

“Where Did Cain Get His Wife?”

Where DID Cain get his wife?????????

That’s a long-standing question that unfortunately, most commentaries don’t offer much help answering. I assume a literal Adam and Eve as the first humans. Therefore for several generations the family tree has only one trunk. Seth and Cain could only have married daughters of Adam and Eve, their sisters.

That always causes some severe consternation. Francis Collins, an evangelical Christian and the former head of NIH, has written that that solution goes against numerous Old Testament laws. How could the God of the Bible allow for such things? Collins opts for an evolved human race and a figurative Adam and Eve. He also seems to think, though he doesn’t explain, that Cain marrying his sister goes against the plain reading of the text.

The main societal taboo against incest is a practical one since offspring from these unions, even among distant cousins, carry an increased risk of birth defects. This is a well-known result of what geneticists call inbreeding. BUT Adam and Eve were completely without genetic mutation, the source of inbreeding birth defects. Therefore there was no biological risk from sister/brother marriages.

In the time of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was still the practice of marrying within one’s family, at least twenty generations after Adam and Eve if you assume no extra generations in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

In Genesis 20:12 Abraham tells Abimelech that he was not completely lying when he told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister; “Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my

father though not of my mother." Sarah was Abraham's half-sister.

When Isaac needed a wife, Abraham tells his servant to go to his country and even his own family to find a suitable wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:4). Genesis 24:15 tells us that Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel, who is the son of Nahor, Abraham's brother.

Isaac then tells Jacob to seek a wife from the daughters of Laban, Rebekah's brother. (Genesis 28:2). So Jacob married two of his first cousins, Leah and Rachel.

Before the Law of Moses, these kinds of unions were the norm. But over 400 years later, mutations have accumulated in all populations and such marriages are quite risky. Therefore, I think, that is why you read in Leviticus 20:17 that if you marry your sister who is either the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother (thus including half-siblings) they shall be cut off. So a marriage like Abraham and Sarah's was specifically outlawed in the Law of Moses. I think times have changed and the offspring of these once-normal arrangements are at significant risk.

Also, there still may have been a reticence to marry a brother or sister with whom one grows up. But when you realize that Seth was born when Adam was 130 years old, certainly there were many more children between Cain and Abel, and Seth. Therefore Cain very conceivably could have married a sister who was twenty or thirty years younger than he was, and therefore they did not grow up together, so there wasn't the same degree of familiarity as with a same-age sibling.

Bottom-line, I find no difficulty either theologically or biologically with Cain and Seth marrying their sisters. Marrying within the family remained the normal practice for over twenty generations.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ray Bohlin

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“How Can I Trust Christianity and the Bible Are True With So Many Changes and Translations?”

I recently visited the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC. I was excited to go there, because I thought I would view a lot of evidence for the faith of Christianity. While that was true, I was disappointed to leave the museum more confused than when I had arrived. The history of the Bible section showed that there have been many changes, corrections and translations made of the Holy Bible. How do we know that the Christian faith is the one true thing, and how do we know that the Bible has been translated/passed down correctly (and without error) during all those times of translations?

The great news is that we have a crazy HUGE number of manuscript copies of the New Testament, that allows us to know with amazing accuracy which are the most accurate copies (because we can identify where the copy mistakes are). I just checked with the world experts at the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (www.csntm.org); there are 5500 copies of the Greek New Testament, and 15,000 copies total of the various languages from before the printing press was invented.

I just used these numbers to update one of my favorite answers to email on our website: probe.org/the-bible-has-been-changed-and-corrupted-over-time/

And here is the link to one of our best articles on the Bible: probe.org/are-the-biblical-documents-reliable/

One other article that is, I believe, super powerful for building your confidence that Christianity is true: probe.org/how-i-know-christianity-is-true/

I hope this encourages you!

Cordially,

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries Webmistress

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“Where Are the Rest of Jesus’ Teachings?”

