetic mistakes in living things. Cain was in the first generation of children ever born. He (as well as his brothers and sisters) would have received virtually no imperfect genes from Adam or Eve, since the effects of sin and the Curse would have been minimal to start with (it takes time for these copying errors to accumulate). In that situation, brother and sister could have married with God's approval, without any potential to produce deformed offspring. By the time of Moses (a few thousand years later), degenerative mistakes would have built up in the human race to such an extent that it was necessary for God to forbid brother-sister (and close relative) marriage (Leviticus 18-20). (Also, there were plenty of people on the earth by then, and there was no reason for close relations to marry.)

- Why is there such a difference in God's viewpoint on war between the Old and New Testaments? The Israelites were commanded to slaughter their enemies, but Christians are commanded to love their enemies. Does God approve of war?

The sixth commandment is "Thou shalt not kill." Atheists claim that God violated His own commandment in ordering the destruction of entire cities, just to allow the Jews to have a homeland in the Middle East. The Bible confirms that God ordered the killing of thousands of people. So isn't this an open and shut case for the hypocrisy of the God of the Bible? No, because not all killing is the same. Hebrew, the language in which most of the Old Testament was written, uses different words for intentional vs. unintentional killing. The verse translated "Thou shalt not kill" in the KJV translation, is translated "You shall not murder" in modern translations - because these translations represent the real meaning of the Hebrew text. The Bible in Basic English translates the phrase, "Do not put anyone to death without cause." Hebrew law recognized accidental killing as not punishable. In fact, specific cities were designated as "cities of refuge," so that an unintentional killer could flee to escape retribution. But the punishment for intentional murder was the death sentence. The Bible also prescribes that people have a right to defend themselves against attack and use force if necessary.

To answer the question whether God breaks His own commandments, we need to determine if God committed murder (i.e., killed people without cause). The Bible is quite clear that God has killed people directly (the most prominent example being the flood) and indirectly (ordered peoples to be killed). If God ordered or participated in the killing of innocent people, then He would be guilty of murder. But in the flood, for instance, the Bible says that all people had become corrupted and were continually plotting evil – only Noah and his family were righteous. So no innocent people were killed in the flood.

What about when God ordered Joshua and his people to kill every man, woman and child in Canaan? What crime could be so great that entire populations of cities were designated for destruction? God told Moses that the nations that the Hebrews were replacing were wicked. How "wicked" were these people? The Bible tells us that they were burning their own sons and daughters in sacrifices to their gods. These people were not really innocent. For reasons like this, God ordered the destruction of the peoples whom the Israelites dispossessed.

Deuteronomy 9:5 Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Deuteronomy 12:31 Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

But why couldn't God have spared the children? First of all, the Bible indicates that all people are sinners, including babies, and worthy of judgment. However, the Bible also indicates that children are incapable of making moral choices, so we believe that they go to heaven if they have not yet reached the age of accountability.

So, in having babies killed, God was actually doing them a favor, since, if they had grown up opposed to God, they would have gone to hell for certain due to the influence of their pagan culture. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is really not as general as the King James version would indicate. The commandment actually refers to premeditated, unjustified killing - murder. Although God ordered the extermination of entire cities, He did so in righteous judgment on a people whose corruption had led to extreme wickedness, including child sacrifice. So, the charge that God indiscriminately murdered people does not hold to the critical examination.

In the New Testament, we move from an earthly kingdom for the Jews to a heavenly kingdom for the church. There is still warfare, there is still a necessity to attack the enemy, but it is a spiritual battle rather than a physical one. In the physical realm, we love and pray for our enemies – but in the spiritual realm, we go to war against the spirits that drive them. It is different, to be sure, but God still approves of this kind of war – not lazy, comfortable “Christianity.” In order to maintain His righteousness, God must judge sin - everything that goes against His character. If God let everyone into heaven, then He would have to allow in people such as Stalin and Hitler. Obviously, heaven would then not be a good place to be. Therefore, God's righteousness requires the judgment of all sin. Only those people who agree with God and are willing to allow themselves to be changed into sinless beings can enter into heaven.

God's judgment of people groups found in the Old Testament actually pales in comparison to the judgment He will render at the end of time. According to the New Testament Book of Revelation, God will judge and kill billions of people who reject Him when Jesus returns, including 200 million killed in a single battle. Such large armies have never existed in the history of mankind until the last 100 years, suggesting that this judgment could come at any time.

- The book of Job contains references to huge animals called the Leviathan and the Behemoth – were these dinosaurs or something else? What about the dinosaur bones that have been found and dated to be tens of thousands of years old? Doesn't this contradict the creation account?

Job 40:15-18 Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron.

Job 41:1-2 Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

Job 41:14-15 Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal.

- GAP Theory – Genesis 1:1 vs. Genesis 1:2
- Behemoth – tail like tree – dinosaur? / Leviathan – aquatic dinosaur?
- Part of previous creation OR could be errors with Carbon 14 dating
- Regardless, if these animals were dinosaurs it doesn't contradict Genesis

- Why does the Bible include passages that are not the "words of God" like the passages in Job where his friends give the wrong perspective and advice?

In Job, God's purpose is not to explain WHY the godly suffer, but to show us HOW the godly suffer! And sometimes, when we suffer, well-meaning people come by with really dumb advice – just like Job's friends. So this "wrong" information is included in the Scripture to show us the CONTRAST between man's wisdom and God's wisdom. The book of Proverbs is also a "wisdom book" and it contains similar principles ...

