

WHERE
DID
CAIN
GET HIS
WIFE



Ken Ham

CAIN'S WIFE – WHO WAS SHE?

Is She the Most-talked-about Wife in History?

We don't even know her name, yet she was discussed at the Scopes Trial, mentioned in the movies *Inherit the Wind*¹ and *Contact*², and talked about in countries all over the world for hundreds of years.

Skeptics of the Bible have used Cain's wife time and again to try to discredit the book of Genesis as a true historical record. Sadly, most Christians have not given an adequate answer to this question. As a result, the world sees them as not being able to defend the authority of Scripture and thus the Christian faith.

For instance, at the historic Scopes Trial in Tennessee in 1925, William Jennings Bryan, the prosecutor who stood for the Christian faith, failed to answer the question about Cain's wife posed by the ACLU lawyer, Clarence Darrow. Consider the following excerpt from the trial record as Darrow interrogates Bryan:

Q - Did you ever discover where Cain got his wife?

A - No, sir; I leave the agnostics to hunt for her.

Q - You have never found out?

A - I have never tried to find.

Q - You have never tried to find?

A - No.

Q - The Bible says he got one doesn't it? Were there other people on the Earth at that time?

A - I cannot say.

Q - You cannot say. Did that ever enter your consideration?

A - Never bothered me.

Q - There were no others recorded, but Cain got a wife.

A - That is what the Bible says.

Q - Where she came from you do not know.³

The world's press was focused on this trial and what they heard has affected Christianity to this day – Christians can't defend the Biblical record!

In recent times, this same example was taken up by Carl Sagan in his book *Contact*⁴ (which was on *The New York Times* bestseller list), and used in the movie of the same name based upon this work.

In the book, we read the fictional character Ellie's account of how she could not get answers from a minister's wife, who was the leader of a church discussion group:

Ellie had never seriously read the Bible before . . . So over the weekend preceding her first class, she read through what seemed to be the important parts of the Old Testament, trying to keep an open mind. She at once recognized that there were two different and mutually contradictory stories of Creation . . . and had trouble figuring out exactly who it was that Cain had married.⁵

Sagan cleverly listed a number of common questions (including Cain's wife) that are often directed at Christians in an attempt to supposedly "prove" the Bible is full of contradictions and can't be defended. The truth is – most Christians probably couldn't answer these questions! And yet – there ARE answers. But, since churches lack in the teaching of apologetics⁶, particularly in regard to the book of Genesis, most believers in the church are not able to be "...ready always to [give] an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15)

Why is it Important?

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 of Genesis and its record of only one man and woman at the beginning of history. Defenders of the Gospel must be able to show that all human beings are descendants of one man and one woman (Adam & Eve) – as only descendants of Adam and Eve can be saved. Thus, believers need to be able to account for Cain's wife and show clearly she was a descendant of Adam and Eve.



Bible Reading:

Genesis 4:1 – Genesis 5:5

One of the questions most asked of creation speakers is “Where did Cain get his wife?” In order to answer this question, we first need to cover some background information concerning the meaning of the Gospel.

The First Man

“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.” (Romans 5:12)

We read in 1 Corinthians 15:45 that Adam was “*the first man.*” God did not start by making a “race” 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, has also been 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, the human race, who are all descendants of Adam, needed 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 was the solution?

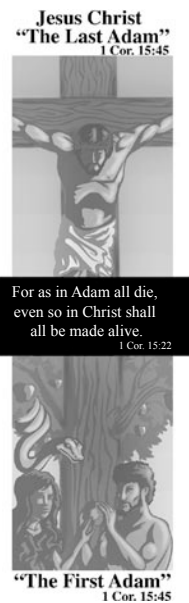
The Last Adam

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 became a man – a perfect Man – yet still our relation! He is called “*the last Adam*” (1 Corinthians 15:45), because he took the place of the first Adam. He became the new head and, because He was sinless, was able to pay the penalty for sin:

