**Bible Query - Introduction**

The Bible is a rich and fascinating book. However, some people are put off by its depth and complexity. While Christians should always be learning and growing, some have been content simply to lay their unanswered questions aside, without the growth that comes from the answers. Other people say the Bible has contradictions. While the Bible does have things that are difficult to understand, every alleged contradiction in the Bible has an explanation.

Life itself can be full of difficulties and apparent contradictions. For example, once my eight-year-old daughter was confused as to why I answered the phone when she called me at work. You see, she reasoned that since every business has a phone, how come it was not the owner of the company who answered the [one and only] phone where I worked???

Likewise, difficulties in the Bible can be impossible to solve when we have wrong and simplistic assumptions. The same difficulties can become easy when the false assumptions are cleared away.

This work addresses the following topics:

Biblical archaeology

Cults and spiritual counterfeits

Skeptics, religious liberals, and atheism

Bible and science

Explaining old-fashioned King James Version phrases

Bible manuscripts

Gives Bible Interpretations various Christians have

Doctrinal questions: Trinity, evil, etc.

Questions on prayer and other aspects of the Christian experience

Life application questions

To get other and more complete answers, this work catalogs answers given in good Christian books, so that you can read further and often more complete information.

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The questions are arranged in the order the verses appear in the Bible. If you do not find a question about reconciling two verses under the first verse, look under the second. Before discussing the verses, the following sections address five general questions.

**Why So Many Questions?**

I have attempted to hunt down every objection, difficulty, and alleged contradiction every non-Christian and Christian has asked. I tried to show some of the archaeological support for the Bible, discuss Bible and science issues, and give multiple answers in some places where Christian scholars disagree. I often look at things skeptically, but praise God Jesus died for skeptics, too. I also believe the Bible in the original manuscripts is the inerrant word of God. However, I am extremely skeptical of other things, such as the claims that the universe could have started by random chance.

I have tried to be thorough in ferreting out as many potential questions as possible, but I am certain there are questions I have missed. If you encounter additional questions not covered in these papers, please send them to the cdebater@aol.com. We want to give you an answer and consider your input for future versions. Also, if you believe an answer can be improved, I would appreciate your comments as well.

**How Important is All This?**

Frankly, it is not critical for a Christian to know the answers to all these questions. Could anyone have been a good Christian prior to having the wealth of archaeological evidence we have in the twentieth century? Of` course! Many fine Christians have a deep relationship with Jesus, and other gifts, without having this head-knowledge.

However, more than in any other period of history, these last two centuries have been a skeptical age. We should “...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15).

A conservative Christian can be considered either “pre-skeptical” or “post-skeptical”. Pre-skeptical Christians may be taken aback that there are skeptics out there who have lots of questions. Post-skeptical Christians have heard a number of these questions and answers, and perhaps originated a few “chestnuts” of their own. As Christians we seek the truth. It is proper for a Christian to respectfully question anything, and to wait patiently to see if God will provide an answer.

**What About non-Conservative Christians?**

I grew up in a liberal Christian environment where most thought the Bible had many errors. I believe there are a large number of non-conservative Christians who would be happy to become conservative Christians, except that they see some alleged errors in the Bible, and see no hope of ever resolving them. If this describes you, perhaps these answers will really help.

**What If You Don’t Have an Answer?**

For much of my Christian life, there have been one or two questions I could not fully answer. I would pray about them, read the Bible, study what others said, and eventually, sometimes months later, I would have the answers. Meanwhile, by then I had new questions. My questions were a way God used to teach me.

Christians have a perfectly fine answer to any question: “I do not know; but I will find out and get back to you.” We must leave room for God’s word in us (John 8:37), and God will give us the words and wisdom to answer (Luke 21:14-15). More important than having all the answers, is to have a living relationship with the one who is the answer: Jesus.

**How Do I Become a Christian?**

Two words: repent and believe. Here is what these mean, as well as what they do not mean.

Repentance means giving the One True God your bad habits, evil behavior, lack of love, selfish desires, and other sins. It does not mean you must cleanse yourself before you can come to Christ. It does mean turning from living for yourself, and turning your life over to God, and allowing Him cleanse your life.

Belief means trusting what God says in His word, the Bible. There is only one true God, existing as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the Creator, sustainer, and judge of all. God is Almighty, All-knowing, and holy. God is love, but God’s wrath hangs over all who transgress His commands.

That includes us. By God’s standard, all of us have fallen short of what God requires in what we say, do, think, and fail to do. In God’s eyes, all of us are failures in who we are. On our own, we have no hope of ever satisfying God’s demands for justice without going to Hell forever.

When there was no hope for us, God made for us a great and certain hope in His Son, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for our sins as to satisfy the demands of justice. Jesus is the only way to God, and His grace is sufficient for us.

Belief means more than intellectual assent. We must choose to give our life over to God, and ask God’s Holy Spirit to come into our heart and commit to try to obey God. All who reject Jesus will die in their sins and go to Hell forever. The most important question of all is not the following sheets. The most important question is the one you will be asked by God at the Last Judgment: “Did you know my Son?” If you have not done so, please give your life over to God today.

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**Bible Query in General**

**Q: Is Christianity a religion?**

A: Christianity can rightfully be called a religion, as James 1:27 does, because it speaks about God, how we should live, and what happens after you die. However, it would be incomplete to say that Christianity is merely a religion. It is God’s way of transforming our lives, and providing forgiveness so that we can live with Him forever.

We need to realize the holiness, majesty, love, justice, and power of God. We have to understand how we have fallen short of God’s standard of justice because of our sins. There is no way to Heaven except through the free gift of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins. To be born again we have to accept this gift from God, and commit our entire life over to Him.

Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism do not promise being “born again” in a transformation to be a child of God.

**Q: What if I don’t believe that there is a God?**

A: At the end of a meeting, the famous evangelist D.L. Moody was accosted by a man who said, “Mr. Moody, I am an atheist.” Here is a paraphrase of what Moody told him.

Let me ask you, out of all the information in the universe, how much information do you think human beings know? “

The man said maybe 10%. (That was rather generous, but Moody did not press the point.)

Moody continued, out of all the information that people know, what percent do you know?

The man said maybe 20%.

Moody then said, out of the 80% of human information you do not know, and the 90% more than no humans know, do you thin there any possibility that there might be a God?

The man said it was possible.

Moody then said, “OK, then you are not an atheist; you are an agnostic.”

Moody then asked him, if there really were a God out there, who loved you and created a heaven for people, would you have an interest in knowing about Him.

The man said, “if there was, then sure.”

Moody responded, “Ok then, you are not an agnostic, you are a seeker.”

Moody then said, “If there were a letter, purportedly written by this God, would you be interested in seeing it?

The man said, “Sure!”

Moody said, “here is the gospel of John in the Bible. Why don’t you take it home and read it!”

Let’s look a bit more closely at these three “stages”.

**Atheist to Agnostic:** The famous scientist Isaac Newton once had a beautiful, intricate, mechanical model of the solar system. An atheist friend of his came over. He greatly admired the model and asked Newton who made it. Newton replied that nobody did; it just made itself. The friend asked again, and Newton repeated his answer. The friend started to get angry, when Newton asked him, if you cannot believe something as simple as this made itself, then how can you believe the universe could make itself?

There is a famous philosophical argument for the existence of God called the Cosmological Argument. It says that every created thing had a cause for its creation. Now things can cause other things, but since at least one created thing exists, there had to be a first cause, that was itself uncaused, because you cannot get something from nothing. Now this does not prove that Christianity is true, or that the first cause was personal, but everyone has to believe in a first cause.

But is the first cause intelligent? Now despite what they say, even atheists believe in “god”. If you define “god” as that which is eternal, with no beginning, all-powerful, even the most close-minded atheist believes in “god”. It is just that they call their god “random chance”. Now which is more reasonable to believe. That the amazing balance, order, and beauty in the universe had an intelligent design, or that it was only random chance. If physical constants had been a little different, atoms would not exist; water would not have a large enough liquid range for life on earth to exist, animals could not breathe, and the earth would not be in a place to support organic life. Is it reasonable to believe that all of our lives, and existence, is a cosmic “accident”? No, there has to be Someone out there.

**Agnostic to Seeker:** The brilliant French scientist Blaise Pascal’s had a famous saying called “Pascal’s Wager”. It is sort of a tongue twister that goes: To believe in God involves great potential gain and no potential loss. To not believe in God involves great potential loss and no potential gain. Great potential gain with no potential loss is better than great potential loss with no potential gain. Therefore it is better to believe in God than not to believe in God.” His point is still valid today, - even if you can’t say that fast.

Now if God wanted to hide Himself, and not reveal Himself to man, admittedly, He could do so. But if God revealed Himself, how could He? He might leave hints in nature. He might speak to individuals, who would be His spokesmen. On the other hand, an imposter might have spokesmen too. So, God would “validate” His spokesmen by having them accurately foretell the future, and do miracles. Finally, He might come Himself. If He came in all His glory, our skin might be blown away by the blazing brightness. But, if He is Almighty, He could figure out a way to come, leaving aside most of His glory, so that we could bear to see Him, and yet understand Him as God. How could God communicate with us? I believe He did all the above.

If God were to come to earth, not in so much glory that everything were destroyed, but with enough power to do miracles, tell the future, and teach great things, would that satisfy you? If God were to do that, just how many times would He have to come to convince you? Once was good enough for me. The evidence of fulfilled prophecy, the undeniable fast of the resurrection, and the testimony of the apostles, eleven of which gave their lives dying for Christ, is enough for me. How about you?

**Q: How can I believe that the Bible is God’s words, since it seems just like any other religious book?**

A: Benjamin Franklin, always the experimenter, once did a test with the Bible. Once when he was in the French Court, Franklin heard some French aristocrats putting down the Bible, so here is what he did. Franklin wrote out the story of Ruth in his own handwriting, changing all the names to French ones. Then he read the story to the aristocrats. They asked him “But where did you find this gem of literature, Monsieur Franklin?” Franklin answered, “It comes from that book you so despise, la sainte [Holy] Bible!”. (This is according to the *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.287-288.)

If God were to reveal Himself to people, how would He do it? He would not need to wait until the people entered a scientific age, for the truths about himself, and what they should do would be for all times. He might give some prophecies of the future, have His special messengers do some miracles, and teach us the highest ethical standards. If such a book existed, would you want to read it? Such a book exists, and it is the Bible.

One would think God would know how to succeed, such that the book would not be lost but be widely published. There are not many widely published religious books that claim to be from God: the only ones with any following besides the Bible are the Qur’an, the Vedas, Mahabharata including the Bhagavad-Gita, the Upanishads, and the Tritipaka. We would invite you to compare the teachings of the Bible with these at any time.

For example, The Qur’an in Sura 4:34 says that if a wife continues to not listen to her husband, the husband is to “beat” or “scourge” his wife. The Arabic word here does not mean tap lightly; it is the same word used to beat a violent criminal or a camel. If a wife is good, but a husband is remiss, the Qur’an never says the wife is to either beat her husband or find her father, brother, or another man to beat her husband. Sura 18:85-86 states that a man followed the setting sun and found that it went down into the waters of a muddy spring. Now we know the sun does not go down into a muddy spring.

“My sons kill their enemies and my daughter is an empress, and I am completely victorious. My voice is supreme in my husband’s ears. The oblation that Indra made and so became glorious and supreme, this is what I have made for you O gods. I have truly become truly without rival wives. Without rival wives, killer of rival wives, victorious and pre-eminent, I have grabbed for myself the attraction of the other women as if it were the wealth of flighty women.” Rig Veda 10.159.3-5. The basis for the caste system that keeps people of lower castes (generally darker complexion) from higher positions is also from the Rig Veda 10.90.11-12 p.31.

Like the Rig Veda, the Bhagavad Gita also supports the caste system of segregation in India. “O son of Prtha [Arjuna], those who take shelter in Me [Krsna], though they be of lower birth -- women, vaisyas [merchants] and sudras [workers]--can attain the supreme destination. How much more this is so of the righteous brahmanas, the devotees and the saintly kings. Therefore, having come to this temporary, miserable world, engage in loving service to me.” Bhagavad Gita 9.32-33 p.497-498.

The Katha Upanishad p.19 tells us something of the nature of the Hindu “God” Brahman: “To him [Brahman] the Brahmins and Kshatriyas are but food, and death itself the condiment [that is, spice].” The Upanishads teach that the goal of man is to lose all love, concern, and individuality as they are reabsorbed into the cosmic flame.

The Tritipaka might have “cooler” teachings, but Buddhism also teaches that all life is suffering and that people should escape to a place where there is no love or hate, joy or sadness, and no individuality.

So before saying the Bible is just like any other book, read 1 Corinthians 13, the Sermon on the Mount, and especially the last week of Jesus in the gospels, and see.

**Q: Won’t you go to Heaven if you are simply a good person?**

A: Just as you and your roomie can set the rules in your own apartment, God can set the rules for His house. If a strange but friendly dog comes to my door, who is not housebroken and will go to the bathroom or throw up on my bed, he is not coming into my house. (And that goes for humans too.)

Actually, if you are a good person you would go to heaven, but just how good would you have to be? God’s standard for his perfect place is perfection, and according to Him, Romans 3 says that nobody measures up. Even worse, we are subject to the judgment for the sins we have already done. Well, actually one “man” is perfect enough. That is Jesus Christ. Though He did not have to, He chose to die in our place. If we accept His free gift, and if we are willing to submit our lives to God’s process of making us holy, perfect, and acceptable to Him (in other words, “housebroken for Heaven”)

**Q: How do you know that your way is the right way?**

A: First of all, it is not “my” way, it is Jesus’ way. Show me someone else who had over 200 prophecies and implications made about Him before He was born, and show me someone else who rose from the dead, and you can consider their way too.

You know, some of the prophecies were incredibly detailed, such as the one in Daniel 9 about the time that the Messiah would die. Others are incredible, such as Him being called “God with us” or being born of a virgin (*parthenos* in Greek) in Isaiah. So if I make a list of all the people who were born in Bethlehem, died around 32-33 A.D., were claimed to be born of a virgin and claimed to be God, and I go through the list and see how many of them did miracles and rose from the dead, I only have one candidate. Who else has the credentials?

**Q: How can God be loving and allow all the stuff that’s going on in the world?**

A: While originally the world was good, do not forget that today we live in a fallen world. Nobody is good compared to God’s standard, but many times, bad things happen to people less deserving than others who appear to get away with something.

This would seem to make life unjust, that is if earthly life were all that there is. A former editor of *Scientific American*, an agnostic named Martin Gardiner, made a profound point in his book, *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*. He said that if you believe in justice (and he did), then you have to believe in an afterlife. In other words, life is so unjust on this earth, that if everyone does get justice, there must be a time after death when justice is dealt out. Christians call this Judgment Day. Centuries before, Lactantius (c.303-325 A.D.) made almost the same point in *The Divine Institutes* book 6 ch.9 p.171-172.

The world is far from an ideal place, but if it were ideal, what would it be like? Nothing bad would happen to anyone, and nobody would get sick or die. Though everyone would have the free will to do whatever they pleased, everyone would unanimously choose to love God and others. I believe in this ideal world, called Heaven. The pangs of earth tell us not to feel too comfortable here, but 1 Peter 1:6-9 reminds us that the sufferings of this life are nothing compared with the joys of the next for God’s people. Earth is not the best of all possible worlds, but it might be the best process to the best of all possible worlds: heaven.

**Q: Given that God has both great love and great wrath, how are we to understand the Hell and the Lake of Fire?**

A: We can think of punishment after death in terms of five complementary metaphors: a cosmic trash dump, a judgment, a quarantine, infinite growth, and a time warp of destruction.