I have been searching for text/documents/anything that Jesus taught. He had over three years of anointed ministry, and only a few lines in the Gospels are recorded. Where is the rest of His teachings? I doubt that He wrote them down to a great extent, but surely some of his followers wrote down His teachings.

It’s great to hear about your excitement for the teachings of Jesus! May the Lord increase your tribe!

There is, unfortunately, a lot of nonsense written about

Jesus—both at the scholarly and popular level (though doubtless more at the popular level). The fact of the matter is that the earliest and best historical evidence concerning Jesus and his teachings is to be found in the New Testament. Nothing else even comes close.

Of course, Jesus is mentioned in some ancient non-Christian sources. I have written a brief article about it here: probe.org/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources-2/

Additionally, the Gospel of Thomas appears to contain some of Jesus' actual sayings. According to New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman, probably about 1/3 of this gospel contains actual sayings of Jesus (or something close), about 1/3 of the sayings are full-blown Gnosticism (espousing things that Jesus never taught), and the final 1/3 are somewhere in between these two.

But here's the thing. The Gospel of Thomas is an early second century production. The other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical gospels are later still. By contrast, all of the New Testament documents (including the four gospels) are first century productions. So bottom line: if you want to know what Jesus really taught, you need to read the New Testament (and the NT gospels in particular). Indeed, the reason scholars think that some of the sayings in the Gospel of Thomas are probably authentic sayings of Jesus is because they are consistent with sayings we find in the New Testament Gospels—the earliest and most historically trustworthy documents we have concerning the life and teachings of Jesus.

A few other books you might enjoy by good, solid, evangelical Jesus scholars:

1. *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*, by Craig A. Evans:

www.amazon.com/Fabricating-Jesus-Scholars-Distort-Gospels/dp/0

[830833188/](#)

2. *Reinventing Jesus: How Contemporary Skeptics Miss the Real Jesus and Mislead Popular Culture*, by Komoszewski, Sawyer, and Wallace:

www.amazon.com/Reinventing-Jesus-J-Ed-Komoszewski/dp/082542982X/

3. *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*, by Gary R. Habermas:

www.amazon.com/Historical-Jesus-Ancient-Evidence-Christ/dp/0899007325/

May the Lord greatly bless you in your studies!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“Is It True That Adam Was 90 Feet Tall?”

My question may sound funny at first. So I was witnessing to a Muslim that I know and we got into a discussion on the book of Genesis, more specifically on Adam and the garden of Eden. So the Muslim man I was discussing with claims that Adam was 90 feet tall in the Koran!? He said that this is a known historical fact of science. This seems just crazy talk, so my question may seem crazy but is there any historical/scientific proof for such a claim? Sounds more like a fairy tale and scientifically impossible. Just wanted to know your thoughts.

Good for you for witnessing to our Muslim friend! No, it's NOT a known historical fact of science. Just ask him for the evidence of this claim. (And remember that the Koran is a man-made book with no divine inspiration. We shouldn't be surprised that it would have statements like this in it.)

Here's a page that references the claim: answering-christianity.com/adam_90_feet_tall.htm And here's a page that responds to the claims: www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Osama/90feet-adam.htm Hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“Your Answer About OT Prophecies of Jesus' Resurrection Are Troubling”

You responded to a question written by someone titled, [“Where are the OT Prophecies of Jesus' Resurrection?”](#) Your answer is troubling. In Acts 13:32 God the Holy Spirit through Luke makes it expressly clear that He did prophesy in the OT regarding Christ's resurrection. You answered that there are no prophecies in the OT about Jesus' resurrection. Summed up: **Your answer is in contradiction to Acts 13:32. Resolution?**

I do (in fact) believe that there are OT predictions concerning the resurrection of Christ. The issue I was wrestling with in my response, however, is whether any of

these predictions are “explicit” or “specific.” I state this quite clearly in my original letter:

“I do not think there are any specific predictions of Jesus’ resurrection in the OT.”