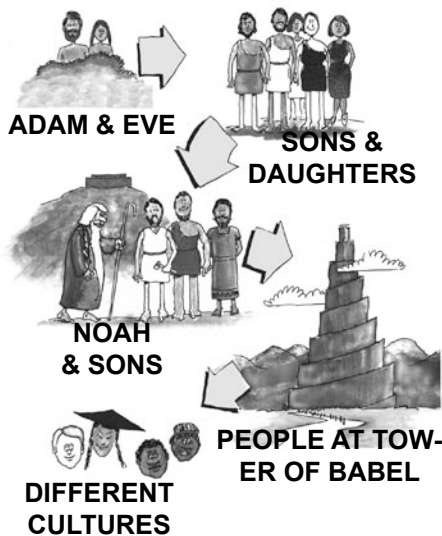
“For since by [a] man came death, by [a] man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:21,22)

Christ suffered death (the penalty for sin) on the Cross, shedding His blood (*and without shedding of blood is no remission* – Hebrews 9:22) so that those who put their trust in His work on the Cross can come in repentance of their sin of rebellion (in Adam) and be reconciled to God.

Thus, only descendants of the first man Adam can be saved.



ONE RACE



All Related

Since the Bible describes ALL human beings as sinners, and we are ALL related (Acts 17:26 - *And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth*), the Gospel only makes sense on the basis that all humans alive and all that have ever lived (except for the first woman⁷) are descendants of the first man Adam. If this were not so, then the Gospel could not be explained or defended.

Thus, there was only ONE man at the beginning – made from the dust of the Earth (Genesis 2:7).

This also means that Cain’s wife was a descendant of Adam. She couldn’t have come from another “race” of people and must be accounted for from Adam’s descendants.

The First Woman

In Genesis 3:20 we read, “*And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.*” In other words, all people other than Adam are descendants of Eve – she was the first woman.

Eve was made from Adam's side (Genesis 2:21-24) – this was a unique event. In the New Testament, Jesus (Matthew 19:4-6) and Paul (Ephesians 5:31) use this historical and one-time event as the foundation for the marriage of one man and one woman.

Also, in Genesis 2:20, we are told that when Adam looked at the animals, he couldn't find a mate -- there was no one of his kind.

All this makes it obvious **that there was only ONE woman, Adam's wife, from the beginning.** There could not have been a "race" of women.



Where Did Cain Get His Wife?

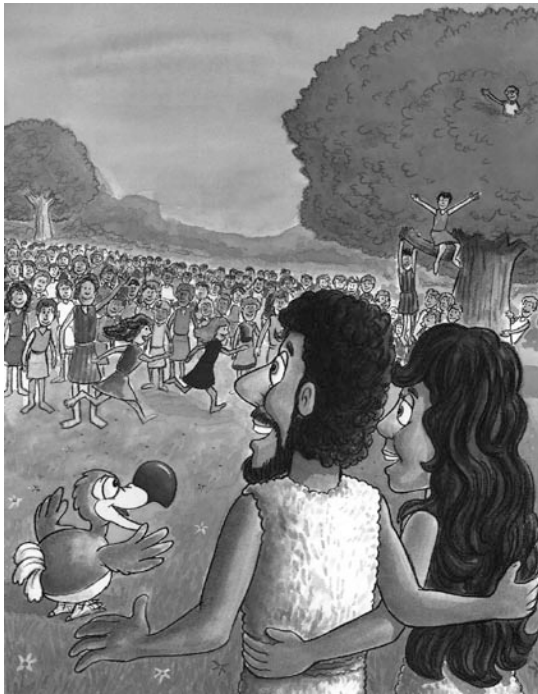
Thus, if Christians cannot defend that all humans (including Cain's wife) can trace their ancestry ultimately to Adam and Eve, then how can they understand and explain the Gospel? How can they justify sending missionaries to every tribe and nation? Therefore, one needs to be able to answer the question concerning Cain's wife, to illustrate that Christians can defend the Gospel and all that it teaches.

CAIN'S WIFE

Who was Cain?

Cain was the first child of Adam and Eve recorded in Scripture (Genesis 4:1). He and 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 these three males are specifically mentioned, Adam and Eve had other children.

