

Baffling Questions From Genesis: Part 2

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The two most asked questions I am confronted with by critics are, “Who did Cain marry, and How did people live 800 years in Genesis 5 ?” Last week we saw that Gen.5:4 tells us Adam had many other sons and daughters so the obvious answer was he married his sister. This sounds horrible to us, not to mention that incest causes genetic problems. Remember that incest wasn’t forbidden until the time of Moses, and we can assume the gene pool was very rich and genetic problems had not developed yet.

How did people live so long initially? The original creation was an ideal environment for the preservation of human life. Eden was perfect for good health and long life. After they were expelled from Eden, conditions for longevity continued to be very favorable until the great flood of Noah’s time. There was a virtual absence of disease and harmful environmental affects until after the flood. After the terrible judgment of the flood, conditions gradually changed for the worse. There was a gradual working out of the cursed effects of sin upon the human race. By the time of Moses, the life expectancy was about 70-80 years. Moses wrote Psalm 90:10, “the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow, for soon it is gone and we fly away”. The perspective of the Bible is that after the fall of man into sin, it was actually gracious of God to shorten our lives.

New Question About Polygamy

How can we say the Bible teaches monogamy? The man Israel was named after was Jacob and he had four wives with children from each. In fact all the characters in the O.T. had multiple wives. Muslims use the story of Jacob in Genesis 29-30 to justify polygamy.

Answer: We build doctrine on what Scripture commands, not on how people behaved. God’s ideal for marriage is revealed in the creation account and affirmed by Jesus in the Gospels. The polygamy was the standard for those times because of the “hardness of men’s hearts”, so Jacob was doing what his father and grandfather did and may have rationalized it as right as far as he knew. Nevertheless, his overall story reveals the trouble and painful consequences of polygamy. Jacob’s wives drove him nuts with their jealousy and bitter competition, and all of his sons were rivals and tried to kill Joseph. The evil stimulated by polygamy distorted the good that God intended to bring through marriage. It is clear that Adam was only complete by being joined to one woman that God made for him, Eve. In Genesis 2:24 we are told, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” The first to violate this was Lamech in Gen.4:19, but he was a seriously evil and messed up guy.

Was God Really Sorry He Made Man ?

Does God change His mind? Did the sin of man catch God by surprise? What does it mean in Gen.6:6, “The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth” ?

Answer: The Hebrew word translated sorry here means that God was deeply grieved about what had happened. God hates sin but He loves people, so it grieved Him to see people so totally messed up. God was sorry for what man had done to himself. We know from many passages like 1 Samuel 15:29 that, “God who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind.”

The depth of the corruption to which mankind had fallen by Noah’s time was revolting to the Lord of righteousness and justice. God responded to their depravity as His attribute of justice demanded. His response to humanity was a necessary adjustment to the change in humanity’s feeling about Him—rejection. Throughout Scripture, God adjusts how He treats man based on their response to Him. When people repent and seek the Lord, He reveals Himself. When people confess and repent of their sins, God then forgives them, but when the whole human race rejected God and reveled in their sin, God responded accordingly.

Was it Really Possible to Get That Many Animals on the Ark?

When you convert the dimensions to feet, you come up with a vessel that was a huge barge-like structure designed for capacity and floating stability 450 feet long by 75 feet wide by 45 feet high. It was four stories high with three decks for the animals. There would have been room for 522 standard livestock railroad cars. Over 125,000 animals the size of sheep or cattle could have been carried on the Ark along with food for a year. It is estimated there are approximately 18,000 species of land animals today. Even if you doubled or tripled that there would be room.

Critics have asked me questions like: How could 8 people care for all those animals? What about the special dietary needs of exotic animals? What about temperature control? How did all those animals get there from all over the world?

My answer is usually something like—Are you nuts? We are talking about the God who created the animals, who brought them into being, and created all the food they have always eaten. This is the God who destroyed the world with a worldwide flood, and then basically recreated it—and you are worried about special dietary needs?

Who Wrote the First Five Books of the Bible ?

The Bible itself is very clear that Moses wrote them, and all Jewish and Christian tradition also attributed these books to Moses. However that does not stop the majority of “scholars” from doubting Moses’ authorship. This movement began during the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th century, but was not the majority opinion until the 19th century German scholars like Julius Wellhausen came up with their “documentary theory”. He wrote that there were four different sources for the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible), and these books were compiled over a long period of time beginning in 850 BC and finally put all together by Ezra around 450 BC. All of his evidence to support this theory comes from his own internal study of these books. Basically, their anti-supernatural bias led them to believe that the teaching evolved over a thousand years until its final form of “truth” that we now have. The majority opinion in our modern times is one of rationalistic skepticism similar to the 19th century Germans.

The conservative evangelical view that I personally hold is that there is ample evidence that Moses did write the Pentateuch. These writings repetitiously refer to Moses as the author, like Ex. 17:14, “God said to Moses, ‘Write for me a memorial in a book’, or Ex.24:4, “Moses wrote all the words of God”, or 24:7, “Moses took the book of the covenant and read it to the people”. See also Ex.34:27, Nu.33:1-2, Deut.31:9, “Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests”. When Moses died, the Lord told Joshua, “This book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, meditate on it” (Josh.1:8). We are told that Joshua read aloud from the Law of Moses. Would these self important scholars have us believe that all these verses are false? Most of the rest of the Old Testament authors refer to Moses as the author of the Torah (the Law). Look at 1 Kings 2:3, Ezra 6:18, Neh.13:1, Dan.9:11-13, Mal.4:4, and many others. Could every author in the O.T. be in on this conspiracy to fool us into thinking Moses wrote it? The only convincing argument the critics have is that it appears to be written by narrators and not in the first person, also some of the events like Moses’ burial could not have been written by Moses. These are easily explainable that Moses wrote in the 3rd person as a literary device as many authors do, and Joshua, his successor added to the narrative.

Christ and the Apostles also testified to Moses as the author. In John 5:46-57, Jesus said Moses wrote about Him and in Jn.7:19 Jesus said, “Did not Moses give you the Law?” In Acts 3:22 Peter said Moses wrote Deuteronomy, and Paul in Romans 10:5 said Moses wrote the Torah. If Jesus is wrong and the Apostles are wrong then all of Scripture is in jeopardy. In fact, considering that all the authors of the O.T. and the N.T. and all the scribes who copied it going back to 850 BC and all the religious leaders over all these years would have had to be in on this conspiracy; thousands of people would have had to be involved in this fraud to fool us. I could give you dozens of petty reasons why the scholars say Moses did not write any of the Bible, but what is the real reason these scholars want to put such a late date on the O.T.? I am convinced that they are motivated by a desire to discredit the Bible by making it purely an invention of man written well after the events, and therefore not prophetic or eyewitness accounts.

After all, how could Moses predict the history of Israel in Deut. 28 so accurately? How could all the prophets predict the invasions of Assyria and Babylon, the captivity, and the return from captivity? It is essential to the cause of the critics that they prove all these books were written after the fact. How could a fifteenth century BC Moses have foreseen events in 587? The Bible says Moses merely wrote down what God revealed to him.

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