**A chosen destiny:** Look at Hell from the perspective of a wicked person: Imagine Hitler being in heaven, without ever repenting of what he did. Imagine millions being forced to live with a Holy God forever, against their will. Can you even imagine this? I can’t. Rather, I think that if someone finally says they do not want to love, serve, and worship God forever, God reluctantly says “OK”. God will build a separate universe just for them, and they can do whatever they want in that universe. This universe we call Hell. Of course, God is the source of all love and goodness, and they will not experience those things there. They may have former friends with them in Hell, but without the love, they will not be their friends anymore. People are not all there is in that universe. Demons and others will be there with them. So a person in Hell did not directly choose the suffering of Hell, but they chose the path of rejecting God and led them to their destiny.

**A trash dump:** One of the most common words Jesus used for “Hell” is *Gehenna*. Gehenna was actually the trash dump outside of Jerusalem. They would pile the refuse out there, and when it got high enough to stink, and there were enough rats and other creatures, they would burn it. Hell can be thought of as a cosmic trash dump of those who choose to be unfit to be with God in Heaven.

**A judgment:** We should not practice cruelty to any creatures, but is cruelty to an ant is different than cruelty to a dog, or a human. In laws, murdering a citizen is different than assassinating a president or king. In other words, the severity of the sin is partially gauged by who or what you are sinning against. Then that would make sins against the most holy God is far, far greater seriousness than sins against others.

**A quarantine:** In my house, I want to keep out what is filthy and causes disease. I have the right to refuse entry to those who would want to hurt my family. If I think I have that right, does not God have the same right for His house?

**Infinite growth:** Imagine someone having a sin in this life, such as greed or lust. Imagine having the desire for that sin grow by 0.01% per year. Now imagine that the person has been in Hell for a million years, and has the certain knowledge that the sinful desire can never be satisfied.

**A time warp of destruction:** The Bible gives hints that time with God in Heaven is not the same as we experience time on earth (Pet 3:8; Ps 90:4; Tt 1:22; possibly Rev 11:7). Time in the afterlife in general could be significantly different. The Bible speaks of the smoke of their torment and Lake of Fire as forever, but it also talks of “perishing” and “destruction”. Given that God gave us eternal souls, and that He gave us the sobering ability to choose to be apart from Him forever, some evangelicals have seen perhaps a merciful mitigating of the infiniteness of sin. Destruction does not have to mean annihilation (which is against eternal punishment) but rather an asymmetric loss of consciousness or sanity.

Some of these previous metaphors are not intended as Biblical definitions of how the Lake of Fire has to be, but rather, not unbiblical descriptions of what it might be like.

**Q: How can I believe in miracles?**

A: And people said the Wright brothers could never fly either. It was “absolutely certain” man could never supersede the natural law of gravity, and yet it happened. Scientists also asserted that the atom could never be split, and time was constant for everything too. We can be amused by the dogmatic mistakes of past scientists, never even guessing that future generations might be amused by the mistakes of our science.

Furthermore, since the Creator made all the natural laws, how can you be so sure He cannot supersede the natural laws with more ease than even the Wright brothers? Imagine for a moment that you could observe and communicate with beings in a two-dimensional universe. You would tell them some “miraculous things” such as you could see their inside and outside at the same time. You could “see” around corners, and you could make things appear and disappear (just by moving them in or out of the plane). If they asked to see you, you could poke three fingers in their plane, and they could observe that you looked like three circles. I am certain they too would have people that would scientifically state you were impossible. So, can we really be so sure that our primitive knowledge knows all that is?

If you have studied either chemistry or physics, then consider this. Given what we know of quantum mechanics, and statistical mechanics in chemistry, if someone had no special powers except the power to make something happen that was already statistically possible, there are few miracles in the Bible that could not be done (besides predicting the future).

Someone might say that if a miracle would convince them, it would have to be a really big miracle. How about the resurrection of the dead? See the next question for more on that.

**Q: Isn’t the resurrection of Jesus is just a mythical story?**

A: No. Some people today believe in flying saucers; others believe men landing on the moon was a myth. Some people believe in astrology and tarot cards; others think our love, respect, and everything that gives us meaning in life is nothing more than chemical reactions coming from an random “accident”. As weird as some beliefs are today, that is a symptom that there is something wrong here. What is wrong is that too few people ask the simple question: “where’s the evidence?”. Even for things that cannot be verified by scientific experiment, such as history, we should still ask “where’s the evidence?” by looking at eyewitness accounts, and evidence you would submit in a court of law. So, if you are asking to see “evidence” of the physical resurrection of Jesus, that is a fair thing to ask.

We have four different lines of evidence. First we have the evidence of the gospel writers. We have the evidence of Paul, who saw Jesus in a vision, and knew of over 500 people who witnessed Jesus after His resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:5-7).

However, many people are not aware of the non-Christian evidence for Christ. The Roman historian **Suetonius** (120 A.D.) wrote of a magician from Palestine named “Chrestus” who allegedly rose from the dead. The Palestinian historian **Thales** wrote of the darkness over the land at that time. The Roman historian **Tacitus** also mentions “Christus” who was killed under Pontius Pilate. There is a common letter, from a man named **Mara bar-Serapion** who wrote a letter to his son around 73 A.D. He encourages him to emulate wise men of history, such as Socrates, Pythagoras, and the wise king the Jews executed. **Josephus** was a Jewish historian who wrote about Jesus as well as James, his brother. The Jewish Talmuds also mention Jesus as a magician. Jesus is mentioned in ***The Babylonian Talmud***, ***Tol’doth Yeshu***, ***Barailu***, ***The Amoa ‘Ulla’*, *Yeb. IV 3***, and ***Baraita***. **Lucian of Samosata**, a second century satirist, wrote of Christ as crucified in Palestine. He also said Christ taught that all men were brothers and encouraged the abandonment of the Greek gods. **Pliny the Younger**, a governor of Bithynia, writing in 112 A.D. to the Emperor, asked how to treat Christians, and he briefly described their beliefs, including that Jesus was a God. **Phlegon** from Caria, writing in 137 A.D., also wrote of a great darkness over the land in 33 A.D.. (He did not mention Christ though.)

A third line of witnesses is Christians who wrote about their faith. **Clement of Rome**, who wrote a letter to the Corinthians that we can date rather precisely at 96-98 A.D., speaks all about Christ and Paul. **Ignatius**, died by 116 A.D wrote many letters. **Polycarp** was another Christian martyr and disciple of **Ignatius** who died c.163 A.D. Papias, martyred around 156 A.D., **Theophilus of Antioch**, died either 181 or 188 A.D., **Justin**, martyred 165 A.D., **Irenaeus**, (182-188 A.D.), **Clement of Alexandria** (193-217/220 A.D.), **Tertullian** (198-220 A.D.), and **Hippolytus**, died 235/6 A.D., also wrote extensively about Christ. The ***Didache*** (or *Teachings of the Holy Apostles*) was an anonymous church manual, written c.60-120 A.D.. **Tatian**, A.D. was a Christian turned Encratite Gnostic who wrote a harmony of the gospels around 172 A.D. called the Diatessaron. If every single copy of the gospels were destroyed, we would still have all or parts of about 79% of verses in the gospels from just the Diatessaron.

A fourth line of evidence is the Christian church itself. It is estimated that about 40,000 Christians were martyred prior to Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire. If all of the early Christians, including the apostles, not only died for what they knew was a lie, they boldly traveled throughout the known world proclaiming what they knew was a lie with such enthusiasm as to launch the world’s largest religion, then this “miracle” of skeptics is almost as great as the miracles in the Bible.

With all the preceding evidence, there is just one more question. When people tell you that the resurrection of Jesus is just a myth, ask them: “where is your evidence?”

**Q: What are the miracles in the Bible?**

A: There are a great number of miracles: even not counting prophecies and God working through natural means. Here are the miracles (including divine appointments) just from Genesis through the Song of Solomon.

**Miracles that occurred in Genesis**

Creation of the heavens and the earth. Gen 1

Creation of the Garden of Eden. Gen 2

Noah’s flood. Gen 7-8

The Tower of Babel and confusion of speech. Gen 11:7-9

Sending diseases on Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai. Gen 13:17

God appears to Abraham as three visitors. Gen 18

Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed. Gen 19:1-29

Birth of Isaac to Sarah, an elderly barren woman. Gen 21:1-2

God called Hagar to find a well. Gen 21:17-19

An angel called to Abraham and provided a ram in place of Isaac. Gen 22:12-13

Abraham’s servant immediately found a wife for Isaac (divine appointment). Gen 24:12-16

**Miracles that occurred in Exodus**

Pharaoh’s daughter found baby Moses (divine appointment) Ex 2:5-6

Moses and the burning bush. Ex 3:2-6

Moses’ rod and leprous hand. Ex 4:2-7

Aaron’s staff became a snake. Ex 7:8-10

The Egyptians’ staffs became snakes, but Aaron’s staff ate them up. Ex 7:11-12

Plague of blood. Ex 7:19-22

Plague of frogs. Ex 8:6-7

Plague of gnats. Ex 8:17-18

Plague of flies. Ex 8:24

Plague of livestock dying. Ex 9:6-7

Plague of hail. Ex 9:23-25

Plague of locusts. Ex 10:12-15

Plague of darkness. Ex 10:22-23

The Passover. Ex 12:29-30

Cloud and the pillar of fire. Ex 13:21-22

Crossing the Red Sea. Ex 14:21-31

Water made sweet at Marah. Ex 15:25

Provision of quail and manna. Ex 16:13-15; Lev 11:4-9

Water from the rock at Massah. Ex 17:1-7; Num 20:11

Israelites defeated the Amalekites as long as Moses’ hands were held up. Ex 17:11

The Lord descended on Mt. Sinai, which looked aflame with fire. Ex 19:20

The people were struck with plague because the golden calf. Ex 32:35

Radiant face of Moses. Ex 34:29-30

**Miracles that occurred in Leviticus**

Nadab and Abihu died for by having unauthorized fire before the Lord. Leviticus 10:1-2

Fire from the Lord Leviticus 11:1

Leviticus 11:4-9 already mentioned with Exodus 16:13-15

**Miracles that occurred in Numbers**

Miriam temporarily had leprosy. Numbers 12:10-14

Numbers 20:11 already mentioned in Exodus 17:1-8

Balaam’s donkey. Numbers 22:32-32

Plague against the Israelites. Numbers 25:8-9

**Miracles that occurred in Deuteronomy**

Moses was strong and still had good eyesight right before he died at 120 years old. Deuteronomy 34:7

**Miracles that occurred in Joshua**

Crossing the Jordan River. Joshua 3:15-17

Fall of the walls of Jericho. Joshua 6:20-21

Hailstones and the sun stands still while fighting the southern Canaanite kings. Joshua 10:11-14

**Miracles that occurred in Judges**

Gideon’s fleece. Judges 6:36-40

Samson’s barren mother and father saw an angel and had Samson. Judges 13:2-6

Samson’s strength. Judges 14:5-16:20

**Miracle that occurred in Ruth**

Ruth chose Boaz’s field to work in (divine appointment). Ruth 2:3,19-20

**Miracles that occurred in 1 Samuel**

Hannah was childless, but had Samuel. 1 Samuel 1:3,17

When the Philistines had the ark, their idol fell, and they were afflicted with tumors. 1 Samuel 5

God killed 70 men of Beth Shemesh who looked into the ark. 1 Samuel 6:19

Saul just happened to enter unknowingly the cave where David was hiding. (divine appointment) 1 Samuel 24:3-4

**Miracles that occurred in 2 Samuel**

Uzzah was killed reaching out to steady the ark. 2 Samuel 6:6-7

The LORD sent a plague because David counted the fighting men. 2 Samuel 24:15-16

**Miracles that occurred in 1 Kings**

The LORD appeared to Solomon twice. 1 Kings 3:5; 9:2

Drought prophesied by Elijah. 1 Kings 17:1-6

The jar of flour and the jug of oil that were never used up for the widow at Zarephath. 1 Kings 17:7-14

Elijah raised the dead boy of the widow of Zarephath. 1 Kings 17:17-18

Elijah and the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. 1 Kings 18:38

God supernaturally feeding Elijah afterwards. 1 Kings 19:1-9

The LORD appearing to Elijah. 1 Kings 19:9-13

**Miracles that occurred in 2 Kings**

God sent fire to kill soldiers sent to capture Elijah 2 Kings 1:9-12

Elijah goes to heaven in a whirlwind. 2 Kings 2:11-12

The Jordan River parts for Elisha. 2 Kings 2:13-14

Elisha and healing the water. 2 Kings 2:19-22

A bear mauls 42 youths jeering Elisha. 2 Kings 2:23-25

The widow’s oil. 2 Kings 4:1-7

Elisha raised the Shunnamite’s son from the dead. 2 Kings 4:8-37

Elisha removes poison from food in a pot. 2 Kings 4:38-41

Elisha feeds 100 men with 20 loaves of barley. 2 Kings 4:42-44

Elisha heals the Syrian Naaman of leprosy. Gehazi gets the leprosy. 2 Kings 5:1-27

An iron axehead floats. 2 Kings 6:1-7

Elisha traps Arameans. 2 Kings 6:8-20

Aramean army retreats after hearing chariots and horses. 2 Kings 7:5-8

185,000 Assyrians killed besieging Jerusalem. 2 Kings 19:35-36; 2 Chr 32:21; Isa 37:21-37

**Miracles that occurred in 1 Chronicles**

Uzzah killed after touching the ark. 1 Chronicles 13:9-10

Sound of marching at the tops of the balsam trees. 1 Chronicles 14:15

Plague on Israel after the census. 1 Chronicles 21:14-15

**Miracles that occurred in 2 Chronicles**

Moabites and Edomites fight each other instead of Israel. 2 Chronicles 20:22-23

King Uzziah becomes leprous after offering the priest’s sacrifice. 2 Chronicles 26:20-21

See 2 Kings 19:35-36; 2 Chronicles 32:21; Isa 37:21-37 for the Assyrian army decimated.

**No miracles occurred in Ezra through Song of Solomon**

**Miracles that occurred in Isaiah**

(Visions and future miracles are not included here.)

See 2 Kings 19:35-36; 2 Chronicles 32:21; Isaiah 37:21-37 for the Assyrian army decimated.

**No miracles occurred in Jeremiah or Lamentations**

(Future miracles are not included here.)

**Miracles that occurred in Ezekiel (not done yet)**

(Visions and future miracles are not included here.)

Ezekiel 24:15-18 Ezekiel’s beloved wife dies.

**Miracles that occurred in Daniel**

Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream Daniel 2:24-49.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego saved through the fiery furnace. Daniel 3:20-30

Nebuchadnezzar lives like an animal for a time. Daniel 4:31-34

The writing on the wall. Daniel 5

Daniel in the den of lions. Daniel 6:16-28

**No miracles occurred in Hosea though Malachi**

**Miracles that occurred in the gospels (not done yet)**

**Miracles that occurred in Acts (not done yet)**

Jesus taken up to heaven. Acts 1:9-11

At Pentecost tongues of fire and speaking in different human languages. Acts 2:1-13

Peter and John heal a 40+ year old crippled beggar. Acts 3:1-10,22

The meeting place as shaken after believers prayed. Acts 4:31

Ananias and Sapphira killed for lying to God. Acts 5:1-11

The apostles heal many people. Acts 5:12-16

Apostles miraculously released from jail. Acts 5:17-21

Philip performs miracles in Samaria. Acts 8:4-8,12

Simon the sorcerer amazed people with his magic (whether fake or true it does not say.) Acts 8:8-11

Philip and the Ethiopian 8:26-40

The vision and blindness of Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9:1-12

Saul’s sight is restored. Acts 9:17-18

Peter heals Aeneas the paralytic. Acts 9:32-35

Peter heals Tabitha (=Dorcas) Acts 9:36-43

Cornelius and those in his house speak in tongues (prior to being baptized) Acts 10:44-48

(not finished after here)

**No miracles occurred in Romans through Jude**

(Visions are not included here.)

**Miracles that occurred in Revelation**

(Future miracles are not included here. John’s vision is not listed here.)