Cain's Brothers and Sisters



In Genesis 5:4 we read a statement that sums up the life of Adam and Eve – *“And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters.”*

During their lives, Adam and Eve had a number of male and female children. In fact, 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.”*⁸

Scripture doesn't tell us how many children were born to Adam and Eve, but considering their long life spans (Adam lived for 930 years – Genesis 5:5), it would seem logical to suggest there were many! (Remember, they were commanded to *“Be fruitful, and multiply.”* (Genesis 1:28)

The Wife

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 marry sisters or there wouldn't have been any more generations!

We're not told when Cain married or many of the details of other marriages and children, but we can say for certain that Cain's wife was either his sister or a close relative.

OBJECTIONS:

God's Laws

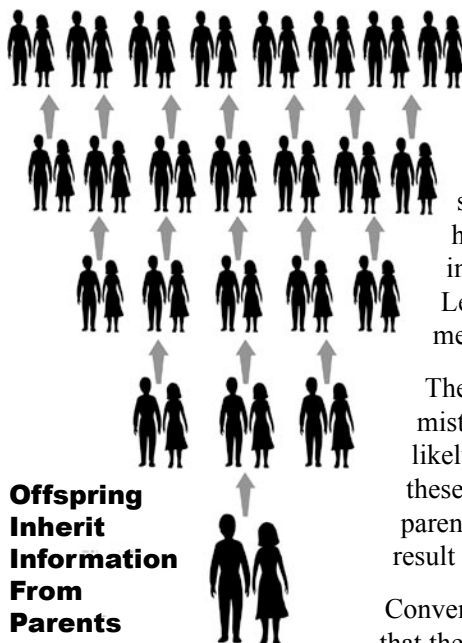
Many people immediately reject the conclusion that Adam and Eve's sons and daughters married each other by appealing to the law against brother-sister intermarriage. Some say that you can't marry your relation. Actually, if you don't marry your relation, you don't marry a human! A wife is related to her husband before they are married because ALL people are descendants of Adam and Eve – all are of *one blood*. This law forbidding *close* relatives marrying was not given until the time of Moses (Leviticus 18-20). Provided marriage was one man for one woman for life (based on Genesis 1&2), there was no disobedience to God's law originally (before the time of Moses) when close relatives (even brothers and sisters) married each other.

Remember that Abraham was married to his half-sister (Genesis 20:12).⁹ God’s law forbade such marriages,¹⁰ but that was some four hundred years later at the time of Moses.

Biological Deformities

Today, brothers and sisters (and half-brothers and half-sisters etc.) are not currently permitted by law to marry and have children.

Now it is true that children produced in a union between brother and sister have a greater chance to be deformed. As a matter of fact, the closer the couple are in relationship, the more likely it is that any offspring will be deformed. It is very easy for the layperson to understand this without going into all the technical details.



Offspring Inherit Information From Parents

Each person inherits a set of genes from his or her mother and father. Unfortunately, genes today contain many mistakes (because of sin and the Curse), and these mistakes show up in a variety of ways. For instance, people let their hair grow over their ears to hide the fact that one ear is lower than the other – or perhaps someone’s nose is not quite in the middle of his or her face – maybe someone’s jaw is a little out of shape – and so on. Let’s face it, the main reason we call each other normal is because of our common agreement to do so!

The more closely related two people are, the more likely it is that they will have similar mistakes in their genes, inherited from the same parents. Therefore, brother and sister are likely to have similar mistakes in their genetic material. If there were to be a union between these two that produces offspring, children would inherit one set of genes from each of their parents. Because the genes probably have similar mistakes, the mistakes pair together and result in deformities in the children.

Conversely, the further away the parents are in relationship to each other, 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 some of the pairs of genes containing only 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. Instead of having totally deformed ears for instance, a person may have only crooked ones! (Overall, though, the human race is slowly degenerating as mistakes accumulate generation after generation.)

However, this fact of present-day life did not apply to Adam and Eve. When the first two people were created, they were perfect. Everything God made was “*very good*” (Genesis 1:31). That means their genes were perfect – no mistakes! But, when sin entered the world (because of Adam – Genesis 3:6), God cursed the world so that the perfect Creation then began to degenerate, that is, suffer death and decay (Romans 8:22). Over a long period of time, this degeneration would have resulted in all sorts of mistakes occurring in the genetic material of living things.