And although I could always be wrong, it doesn’t seem to me that the predictions are of this sort. It is only after His resurrection that we can clearly see that these passages were intended to refer to the resurrection of Christ. Prior to this, however, it does not seem to me that it was clear from the OT that the Messiah would be raised from the dead. This is certainly not something that the Jews of Jesus’ day (including Jesus’ own disciples) were expecting. This is quite clear, I think, if you look at those passages in which Jesus predicts His resurrection to His own disciples (e.g. Mark 8:31-32; 9:30-32; etc.). Indeed, the apostle John tells us quite explicitly that he did not believe until he saw some evidence of Jesus’ resurrection. And (speaking for himself and the other disciples) he specifically tells us why:

“For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead” (John 20:9).

In other words, _____, in spite of all the OT prophetic evidence AND Jesus’ repeated predictions that He would rise from the dead after being crucified, the disciples did not understand any of it. It was still not clear to them. They were not expecting the death and resurrection of their Messiah and they were initially quite surprised by it all.

So while I agree that there are OT predictions of the resurrection of Christ, I just don’t see that these predictions are explicit in the sense of telling us directly, “The Messiah will be raised from the dead,” etc. Of course, if you can point one out to me that is explicit in this sense, I would be very grateful.

So it seems to me that the resolution to your difficulty,

_____, is to read your sources a bit more carefully in the future.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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“Is the Phrase ‘Holy Ghost Fire’ Biblical?”

I hear people, even pastors, speak this phrase “Holy Ghost Fire.” Is this phrase biblical? Because I’ve searched the scripture and haven’t come across it.

Thanks for writing. This particular phrase does not occur in the Bible. It sounds like to sort of thing that Pentecostal preachers might say in reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The biblical basis for this sort of language would be passages like Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16, in which John the Baptist distinguishes his baptism from that of the coming Messiah (Jesus) who will baptize with “the Holy Spirit and with fire.”

Later, in Acts 2:1-3, we have the account of what happened to Jesus’ disciples on the Day of Pentecost. We are told that “tongues of fire” came to rest on each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues (or languages).

It is probably to passages of this sort that these preachers are indirectly referring. Of course, this raises a lot of questions about the precise nature of the Holy Spirit's baptism and what it means to "speak in tongues," etc. If you want to explore these issues further, from a non-Pentecostal perspective, I would recommend visiting bible.org and doing searches on some of the things you're interested in. This site has a great deal of biblical and theological material, including the NET Bible, all free of charge.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“Did the Church Create the Bible?”

What would you say to a Catholic person who said “the church created the Bible”?

In a very real sense, the person who says this is basically correct. But some qualifications are also needed.

First, the church did not create the Old Testament. These books preceded the church by quite a bit (assuming the church began on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2).

Second, it's important to remember that the New Testament books (like those of the Old Testament) are both a divine and human creation. The books were authored by human beings, but their writings were superintended by the Holy Spirit (this is

the doctrine of [inspiration](#)).

Third, it's important to remember that Protestants and Roman Catholics have a slightly different [canon](#) of Scripture. That is, Catholics include some books (e.g. the [Apocrypha](#)) which Protestants do not include in the canon of Scripture (i.e. authoritative, divinely inspired books).

However, once we make these qualifications, it is evident (I think) that the New Testament was written (and brought into its present canonical form) by the church. These writings weren't written by non-Christians after all, but by believers—who are part of the church. The same would go for the process of canonization. Of course, God was providentially guiding those leaders who ultimately decided which books should (and should not) be part of the New Testament. But the fact remains that this was also a decision of the church.

As a “bare bones” statement, then, I think the person who says this is essentially correct.

Shalom in Christ,
Michael Gleghorn

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“Are the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Writings Part of the Apocrypha? Why Aren't

They Scripture?"

I can't find any solid information on the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha [Ed. note: (Greek, "falsely attributed") Jewish writings of the period between the Old and New Testament, which were attributed to authors who did not actually write them] and why these books are not considered inspired scripture. I know they are considered false writings, but why? Are the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Old Testament Apocrypha considered the same thing? Could the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha be just a branch of the Old Testament Apocrypha? And therefore the same principles are applied to the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocrypha about why they are not considered scripture?