**Q: Isn’t it ridiculous to expect anyone to follow absolute guidelines?**

A: Now we all recognize that some things are not absolutes, such as matters of taste, color, or style. However, call me old-fashioned if you wish, but I happen to think that serial murderers are at least socially challenged. Call me politically incorrect if you wish, but I think that Stalin starving millions of Ukrainians to death was absolutely less than kind. Call me a safety nut if you wish, but I sometimes think that jumping out of 21 story high windows can be unsafe to your health. Perhaps you disagree with all this, or else perhaps you hold to some absolutes too.

Therefore, “my fellow absolutist”, the question is not if absolutes exist, but rather what kinds of things are absolutes. There are physical absolutes: such as if you push your car off a bridge, its resale value just might possibly go down. There are emotional absolutes: if you tell your boyfriend he is the only one you will ever love, and yet the next day he sees kissing another man, you just might have to wait a long, long time before getting an engagement ring from him. So, if these things just might possibly be close to absolutes, why would you doubt that there might be moral absolutes too?

A friend of mine wrote a paper for a philosophy class about Kant’s view that good is defined as “that which is done out of a sense of duty.” He let me read the paper while he went to lunch. He told me just to put it on his bed and lock the door when I left. I did that and later joined him at lunch. He asked me what I thought of it, and I told him I disagreed. Hitler’s soldiers, who killed all those Jews as their duty, were not doing a good thing. Nobody who is ordered by a gang boss to commit a crime is doing a good thing. In fact I told him, I thought that was so wrong, that I felt it was my duty to tear up his paper into little pieces! Now wasn’t that a good thing? - He then picked up a table knife and talked about his sense of duty.

A Christian friend of mine was once in a philosophy class where the professor was teaching that everything was relative. In fact he said, when he turned his back on the class, the class did not exist. He turned his back to demonstrate. Just then another student threw a book and hit the professor in the back of the head. The professor turned around rapidly and barked, “who did that”. The student said, “nobody did, because he do not exist!” Like a book with some mass, the absolutes of reality have a way of bonking us on the head when we ignore them.

On a more grim note, some things can be both relative (like statistics) and absolutes. For example, some years ago a study done on a city on the Mexican border that found that 20% of the prostitutes had AIDs. Now let’s say an immoral man tries to “protect himself” such that the risk of transmittal is 10%. If a boy stops for the rest of his life after 10 encounters, the chance that he is AIDs free is 81.7 %, that is, 1 - (1 - (.2)\*(.1))^10. If a man stops after 50 encounters, then the chance that he is AIDs free is only 36%. Yes, there are even absolutes in the relatives.

**Q: Jesus was a partying dude and if He were here, wouldn’t He party with us?**

A: Jesus went to weddings and many dinner parties. He never got drink, never lost His head by getting stoned, and never dishonored His body. Now there are rotten parties and fun parties. One way to tell which is which by how the people feel the day after, or as one Christian put it, “you can bow and worship God, or you can bow and worship the commode [toilet].” We Christians do like parties actually, and we would like to invite you to come: every Sunday morning. Of course, it is not a mere party, but rather both a joyous and awe-inspiring worship of the Living God.

**Q: What if I’ve always been a Christian?**

A: Well perhaps you are, but of course everyone who feels like wearing that label is not necessarily one in God’s eyes. To be a Christian means to follow Christ. It means to acknowledge that God is our Creator, loves us, and will judge mankind on judgment day. It means to repent of our sins; not only sinful acts, but the good things we should have done and failed to do, as well as our words and thoughts. It means to acknowledge that we ourselves can never be good enough to merit going to God’s perfect Heaven. Rather, we simply accept the freely given grace of eternal life, given through Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sins and bodily rising from the dead. It means to trust our lives over to God. Instead of trying to get to heaven through our own good works, to accept Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our lives, and live to please Him.

If you have already given your life over to Christ, that is great. I would like to learn about your experience. If you have not, no time is better than the present. I would like to share with you what I have learned, and be here to try to answer any questions or doubts you have before you come to Christ.

**Q: What if I used to be a Christian?**

A: If so, that sounds sad. It is hard for me to imagine what it would be like to feel so loved by the most powerful, yet loving being in the universe, to be so greatly valued by Him, and then cast yourself away from that love. It must feel ten times worse than a girl (or guy) you really like who breaks up with you because one time you were acting cold and uncaring. What would it be like to have such a great purpose in life, as to help other people live forever in joy, and then to come to a place where your life and goals are just meaningless combinations of chemicals that nobody would care about in the coming centuries. I would like to hear your story.

**Q: Is drinking alcohol OK, since even Jesus turned the water into wine?**

A: Jesus did turn water to wine, but it never said anyone got drunk on the wine. Drinking in moderation is permitted, but we are commanded not to get drunk. One time a heavy drinker I knew went to a Bible study, and he opened the Bible for the first time in a long time. The very first verse he turned to was Ephesians 5:18, which says: “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” (NIV). He later told me he thought the Bible study was “spooky”.

**Q: Since some Christians I know party with me, what’s the difference?**

A: Of course, just claiming to be a Christian, or just going to church, does not make you a Christian any more than walking across a football field makes you a football star. An obedient Christian would not do things against God’s commands, such as getting drunk.

As a Christian, I used to “party hearty” with non-Christians too. I drank (but no alcohol, only soft drinks), I never used drugs or did anything else dishonoring God. Like anybody else, I wanted to get to know people and see old friends. However, I gradually stopped going, basically because I got bored. When people drink so much that they will not remember a word you say the next day anyway, what is the point?

**Q: I think religion is personal, so why not just worship God in my own way?**

A: Yes, our relationship with God is supposed to be personal. Christ was very personal to the apostle Paul. - so personal, that Paul risked his life, traveling throughout the Mediterranean world, to tell everyone he could about having a personal relationship with God! There is also evidence that the apostle Andrew went to modern-day Russia, Matthew went to Ethiopia, and the apostle Thomas probably went as far as India. However, instead of worshipping God in your own way (like Cain tried to do), why not try to worship God in His way. After all, the worship is for Him and not yourself, right?

**Q: I'm not really that wicked compared with that murderer inside a prison cell.**

A: Maybe not, but we all still fall short of what is required to go to heaven. Even though some, like King Herod, had greater sin than others like Pontius Pilate (John 19:11), that does not provide you much comfort if you are separated from God for all eternity. The ultimate question is: do you want to spend all eternity with God, praising and serving Him, in ways we cannot even imagine? If not, then God says the final “OK”. He will make another universe, where you and others with similar sentiments can do your own thing. Of course, God is the source of all love and goodness, so that other place, a wild preserve if you will, is going to be pretty awful without God. That place is called Hell. Jesus often called it Gehenna, which was also the name of the trash dump outside of Jerusalem. Of all that you could have been, of all the love and goodness you could have experienced, is now trashed. And you will have no one to blame, except yourself.

**Q: The Bible is just for priests and ministers because no one can really understand it except them.**A: I can relate to those feelings. We should be in awe of God’s Holy Scripture; it is amazing that the super-intelligent, all-knowing God would choose to reveal His words to all of us poor, dense, forgetful people. Perhaps demons would be laughing at our intelligence, or rather lack thereof, except that by God’s Word, through God’s power, we have authority over them. But, even though theologians spend lifetimes mining the richness of the Bible, we should not be too afraid of God’s Holy book to read it, and equally important, obey it. The message of salvation is simple enough that even small children can learn enough of this book to know the way of salvation. But even though it is simple, it still gives a lifetime of challenge to follow. While good books have been written to teach who do not know anything about the Bible how to study it, let me give you a few brief pointers.

If you want help (and I am sure you do), pray before you study God’s Word, asking for God’s guidance.

Remember, God does not require us to know everything about what He has not revealed, but God has given us both the privilege and responsibility of knowing what He has revealed. He wants you to learn it even more than you want to learn!

When studying the Bible, practice

**Observation:** See not just what the verses are saying, but also the verses before and after, and any parallel passages.

**Interpretation:** Comparing with the rest of the Bible, interpret the meaning God intended for those verses.

**Application:** So what? Determine what you can learn from this that will (or should) make a difference in your life.

Get in a good Bible fellowship. One reason we need to get together with other believers is so that we can help each other

Get some good Bible resources from other Christians. Study Bibles and good Bible study booklets abound, and commentaries are helpful. A concordance will help you find other passages with the same thought or word. There are good (as well as bad) internet resources too. One that specifically answers over 8,667 questions on the Bible is [www.BibleQuery.org](http://www.BibleQuery.org). [www.MeeknessAndtTruth.org](http://www.MeeknessAndtTruth.org) also has lots of helpful materials for defending the faith, and [www.leaderu.org](http://www.leaderu.org) has many articles on Christianity and other topics. [www.watchman.org](http://www.watchman.org) has materials showing what is wrong with false religions, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons.

**Q: Why don’t you believe all the prophets (including Mohammed)?**

A: An Ahmadiyya could ask a Muslim the same question: why don’t Muslims believe their prophet, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad? But Baha’is can ask Ahmadiyyas the same question: why don’t they believe their prophets, the Bab and the Baha’ullah. Even Muslims would agree that we are not to believe Musailama al-Kadhdhab, and Anasi of San’a, because we can all agree we are not supposed to believe all the prophets when some are false prophets.

**So, we do not believe Mohammed, because Mohammed is a false prophet.**

Of course, a Jewish person could ask why both Christians follow Jesus, because the Jewish Talmud taught that Jesus was a false prophet. Going back even farther, Pharaoh of Egypt did not at first see that Moses was a true prophet.

So, given that we are to believe every prophet of God, and disbeliever every false prophet, how do you tell the true from the false prophets?

On this crucial issue God gives us two tests. In Deuteronomy 18:20-21, if they advocate worshipping other gods, or prophesy things that God did not command. 1 John 4:1-3 also adds that if they deny that Jesus came in the flesh, and Jeremiah 6:13 shows false prophets who spoke their own words as God’s words.

The Old Testament, which we have copies of from the time of Jesus and before in the Dead Sea Scrolls, teaches very clearly that God is a Father, and believers are His sons, not in a sexual sense, but by being adopted into His family, being born again as a new creation. Mohammed and the Qur’an explicitly reject this. Mohammed, as a prophet, and the Qur’an as allegedly God’s Holy book, are saying false things about the true God.

**Q: Since Protestantism came here only by 19th century it is impossible to say that our great, great grandparents in the 16th century were thrown in hell.**

A: Agreed. While some Catholics can be genuine Christians too, why go back only as far as Protestantism? Many non-Jewish people died before Christ was even born. While the Bible does not tell us everything about them, it does tell us about God. God is righteous and just (Rom 3:4-5), and God does not count sin where there is no law (Rom 4:15; 5:13). However, that does not let people off the hook, for even stone age natives have an imperfect copy of God’s law in their conscience (Rom 2:14-15). And we have all broken that. But just as God was able to save, Noah, Abraham, Job, and others through Christ, even though they had never heard the name of Christ, God is able to save all who call upon Him, regardless of what they know.

**Q: I don't have time for small group because I am very busy with my work and family.**

A: The key thing is not joining a particular group or not, but do you have faith in God? Specifically, do you have faith that God wants you to have a healthy, balanced life, which includes family and work as well as closeness to Him? Do you have faith that God will provide you with all the time you need to do what you should be doing, even though that might not be enough time to do all the extra things you want to do that God never intended for you to work yourself to death doing?

All Christians will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (also called the bema seat judgment), and give an account and have their works tested (1 Cor 3:11-15). So, you can set your temporary earthly priorities how you want, but do so knowing that you will have to give an account of how you set them. If you should be doing something, then do it.

**Q: Trinity and Oneness belief looks the same with me. Its just all semantics. After all they believed Jesus is God.**

A: Mormons, New Agers, and even an occasional Buddhist all believe that Jesus is God too; you have to believe in the right God. Rather than saying one specific doctrine is essential, to the exclusion of others, it is important to submit and believe everything God has revealed about Himself.

It is a horrible lie to say that the Father died on the cross.

At Jesus’ baptism the Father spoke, and the spirit descended in the form of a dove. Was Jesus a ventriloquist who deceived people with a magic act, or are there three distinct beings?

Hebrews 5:8 says that the Son learned obedience. Ask a Oneness person, exactly whom was the Son obedient to?

Or as one Oneness preacher said on the radio, “I would refuse to worship a God who would send “His Boy” to die instead of Himself.”

**Q: You really cannot say your belief is right while the others are wrong.**

A: In one way you are correct. I cannot say that my views and opinions are right, But Jesus can, and I would just like to share with people what He said. I had an elementary school teacher whom I hope you do not find too dogmatic; she insisted that 2 + 2 = 4. I never thought to tell her “that’s true for you, but not true for me.” If you needed open heart surgery, would you want to go to a physician who said, many people have successfully performed this surgery in the same way, but hey, I am feeling really creative today. I want to try things differently. No, you hope the surgeon not only knows the right way, but is dogmatic about following what is right and using great skill in doing what is best for the patient. The truth is, I needed open heart surgery. In fact, we all need open heart surgery; to replace our heart of uncaring selfishness, with a new heart, from God, filled with supernatural love. We need not just any physician, but the best physician around. We need Jesus to come into our heart.

**Q: I really do not have time for this Bible right now.**A: A Christian, Charles E. Hummel, wrote a good booklet on this, called the *Tyranny of the Urgent*, where he concluded: “The tyranny of the urgent is the enemy of the important.” We allow ourselves to be swamped with so many little tasks that have deadlines that we fail in doing what is of highest importance, just because it does not have a deadline (at least not that we have knowledge of). Just how long is your life on earth going to be, compared to eternity? You should not fail to consider the most important things, and what is more important than God and your eternal destiny. If you genuinely do not have enough time for God, then pray to God; asking Him to cut out of your life all the things that keep you from drawing closer to Him.

**Q: The Bible is just written by men like us and so is subject to error.**

A: Could God Almighty write a perfect word with an imperfect pen? – of course He could. He is Almighty. While neither Peter, Paul, nor any other apostle claimed to be perfectly sinless, we have to decide if we will trust Christ’s apostles or not. If we trust them, here is what they said about Scripture.

“For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” (2 Peter 1:16 uNASB)

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” 2 Peter 1:21 uNASB)

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17 uNASB)

“…just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you. As also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” (2 Peter 3:15b-16 uNASB)

Finally, Jesus told Satan, “It is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.” Mt 4:4. In the other temptations, Jesus answered Satan with Scripture. It was good enough for Jesus; hopefully you will think it is good enough for you.

**Q: I don't think 1 billion Roman Catholics are going to hell just because they differ with your belief.**A: Neither do I. But I have to tell you, there will not be any Catholics in heaven. There will not be any Protestants in heaven either, and I say that as a Protestant. The only people in heaven will be children of God, who love and obey Him. I think some Catholics are genuine Christians. I also think some Catholics and Protestants are not. I am not here to get to you join mine, or any other organization, I am here to invite you to a relationship with God. However, if your religion, whether Catholic, Protestant, or other, leads you to stop paying attention to God’s Word and follow something else instead, then your religion is an idol that stands in the way of a genuine relationship with God.

**Q: Religion is also important because James mentioned it in his letter. (1:26-27)**

A: Religion can be important, but as Elijah would tell you in 1 Kings 18:27, religion is not always good. It depends on the religion. For some, religion is an idol that stands in the way of God. When someone wants to murder someone, or do other things that grieve God’s heart, in the name of religion, that religion is toxic. Paul said the sacrifices of pagans are made to demons in 1 Corinthians 10:20. For others, religion, even “Christian religion”, is a sedative that does nothing. Being religious cannot save anyone, only God saves people. But that being said, James teaches us that religion CAN be very good, and we should all have this kind of religion. Religion that is good externally does acts of love toward others (i.e. visiting orphans and widows in their affliction), and internally has a disciplined obedience to God (keeping oneself unstained from the world).

**Q: Jesus cannot be God and man at the same time.**A: Why not? If God really is Almighty, who are we to tell God what He cannot do? A man cannot become God, but God Almighty is not too weak to be capable of appearing as a man. If someone thinks that God cannot reveal Himself “in person” then that person’s God is too small, and is not the real God. So, we can only follow what God has revealed to us about what He has done.