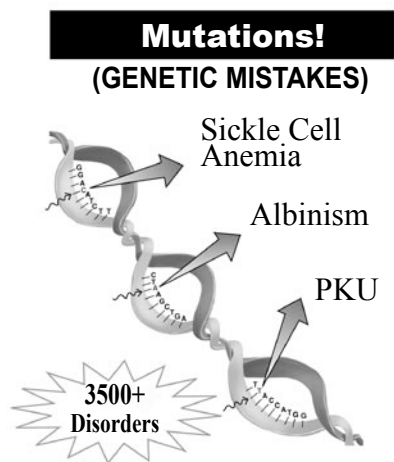
But Cain was in the first generation of children ever born. He (as well as his brothers and sisters) would have received virtually no imperfect genes from Adam or Eve, since the effects of sin and the Curse would have been minimal to start with. In that situation, brother and sister could have married (provided it was one man for one woman – which is what marriage is all about [Matthew 19:4-6]) without any potential to produce deformed offspring.

By the time of Moses (about 2,500 years later), degenerative mistakes would have accumulated to such an extent in the human race that it would have been necessary for God to bring in the laws forbidding brother-sister (and close relative) marriage (Leviticus 18-20).¹¹

(Also, there were plenty of people on the Earth by now, and there was no reason for close relations to have to marry.)

In all, there appear to be three inter-related reasons for the introduction of laws forbidding close intermarriage:

1. As we have already discussed, there was the need to protect against the increasing potential to produce deformed offspring.
2. God’s laws were instrumental in keeping the Jewish nation strong, healthy, and within the purposes of God.



3. These laws were a means of protecting the individual, the family structure, and society at large. The psychological damage caused by incestuous relationships should not be minimized.

Cain and the Land of Nod

Some claim that the passage in Genesis 4:16-17 means that Cain went to the land of Nod and found a wife. Thus, they conclude there must have been another race of people on the Earth, who were not descendants of Adam, who produced Cain's wife.

And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

From what has been stated above, it is clear that ALL humans, Cain's wife included, are descendants of Adam. However, this passage does NOT say that Cain went to the land of Nod and found a wife. John Calvin in commenting on these verses states:

“From the context we may gather that Cain, before he slew his brother, had married a wife; otherwise Moses would now have related something respecting his marriage;”¹²

Cain was married BEFORE he went to the land of Nod. He didn't find a wife there, but “knew” (had sexual relations with) his wife.¹³

Who was Cain Fearful of?

(Genesis 4:14)

Some claim that there had to be lots of people on the Earth other than Adam and Eve's descendants, otherwise Cain wouldn't have been fearful of people wanting to slay him because he killed Abel.

First of all, a reason why anyone would want to harm Cain because he killed Abel would be if they were close relations of Abel!

Secondly, Cain and Abel were born quite some time before the event of Abel's death. Genesis 4:3 states:

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

Note the phrase “in the process of time.” We know Seth was born when Adam was 130 years old (Genesis 5:3), and Eve saw him as a “replacement” for Abel (Genesis 4:25). Therefore, the time period from Cain's birth to Abel's death may have been 100 years or more – allowing plenty of time for other children of Adam and Eve to marry and have children. By the time Abel was killed, there may have been a considerable number of descendants of Adam and Eve involving several generations.



Where did the Technology Come from?

Some claim that for Cain to go to the land of Nod and build a city, he would have required a lot of technology that must have already been in that land, presumably developed by other “races”.

Adam and Eve's descendants were very intelligent people. We are told that Jubal made musical instruments such as the harp and organ (Genesis 4:21), and Tubal-cain worked with brass and iron (Genesis 4:22).

Because of intense evolutionary indoctrination, many people today have the idea that their generation is the most advanced that has ever been on this planet. Just because we have jet airplanes and computers doesn't mean we are the most intelligent or advanced. This modern technology is really a result of the accumulation of knowledge.

We must remember that our brains have suffered from 6000 years (since Adam) of the Curse. We have greatly degenerated compared to people many generations ago. We may be no where near as intelligent or inventive as Adam and Eve's children. Scripture gives us a glimpse of what appears to be advanced technology almost from the beginning.