The books that you are referring to did not meet the standards of canonization. I suggest you read *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible* by Norman Geisler and William Nix. The [Apocrypha](#) is a different set of works that have traditionally been handed down along with the Old Testament by some Christians but not Jews. It is recognized as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox church, but not Protestants who acknowledge its importance as intertestamental literature and even consider it helpful to read for spiritual development, but do not accord it the same status as Scripture. There are multiple theological and historical problems with these books. And their authorship remains unknown.

Dr. Lawrence Terlizzese

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“How Could a Holy God Make Prophets Lie?”

Please explain the text of 2 Chronicles 22:18-22. The Lord put a lying spirit in the mouth of the prophets to lie. How does that conform to God’s holy nature?

Thanks for your question. This story is recounted in both 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18. The question, as you rightly ask, is how such a story can be consistent with God’s holy nature?

There are a number of important observations to make about this passage. First, observe that in 1 Kings 22:1-12, Ahab asks Jehoshaphat if he would be willing to go to war with him to retake Ramoth-gilead. Jehoshaphat agrees, but wants first to inquire of the Lord. Ahab brings out 400 false prophets, who tell him what he wants to hear. It is clear that these are not true prophets of the Lord because Jehoshaphat asks Ahab if there isn’t a prophet of the Lord that they might yet inquire of (see vv. 7-8). This is important, for Ahab has essentially attempted to call a bunch of false prophets before him who will merely tell him what he wants to hear (and has already decided to do).

Second, notice what happens when Micaiah (a true prophet of the Lord) is called. Of course, initially Micaiah sarcastically tells the king what the false prophets are also saying. It’s clear that he says this sarcastically because the king reminds him to only tell him the truth in the name of the Lord. At this point, Micaiah, the true prophet of the Lord, tells the king the whole truth of God; namely, that the king’s venture will not succeed and that the king himself will die in battle. In other words, the Lord, through His true prophet, tells the king the whole truth at this point. He even tells the king that He has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of

the king's (false) prophets. The Lord, through Micaiah, here tells King Ahab the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Third, notice that Ahab disregards the true prophet of the Lord, spurns his advice, and instead willfully chooses to follow the advice of his false prophets (the very prophets that Micaiah has just told him are speaking lies and falsehoods). The Lord has actually told Ahab the whole truth, but Ahab chooses to follow the advice of lying false prophets, rather than the advice of Micaiah, a true prophet of the Lord (as Ahab himself acknowledges Micaiah to be—see v. 8).

Notice, then, that God nowhere lies to Ahab here. In fact, he pointedly reveals to Ahab the whole awful truth about what will happen if Ahab goes ahead with his plans. It's true, of course, that God does permit deceptive spirits to speak through Ahab's false prophets. But it's important to remember that He reveals this truth to Ahab through His true prophet, Micaiah. It's also important to bear in mind that, given God's sovereignty over everything that happens, whenever lies are told or evil spirits (or men) do something, God has sovereignly permitted them to do so. God created human beings and angels as free, rational, morally responsible creatures. Since such creatures are truly free, they are free to do good or evil. Whenever a free creature chooses to do something evil, God must sovereignly permit that creature to do so. However, as we see repeatedly in the Bible, God can take even the evil and sinful choices of His creatures, and bring about good from them (remember the story of Joseph and his brothers; see, in particular, Genesis 50:15-21).

In conclusion, then, although much more could be said, this is how I would briefly attempt to interpret this fascinating story. I hope this is helpful to you. God bless you!

Shalom in Christ,

“How Do You Answer a Person Who Says You Can’t Take the Bible Literally Because It Promotes Killing Homosexuals?”

How would you answer a person who says, “You can’t take the Bible literally because it promotes killing homosexuals” (Lev 20:13)?