A mere man should not accept worship (Matthew 28:9,17; Luke 24:52), and cannot forgive sins that only God can forgive (Mt 9:2-6; Mk 2:5-12; Lk 5:20-23; 7:48-50). Jesus did though, because He was not merely a man, but God also.

**Q: The Trinity is of pagan origin and is a teaching of the Roman Catholic Church.**

A: That is a oft-repeated myth propagated by atheists. No historian would say that and be considered competent. Theophilus of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) used the term Trinity before there was a Roman Catholic Church. Tertullian (198-220 A.D.) wrote an entire work on the Trinity, and though he lived in Rome he was a Montanist, separate from Roman bishop. Likewise, Novatian (250-254/257) wrote *A Treatise Concerning the Trinity* and he started his own denomination. In addition, we have 12 other Christian writers, prior to 325 A.D., who used the word Trinity.

Prior to this, Ignatius of Antioch wrote extensively that Jesus is God, and he was a disciple of John the Apostle. Of course, in the Bible John 1:1 says that The Word [Jesus] was with God and was God. The apostle Thomas called Jesus “my Lord and my God” in John 20:28, the blind man worshipped Jesus in John 9:38, and the disciples worshipped Jesus in Matthew 14:33. Wise man worshipped Jesus in Matthew 2:11, and wise men worship Him today too.

**Q: There are many rules to follow when you become a born-again Christian.**

A: Yes, but there are many rules to follow when being married too: be considerate of your spouse, don’t beat your spouse, don’t fool around with others, etc. But when two engaged people are in love, thinking of marriage as just a bunch of rules is probably the farthest thing from their mind. They are thinking of their permanent relationship. Yes, God gives us commands, not just optional suggestions, and we are to obey our Lord. But this is not Christianity, just an outward expression of Christianity. Christianity is a relationship between me, with all my imperfections, and all-holy, loving God, who loves me even more than I love myself; who loves me even more than I can imagine. Obeying the rules is much easier, once we finally figure out that the rules are for our benefit and safety, and that God’s way is the best way.

**Q: If your pastor beats my minister in a religious showdown of debate then me and my family will transfer to your church.**

A: The issue is not argument, as lawyers argue, but truth, as scientists or researchers might discuss. There was a British politician, a brilliant debater, who did not believe in God named William Wilberforce. A personal friend of his, on a long train ride, shared the truth of the gospel, and Wilberforce demolished him in debate. The Christian finally told him just to be quiet and listen to the truth. Anyway, some time afterwards Wilberforce became a Christian and was a leading cause of abolishing slavery in all British possessions. Make sure the motive is learning the truth, not just winning an argument.

**Q: How can you just ignore Jesus' mother.**A: We don’t. We honor and respect Jesus’ mother, but it is blasphemy to place her at the same level as Jesus. Paul is fearful that some will fall away and be devoted to others besides Christ in 2 Corinthians 11:2-3. But the Catholic church has called her the name of an evil idol: the Queen of Heaven, in Jeremiah 44:17, “co-redeemer” (redemptrix) and “co-mediator” (mediatrix), that are engaging in idolatry when Jesus is our only mediator according to 1 Timothy 2:5-6.

**Q: The Protestant Bible is different from the Roman Catholic Bible therefore the former is incomplete.**A: That does not follow, because it could be that the Roman Catholic Bible has additions. While all Christian Bibles are the same on the New Testament, on the Old Testament there are not two views (Protestant and Catholic) but rather at least five:

1. “Basic” 39 books of the Old Testament agreed to by Jews and all Christians.

2. Catholic Council of Trent has this plus 8 books plus 4 additions to Daniel and Esther.

3. The Slavonic Orthodox Apocrypha is the same as the Catholic except also 2 Esdras, 3 Esdras, 3 Maccabees, and parts of two other books (Prayer of Manasses and Psalm 151)

4. The Greek Orthodox Apocrypha is the same as the Slavonic Orthodox except that is also has 4 Maccabees.

5. The Historic Coptic Apocrypha has 1, 2, 3 Maccabees, Baruch, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Judith, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon, and additions to Daniel and Esther. However, under Cyril V (1874-1927) the Coptic Church rejected these.

The early church had a variety of opinions, with many of the non-Hebrew speaking writers accepting the apocrypha. Jerome, who translated the apocrypha in the Vulgate accepted the apocrypha as scripture early in his life, but after he learned Hebrew he rejected them as Bible canon.

Now knowledgeable Catholics will even agree with Protestants that the apocrypha has provable historical errors, especially the Book of Judith. Doctrinally, the Prayer of Manasses also teaches that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never sinned against God. As Charles Ryrie said, if you in a meat processing meat, and some fell in the mud on the ground, even though it is still mostly good meat, would you want people to eat it? So, we do not need to follow problematic books. – of course not.

**Q: Faith and good works must go together for a person to go to heaven.**

A: Yes they go together, but not in the way you might think. People often confuse what earns our salvation, what gets us saved, and what displays that we are saved.

**Earns salvation:** Neither faith nor works merit salvation; we can never do enough of either to erase the sins we did. It is Christ and His sacrifice that earned our salvation, not anything we did or believed.

Gets us salvation: To be saved we must combine the gospel message we heard with faith (Hebrews 4:3). We are saved by grace through faith, not of works (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**Displays salvation:** But a faith that does not desire to show forth works is not a saving faith. Even demons “believe” and shudder. Faith without works is dead. (James 2:14-26).

**Q: We cannot know for sure we are going to heaven.**

A: The apostle John says otherwise in 1 John 5:13. You would have a valid point – but only if going to heaven depended on our own merits. We would never know if we worked hard enough. Actually, the Bible says that none of us worked hard enough, and if we have ever sinned, then the broad door to heaven is forever closed to us. But even when we had no hope of our own, God gave us hope, by sending a narrow door through which we can get to heaven. This door is Jesus (John 10:7), and by giving up our own ambitions, and turning our lives over to Him, He gives us forgiveness through His shed blood on the cross, and carries us through to eternal life. It is a gift of grace, not of our works (Ephesians 2:8-9). We simply have to accept it by faith.

Now faith is not something to take for granted; Paul commands us to “test ourselves” that we are in the faith in 2 Corinthians 13:5-6. This assumes that we are able to test. 1 John 5:12-13 says that we can “know” that we have eternal life. Likewise John 5:19 says that we can “know that we are of God”.

**Q: My parents don't want me to go to church but the Bible says, "Obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)**

A: It is important to obey those in authority, whether it be parents, government officials, teachers, etc., but we are to obey God as our highest authority. We are to obey and honor our parents (Ephesians 6:1-3), so I would still go to church, if possible, but make it clear to your parents that you respect them, and you will obey them in everything that does not contradict what God says. If your grandparents were to have told your parents not to pay taxes or pay their debts, would your parents have obeyed? Likewise, you have to pay the honor you owe God for what He has done in creating and saving you.

**Q: Its okay for me to practice my belief alone and not attend church.**

A: There are at least two kinds of faith “self-directed faith”, a faith on your own terms, where the ultimate source and authority of faith is yourself, and “obedient faith” on God’s terms. If God were to command us to meet together, then people of faith would have to decide which kind of faith they would put their trust in. Hebrews 10:25 commands us not to forsake assembling together. But it is up to us whether to have an obedient faith or not.

Sometimes a Christian might not be too enthusiastic about meeting with other Christians because the Christians they would meet with have flaws, or they had a bad past experience. No Christian is perfect, and we need each other, to encourage, correct, and on occasion rebuke each other, in love. It is great if you obey God enthusiastically, but when we are not enthusiastic, we are still called to obey God.

**Q: What is right for you may not be right for others.**A: What I feel is right does not matter much, because I might be mistaken, even about what is right for me. The Communists felt that killing non-Communists was right for them. Radical Islamic terrorists feel that suicide bombings are right for them, some drug addicts may feel that taking opium is right for them, and Jains feel that starving themselves to death is right for them. No, what matters is what God says is right. We can choose to follow or reject what God tells is right, but pretending we do not know the truth God has revealed to us is not an option He gave us.

**Bible Query from the Bible**

**Q: What does it mean that the Bible is “infallible”?**

A: It does not mean without any errors whatsoever, but without significant error in doctrine or practice. A person can still be a genuine Christian as C.S. Lewis was, if they believe the Bible is infallible, but falsely think the Bible is not inerrant.

**Q: When people say the Bible is “inerrant” what does that mean?**

A: When conservative Christians say the Bible is inerrant, they mean without error in the original manuscripts. In subsequent, copies, God permitted copyist errors. All who say the Bible is inerrant say the Bible is infallible. But not all who say the Bible is infallible say it is inerrant.

See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.45-48 for an easy to understand discussion on how the original text is inerrant, and the modern text, while still reliable, is only infallible. Other books that give similar descriptions of inerrancy are *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.17, *When Critics Ask* p.23-24, *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.13,25, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.7,16, and *Difficulties in the Bible* p.21-22. *General Introduction to the Bible* p.43, points out that the view of “inerrant autographs and errant copies” was also held by John Calvin and Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.).

Here are some detailed statements on inerrancy from the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics taken from the *General Introduction to the Bible* p.444.

“**Article XIII:** WE AFFIRM that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of biblical study.

WE DENY that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

**Article XV:** WE AFFIRM the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to is literal, or normal sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

WE DENY the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

**Article XVI:** WE AFFIRM that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning.

WE DENY the legitimacy of allowing any method of biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer’s expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.”

For a detailed 19-article definition of inerrancy, one can consult the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, published in *Inerrancy* p.493-502. Article X affirms that only the autographs were inerrant. Article XIX affirms that a person does NOT have to believe in inerrancy in order to be a genuine Christian.

**Q: If “inerrancy” does not have a problem saying small copyist errors have crept in, and the original manuscripts no longer exist, would it not be just as simple to say the errors were in the originals?**

A: Conservative Christians do not believe that because of our view that the Bible is God’s word, and God did not make any mistakes when His word was originally written.

**Q: Specifically, what distinguishes “inerrancy” from “hyper-literalness”?**

A: Inerrancy allows for the following qualifications:

**Anthropomorphic expressions**, such as Exodus 8:19; 13:14; 15:8,12,16; Deuteronomy 7:19; Psalm 91:4; Hebrews 4:13

**Copyist errors**, such as in Numbers 3:28; 1 Kings 4:26; 2 Chronicles 18:12; 22:2,5; 36:9

**Expressions of speech**, such as Exodus 33:11; Deuteronomy 32:50.

**Approximations,** such as round numbers

# Writing from a **frame of reference**, such as John writing what he heard and saw in Revelation

The **human author’s style** was used by God in the writing.

See the discussion on 2 Peter 1:21 for more on the inspiration of Scripture.

**Q: What is the official Catholic position on the inerrancy of the Bible?**

A: While many Catholic people have various views, here is the official church position.

***Catholic Apologetics Today*** says the following.

“The Church has always insisted there is no error at all in Scripture. Thus Pius XII wrote (*Divino afflante Spiritu*), ‘In our age, the Vatican Council [I], to reject false teachings about inspiration, declared that these same books [of Scripture] must be considered ‘as sacred and canonical’ by the church, ‘not only because they contain revelation without error, but because, being written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author, and as such have been handed down to the Church.’ But then, when certain Catholic authors, contrary to this *solemn definition* of Catholic doctrine … dared to restrict the truth of Holy Scripture to matters of faith and morals…. Our Predecessor of Immortal memory, Leo XIII, in an Encyclical, *Providentissimus Deus*… rightly and properly refuted those errors.” (italics in the original)

***The Catechism of the Catholic Church***(Imprimi Potest) 1994, declares the following.

104 In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word, ‘but as what it really is, the word of God.’”

107 “The inspired books teach the truth. Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confined to the Sacred Scriptures.”

**In Summary:** The official Catholic position on the inerrancy of Scripture is identical to the evangelical/fundamentalist view of Scripture with the following exceptions.

**1.** The Catholic church accepts the modern Catholic Apocrypha, which are additional books and sections in the Catholic Old Testament.

**2.** The Catholic position is apparently silent about Scripture being inerrant in the original manuscripts but that God allowed insignificant copyist errors in some of the manuscripts we have.

**3.** The Catholic Church has differences on how to interpret Scripture, particularly in light of Catholic church tradition.

## **Q: When was the term “inerrant” first used?**

A: According to an article by Paul D. Feinberg in *Inerrancy* (edited by Norman Geisler) p.292, Boethius, who lived in the late 6th and early 7th century used this to mean “absence of error”. The *Oxford English Dictionary* says it was first used in 1837 in English to mean “exempt from error, free from mistake, infallible.” Inerrancy was used as a noun about the same time.

**Q: What evidence do we have that God is a Father (either of Jesus or of Christians) or has a Son?**

A: In the Old Testament, the concept of God being a Father was quite common. 2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; 22:10; 28:6; Psalm 2:7; Proverbs 3:12; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 3:19; 13:9; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:6; 2:10. Proverbs 30:4f (NET) says, “What is his name, and what is his son’s name? – if you know!”

In the 27 books of the New Testament, every single book except for 3 John either mentions that God is a Father, Jesus is a Son of God, or we are sons of God. For example, in Matthew 6:9 Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father, who is in Heaven…”. In Revelation 21:7 we have the precious promise that “The one who conquers will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son.” (NET)

**Q: What did the early Christians hear and teach about God being a Father or having a Son?**

A: The early followers of Jesus just after the New Testament was written also wrote about this. Here are references from nine writers prior to 200 A.D..

*First Clement* (96-98 A.D.) ch.23 (son) ch.36

*Epistle of Barnabas* (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.5 (Son of God) ch.14

*Concerning the Martyrdom of Polycarp* (c.169 A.D.) 1st sentence, ch.14, etc.

*Ignatius to the Ephesians* (before 116 A.D.) ch.2, ch.3

Fragments of Papias (before 155 A.D.) Fragment 5 (2 times)

*To Diognetus* (c.130-200 A.D.) ch.10

*First Apology of Justin Martyr* ch.13 (son), ch.15 (2 times) (150 A.D.)

Athenagoras’ *Plea for Christians* (177 A.D.) ch.10 (2 times)

*Theophilus to Autolycus* (168-181/188 A.D.) book 1 ch.4, book 2 ch.22 (2 times)

Now how could so many Christians believe that God was a Father? It could only be that a) they learned that from Jesus, b) they learned that from Jesus’ apostles, c) they learned that from what was clear in the Old Testament, or d) all the above.

**A thought for Muslims:** Could someone view God as a Father, or worship Jesus as God in the Trinity and still go to paradise? Of course, the Bible answers yes, but let’s look at this question from an Islamic perspective. From the time of Jesus on, those who believed in Jesus as a prophet of God believed Him to be God. Either God desired that all who tried to follow Jesus’ words would go to hellfire or else he did not fiendishly mislead all who wished to believe Jesus. If Jesus taught the truth (as Muslims agree He did), then do you believe that God wanted/allowed the knowledge that the prophet Jesus was from God to teach lies to everyone up to the time of Mohammed; lies that would send them to Hell? It is difficult to believe in a capricious, fiendish god like that, but then again, people without really thinking about it, have believed stranger things.

**Q: Can I get to heaven without accepting Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior?**

A: No, you cannot get to Heaven if you refuse to take Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Four points to consider in the answer.

**Fairness:** God is good, Holy, fair, and just to all (Hebrews 6:10) God’s judges people based on the knowledge they have (Romans 4:15; 5:13). Abraham did not know the name of Jesus, yet He followed God and He was still saved through Jesus. (John 8:56, Hebrews 9)

**Only One Way:** We cannot get to heaven on our own righteousness; we need God’s mercy and grace through Jesus. Jesus is not just a way to God, but the one and only way to God. (John 14:6; 15:5; Acts 4:12)

**Reject Jesus as the Son of God and you reject Heaven:** Even to a very religious people, the Jewish Pharisees, Jesus said that if you reject Him, you will indeed die in your sins. (John 8:24)

**God seeks:** God does not want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9), but as Jeremiah wept over his people (Jeremiah 13:17; 14:17) and as Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44) and Peter pleaded with his listeners (Acts 2:40), God, with no less desire, seeks out His own.