In the book of Proverbs, King Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (2 Chronicles 1:10, 1 Kings 4:29), gives us insight and advice regarding many of the issues of life that are not directly addressed in the Law or the Prophets (i.e. **PRINCIPLES** and **APPLICATIONS**). That is why **PROVERBS are PROBABILITIES, not PROMISES**. Generally, the wise prosper while fools do not – but it doesn't always happen that way! These general principles of life are balanced by the reality that the wicked sometimes prosper – but only temporarily!

Psalm 73:2-3 But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Psalm 73:16-17 When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.

So, whatever the result, we still need to live by God's **PRINCIPLES**. God does not guarantee uniform outcomes for each proverb, but in studying them and applying the, we begin to understand the wisdom, character and blessings of God. **And that alone will make us grow!** The aim of Proverbs (and other "wisdom literature") is to give us skill in all our human relationships and learn how to discern between man's and God's wisdom. All of the wisdom expressed in Proverbs is hidden in Christ - we need to know Him most!

Colossians 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

- Where did the mythology of Greek Gods come from? Were these gods worshipped in Bible times or did people make them up after? What about Buddha or Allah - they are not mentioned in the Bible, so where did people even come up with these gods?

According to the early Christian church fathers the ancient Greeks believed that their Gods were originally real people who their ancestors deified and to whom they prescribed divine rites derived from the Egyptians and Phoenicians whose Gods were once mortal men. Eusebius wrote, "The gods, they say, had been originally mortal men, but gained their immortality on account of wisdom and public benefits to mankind ..."

In the Preparation of the Gospel Eusebius, quoting from original Greek sources, tells how the Hellenic religion was created from the corruption of written histories. Over the generations the biographies of the kings of Greece and the events which occurred during their reigns were mixed up with Egyptian theology by the poets and the caretakers of the tombs of these kings and thus the kings were turned into Gods, their tombs into temples and the caretakers into priests. Centuries later because of the imperfections of the Gods characters, their incestuous relationships, the wars they waged against their own offspring and their bizarre initiation ceremonies Socrates thought that their acts should best be left to be forgotten. But others disagreed, and these myths and legends survived. In any case, it is highly that the Gods and Heroes were all based on real people whose hero cults survived well into the Christian era.

The false god Buddha was worshipped even before the birth of Jesus on the Indian subcontinent, but Allah is a much later invention. Muhammed only lived from AD 570 to AD 632, after all! All false gods are a violation of the first commandment, all false gods give men a tool to manipulate others, all false gods cannot save us. People merely come up with them so they can make a god in their image, instead of the other way around!

- Where did the image of Jesus come from? Is there a description given of him somewhere in the Bible? Why does he have long hair?

The images we often see of Jesus came from artists in the middle ages – hundreds of years after Jesus lived. They are totally fabricated, because the Jews didn't make drawings of each other, lest they break the second commandment (no graven images).

Some people say that Jesus had long hair because he was a Nazarite. That's incorrect, but what is a Nazarite? The Nazarite Vow (Numbers 6) had three specific restrictions: they could not eat things made with grapes, they could not touch a corpse, they could not cut their hair for a specified time. Other than three rare exceptions (Samson, Samuel, and probably John the Baptist), a Nazarite would always cut their hair after a specified time – usually 30 days according to the Mishna, although double and triple vows for 60 and 100 days were sometimes made. The Nazarite vow resembled the sanctified life of the priest, except that it was done spontaneously unto God by ordinary Israelites. This vow not only set a man apart but also shamed him, perhaps signifying the shame Jesus would endure.

BUT NOTE THAT JESUS WAS NOT A NAZARITE ANYWAY, BUT A NAZARENE (“OF NAZARETH”). He drank the fruit of the vine, touched dead bodies (and raised them from the dead!), and had short hair! All men of Christ’s day wore their hair short. The Talmud states that the hairstyle was Julian (like Caesar) and that priests cut their hair once every 30 days (based on Ezekiel 44:20 - “Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads”).

Until very recently, images of Israelites were not found depicted in ancient artifacts unearthed by archaeologists. This is obviously because of the injunction against the making of graven images. There are plentiful ancient depictions of the Assyrians, Philistines and other heathen nations with long hair and beards, often woven together. However, an image recently discovered in Northern Israel shows Israelites being enslaved by the ancient Philistines. All of the Israelite men depicted have their hair cut very short, unlike the manner of the heathen who lived round about Israel.

So what do we know about how Jesus looked? We only know that he wasn’t exceptional in his looks, but rather ordinary. (Isaiah 53:2 – “no beauty that we should desire him”)

- Sometimes a preacher interprets a Scripture passage very differently from other teaching I’ve heard – what should I do in that case?

This is what is called taking a Scripture “out of context” – in other words, someone uses a phrase in the English language Bible that SOUNDS like it means one thing, but it really means something else entirely in the original Hebrew (OT) or Greek (NT). So, we have to be careful and remember that any interpretation must line up with the WHOLE Bible.

Proverbs 18:16 A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.

Proverbs 18:16 (TEV) Do you want to meet an important person? Take a gift and it will be easy.

2 Peter 1:20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

There is a right interpretation for the Bible! (i.e. “peace and safety”) Just because we don’t see it yet doesn’t mean it isn’t there!

i.e. ERRORS - David feigned himself mad, In my Father’s house are many mansions, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

John 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Interpret Scripture with Scripture ... and pay attention to your pastor’s reaction!