

Genesis Difficult Questions

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1. Are the "days" of creation actual 24 hour days? How do we reconcile the biblical time with the huge periods of time which are manifest in the fossil and astronomical record?
2. Can Genesis 1 be harmonized with the scientific theories of evolution? Does theistic evolution solve the problem?
3. Why does Genesis 1 use the name Elohim for God and after Genesis 2:4 it uses the name Yahweh (LORD)?
4. Why does Genesis 2 repeat the creation of man and woman? Why do the accounts differ in detail?
5. Where was the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10ff)?
6. Does Genesis 2:18 give humans the mandate to pillage and exploit the land and our natural resources?
7. Why did God prohibit the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Was that a fair test or just a game since God knew humankind would fall (Gen. 2:16-17)?
8. Does Genesis 2:18 suggest women are to be in an inferior role of helper to men?
9. Was the serpent telling the truth when he said that if they would eat the fruit they would become more like God (Gen. 3:5 cf. 3:22)?
10. Did God know a head of time that Adam and Eve would eat of the fruit and sin against him?
11. Is God's commission to the first couple, to be fruitful and multiply on the earth, is that still in place, or has our present population explosion changed that (Gen. 1:28)?
12. In Genesis 3:16, what is the woman's desire and how is it related to the term "rule"?

13. Does Gen. 3:16 have anything to do with Christ?
14. How did Cain and Abel know how to offer a sacrifice? Did they understand what it was for (Gen. 4)?
15. Why did God favor Abel over Cain; or why did he prefer Abel's sacrifice (Gen. 4)?
16. Were people saved by keeping the law and obeying God's commands in the Old Testament whereas in the New we are saved by faith?
17. Where did Cain find a wife (Gen. 4:17)?
18. Did people really live 900 years back then (Gen. 5:5) or did they figure time differently? Can we just add up the genealogies to find out how old the earth is? If we add them up and come up with 4004 BC as the date of the creation, what problems arise in both historical, archaeological and scientific sources? How do you relate these ages to the Sumerian king list which totals ca 241,200 years?
19. What does it mean that God took Enoch (Gen. 5:23-24)?
20. Who were the "sons of God" that married the daughters of men in Gen. 6:1-4? Why did God get so upset?
21. According to Genesis 6:6 can God change? How does that fit with passages like Mal. 3:6 or Num. 23:19 that mention his immutability? Is Gen. 6:6 to be understood merely as a figure of speech (anthropomorphism)? Can God change his mind, can he have regrets?
22. Why does Gen 6:19 say Noah is to take the animals two by two but Gen. 7:2 says he is to take 7 of certain types of animals?
23. Was the flood in Noah's time worldwide or regional? How does that fit with the geological record?
24. Does Gen. 9:6 support the death penalty and capital punishment?

25. Why was the curse on Ham directed to Canaan? What does the curse on Ham have to do with the slavery of Africans?
26. If the dividing of the languages of humankind is described in Gen. 10:5, 20, 25, 31 then did it really happen at the tower of Babel in Gen. 11?
27. Why did Abraham and Isaac lie saying their wives were their sisters (Gen. 12; 20, 26)?
28. How can the city name "Dan" be used in Genesis (14:14) with Abraham when the city was not called "Dan" until after they came out of Egypt over 400 years later (Joshua 19:47)?
29. Could Abraham defeat the Mesopotamian kings with only 318 men (Gen. 14)? Is that believable historically?
30. Was it right for Abraham to sleep with Hagar (Gen. 16:1-4)?
31. Why, when Abraham laughed is he not rebuked but Sarah was (Gen. 17:17 cf. 18:12-15)?
32. Is homosexuality, violence, or inhospitality condemned by the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19: 1-29)?
33. Were there Philistines in Palestine in the time of Abraham (pre-1800 BC)?
34. Was it wrong for Abraham to send Hagar away into the desert as Sarah suggested? What was God's guidance on the matter (Gen. 21:14)?
35. Why did God test Abraham asking him to sacrifice his son (Gen. 22)? Was God asking Abraham to sin? Can God tempt someone (James 1:13)?
36. After the trial of Abraham God responds saying "now I know" that you fear God. Did God learn something by testing Abraham? Can God learn or does his omniscience preclude his learning (Gen. 22:12)?
37. In the asking of Abraham to offer up Isaac was God calling for

- Abraham to sin by human sacrifice (Gen. 22)?
38. Where were the Hittites in the land of Palestine in the time of Abraham (Gen. 24; cf. Num. 13:29)?
 39. Does the phrase "being gathered to his people" refer to a means of burial or to how they viewed the afterlife (Gen. 25:8f)?
 40. Was the promise to Abraham conditional and earned or unconditional and unearned (Gen. 12:1; 17:1, 9-14; 22:16; 26:3-5)?
 41. Is polygamy allowed in the Old Testament (Gen. 29:25-28)? Is Mormon practice of polygamy justified in Genesis?
 42. Why did Rachel want Leah's mandrakes (Gen. 30:14)?
 43. Who is the angel of the LORD (Gen. 31:11-13)?
 44. Why did Rachel steal her family gods (Gen. 31:34)?
 45. Who did Jacob wrestle with at wadi Jabbok (Gen. 32:23ff)?
 46. Was Joseph arrogant as a young man and harsh to his brothers when they came to Egypt (Gen. 42:7)?
 47. How many descendants of Abraham went down to Egypt (cf. Gen. 46:27; Acts 7:14f)?
 48. Because of Joseph's sons, are there twelve or thirteen tribes of Israel (Gen. 48:20)?
 49. How are the blessings of Gen. 49 and Deut. 33 harmonized?
 50. To what does Shiloh refer in the blessing of Judah (Gen. 49:10)?

Resources:

- Archer, Gleason, L. Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982).
- Haley, J.W. Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible (Nashville: Goodpasture, 1951, reprint).

- Kaiser, Walter, et al. Hard Sayings of the Bible (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996).
- Tuck, Robert. A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties (London: Elliot Stock, n.d.).