**Q: Where did we get chapters and verses in the Bible?**

A: Modern chapters and verses were made by Stephen Langton, archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1228. The first Greek NT published with these chapters and verses was in 1551 by a printer in Paris, Robert Stephens, who also did the Vulgate in chapters and verses in 1555. The Geneva English Bible was the first with chapters and verses in 1560. See *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.148-149 for more info.

**Q: Why don’t you believe all the prophets (including Mohammed)?**

A: An Ahmadiyya could ask a Muslim the same question: why don’t Muslims believe their leader, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. But Baha’is can ask Ahmadiyyas the same question: why don’t they believe their prophets, the Bab and the Baha’ullah. Even Muslims would agree that we are not to believe Musailama al-Kadhdhab, and Anasi of San’a, because we can all agree we are not supposed to believe all the prophets when some are false prophets.

**So, we do not believe Mohammed, because Mohammed is a false prophet.**

Of course, a Jewish person could ask why both Christians follow Jesus, because the Jewish Talmud taught that Jesus was a false prophet. Going back even farther, Pharaoh of Egypt did not at first see that Moses was a true prophet.

So, given that we are to believe every prophet of God, and disbelieve every false prophet, how do you tell the true from the false prophets?

On this crucial issue God gives us two tests. In Deuteronomy 18:20-21, if they advocate worshipping other gods, or prophesy things that God did not command. 1 John 4:1-3 also adds that if they deny that Jesus came in the flesh, and Jeremiah 6:13 shows false prophets who spoke their own words as God’s words.

The Old Testament, which have copies of from the time of Jesus and before in the Dead Sea Scrolls, teaches very clearly that God is a Father, and believers are His sons, not in a sexual sense, but by being adopted into His family, being born again as a new creation. Mohammed and the Qur’an explicitly reject this. Mohammed, as a prophet, and the Qur’an as allegedly God’s Holy book, are saying false things about the true God.

**Q: Why are you so negative about Islam?**

A: We love Muslim people and wish the very best for them, that they would live in joy in Heaven forever. We are critical of Islam for their benefit. However, we are not nearly as negative about Islam as Muslims themselves. When worshippers at a mosque in Pakistan are gunned down, simply because they are Shi’ites, that is negative. When Tamerlane, who built a mosque, made a mound of 70,000 skulls of the Muslim people living in Isfahan that is rather negative.

Christians should not be negative toward Muslims (or anyone else) in three ways.

**1.** We never curse Muslims like Mohammed cursed us. At the end of Mohammed’s life he said, “May Allah curse the Jews and Christians for they built the places of worship at the graves of their Prophets.” (*Bukhari* vol.1 book 8 ch.55 no.427 p.255). Notice that he did not differentiate between true and hypocritical Christians, he just cursed all of them.

**2.** We do not want to say anything that “slanderous” (= false + negative). For example, that the Jews were wicked because they worshipped Ezra (‘Uzair) son of Allah, as the Qur’an in Sura 9:30 says.

**3.** Mohammed said to “lampoon the pagans in verse” according to *Bukhari* vol.8 book 72 ch.91 no.174 p.113.

So at least we can agree with modern Muslims (I hope) that be negative like this is not what God wants.

As for us, Jesus spent over 1/3 of all His recorded words either rebuking, warning specific people, warning in general, or correcting false things. He was encouraging also, and we are too. Not only do we ask, “What would Jesus do?”, but we also should ask, “What would Jesus want us to say?” Yes we are “warners” like Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Paul, and even Jesus, but we want you to know that we also love you. We would never want to hurt you, even though Muslims hurt Christians, and we want only the best for you.

**Q: Why do you Christians [allegedly] attack Muslims?**

A: We care for Muslim people; we do not attack them. Three points to consider in the answer: Bosnians, Jesus, and villagers.

**Bosnians:** When Serbs were ruthlessly slaughtering Bosnian Muslims, Americans (of all religions) stood against that. Serbs might have perceived America as being against them, but we were not against Serbian people. We were for protecting the oppressed, and we were against the atrocities that some (but not all) Serbs did. Likewise we have nothing against the Afghans, as our aid shipments to them show, but when our own civilians were attacked, we responded to try to protect ourselves from this happening again.

**Jesus** said we were to turn the other cheek, and we do that as individuals. However, on a government level Romans 13:4 says it does not bear the sword in vain. Western culture is not Christian, though Christianity has heavily influenced it. Western culture is not always right, but we have a duty to stand against what is wrong. There are things wrong besides murdering people. Treating women as second class citizens, unwilling to work, whose witness is only half that of a man, and who should rarely be outside the home is another wrong. God is mocked when it is done in His name.

**Villagers** in Indonesia and Sudan have been slaughtered today by Muslims simply because they are Christians. Would you tell me why many Muslims across the world feel they should be doing this, and yet Muslims think of any peaceful, rational criticism of Islamic practices is an attack on them?

**Q: Why did Christians have the Crusades against Muslims?**

A: Jesus was the Prince of peace, and He never said to kill someone because they had a different religion. The “Christian” Crusades were not a part of the Christianity of the Bible. The Crusades (or Christian Jihads) were a wrong thing Europeans learned from Islamic Jihads.

**Q: How do Christians pray?**

A: The Bible has many prayers we can use as examples, but Jesus specifically taught His disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13. Christians view prayer as talking with God; hence few Christian prayers are memorized. Christian prayers often end with phrases such as “in Jesus’ name”, because it is by Jesus’ sacrifice that we have access to pray to the Father. (John 16:26)

Christians are to pray to God continuously, as commanded in 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:4;6; Hebrews 13:15; and by the examples in Romans 1:9-10, Colossians 1:9, and 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3; 3:10.

This is unlike Islam, where there are specific times prayer is forbidden in *Bukhari* vol.2 book 21 ch.38 no.283 p.158. *Fiqh us-Sunnah* volume 2 p.11 says, “‘Umar saw him and told him: ‘Sit, the People of the Book were destroyed because they did not differentiate between their prayers.’ The Prophet said: ‘Well said, Ibn al-Khattab.’”

**Q: In the Dead Sea Scrolls extra-Biblical manuscripts, could the Righteous Teacher be a prophecy of Mohammed, Jesus, John the Baptist, or someone else?**

A: No, because the one they called the righteous teacher had come before these manuscripts were written, according to the evidence of the manuscripts themselves. Here are the relevant parts taken from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English* by Florentino Garcia Martinez.

The Teacher of Righteousness came 390 + 20 years after the exile. The exile was in 586 B.C., so that would during the time of the Maccabees, well before the time of Christ.

“For when they were unfaithful in forsaking him, he [God] hid his face from Israel and from his sanctuary and delivered them up to the sword. However, when he remembered the covenant of the very first, he saved a remnant for Israel and did not deliver them up to destruction. And at the moment of wrath, three hundred and ninety years after having delivered them up into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, he visited them and caused to sprout from Israel and from Aaron a shoot of the planting, in order to possess his land and to become fat with the good things of his soil. And they realized their sin and knew that they were guilty men; but they were like blind persons and like those who grope for the path over twenty years. And God appraised their deeds, because they sought him with a perfect heart and raised up for them a Teacher of Righteousness, in order to direct them in the path of his heart.” The *Damascus Document* copies from the Genizah (CD-A) col.1 lines 3-11. p.33

The same thing is mentioned in the copy of the *Damascus Document* 4Q268 (=4QD©) lines 13-17 p.48 and 4Q266 (=4QC(a)) fragment 2 lines 7-14 p.49. Note that while two manuscripts (A and B) are from a Jewish Geniza in Cairo and dated after 900 A.D., two other manuscripts are from around the time of Christ among the Dead Sea scrolls.

As an aside, the Teacher of Righteousness is mentioned prominently in the Habakkuk Pesher (1QpHab) col.1 line 13 p.198; col.2 line 2 p.198; col. 5 line 10 p.199; col.7 line 4 p.200; col.8 line 3 p.200; col.9 lines 9-10 p.201; col.11 line 5 p.201.

Also, there is a very brief mention of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Psalms Pesher 4Q173 fragment 1 p.206.

**Conclusions:**

The Teacher of Righteousness was the founder of the Qumran community (p.liii)

The introduction also says that various discredited theories have claimed the Teacher of Righteousness was Jesus, or else John the Baptist, or else the apostle James). It adds, “However, in common to all these theories is denial of the conclusions reached by archaeological investigation, which infers that all the manuscripts were deposited in the cases (and by the same toke, were written) prior to the destruction of Khirbet Qumran in 68 CE. Above all, these theories deny the conclusions from palaeographic analysis of the manuscripts.” (p.xlvii)

Florentino Garcia Martinez heads the Qumran Institute at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands.

**Q: What passages and words in the Bible are in Aramaic?**

A: In the Old Testament Daniel 2:4b-7:28, where the topic of the Gentile nations is in Aramaic. Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26 are in Aramaic. Jeremiah 10:11 is in Aramaic. The name Jegar Sahadutha in Genesis 31:37 is in Aramaic.

In the New Testament Jesus’ words in Aramaic are recorded in Matthew 27:26a. John 19:8 says that the place of the stone pavement was called *Gabbatha* in Aramaic. In Mark 5:41 Jesus spoke to the little girl *Talitha koum* in Aramaic.

**Q: In the Dead Sea Scrolls extra-Biblical manuscripts, could the [alleged] priestly Messiah be Jesus and the [alleged] kingly Messiah” be a prophecy of Mohammed, as one Muslim claimed?**

A: No. First of all, there is no “priestly Messiah” and no “kingly Messiah” in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Rather some Dead Sea scrolls have one messiah, and other Dead Sea scrolls have two messiahs, a messiah of Aaron and a messiah of Israel. Which tribe of Israel was Mohammed from? Since Mohammed was not from any tribe of Israel, one cannot say he could be either one.

Mention of the two messiahs of Aaron and Israel in *The Rule of the Community* 1QRule col.9 p.13-14

The regulations are to be followed, through the time of wickedness until the Messiah of Aaron arises. *The Damascus Document* CD-A col.12 line 23 p.43

Mention of the messiah (singular) of Aaron and Israel in *The Damascus Document* CD-A col.9 lines 10-11 p.45; col.19 lines 10-11 p.46; col.20 lines 1 p.46

Mention of the Messiah (singular) of Aaron and Israel. Q266 fragment 18 col.3 line 12 p.56

Furthermore, the messiah of Aaron is the same as the Teacher of Righteousness. “Its interpretation concerns the Priest, the Teacher of [Righteousness, whom] God chose to stand [in front of him, for] he installed him to found the congregation [of his chosen ones[ for him,” Psalms Pesher 4Q171 Col.3 lines 13-16 p.205

*The Rule of the Congregation* (1Q28a) col.2 p.127 says many things about the Messiah. “when [God] begets the Messiah with them” (line 11 [God] is in Florentino’s book) . After, [The Me]ssiah of Israel shall ent[er] and before him shall sit the chiefs [of the clans of Israel, each] one according to his dignity,” (lines 14-15).

Did Mohammed drink wine? “And [when] they gather at the table of community [or to drink] the new wine, and the table of community is prepared [and] the new wine [is mixed] for drinking, [no-one should stretch out] his hand to the first-fruit of the bread and of the [new wine] before the priest, for [he is the one who bl]esses the first-fruit of bread and of the new wine [and stretches out] his hand towards the bread before them. Afterwards the Messiah of Israel shall stretch out his hand towards the bread.” lines 17-20.

**Conclusion:** The Messiah of Aaron is the Teacher of Righteousness (Psalms Pesher 4Q171 Col.3 lines 13-16 p.205), so it is not Christ. There is no kingly Messiah, only a Messiah of Israel, and Mohammed is not from Israel.

**Q: Why answer so many questions?**

A: This is as much a personal question as a question about the Bible, but here is the answer anyway.

Excluding answers of “craziness”, “nothing better to do”, and “too much time on my hands”, I saw a need for this, prayed about it, and began this undertaking. This came from a four page handout I had when teaching a workshop on the Inerrancy of the Bible at a “Christian Life Retreat” at Forest Glen in the Spring of 1997. In this handout I thought I had answered all the important questions on Genesis.

Anyway, a number of Christians, many with much better skills than I have, have written a number of good books on answering Bible questions already. But while there answered 300, 500, or 800 questions fairly well, they were not comprehensive. Furthermore, the answers were not on in electronic format, and the copyright language was not such that Christians could copy and communicate the answers as they please. Here are the reasons why I think it is important to have answers to all these questions.

**1 Peter 3:15** “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,”. Skeptical non-believers claim the Bible is incorrect or contradictory, and believers need a place to go to have an answer.

**2 Thessalonians 2:15** “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” Christians themselves may have questions about doctrines and words.

**Proverbs 30:5** “Every word of God is purified; he is like a shield for those who take refuge in him.” (NET). While a person can still be a genuine Christian and believe the Bible had errors in the original manuscripts, I believe it is important to recognize that it is inerrant. However, it seems that when a Christian claims the Bible is inerrant, they ought to be able to access answers to nearly every objection someone could raise. This is what this work tries to do.

These answers might not always be the best ones, and that is why listed are the answers in various Christian books, which are often more extensive. If you think the answer here not adequate or could be improved, we would appreciate any suggestions you have.

**Bible Query from the Old Testament**

**Q: In the OT, who was the first in the Bible to answer hard questions?**

A: The first person recorded to do so was Moses in Exodus 18:13-16, who afterwards at Jethro’s suggestion had judges to decided the less difficult things in Exodus 18:22-26. Solomon, when the Queen of Sheba asked him hard questions in 2 Chronicles 9:1-2. Presumably, many of these questions were about God and his law.

**Q: Why do you trust the Old Testament?**

A: Both scripture and archaeology indicate there are no significant changes in our copies today for at least five reasons:

**God promised** to preserve His word in Isaiah 55:10-11; 59:21; 1 Peter 1:24-25, Matthew 24:35. We can trust God.

**Jesus** and the New Testament confirmed the Old Testament scriptures in Matthew 19:4; 22:32,37; 39; 23:35; Mark 10:3-6; Luke 2:23-24; 4:4; 11:51; 20:37; 24:27,44

**Archaeological evidence**: In the **Septuagint**, the Torah was translated into Greek around 400 B.C. The **Dead Sea Scrolls** were from about 250 B.C. to after the time of Christ, and we can compare them with our Bibles today. **Aramaic Targums** are translations made around the time of Jesus. The Dead Sea Scrolls are about 95,000 fragments from 867 manuscripts of the Old Testament and other writings. About 1/3 of the Dead Sea scrolls are manuscripts of the Old Testament according to *The NIV Study Bible* p.1432. Archaeology shows the Bible Jesus knew was preserved. **Nahal Hever** (=Wadi Habra) is a cave near Engedi, that has parts of 35 scrolls. One is a fragment written between 50 B.C. and 50 A.D. of the minor prophets in Greek Nahal Hever scroll 5/6HevPs has part of Psalm 22, and another has Psalm 15:1-2.

At **Masada**, there was a copy of Joshua dated 169-93 B.C. The *Journey from Texts to Translations* p.190 also says texts at Masada come from Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, and Ezekiel. The Romans captured Masada in April 73 A.D., so the scrolls had to be before then.

Note that the Genesis fragment (Genesis 46:7-11), Talmon thinks could be from a paraphrase of Genesis included in the Book of Jubilees. See *The Dead Sea Scrolls & Modern Translations of the Old Testament* p.80 for more info.

**The Nash Papyrus**, dated 150 B.C., contains the Ten Commandments combined from Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-6:4f. In it the sixth and seventh commandments are reverses according to *The Journey from Texts to Translations* p.188.

At **wadi Muraba’at/Murabba’at** a Hebrew scroll (Mur.88) of ten of the twelve Minor Prophets is from c.132 A.D. Small fragments of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah were found in cave 2. *The Journey from Texts to Translations* p.188-189 also says that all of the Muraba’at scrolls are virtually identical to the Masoretic text.

