

Questions and Answers about Genesis

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Here we are at the start of a great project

- When you first started to even think about reading through the Bible in a year, I'm sure it seemed like a huge project.
- But as we're finished with the first month of it, I know to me it seems like we are flying through very quickly
- We've finished Job and have one more lesson where we will finish Genesis, but before we leave I wanted to give my live Sunday School class a chance to ask some questions.
- We only have time for a few, but let me offer some answers to some of them plus I'll talk about resources where you can find out more and I'll have links to additional resources on the website, www.bible805.com

First a reminder of WHY we are reading the Bible

- But what is its intention? (For God giving us the Bible) What is God's purpose for it?
- **To make us wise for salvation, says Paul, and for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:15–16).**
- This redemptive purpose of inspired Scripture is also the point of John 20:31: ***“These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”***
- The Acts 8 story of Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian is also instructive here. The understanding and interpretation of the Isaiah passage have one purpose: ***“Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus” (v. 35).*** That is the “what for,” the purpose.
- ******Jesus did not recommend the Bible as a book of divinely given facts about things in general (science, history, anthropology, cosmology). Rather, he pointed to the Old Testament and said: “These are the Scriptures that testify about me” (Jn 5:39). If our study of Scripture is isolated from these explicit purposes, our attempts to understand the hard sayings may prove futile.**
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C.. Hard Sayings of the Bible (pp. 25-26). Society of Biblical Literature. Kindle Edition.

Now to Questions

“Did angels (or as some have said, extra-terrestrials) have children with humans according to Genesis 6:1-4”

- One of the most confusing pages in the Bible
- When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³ Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not contend with^[a] humans forever, for they are mortal^[b]; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.”
- ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. Gen.6:1-4, NIV
- Context—just before the flood, given as one of the justifications or explanations for the extreme evil of humanity
- Studied many sources, the stranger ones, no verifications other than myth, best summary in Hard Sayings of the Bible, which I will quote and summarize

Identity of the “sons of God” “Daughters of men” and the “Nephilim” (or “giants”)

- Options:
- “the cosmologically mixed races view” (angels and humans),
- “the religiously mixed races view” (godly Sethites and worldly Cainites)
- “the sociologically mixed races view” (despotic male aristocrats and beautiful female commoners).
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C.. Hard Sayings of the Bible (p. 106). Society of Biblical Literature. Kindle Edition.

Possibility of angels and humans

- Very old theory based on
- Term “sons of God” sometimes used to refer to angels in the Bible, but not exclusively
- 1 Enoch tells the story of angels who married humans and the result was huge giants (900 ft tall) who devoured all on the earth--pseudographical
- Repeated in parts by Josephus and others
- Not considered canonical by Jews or the church
- Repeated today by less than consistently reputable scholars

Reasons why this cannot be

- Nowhere else in the Bible is the idea that angels can marry or have a sexual relationship with humans
- Jesus stated specifically that angels do not marry in Mark 12:25
- Some also point out there is no reason why judgement (the Flood) should happen to earth if angels were the cause of it
- The idea that “giants” were the result, if taken in a historical context loses a bit of its power
- Goliath 6’9” tall (some manuscripts over 9 ft) either one formidable
- Charlemagne 6’4”, average man about 5’6”
- There have always been taller men and because of size often seized positions of power, but size alone did not/does not make them sinful.

Additional suggestions about the angels and humans

- Some, however, will appeal to the New Testament passages of 1 Peter 3:18–20, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6–7 for further support of the angel theory. But these passages do not say anything about angelic marriages. To argue from the phrase “in a similar way” in Jude 7 that the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah is the same as the sin of Genesis 6:1–4 claims too much, for the sin of sodomy is not the same thing as marrying a wife from another part of the universe!
- In fact, “in a similar way” does not compare the sin of the angels with the sin of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah; instead, it compares the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah with the sins of “the cities about them” (that is, Admah and Zeboiim; see Deut 29:23 and Hos 11:8). Thus, the sins of Jude’s angels (Jude 6) and the sins of the five cities of the plain (Jude 7) are held up as warnings of the judgment that could come to others.
- The fall of the angels that Jude mentions is that which took place when Lucifer fell. To connect this fall with the time of the flood because of the proximity of the references in Jude 4–7 would demand that we connect the flood with the overthrow of the five cities of the plain. But the events listed in Jude are successive, not simultaneous: (1) the fall in eternity of Satan (Jude 4), (2) the preaching of Noah prior to the flood (Jude 5) and (3) the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah (Jude 6).
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C.. Hard Sayings of the Bible (p. 107).

