

Who Was That Girl?

A Brief Examination of the Question: Where Did Cain Get His Wife?

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- I. Introduction: An age old question comes up when we read Genesis 4:17
 - A. Jewish Rabbis and Commentaries have dealt with this question.
 - B. Church Fathers and Commentators have dealt with this question.
 - C. The Scopes Trial of 1925 made it a big issue.
 - D. The Carl Sagan book *Contact* (made into a major motion picture starring Jodie Foster) brought up this question, as many critics have.
- II. The possible answers
 - A. The Bible is full of mistakes and contradictions and therefore cannot be trusted.
 - B. Cain got his wife from some other “race” or people group somewhere else on Earth (or even from another planet).
 - C. Cain married one of his sisters.
 - D. Note: none of the above possibilities answers every single question we might have about this subject.
- III. The problem is not with the Bible
 - A. Genesis 1:1 is just as “hard to believe” (or easy) as any other passage
 - B. The Bible claims to be the Word of God
 - C. The Bible does not promise to answer our every question
- IV. There is no Biblical reason to think Cain got his wife from some other “race” or people group.
 - A. Genesis 1-3 only speak of God creating Adam (and then making his wife from his rib). No other people are mentioned.
 - B. In Genesis 3:20 Adam names his wife “Eve,” (in the Hebrew sounds closer to “Kava”) which carries with it the idea of life, or “mother of all living,” i.e. Eve was the mother of anyone who ever lives.
 - C. Romans 5:12 tells us that all people are born sinners because of one man, Adam. See also Romans 5:17-19. Also, only descendants of Adam can be saved. If there was another “race” of people they would not need salvation and could never receive it, for Christ only died for Adam’s descendants.
 - D. I Corinthians 15:45-47 indicates that Adam was the first man and that Christ is the second / last Adam. See also I Corinthians 15:21-22.
- V. The best answer is that Cain’s wife was one of his sisters.
 - A. Genesis 5:5 tells us that Adam lived to be 930 years old.
 - B. Genesis 1:28 tells Adam to “multiply.” This seems to be the expectation of the Creator.
 - C. Genesis 5:4 tells us that Adam had sons and daughters.

- D. The ancient historian Josephus Flavius cites an age-old Jewish tradition that Adam and Eve had “thirty-three sons and twenty-seven daughters.”

VI. Objections

- A. It is wrong to marry your sister.
 - 1. Leviticus 18:9 does forbid marrying the daughter of your father.
 - 2. However, this law was not given until 2500 years after Cain. God has always dealt with mankind through different dispensations.
 - 3. Cain marrying his sister did not violate Genesis 2:24. Note that Sarah was Abraham’s half-sister - both the children of Terah.
 - 4. This does not mean someone should marry his sibling today, even if our government decides to continue to redefine marriage. Incest and inbreeding are clearly forbidden by Scripture.
- B. Cain’s children would have had deformities
 - 1. It is true that the more closely related two individuals are, the more likely they are to produce children with deformities. This is because relatives tend to have the same genetic mistakes, and when they procreate those mistakes are compounded in the children. This can even be true in the animal kingdom.
 - 2. However, Adam and Eve were created perfect, and since Cain and his sister were produced in the first generation of offspring, the genetic defects would have been minimal.
 - 3. By the time God had Moses write the commandment of Leviticus 18:9, genetic defects would have been much more likely.
 - 4. Also, both in Moses’ time and today there is no reason to have to marry your sister, but in Cain’s situation he had no choice.

VII. Conclusion

- A. The most biblical answer to “Where did Cain get his wife?” is “He most likely married one of his sisters.”
- B. This answer is in harmony with the Biblical worldview and the inspiration of Scripture.
- C. The believer is to walk by faith in this regard, and may have to live with some unanswered question
- D. Those whose heart is predisposed to mock the things of God will not be satisfied with any answer they are given
- E. This Bible difficulty is a gift to us from God, to provoke us to study His word, to keep us humble, to confound the unbelieving scoffer, and to reward those whose hope is in the Lord.
- F. This woman was significant to God and ought to be remembered
 - 1. She was given no voice in Scripture
 - 2. She was given no name in Scripture
 - 3. Her life was to follow a murderer and a vagabond
 - 4. She is guilty by association
 - 5. If Cain was her brother, then so was Abel
- G. “Thy word is true from the beginning...” Psalms 119:160