**Early church writers**, as early as 96-98 A.D., extensively referred to the Old Testament.

**Jewish scribes**, even though hostile to Christianity, preserved the same Old Testament found in every Protestant Bible today.

**As a side note for Muslims**, the Qur’an says that Muslims are to believe in all the prophets, and that God gave Jesus the Torah and the gospels.

Sura 4:150-151 says, “Those who deny Allah and his messengers, and wish to separate between Allah and his messengers, Saying: ‘We believe in some but reject others’: and wish to take a course midway, (151) They are in truth unbelievers;...”

Sura 3:48 says, “And Allah will teach him [Jesus] the book and Wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel. If Jesus was taught the Old Testament, and we have the Old Testament from the time of Jesus, then Jesus was taught what we have.

Sura 3:50 says, “‘I [Jesus] have come to you), to attest the Torah which was before me. ... I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me.” People have a near impossible time trying to do the following.

Sura 5:47 says, “Let the People of the Gospel Judge by what Allah hath revealed Therein....” If the People of the Gospel are to judge by what God has revealed in the Gospel, then how can the Gospel they are to judge by not be the Gospel God told them to judge by?

Sura 5:48 says, “To thee (People of the Book) We sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee....”

Sura 15:9-10 says, “We have, without doubt, Sent down the Message; And We will assuredly Guard it [from corruption]. We did send messengers before thee Amongst the sects of old:” Sura 15:9 does not say just the “Qur’an” was guarded, but “the message.”

**In summary,** God is Almighty, All-knowing, and far from careless. We can trust that He has always preserved right direction for those who look to follow wherever He leads.

## **Q: In the OT, how many verses and words are there?**

A: According to Wick Allison in *That’s In the Bible? - The Ultimate Learn-As-You-Play Bible Quiz Book*, (Dell Trade 1994) p.18, the (KJV) Old Testament has 23,214 verses and 647,000 words in English. These verses include Genesis: 1,533, Exodus: 1,213, Leviticus: 859, Numbers: 1,288, and Deuteronomy: 959, for a total of 5,852 verses in the Torah.

Q: What evidence is there that the Jews recognized there were no prophets for the 400-year period?

A: There are at least four sources of evidence.

**1 Maccabees 4:45; 9:27; 14:41** says the people were waiting “until a prophet should arise”.

***The Manual of Discipline*** among the Dead Sea Scrolls also looked for the “coming of a prophet”.

***The Babylonian Talmud*** 7-8 says, “After the latter prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the Holy Spirit departed from Israel”

**The New Testament** never quotes any book written after Malachi.

See *A General Introduction to the Bible* p.243 for more info.

Q: Into how many sections did the Jews divide the Old Testament?

A: As *A General Introduction to the Bible* p.243 shows, different Jews had different classifications.

**No classification** is in the Septuagint, the Christians manuscripts of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, of the list of the Jewish convert Epiphanius of Salamis (c.315-403 A.D.)

**Law and prophets** are mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 7:12; 22:40

**Moses and all the Prophets** was mentioned in Luke 24:27.

**Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms** is what Jesus said in Luke 24:44.

**Law (Torah), Prophets, Writings** is first mentioned in the Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (c.132 B.C.), but it does not list which books are in which section.

**Josephus** (c.100 A.D.) also has three sections, but only 4 books in the writings. Apparently, Ruth was counted in Judges, Lamentations was counted in Jeremiah, and Esther and Daniel were with the prophets.

**Philo the Jew** (lived 20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) mentioned “the Law, the Prophecies, as well as hymns and the others which foster and perfect knowledge and piety”. (*The Contemplative Life* 3.25)

**The Babylonian Talmud** gave the modern threefold division.

**Law (*Torah*):** (Five books in the order of: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

**Prophets:** 8 books in the order of: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel (as one book), 1 and 2 Kings (as one book), Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Twelve minor prophets (Hosea through Malachi). In the Hebrew Bible, the twelve minor prophets directly follow Ezekiel.

**Writings (*Ketubim*):** 11 books in the order of: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah (as one book) and 1 and 2 Chronicles (as one book).

See *A General Introduction to the Bible* p.22-23,243-250 for more info.

**Q: When were the books of the Old Testament written, and where did the New Testament quote from them?**

A: The Old Testament is one of the most amazing books in the entire world. Its thirty-nine books were written over a span of one thousand years by kings, slaves, priests, warriors, shepherds, rich, and poor. Here is a table of the dates of writing and a partial list of New Testament references. For a complete list of references consult Kurt Aland et al. *The Greek New Testament 3rd edition* 1975 p.897-903.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **O.T. Book** | **Author** | **Dates B.C.** | **Quotes and References** |
| Genesis | Moses | ca.1407 B.C. | Mt 19:4-5; Mk 9:16; 10:6,8; Acts 3:25; 7:3,7; Rom 4:17,18; 9:7,9,12; 1 Cor 6:16; 15:45; 2 Cor 4:6; Gal 3:6,8,16; 4:30; Eph 5:31; Heb 4:4; 6:14; Jms 3:23 |
| Exodus | Moses | ca.1407 B.C. | Mt 5:21,38; 15:4; 19:19; 22:32; Mk 7:10; 10:19; 12:26; Lk 2:23; 18:20; ~Jn 6:31; 19:36; Acts 7:28,32,34,40; 23:5; Rom 9:15,17; 13:9; 1 Cor10:7; 2 Cor8:15; Heb8:5;9:20; 12:20; Jms2:11 (2 times) |
| Leviticus | Moses | ca.1407 B.C. | Mt 5:38,43; 15:4; 19:19; 22:39; Mk 7:10; 12:31; Lk 2:24; 10:27; Rom 10:5; 13:9; Gal 3:12; 5:14; Jms 2:8; 1 Pet 1:16 |
| Numbers | Moses | ca.1407 B.C. | 2 Tm 2:19 (LXX) ~Jn 19:36 |
| Deuteronomy | Moses (mostly) | ca.1407 B.C. | Mt 4:4,7,10; 5:38; 6:13; 15:4; 18:16; 19:19; 22:37; Mk 7:10; 10:19; 12:30; Lk 4:4,8,12; 10:27; 18:20; Acts 3:23; 7:37; Rom 10:6-7,8,19; 11;8; 12:19; 13:9; 15:10; 1 Cor 9:9; Gal 3:10,14; Eph 6:3; Heb 1:6; 10:30 (2 times); 12:21,29; 13:5; Jms 2:11 (2 times) |
| Joshua | Joshua | ca.1377 B.C. | ~Heb11; Jms 2:25 |
| Judges | anon. Samuel? | 1377-1004 B.C. | ~Heb 11:32 |
| Ruth | anon. Samuel? | ca.1011 B.C. | ~Mt 1:5; ~Lk 3:32 |
| 1,2 Samuel | anon. Samuel? | 1050-1004 B.C. | Rom 15:9; 2 Cor 6:18; Heb 1:5 |
| 1,2 Kings | anonymous | c.950-550 B.C. | Rom 11:3,4 |
| 1,2 Chron. | anon. Ezra? | c.950-550 B.C. | Allusion in Heb 1:5 |
|  | part written | 340 B.C. |  |
| Ezra | Ezra | 450-430 B.C. | Neh 8:1; 12:32 |
| Nehemiah | Nehemiah | 445-430 B.C. | ~Ezra 2:2; ~Jn 6:31 |
| Esther | anonymous | c.470-424 B.C. | - |
| Job | anonymous | perhaps 2100 | Rom 11:35; 1 Cor 3:19 |
| Psalms | David & others | ca.1050 B.C. | Mt 4:6; 8:2; 13:35; 21:9,16,42; 22:44; 23:39; 27:46; Mk 11:9; 12:11,36; 15:34; Lk 4:11; 13:35; 19:38; 20:17,43; Jn 2:17; 6:31,45; 10:34; 12:13; 13:18; 15:25; 19:24,36; Acts 1:20 (2 times); 2:28,35; 4:11,26; 13:33,35; Rom 2:6; 3:12,13 (2 times),14,18; 4:8; 10:18; 11:10; 15:3,9,11; 1 Cor 3:20; 10:26; 15:27; 2 Cor 4:13; 9:9; Eph 4:8,26; Heb 1:5,7,9,12,13; 2:8,12; 3:11,15; 4:3,7; 5:5,6; 7:17,21; 10:7,30; 13:6; 1 Pet 2:7; 3:12; Rev 2:27; 19:15 |
|  | Ps 137 | after 587 B.C. |  |
| Proverbs | Solomon, Agur, | c.971-931 B.C. | Rom 2:6; 12:20; Heb 12:6,13; Jms 4:6; 1 Pet 4:18; 5:5; 2 Pet 2:22 |
|  | Lemuel, others |  |  |
|  | 25:1 copied | 729-686 B.C. |  |
| Ecclesiastes | Solomon | after 967 B.C. | - (Rom 3:12 similar concept) |
| S. of Songs | anonymous | after 967 B.C. | - |
| Isaiah | Isaiah | 696-622 B.C. | Mt 3:3; 4:16; 8:17; 12:21; 13:14-15; 21:13; 24:29; Mk 1:3; 4:12; 7:6,7; 9:48; 11:17; 13:25; Lk 3:4-6; 4:19; 8:10; 19:46; 22:37; Jn 1:23; 12:40; Acts 7:50; 8:33; 13:34,47; 28:27; Rom 2:24; 3;17; 9:20,28,29,33; 15:12,21; 10:15,16,20, 21; 11:8; 14:11; 1 Cor 2:9,16; 14:21; 15:32,54; 2 Cor 6:2,17; Gal 4:27; Heb 2:13 (2 times); 1 Pet 1:25; 2:6,8,22; 3:14 |
| Jeremiah | Jeremiah | 627/6-587 B.C. | Mt 2:18; 21:14; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46; 23:30; 2 Cor 10:17; Heb 9:12; 10:16,17 |
|  | Jer 52:31-34 | ca.561 B.C. |  |
| Lamentations | Likely Jeremiah | 586-583 B.C. | - |
| Ezekiel | Ezekiel | 7/593-571 B.C. | Rom 2:24; 2 Cor 6:17 |
| Daniel | Daniel | 606-536 B.C. | Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; Rev 4:14 |
| Hosea | Hosea | c.790-710 B.C. | Mt 2:15; 9:13; 12:7; Lk 23:30; Rom 9:25,26; 1 Cor 15:55 |
| Joel | Joel | 900;587;400? | Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13 |
| Amos | Amos | 760 earthquake | Acts 7:43; 15:16-18 |
| Obadiah | Obadiah | 844;723;585? | - |
| Jonah | Jonah | ca.763 B.C. | 2 Ki 14:25; references: Mt 12:39-41; Lk 11:29-32 |
| Micah | Micah | before 722 B.C. | Mt 2:6; 10:36; 10:35-36 |
| Nahum | Nahum | before 612 B.C. | - |
| Habakkuk | Habakkuk | c.697-598 B.C. | Ac 13:41; Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38 |
| Zephaniah | Zephaniah | 640-609 B.C. | - |
| Haggai | Haggai | 520-515 B.C. | Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Allusion in Heb 12:26 |
| Zechariah | Zechariah | 520-515 B.C. | Ezra 5:1; 6:14; Mt 21:5; 26:31; Mk 14:27; Jn 12:15; 19:37 |
| Malachi | Malachi | 538; 450-430 | Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lk 7:27; Rom 9:13 |

The author is the person to whom God revealed his word. The words were either written down by him or by secretaries. For example, Jeremiah’s scribe Baruch wrote down many of his prophecies. Jeremiah 51:64 says, “...the words of Jeremiah end here.”

There are about 250 references to Old Testament passages in the New Testament. Old Testament writers often mentioned each other.

**Five books of the Law:** Joshua 1:7; 8:31; 23:6; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6;17:37;18:6; 1 Chronicles 16:40; 2 Chronicles 17:9; 23:18; 30:5,16,18; 31:3; 35:26; Ezra 3:2,4; 6:18; 7:6; Daniel 9:11,13; Hosea 8:12

**Ezra:** Nehemiah 8:1; Nehemiah 12:32

**Nehemiah:** Ezra 2:2

**Isaiah:** 2 Kings 19:2; 2 Chronicles 32:20

**Jeremiah:** Daniel 9:2; 2 Chronicles 36:22

**Jonah:** 2 Kings 14:25

**Micah:** Jeremiah 26:18

**Haggai:** Ezra 5:1; Ezra 6:14

**Zechariah:** Nehemiah 12:1,4,16, Ezra 5:1; 6:14

The point of this is that the Old Testament books fit together, as interlocking pieces of a puzzle.

## **Q: What ancient books are mentioned by the Old Testament but not in the Old Testament?**

A: In ancient times, just as now, there are a number of religious and historical writings, many of varying quality. Besides the apocryphal books, there are what are called “pseudo-apocryphal books” that are not accepted by anyone today. These are often spurious works that claim to be written by a historical figure but in fact are not. Of course, if something is false, it is not God’s word. Other books, while not perfect, are not too bad. Of course, if a godly person writes something that is true, that is not necessarily God’s word, nor did he claim it to be so. Likewise, a good Christian book written today can be good, but not God’s word. Some books, like 1 Enoch, are more complicated. First Enoch is a composite book, with the oldest author likely writing most of the first section. By the way, Jude 14-15 quotes from the oldest part of First Enoch.

The Old Testament itself mentions some books and records we do not have any copies of today.

**Acts of Solomon** 1 Kings 11-41

**Chronicles of Kings** 1 Kings 14:19, 29, 2 Kings 19:9-12, 11

**Kings of Judah/Israel** 2 Chronicles 16:11; 25:26; 28:26,32; 27:2; 35:27; 36:8

**Kings of Israel** 2 Chronicles 20:34; 33:18; 24:7; 1 Kings 14:19

**Jasher (Upright one)** Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18

**Wars of the Lord** Numbers 21:14

These were never claimed to be scripture, but these simply other reliable records, which have been lost to the modern world.

**Q: Which Early Church authors quoted from which Old Testament Books?**

A: Here is what I have found.

Cr *1 Clement* (of Rome) (16 pgs) 96-98 A.D.

Ig Ignatius (21 pgs) c.110-117 A.D.

Ba *Epistle of Barnabas* (13 pgs) c.70-130 A.D.

Pa Papias disciple of John (3 pgs) 110-113 A.D.

Di Didache (6 pgs) c.60-120A.D.

Dg *Epistle to Diognetus* (6 pgs) c.130-200 A.D.

Po Polycarp, disciple of John (4 pgs) c.150 A.D.

JM Justin Martyr (119 pgs) c.138-165 A.D.

He *Shepherd of Hermas* (47 pgs) c.115-155 A.D.

Th Theophilus [Antioch](33 pgs)168-181/188 A.D.

Me Melito of Sardis (11 pgs) 170-177 A.D.

Ae Athenagoras (34 pgs) c.177 A.D.

Ir Irenaeus of Lyons (264 pgs) 182-188 A.D.

CA Clement of Alexan.(424 pgs)193-217/220 A.D.

Te Tertullian [Rome] (854 pgs) 198-220 A.D.

Hi Hippolytus, (233 pgs) 225-235/6 A.D.

Or Origen (622 pgs) 230-254 A.D.

Nv Novatian (39 pgs) 250-257 A.D.

an *Treatise Against Novatian*(7 pgs) c.255 A.D.

and *Treatise on Rebaptism* (11 pgs)

Cp Cyprian and friends (270 pgs) c.246-258 A.D.