A godly race (of Seth) & ungodly (of Cain)

- Simply doesn’t make sense—only evil men; only godly women
- And why would that produce “giants”? Though it doesn’t say that.

Final view of sociologically mixed groups

- “Sons of God” an early, but very typical reference to men in power. (“puny god” Hulk and Loki)
- The term also “giants” often referred to those in despotic power
- Hard sayings book has extensive documentation on the use of this term in ancient writings to refer to men in power and those who early on began to practice polygamy.

Summary of Genesis 6 controversies

- Genesis 6:1–4, therefore, is best understood as depicting ambitious, despotic and autocratic rulers seizing both women and power in an attempt to gain all the authority and notoriety they could from those within their reach. Their progeny was, not surprisingly, adversely affected, and so it was that God was grieved over the increased wickedness on planet Earth. Every inclination of the hearts and thoughts of humanity was evil. Thus, the flood had to come to judge humankind for the perversion of authority, the state, justice and human sexuality.
- Kaiser Jr., Walter C.. Hard Sayings of the Bible (p. 108). Society of Biblical Literature. Kindle Edition.
- Perhaps not as explosive, etc. but truthful

Application

- Immoral power, pride, sexual greediness is not pleasing to God
- “Blessed are the peacemakers, THEY shall be called the sons of God.” Matt. 5:9
- People like that are not to be admired
- They will be judged, and their power will end
- The meek will inherit the earth. Matt. 5:5
- *Meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In the OT, the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend against injustice. Thus, meekness toward evil people means knowing God is permitting*

the injuries they inflict, that He is using them to purify His elect, and that He will deliver His elect in His time (Isa 41:17, Luk 18:1-8). Gentleness or meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest. It stems from trust in God's goodness and control over the situation. The gentle person is not occupied with self at all.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/mat/5/1/s_934005

“What about the curses in Genesis?, e.g. Cain and Lamech, Canaan and Ham?”

- Curse of Cain and Lamech
- Lamech-- a descendant of Cain.
- The first bigamist (more than one wife) in the Bible
- Kills and then to his wives--a sinful boast. Cain's avenging was decreed by God. Only God had the right to take his life.
- Lamech in many ways setting himself up as even greater than God because though God pronounced a "seven-fold" curse, Lamech ups it to seventy-seven.
- His people built a city, first to use music, metallurgy--one commentator said ancients were not that skilled.....not true.
- After this Lamech, Cain's line not listed again (and was wiped out totally in the flood).

Matthew Henry's summation of the line of Cain

- Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and we never find that he came into it again, to his comfort. The land Cain dwelt in was called the land of Nod, which means, 'shaking,' or 'trembling,' and so shows the restlessness and uneasiness of his own spirit, or 'the land of a vagabond:' they that depart from God cannot find rest anywhere else. Those on earth who looked for the heavenly city, chose to dwell in tabernacles or tents; but Cain, as not minding that city, built one on earth. Thus, all who are cursed of God seek their settlement and satisfaction here below.

Matthew Henry, concise commentary

Curse of Canaan, not Ham

- When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, ²⁵ he said,
- “Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers.”

- **Important to remember:** “Then God blessed Noah and his sons. Gen. 9:1”
- In a shame-based culture, Ham's telling and shaming his father extremely serious. To curse the son would be to say that a curse would follow his family line.
- “The cursing of Ham has to do with the sin of Ham when his father Noah uncovered himself at his drunkenness. Though we are not told the exact sin of Ham, we do know that it was reprehensible enough for God to curse the line of his son Canaan. The judgment was not directed to Canaan personally but rather to his descendants.” Don Stewart
- What is stated is that Canaan was cursed, and this must have been due to either the same sin committed by Canaan or a prophetic utterance of the sins that Canaan and his descendants would become notorious for over the coming centuries (*Leviticus 18:3–29, Deuteronomy 20:17–18*), or possibly both things.
<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-characters/the-curse-of-canaan/>

“What about the blessing of Isaac to Jacob.... question was, “Isaac did not bless Esau even though Isaac discovered that Jacob had deceived him (Isaac) into giving him the blessing.

Couldn't or why didn't Isaac not bless Esau too?