Cain had the knowledge and talent to know how to build a city!

CONCLUSION

One of the reasons many Christians cannot answer the question about Cain's wife is because they tend to look at today's world (and the problems that would be associated with close relations marrying), and not the clear historical record God has given to us.

They try to interpret Genesis from our present situation, rather than understand the true Biblical history of the world and the changes that have occurred because of sin. Because they are not building their world-view on Scripture but taking a secular way of thinking to the Bible, they are blinded to the simple answers.

Genesis is the record of the God who was there as history happened. It is the Word of One who knows everything, and who is a reliable Witness from the past. Thus, when we use Genesis as a basis for understanding history, we can make sense of evidence which would otherwise be a real mystery. You see, if evolution is true, science has an even bigger problem than Cain's wife to explain – namely, how could man ever evolve by mutations (mistakes) in the first place, since that process would have made everyone's children deformed? The mere fact that people can produce offspring that are not largely deformed is a testimony to Creation, not evolution.

For additional information, call or write the ministry nearest you. (See inside front cover for locations.)



Answers in Genesis seeks to give glory and honor to God as Creator, and to affirm the truth of the Biblical record of the real origin and history of the world and mankind.

Part of this real history is the bad news that Adam's rebellion brought death, suffering, and separation from God into this world. We see the results all around us. But the good news is that God has done something about it.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Jesus Christ the Creator, though totally sinless, suffered the penalty of death and separation from God to satisfy the righteous demands of the holiness and justice of His Father. Therefore:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18)

(For more information on what the Bible says about receiving eternal life, please write or call the Answers in Genesis office nearest you -- see inside front cover.)

- ¹ A Hollywood version of the famous Scopes Trial.
Ham, Ken. 1996. "The Wrong Way Round!" *Creation ex nihilo*. Vol. 18(3). Pg. 38-41.
Menton, David. 1997. "Inherit the Wind: An Historical Analysis". *Creation ex nihilo*. Vol. 19(1). Pg. 35-8.
- ² *Contact*. Released July 11, 1997. A Robert Zemeckis Film. Warner Bros.
Based upon the book *Contact* by Carl Sagan, 1985. Pocket Books, New York.
- ³ The World's Most Famous Court Trial, Tennessee Evolution Case (A word-for-word report). 1990.
Bryan College (reprinted from the original edition). Pg. 302.
- ⁴ *Contact*. Released July 11, 1997. A Robert Zemeckis Film. Warner Bros.
Based upon the book *Contact* by Carl Sagan, 1985. Pocket Books, New York.
- ⁵ Sagan, Carl. 1985. *Contact*. Pocket Books, New York. Pg. 19-20.
- ⁶ Apologetics – from the Greek word, ἀπολογία (apologia), meaning to give a defense. The field of Christian Apologetics is the ability to give a defense of our faith in Jesus Christ and our hope in Him for our salvation as expressed in 1 Peter 3:15. This requires a thorough knowledge of Scripture including the doctrines of the Creation, Original Sin, Curse, Flood, Virgin Birth, Life and Ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, the Cross, Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, Promise of the Second Coming and a New Heaven and a New Earth. Then one needs to be able to explain logically and clearly these various doctrines in a way that justifies one's faith and hope in Jesus Christ.
- ⁷ Eve, in a sense, was a "descendant" of Adam in that she was made from his flesh and thus had some biological connection to him (Genesis 2:21-23).
- ⁸ Josephus, Flavius. (Translated by William Whiston, A.M.) 1981. *The Complete Works of Josephus*. Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pg. 27.
- ⁹ Another example would be Isaac's wife, Rebekah – she was Isaac's second cousin (Genesis 24:15).
- ¹⁰ Leviticus 18-20.
- ¹¹ Some have claimed this means God changed his mind by changing the laws. But God didn't change his mind – because of the changes that sin brought, and because God never changes, He introduced new laws for our sake.
- ¹² Calvin, John. 1979, reprinted. *Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Baker House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Vol. 1. Pg. 215.
- ¹³ Even if Calvin's suggestion concerning this matter is not correct, there was still plenty of time for numerous descendants of Adam and Eve to move out and settle areas such as the land of Nod.