Not shown are Julius Africanus (232-245 A.D.). [Neh,Dan by name, allude Ex]

**W** = Books or quotes mentioned by name or by writer

**I** = Implied

**G** = Mentioned as words of God + quoted

**S** = Mentioned as scripture or quoted + “it is written”

Q = quote of 1 or more verses. ½ =quote of ½ a verse

A = Allusion. – = no reference **X** = excluded

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Writer | Cr | Ig | Ba | Pa | Di | Dg | Po | JM | He | Th | Me | Ae | Ir | CA | Te | Hi | Or | Nv | an | Cp |
| Old T. | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** |
| Gen | **S** | - | **G** | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | A | **B** | **W** | **G** | **W** | **W** | **W** | W | W |
| Ex | **G** | - | **W** | - | Q | - | - | **W** | - | **G** | **W** | - | **W** | Q | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | Q | **W** |
| Lev | - | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | **½** | **W** | **W** | **W** | W | - | - | **W** |
| Num | Q | A | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | A | - | **W** | - | **W** | **S** | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** |
| Dt | Q | A | **W** | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | W | W |
| Josh | Q | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | Q | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| Judges | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | A | **W** | **W** | **-** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** |
| Ruth | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 1,2Sam | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | Q | - | - | **W** | - | **S** | **W** | A | **W** | **I** | **-** | Q | **W** |
| 1,2Ki | A | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | Q | **W** | **W** | Q | **W** | **-** | W | W |
| 1,2Ch | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | **W** | **W** | **½** | **-** | **W** |
| Ezra | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | A | - | - | - |
| Neh | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X\*** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | Q |
| Esther | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | - | - |
| Job | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | Q | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| Psalms | **W** | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | W | W |
| Prov | **G** | **G** | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **S** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | - | W |
| Ecc | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | A | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| SofS | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | A | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| Isaiah | Q | Q | **G** | - | - | - | Q | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** |
| Jer | - | - | **G** | - | - | - | - | **W** | A | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** |
| Lam | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X\*** | - | A | **W** | Q | - | **W** | - | - | - |
| Ezek | **G** | - | **G** | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | A | **W** | **W** |
| Daniel | A | - | **S** | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | W | W |
| 12 min-or pro. | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **-** | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | - |
| Hosea | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | Q | **W** | **W** | - | **W** |
| Joel | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **S** | - | **W** | - | - | **S** | **W** | **W** | **-** | **W** | **W** | Q | **W** |
| Amos | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | **S** | **W** | **W** | **W** | Q | **½** | - | **W** |
| Obad | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jonah | A | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **-** | **W** | - | - | **-** |
| Micah | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | Q | **W** | **W** | **W** | **S** | - | Q | **W** |
| Nahum | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | Q | **W** | - | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| Hab | **S** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | **W** | **W** | - | **W** |
| Zeph | - | - | **S** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | **S** | **W** |
| Haggai | - | - | **S** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **S** | A | - | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| Zech | - | - | **G** | - | - | - | - | **W** | A | **W** | - | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **½** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** |
| Malachi | ½ | - | - | - | - | A | - | **W** | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | - | - | **W** |
| Writer | Cr | Ig | Ba | Pa | Di | Dg | Po | JM | He | Th | Me | Ae | Ir | CA | Te | Hi | Or | Nv | an | Cp |
| Time | 96-98 A.D. | | | | | | | 150 A.D. | | 168 A.D. | | | | 200 | | 225 A.D. 258 A.D. | | | | |
| Pages | 151 pages | | | | | | | | 135 pgs | | | | 264 | 854 | 424 | 225 | 622 | 57 pgs | | 270 |

X\* Meleto did not mention Lamentations, Nehemiah, or Esther. But some included Lamentation in Jeremiah, and Nehemiah in Ezra.

**Q: What lists of Old Testament books do we have apart from Bible texts?**

A: Here are the lists.

**Ben Sira**, in 2nd century B.C. all but Ezekiel

**Philo** the Alexandrian Jew (*De Vita Contemplativa* 25) 3 sections

**Josephus** the Jewish writer <100 A.D. *Contra Apion* 1.8.

**Jewish Council at Jamnia** 90 A.D. no Apocrypha

**Council at Carthage** 397 A.D. has historic Apocrypha (including 1, 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, not found in the Catholic Apocrypha today)

Q: Where are chiasms found in the Old Testament?

A: Chiasms are a symmetric poetic structure common in Hebrew poetry. Here are some of them.

Genesis 7:4-8:12; 7:21-23a

Leviticus 24:13-23

Leviticus 25:14-17

Numbers 15:35-36

1 Samuel 2; 3:17; 3:1-4:1; 8:5-22, and 18:20-26

2 Samuel 1:19-27; 5:17-8:18; and 23:1-7

Job 4:5-5:27

Psalm 3:7-8; 51, 58. Psalm 109 is close to a chiasm.

Isaiah 15:1-14; 21:1-10; 22:8-11; 22:1-4; 22:8-11; 22:12-14; 23:1-14; 24:1-13; 26:1-21; 27:1-13; 29:9-14; 32:1-5; 37:14-20; 38:1-8; 38:10-20; 41:17-20; 42:1-4; 42:13-17; 43:1-7; 43:8-13; 43:22-24; 43:25-44:5; 44:6-8; 48:17-22; 51:1-3; 51:7-8; 51:13-15; 55:1-13; 56:9-12; 59:14-20; 61:5-9; 63:15-64:12; 65:1-66:24; 65:17-18b; 65:18c-20; 66:5-14; 66:18-24.

Jeremiah 9:1-11; 20:24-18

Zechariah 6:9-15

Ezekiel 26:3-14 has chiastic structure, though it is not a perfect chiasm.

Some commentators see the entire books of Esther and Matthew as chiastic in structure.

**Q: In the Old Testament, where is Aramaic found?**

A: *The Encyclopedia Britannica* volume 1 (1956) p.684 says, “the earliest records of Aramaic go back to about 800 B.C…. The alphabet at this time differs little from that of the Moabite Stone.” It says there were two tendencies which were completed during the time of the Persians

**The Bible passages** in Aramaic are the following:

Genesis 31:47 (two words only)

Daniel 2:4b-7:28

Ezra 4:8-6:18

Ezra 7:12-26

Jeremiah 10:11

Ecclesiastes has some Aramaic expressions

**Some names** are both Hebrew and Aramaic

El, Mordecai, Mara (Ruth 1:20), Tobias, Geshem

**Some other words** are both Hebrew and Aramaic.

*lahen* (“therefore” in Aramaic, “to them” in Hebrew) (Ruth 1:13)

Two inscriptions in halls in caves 11 miles (18 km) west of Amman, Jordan mention “Tobiah” in Aramaic. (From 590 B.C. to as late as 200 B.C.)

**All post-exilic Old Testament books** have some Babylonian or Aramaic expressions according to *When Critics Ask* p.265-267. For reference, Isaiah has no Aramaic terms.

**Various words** in the Gospels in the New Testament are in Aramaic too.

**Q: In the Old Testament, what is the difference between a scribal (or copyist) error, and an error in the originals? Which explanation would be more reasonable?**

A: Scribal errors are typically misspellings, changes of a few letters, or occasionally skipping or repeating a line of text. There are also deliberate scribal changes where they would change or add a word, or add a word or phrase to bring out the meaning, similar to what paraphrases do today.

For a particular passage, if we only had the Old Testament, it would be difficult to say which was more reasonable because we do not have enough manuscripts. However, we can compare by analogy with the 10,000+ New Testament manuscripts. The New Testament manuscripts show many one, two, and three letter variations due to scribal errors and misspellings. To say that the New Testament manuscripts had lots of scribal errors because we have many manuscripts to prove it, and the Old Testament had almost none because we do not have many manuscripts showing variations, would not make sense, because we do not have so many Old Testament manuscripts. No, rather, the frequency of copyist errors in the Old Testament is probably of roughly similar magnitude as copyist errors in the New Testament.

**Q: Do Church of Christ denominations believe the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament? (a Christian asked this)**

A: No, this is a false charge I have heard. Some Church of Christ churches have some serious errors relating to water baptism actually saving people, contrary to Acts 10:44-48, and a Pelagian view of man’s nature, contrary to John 6:44,65 and Romans 3:10-18. However, to the best of my knowledge no Church of Christ person has ever said the God of the Old Testament is different from the New Testament. The various schools of the Gnostics, an ancient type of heresy, were the ones who said this, and would not worship the Creator.

**Q: Why does God smite people left, right, and center in the Old Testament, but does not do so now?**

A: God related to the Israelites before Jesus came somewhat differently than He relates to Christians since the crucifixion.

In the Old Testament, God created a people for himself from descendants of Jacob. They did not have all the knowledge we have been given today, but they knew the importance of the need for sacrifices, and the seriousness of sin. While almost every major theme in the New Testament is also found in the Old Testament, often it was unclear, in veiled form.

Since Jesus came, God deals with his children, from all nations and peoples, more gently. For the Jews who rejected Jesus, and their descendants, God has not seemed to have anything more to say to them, or dealings with them, though they will once again enter the picture during the end times.

Of course, one could argue that God’s “smitings” really have not changed much, since people are still going to Hell. It is just that in Old Testament times, with less knowledge given out, God gave out more warnings, while in New Testament times, we have already been warned.

**Q: Which early writers referred to the Old Testament as the Old Testament?**

A: Here is the list. If a writer mentions the New Testament, but not the Old, then an Old Testament is implied. If it is just implied, the name is not in bold and it says “Implied”.

**Justin Martyr** (c.138-165 A.D.) mentions “how the New Testament, which God formerly announced” *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* ch.51 p.221.

**Melito of Sardis** (170-180 A.D.) mentions the “Old Testament” and lists the books in fragment 4 from the *Book of Extracts* vol.8 p.759

**Irenaeus** (182-188 A.D.) mentions the New Testament and the Old Testament in *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 5 ch.34.1 p.563. He also mentions it on p.564

**The Muratorian Canon** (c.170 A,D.) ch.3 p.603 mentions the Old Testament.

**Clement of Alexandria** (193-202 A.D.) “For God is the cause of all good things; but of some primarily, as of the Old and the New Testament;” *The Stromata* book 1 ch.5 p.305. See also *Stromata* book 4 ch.21 p.434

**Tertullian** (c.213 A.D.) “He is clearly defined to us in all Scriptures-in the Old Testament as the Christ of God, in the New Testament as the Son of God.” *Against Praxeas* ch.24 p.620

Tertullian (207/208 A.D.) mentions the Old and New Testaments in *Tertullian’s Five Books Against Marcion* book 4 ch.6 p.351.

**Hippolytus** (225-235/6 A.D.) (Implied) refers to the New Testament in Fragments from Commentaries *Commentary on Genesis* 49:11 p.165

**Asterius Urbanus** (c.232 A.D.) “But they will never be able to show that any one of the **Old Testament** prophets, or any one of the new…” *The Exordium* vol.7 ch.9 p.337

**Commodianus** (c.240 A.D.) “Now astounded, swear that thou wilt believe in Christ; for the Old Testament proclaims concerning Him.” *Instructions of Commodianus* ch.25 p.207

**Origen** (225-254 A.D.) refers to the “Old Testament” in *Origen Against Celsus* book 7 ch.24 p.620. He mentions the Old and New Testaments in *Commentary on John* book 5 ch.4 p.348.

**Novatian** (250-257 A.D.) mentions the Old Testament and New Testament in *Novatian’s Treatise Concerning the Trinity* ch.7 p.617. he also mentions the truth of both the Old and New Testaments in ch.17 p.627

*Anonymous* ***Treatise on Rebaptism*** (c.248-256 A.D.) ch.15 p.676 quotes Numbers 11:17 as said by God to Moses in the Old Testament.

**Cyprian of Carthage** (c.246-258 A.D.) mentions the Old Testament in *Treatises of Cyprian* Treatise 12 ch.4 p.509

**Dionysius of Rome** (259-269 A.D.) says the Trinity is in Scripture but the doctrine of “three gods is neither taught in the Old nor in the New Testament.” *Against the Sabellians* ch.1 vol.7 p.365

**Archelaus** (262-278 A.D.) mentions there are neither two old testaments nor two new testaments. (The Christian Diodorus is speaking) *Disputation with Manes* ch.45 p.220

Archelaus (262-278 A.D.) refers to the Old Testament. *Disputation with Manes* ch.42 p.217

**Anatolius of Alexandria** (270-280 A.D.) refers to the “Old Testament” which implies a New. *The Paschal Canon of Anatolius of Alexandria* ch.8 p.148

**Victorinus of Petau** (martyred 304 A.D.) mentions the Old and New Testaments in his *Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John* p.345

**Methodius** (270-311/312 A.D.) “I will bring forward to you, O virgins, from the Old Testament, written prophecy from the Book of Judges, to show that I speak the truth,” *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* Discourse 10 ch.2 p.348

**Alexander of Alexandria** (313-326 A.D.) “And besides the pious opinion concerning the Father and the Son, we confess to one Holy Spirit, as the divine Scriptures teach us; who hath inaugurated both the holy men of the Old Testament, and the divine teachers of that which is called the New.” *Epistles on the Arian Heresy* Letter 1 ch.12 p.296

**Lactantius** (c.303-c.325 A.D.) “But all Scripture is divided into two Testaments. That which preceded the advent and passion of Christ-that is, the law and the prophets-is called the Old; but those things which were written after His resurrection are named the New Testament.” *The Divine Institutes* book 4 ch.20 p.122

**After Nicea**

**Eusebius** (318-339/340 A.D.)

**Athanasius** (367 A.D.) mentions the “Old Testament” and lists its books in Athanasius’ *Festal Letter 39* ch.4 p.552

**Ephraim/Ephrem** (350-378 A.D.)

**Basil of Cappadocia** (357-379 A.D.) refers to the New Testament in Letter 42 ch.3 p.144-145.

**Cyril of Jerusalem** (c.349-386 A.D.) mentions the Old Testament and New in Lecture 2.4 p.8 and 3.6 p.15

The **Synod of Laodicea** (343-381 [or 363] A.D.) canon 59 p.158 mentions the Old and New Testaments.

**Gregory of Nyssa** (382-383 A.D.) mentions the Old Testament *Against Eunomius* book 11 ch.5 p.238

**Ambrose of Milan** (370-390 A.D.) mentions the Old and New Testaments in *Of the Christian Faith* book 1 ch.8.57 p.210

**Gregory Nanzianzus** (330-391 A.D.)

**Pacian of Barcelona** (342-379/392 A.D.) mentions the New Testament in *On Penitents* ch.4.1 p.74

**Didymus** the blind (398 A.D.) refers to the Old and New Testament. *Commentary on Zechariah* 8 p.201

**Syriac Book of Steps (Liber Graduum)** (350-400 A.D.)

**Epiphanius of Salamis** (360-403 A.D.) mentions the Old and New Testaments. *The Panarion* section 3 scholion 1 and 5 p.334

**Rufinus**’ *Commentary on the Apostles Creed* (374-406 A.D.)

**John Chrysostom** (martyred 407 A.D.) refers to the “Old Testament” *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers First Series* vol.11 p.349

**Council of Carthage** (393-419 A.D.)

**Jerome** (317-420 A.D.)

**Augustine of Hippo** (338-340 A.D.) mentions the Old Testament in *The City of God* book 17 ch.5 p.345 and book 17 ch.7 p.347. Also *Commentary on Psalms* 405,521, 531, 681

**John Cassian** (419-430 A.D.) The New Testament is referred to by name in the *Institutes of John Cassian* book 1.1 p.201 and the *Conference of the Abbot Paphnutius* ch.15 p.327

**Vincent of Lerins** (c.434 A.D.) references the “Old Testament”. *Twelve Books* book 1.1 p.201

**Socrates** (c.400-439 A.D.) *Socrates’ Ecclesiastical History*

**Theodoret of Cyrrus** (423-458 A.D.)

**Council of Chalcedon** (451 A.D.)

**Pope Leo I of Rome** (440-461 A.D.)

**Among heretics and spurious books**

**Marinus** (c.300 A.D.) a Bardasene, in disputing with Adamantius, appealed to the “Old Testament” and referred to David as a prophet. *Dialogue on the True Faith* ch.862a 20 p.173

**Theodore of Mopsuestia** (392-423/429 A.D.) mentions the Old Testament, the Seventy translators of divine scripture. *Commentary on Zephaniah* ch.1 p.289

**Q: What are the main manuscripts of the Old Testament we have preserved today?**

A: There are six main families.

