

## **Baffling Questions From the Book of Genesis**

### Baffling Questions From the Book of Genesis

Many of us really struggle with Genesis because it has some seemingly strange stories and hard to believe miracles as well as ages that are unheard of today. Let me try to deal with some of the most asked questions:

1. Who did Cain marry since Adam and Eve only had two sons?

Answer: Genesis 5:4 tells us that Adam had other sons and daughters so clearly the children married brothers and sisters. Thousands of years later the Mosaic Law forbade incest, but at the beginning no other possibility existed. I assume the gene pool was very rich and the genetic code had not been duplicated at that time. Much later when the population explosion began, malfunctions occurred in the duplication of the human genetic code which made it necessary to forbid sibling marriage.

2. Why aren't dinosaurs mentioned in the creation account? Where did they come from?

Answer: The only definitive answer I have ever seen is called the "gap theory". Dinosaurs belonged to God's original creation. God's original creation was destroyed by the fall of Satan. The seven day creation account in Genesis describes the repair of that which was "formless and void". This theory sees a gap between Gen.1 v.1 and v.2 of an undetermined time. In other words the creation of v.1 had become formless and void, and God re-created it. I don't necessarily subscribe to this, but it does explain dinosaurs.

A simple answer is that they either died off very early or were destroyed by the great flood in Gen. 6-8.

3. Why was Cain's offering of grain not acceptable to the Lord in Genesis 4?

Answer: Cain was a farmer so the fruit of his labor was grain, but Abel was a keeper of flocks. Each brought a sacrifice of his own occupation to God, but God only accepted Abel's blood sacrifice. We get more insight from Hebrews 11:4, "by faith (and obedience) Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain". How so? God had ordained that sinful man could only approach Him by way of a blood sacrifice which Abel faithfully did; but Cain pridefully (but disobediently) brought the fruit of his own labors. Instead of obeying God by faith like Abel did, Cain did it his own way. 1 John 3:12 backs this up by saying that what Cain did was evil, and what his brother did was righteous. Ever since then, mankind has struggled with obeying God. Cain and Abel well represent the human race—the few who come to God on God's terms are represented by Abel, but the vast majority of the human race pridefully approach God on their own terms as Cain did.

4. How could people live so long in Genesis 5 ?

Answer: The environment was still semi-perfect, and wasn't as damaging (UV rays, natural disasters, diseases, etc.). It progressively became worse after the flood of Gen.6-8. Many human diseases are genetic caused by malfunctions which occur in the duplication of the human genetic code. As the human race multiplied, multiple errors in duplication weakened our race. This was probably allowed by God as part of the curse in Gen.3 against sin. Remember that God purposely drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden so that they would eventually die (Gen.3:24). This was actually an act of mercy lest they live forever in a state of fallenness and alienation.

5. Is it contradictory that the Ten Commandments say, "Thou shalt not kill"(Ex.20:13), yet Gen.9:6 says a person who kills another should be killed in turn?

Answer: Two different Hebrew words were used which help us resolve this supposed dilemma. "Harag" is the word generally used for killing in a war or the state's execution of a criminal. This word is used for killing without moral distinctions. The other word is "rasah" used to indicate a personal killing whether accidental homicide or premeditated homicide. Rasah is never used to refer to judicial executions or killing in war. The commandment in Ex. 20:13 is not a blanket commandment against all killing, but should be properly translated, "You shall not murder". A word study of the two words will reveal that "harag" is used for a variety of events, but "rasah" is always used for murder. In 1611 the first universal English translation of the Bible that was widely used was published as the King James Version. Unfortunately, the translators incorrectly translated Ex.20:13 as "Thou shalt not kill" which began the controversy. Most modern translations translate it "You shall not murder".

6. How can you say the Bible is inspired by God when it contains scientific errors like the sun setting and rising?

Answer: Every modern newspaper and publication uses language like sunrise and sunset. Certainly they do not believe the sun circles the earth, but they are using phenomenological language. We all speak in terms of how things appear rather than scientific descriptions. I don't know a single person who doesn't refer to sunrise and sunset. Any reasonable person would not judge the Bible's inspiration by its use of phenomenal language.

7. How was Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed?

Answer: These cities were built in the valley at the southern end of what is now the Dead Sea. The area held rich deposits of bitumen which is made of petroleum. It would be easy for storm with lightning to ignite the highly flammable substance. This fits the Bible's description of dense smoke and burning sulfur (Gen.19:28).

8. In Gen.26, Isaac duplicated Abraham's sin and lie to Abimelech, but that guy must have died long before. Is this an error?

Answer: Abimelech means "my father is king". It was a title and not a personal name. Therefore Abraham and Isaac did not deal with the same individual.

Next—more commonly asked questions.

Charlie Taylor