There are a number of things that one might say to this, but I will mention just a few. In addition, I will not only speak to the issue of interpretation, but will also address some of the issues which give rise to a statement like this. Of course, we must also remember that there is oftentimes a lot of anger behind a statement like this. Hence, it is important to remember that while we always want to speak the truth, we want to be careful to do it in love. This is the most important thing to bear in mind in responding to someone making such a claim. We want to be kind, gentle, and patient in our response. But concerning the response itself, here are a few things that occur to me as I think about this issue.

First, this particular law was only given to ancient Israel under the terms of the Old Covenant. But God is not relating to anyone under the terms of this covenant today. Rather, God is now relating to all men under the terms of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8). Hence, this is not a law which should be

implemented today. In addition, I think it is also important to point out that this passage does not PROMOTE killing homosexuals. This is simply false—and it is important to say so. This particular law requires that those who engage in homosexual activity be put to death. Even under the Old Covenant, a person with homosexual inclinations or attractions, who refused to act on them, would NOT be put to death. What is at issue here is homosexual *activity*—not homosexual attraction. Hence, even interpreted literally, this law does NOT promote killing homosexuals. Rather, it stipulates that those who engage in homosexual *activity* are to be put to death. But again, it is important to remember that God is no longer relating to mankind under the terms of this covenant.

Second, the law reveals the awful truth about human sinfulness and the holiness of God. God takes sin very seriously and his holiness and moral perfection require that He deal with it as it deserves. Under the terms of the Old Covenant, homosexual behavior was not unique in meriting the sentence of death. Adultery (Lev. 20:10), blasphemy (Lev. 24:16), murder (Exod. 21:12), striking one's father or mother (Exod. 21:15), kidnapping (Exod. 21:16), cursing one's father or mother (Exod. 21:17), and other acts as well, all merited the death sentence under the Old Covenant. Even Sabbath violations received the death sentence (Exod. 31:14). Hence, homosexual activity was not unique in meriting the death sentence under the terms of the Old Covenant.

Third, God disapproves of ALL sexual sin—not just homosexual activity. God disapproves of adultery, fornication, rape, incest, bestiality, as well as homosexual sin. Again, homosexual sin is not unique in being prohibited by God. All sexual sin is prohibited. The Bible allows for sexual activity only within the confines of one man/one woman heterosexual marriage. Any kind of sexual activity outside of this is sin—whether that sexual activity be homosexual, heterosexual,

sex with animals, etc.

Fourth, the moral law is based upon the morally pure and morally perfect character of God. If the Bible really is the word of God, then homosexual behavior (along with all other sexual sin) is sin. All such activity, then, would constitute a violation of God's moral law.

Finally, I think we can agree that we should not ALWAYS interpret the Bible "literally." The Bible, after all, does contain a wealth of figurative and metaphorical language, and it would be inappropriate to interpret such metaphorical expressions literally. The problem in this case, however, is that the verse in question is not making use of such figurative or metaphorical language. Indeed, the writer is quite explicit in spelling things out for us. It would strike me as dishonest to suggest that this passage should be interpreted non-literally or metaphorically. What would it be a metaphor of? What would be the literal truth behind (or underneath) the metaphor? In addition, why should anyone think that God does not disapprove of sexual sin? What sort of argument or evidence is there for believing that God's attitude toward sexual activity is essentially the same as that of a modern secular American? Why should we think that sin (all sin) is not a deadly serious issue to an utterly holy God? It seems to me that the statement you mentioned simply makes some unwarranted assumptions about God's attitude toward human sin.

Of course, the good news is that God has provided atonement for sin through the substitutionary death of His Son, and His resurrection for our justification. Anyone who is willing to turn from their sin, and trust Christ for salvation, can and will be forgiven and saved. No one needs to die for their sins (since Christ has already done so). But everyone who rejects Him and His sacrifice will have to pay for their sin themselves. Hence, we want to communicate, I think, that God takes sin very seriously. But He has also provided for our

forgiveness through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.

Hopefully some of this will be helpful to you as you continue to wrestle with an appropriate response to claims of this sort.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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