- Isaac did bless Esau
- It was by faith that Isaac gave Jacob and Esau his blessing, for his words dealt with what should happen in the future. Hebrews 11:20-22
- Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!” Then Esau wept aloud.
- ³⁹ His father Isaac answered him,
- “Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above.
⁴⁰ You will live by the sword and you will serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck.”
- Like God's blessing of Ishmael also, though he was not in the covenant line of people

Comments on Esau

- When the children were born God told parents that the older would serve the younger
- Predestination or foresight?
- Esau's character: sold his original blessing and the rights of the firstborn; married pagan wives, angry, harbored murder in his heart, no evidence of serving God
- Jacob struggled, but a growing relationship with God
- God choosing Jacob a picture of God's gracious choice (NT verses)

"If the Bible says you can't see God, how could people see him in Genesis?"

- Keep in mind our God is a Trinity—three persons—ONE GOD
- God the Father, the one not seen, but at times one person of the Trinity chose to take human form
- Overall called a "theophany"
- Some specifically, when the pre-incarnate Christ, called a "Christophanies"
- Some Bible commentators believe that whenever someone received a visit from "the angel of the Lord," this was in fact the pre-incarnate Christ. These appearances can be seen in Genesis 16:7-14; Genesis 22:11-18; Judges 5:23; 2 Kings 19:35; and other passages.
- Other commentators believe these were in fact angelophanies, or appearances of angels.
- While there are no indisputable Christophanies in the Old Testament, every theophany wherein God takes on human form foreshadows the incarnation, where God took the form of a man to live among us as Emmanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23)

"How do you explain fossils of humans 30,000 to 40,000 years old?"

- Great debate on the age of fossils by even secular scientists
- Great debate on the age of the earth by Christian and secular scientists
- We really don't know
- What we do know—

What is not important is the HOW and the WHEN, what is important is the WHO

- In the beginning God created man in his own image
- Adam and Eve real people at a specific point in

time

- New Testament theology dependent on this
- ***For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 1 Cor 15:22 NIV***
- ***Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. 1 Cor 15:22 NLV***
- Some things in the Bible we are not told the details.
- Trust in the one who does and who in His time may explain the details to us in the coming Kingdom.
- NT explains OT, reasonable to assume much we don't understand now we will and from far better teachers than we have now (meaning me).

Questions related to: Is Jesus the only way to heaven?

- Short answer: "Yes"
- But let's look at it in the light of our project to read through the entire Bible.
- To repeat the quote from earlier....
- To make us wise for salvation, says Paul, and for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Tim 3:15-16).
- The biblical writings were written "to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom 15:4). This redemptive purpose of inspired Scripture is also the point of John 20:31: "These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

How can reading through the entire Bible in historical order help do this?

- This is exciting!
- Every OT book as you will see prefigures or has specific prophecies about a coming Messiah.
- The NT shows specifically how these prophecies were fulfilled—reading the book of Matthew is especially instructive at this point.
- Look at this objectively. Thousands of years ahead, specific prophecies made about a specific person who would live in a historically verified time and die in precisely the way predicted.
- Jesus was not simply a nice man who happened along in the first century.
- ***God, outside of time, step-by-step in time***
- ***Verifies that Jesus and Jesus alone is the only one who qualifies to be the savior of humanity.***

- ***You'll see this more and more clearly as we study the WHOLE Bible—why it is SO important***

Jesus Salvation, prophesied in the Old Testament, Fulfilled in the New

- And he freely shares the salvation he accomplished on the cross with anyone who asks for it.
- It's all about Him.
- That's why the most horrible thing he can say to a condemned soul is, "I never knew you—depart from me."
- But remember—it is NOT the Lord's will that anyone should experience that (2 Pet. 3:9)
- The Bible promises:
- "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved." Rom. 10:13—but I think it's only realistic to understand that really getting to know Jesus is more than an initial cry for help.
- Jesus said if we say we love him, we will keep his commands— and that means knowing His Word, His commands, and living by them.
- And that's what we're doing in Bible 805 and this class!

Resources for Answers about Genesis

- ***Conservative, Biblical sites:***
- Equip.org—highly recommended, HH wrote several short books on evolution
- Answersingenesis.org—young earth, conservative
- Gotquestions.org—summary answers, a good place to start for lots of questions
- Str.org—one of the best, lots of writers, resources

That's all for now,

- Please check out the show notes and other materials at www.bible805.com
- Until next time, I'm Yvon Prehn, your fellow pilgrim, writer and teacher for Jesus.
- I'd like to close with this benediction:
 May you know the invitation of God, to move
 -from confusion to clarity
 -from wandering to rest
 -from loneliness to knowing you are loved
 -from turmoil to peace
 From wherever you are on your spiritual journey to a growing knowledge of God's Word and in your personal relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen
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