**1. Masoretic text** is the family Jews themselves preserved through the Middle Ages.

**2. The Samaritan Pentateuch** compares very closely with the Masoretic text and Dead Sea scrolls, except for some obvious changes (Mt. Gerizim instead of Jerusalem, etc.) All of the Samaritan Pentateuch manuscripts are Medieval though. Some of them are Codex Add. 1846 (1100 A.D.), Codex B (1345/1346 A.D.), Manuscript E (1219 A.D.), and the Sepher ‘Abisha’ Scroll (12th -13th century). The also translated their Torah into Aramaic, Greek, and Arabic. See *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.93-95 for more info.

**3. The Greek Septuagint**, including the Lucianic recension and Christian writings,

**4. Origen’s Hexapla had a Fifth Column of the Septuagint.** Pamphilus and Eusebius had it copied many times and distributed. We have preserved a manuscript of that, called the Leiden Codex Sarravianus (4th or 5th century A.D.). *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series* vol.1 p.38

#### 5. The Syriac translation not gives us clues about specific words that are difficult to know for certain in ancient Hebrew, it also shows us how they understood verses in the time of Christ.

**6. Dead Sea scrolls** from about the time of Christ. Most of these manuscripts are most similar to the Masoretic text, but some are more similar to the Septuagint. In addition to Bible manuscripts they also have many commentaries on scripture, and other religious books.

**In addition**, here are other manuscripts that were found.

**The Nash Papyrus**, dated 150 B.C., contains the Ten Commandments combined from Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-6:4f. This was the oldest known Biblical text until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. A photograph of it is in the *New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.228.

At **Masada**, there was a copy of Joshua dated 169-93 B.C. by mass spectrometer radiocarbon dating. (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.18). The Romans captured Masada in April 73 A.D., so the manuscripts had to be before then.

**Nahal Hever** is a cave near Engedi just west of the Dead Sea, that has a fragment of the minor prophets in Greek (8 Hev XIIgr). It also has Numbers (5/6 Hev 1a), and Psalms (5/6Hev 1b). According to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.34, they were written between 50 B.C. and 50 A.D.. A wealthy woman named Babatha took refuge there at the start of the Bar Kochba revolt against Rome. It is a revision of the Septuagint, made in Judea, and almost identical to the Masoretic text.

The **Wadi Muraba’at** scroll of the Minor Prophets (Mur 88) is from c. 132 A.D. It contains Habakkuk 1:3-2:11 and 2:18-3:19. Wadi Muraba’at also contains some writings of Bar Kokhba himself in 132 A.D.

See the *Dictionary of New Testament Background* p.540-541 for more info on Nahal Hever and wadi Muraba’at.

**Q: What is the Septuagint?**

A: The Septuagint (abbreviated LXX) is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek. It consists of the entire Jewish Old Testament plus some additional material. The Septuagint was translated between 285 (for the Torah) and the Old Testament was completed prior to 160 B.C. The translation of the Torah was of high quality, but other books, such as some of the minor prophets, were simply paraphrases; Isaiah was the most paraphrastic. Nonetheless, it is interesting to read the Septuagint the two reasons:

a) To see what is different from the Masoretic version, and

b) How Jews before Christ interpreted the meaning of the Old Testament as they translated it into another language.

Remember that the Alexandrian Greek dialect before Christ did not have the theological terms of Hebrew and the Greek after Christ. Indeed, the Septuagint and study of the Old Testament in Greek may have played a role in the theological terms being amenable to Greek by the time of Christ. In addition, a passages in the New Testament agree more with the Septuagint than the Masoretic text.

The name “Septuagint” comes from the word for “seventy”. The legend in the so-called *Letter of Aristeas* says 72 Jews from Jerusalem came to Alexandria and translated it in 72 days. Philo also says they translated it just off of Alexandria. See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.10-11 for more info.

There are different versions of the Septuagint. Besides the major text line, there are what are termed “Lucianic texts” of the Septuagint. Lucian was a teacher at the church of Antioch.

*The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.1002 says the oldest known copy of the Septuagint is a fragment of Deuteronomy 25:1-3 dated 150 A.D. However, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says the oldest known existing copy of the Septuagint is a copy of Leviticus from 100 B.C. among the Dead Sea Scrolls found in cave 4. As for complete Bibles, Vaticanus (325-350 A.D.) and Alexandrinus (c.450 A.D.) all have the Septuagint Old Testament. Sinaiticus (340-350 A.D.) has most of the Septuagint Old Testament, though not Deuteronomy 4:22-28:67; and 30:17 to the end.

## **Q: Did the Septuagint contain the all of the Apocrypha?**

A: Conservative Protestant Christians have two views.

**a) Yes, the entire apocrypha** is in the manuscripts Vaticanus (325-250 A.D.) and Alexandrinus (c.450 A.D.). Sinaiticus (340-350 A.D.) contains Tobit, Judith, 1 and 4 Maccabees, Wisdom, and Sirach. About 19 pre-Nicene church writers quoted from books of the historic apocrypha. For example, Cyprian of Carthage (c.246-258 A.D.) quotes from Ecclesiasticus in *Treatise 8* ch.2 p.476 and Tobit in *Treatise 8* ch.5 p.477. Some early church writers considered it Scripture and others did not.

**b) No, only Sirach and possibly fragments of Tobit** exist today that were provably written prior to Christ. Among the Dead Sea scrolls, 2Q18 (= 2 Qsir) contains Sirach 6:14-15,20-31), and Cave 7 478 possibly contains fragments of Tobit. Cave 4 has five fragments of Tobit (4Q196 through 4Q200), 4 in Aramaic and one in Hebrew. Also, *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.25 says that scrolls at Masada include Sirach 39:27-44:17c in Hebrew. A photograph of Tobit 6:12-7:10 in 4QTobitb (=4Q197) is in *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.184. 11QPs(a) contains Sirach 51:13-30; a translation of the text is in *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.186.

**Other books:** The Dead Sea Scrolls also had a number of hymns and other books not in the apocrypha, including 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and many known only among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, Sirach and possibly Tobit among the Dead Sea scrolls does not prove that anyone, even the Qumran community necessarily thought of them as scripture.

**Bible Books:** The Dead Sea scrolls had Septuagint copies of Exodus 28 (7Q1 = 7QLXXExod of Exodus 28:4-7), Leviticus (4Q119, 4Q120), Numbers (4Q121), Deuteronomy (4Q35; 4Q122). Apparently, the Dead Sea scrolls did not have any copies of any other Septuagint books, and certainly no apocryphal Septuagint books.

*The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* p.467-518 gives many details of Septuagint manuscripts. 4Q51 is the most unusual. It is a copy of 1, 2 Samuel as a Hebrew manuscript whose text appears to be the Hebrew behind the Septuagint of Samuel. 4Q75 contains Zechariah, Malachi, and Jonah, and appears to be halfway between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint.

The *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* p.114 says that unlike the books of the Bible, the copies of the apocryphal manuscripts were not written by scribes living in Qumran, but these manuscripts were brought in to Qumran.

While the apocryphal books were undoubtedly written before the time of Christ, *When Cultists Ask* p.287 observes that we cannot say for certain whether they were added to the Septuagint before or after the time of Christ.

**Conclusion:** While we have no direct evidence saying whether the apocryphal books were first considered by some to be a part of the Bible before or after Christ, Clement of Rome quoted Judith in *1 Clement* ch.55, without saying it was not scripture. Since the entire apocrypha was copied in the Septuagint by 325 A.D., and there is no mention of any Christians or Jews being aware of it being added only after the time of Christ, then it is safe to say:

**Conclusion 1:** We cannot prove it was in the Septuagint prior to Christ but,

**Conclusion 2:** It was put in at some point, and the evidence of an addition after Christ is not there.

**Q: What is the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint?**

A: Lucian was a presbyter (elder) at the church in Antioch who died as a martyr in 312 A.D. He made a copy of the Septuagint where he corrected imperfections in Greek grammar and style.

We do not have any writings preserved of Lucian’s theology. However, one of his disciples was Arius, and another was the Arian heretic Eusebius of Nicomedia (not Eusebius the church historian). See *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils* (325-787) p.51-53,77 for more info.

**Q: What other Greek translations of the Old Testament were made?**

A: In addition to the Septuagint, and the Lucianic recension of the Septuagint, there were three other Greek translations.

**Aquila:** After Christianity started to grow, Aquila, a proselyte to Judaism from Pontus made a translation in 126 A.D., for the purpose of opposing the Septuagint, since Christians were using the Septuagint to convert Jews.

**Symmachus:** The Ebionites were a Christian cult that held to many Jewish practices and did not believe Jesus was God. Symmachus the Ebionite made a translation in the second century.

**Theodotion** was another Ebionite who made a translation in the same century. We only have small fragments of their texts though.

See *The Septuagint Version: Greek and English* p.iv-v for more info.

**Q: What is an overview of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran community that preserved them?**

A: God promised to preserve His word in Isaiah 59:21; 40:8; Psalm 119:89, and 1 Peter 1:23-25. However, since there were few Old Testament manuscripts earlier than 950 A.D., someone might be curious just how precisely the Old Testament was transmitted before then. However, in 1947 a Bedouin boy, Muhammad Adh-Dhib, threw a stone into a cave at Qumran and heard the crash of pottery. That uncovered a stored library of about 500 to 867 manuscripts from Jesus’ time, 1/4 to 1/3 of them from the Bible.

Only about 200-300 people lived in Qumran at any one time. Qumran was like a monastery, for of the 1,200 graves in the cemetery, only 6 were of women and 4 of children. There were about 200-300 caves, and people lived in 30 of them. Most of the people lived in huts or tents, though. Coins at Qumran show people lived there from about 135 B.C. to the abrupt destruction in 68 A.D. The Romans captured Qumran and killed or enslaved all who did not escape.

**Beliefs of the Children of Light Jewish Sect:** Modern scholars once confused the inhabitants of Qumran with Essenes because of their similarities. This sect, calling itself, “Children of Light”, started about 200 B.C. They believed in the resurrection of the dead (like the Pharisees), practiced baptism by immersion, and had overseers similar to Christian bishops. They thought Melchizedek was a heavenly being and the wicked would be annihilated.

Qumran commentaries on Genesis 49:10 and Isaiah 11:1-3 show they recognized these as Messianic prophecies. Like others, the Qumran community believed the Messiah would do miracles and healings. They also believed the Messiah would personally slay the Roman Emperor. It would take years to bury all the dead from the Messiah’s military victories. Thus, as the *Christian News* (11/23/1998) says, “So now we know that when Caiaphas conducted the trial of Jesus, all he had to do was get Jesus to admit that he was the Messiah. As Jesus, who has performed the predicted miracles, made that admission, he was assumed to be guilty of treason against the emperor.”

**Let’s Visit “The Library”:** Eleven caves preserved about 95,000 fragments, 40,000 in cave 4 alone. Some of the non-Bible fragments include mezuzot (verses worn on arms) and phylacteries (verses worn on the forehead) from Exodus and Leviticus. Here are some of the preserved Old Testament texts.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Book | Copies / fragments | Earliest scroll | Commentaries |
| Genesis | 15 / 20 |  | 1 |
| Exodus | 15 / 23 | 250 B.C. |  |
| Leviticus | 8 / 13 |  |
| Numbers | 6 / 8 |  |  |
| Deuteronomy | 25 / 29 |  |  |
| Parallel Torah | 1 |  |  |
| Joshua | 2 |  |  |
| Judges | 3 |  |  |
| Ruth | 4 |  |  |
| 1,2 Samuel | 4 |  |  |
| 1,2 Kings | 3 / 4 |  |  |
| 2 Chronicles | 1 |  |  |
| Ezra | 1 |  |  |
| Nehemiah | 0 |  |  |
| Esther | 0 |  |  |
| Job | 4 |  |  |
| Psalms | 27 / 36 |  | chap. 37 |
| Proverbs | 2 |  |  |
| Ecclesiastes | 2 | 175-150 |  |
| Song of Solomon | 4 |  | possibly |
| Isaiah | 18 / 23 | 120-100 B.C. | 1 |
| Jeremiah | 4 / 6 |  |  |
| Lamentations | 4 |  |  |
| Ezekiel | 6 |  |  |
| Daniel | 8 | 120 B.C. |  |
| Hosea | 3 |  | 2 |
| Obadiah | 0 |  |  |
| Jonah | 3 |  |  |
| Micah | 2 | 3rd century | 1 |
| Nahum | (4Q82) |  | 1 |
| Habakkuk | (4Q238) |  | 1 |
| Zephaniah | 2 |  | Possibly |
| Zechariah | 3 |  |  |
| Joel, Amos, Zeph, Malachi | (4Q78, 4Q82) |  |  |
| Jonah, Haggai, Zech, Malachi | (4Q76) |  |  |
| Total O.T. | 175-200 | 250 B.C. | 8-10 |
| Total Other | 325-667 |  | 0 |

No commentaries on other books showed that they considered non-Bible books as scripture.

**Shedding Light on Jewish culture back then** is one important function of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

One belief the Qumran Community held in common with others was that the Messiah will do miracles, and healings. They also believed the Messiah would personally slay the Roman Emperor. It would take years to bury all the dead from the Messiah’s military victories. Thus, as the *Christian News* (11/23/1998) says, “So now we know that when Caiaphas conducted the trial of Jesus, all he had to do was get Jesus to admit that he was the Messiah. As Jesus, who has performed the predicted miracles, made that admission, he was assumed to be guilty of treason against the emperor.”

The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.441 says that the Dead Sea scrolls show that the Gospel of John, rather than being a second century Hellenistic document, “is shown more clearly than ever to be a product of 1st century Palestine by virtue of its many parallels with the Qumran texts.”

One manuscript from Qumran cave 4 is Exodus from the Samaritan Pentateuch. One of the oldest scrolls is 4Q17, contains Exodus 38 to Leviticus 2. It is one of the oldest manuscripts, copied towards 250 B.C. It is practically identical to the Masoretic text. The Isaiah scroll has the complete text of Isaiah. It and the other copy in cave 1 were identical with the standard Hebrew Bible in 95% of the text according to *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* p.25. (As a spot check, from my own sampling I saw complete agreement on 94.6% on a consonant-by-consonant basis.)

There are a number of small variations in the Masoretic vs. Qumran texts, and they could be due to dialect differences and changes, such as today we have British English vs. American English. Here are a few of the larger or more important variations. Also, scholars caution that while the Masoretic scribes extreme care in precisely copying every scroll, the sect at Qumran might not have had as high a standard in copying.

**Exodus 1:5** in the Masoretic text says 70 people went into Egypt. When Stephen said 75 in Acts 7:14, one could assume scripture was (inerrantly) recording Stephen reciting from a Septuagint error, which said 75. However, the Dead Sea Scrolls also say 75, so perhaps Stephen and the Septuagint were correct here.

**Deuteronomy 32:43** has “let all God’s angels worship him” while the Masoretic text does not. Hebrews 1:6 quotes this.

The Masoretic **1 Samuel 17:4** says Goliath was 6 cubits and a span, or roughly 9 feet 9 inches. However, the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls say 4 cubits and a span, or about 6 feet, 9 inches.

**Targums**, which are Aramaic paraphrases, have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls of Leviticus, and two targums from parts of Job. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls are commentaries of Genesis, Psalm 37, possibly Song of Songs, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, two of Hosea, and a badly mutilated one of Habakkuk 1:2 through the end of chapter 2. The authors tried to relate everything to events of their day.

**The Septuagint:** Cave 4 has the oldest copy of part of the Septuagint, which is the text of Leviticus, dated 100 B.C.. Cave 7 has a copy of Exodus chapter 28. Other scrolls contain a copy of Numbers and two copies of Deuteronomy. Two scrolls are very curious. One scroll appears to be the Hebrew behind the Septuagint for 1 and 2 Samuel. Another scroll of Zechariah, Jonah, and Malachi are Hebrew that appears to be between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text. The Septuagint version of Jeremiah is 60 verses (1/8 shorter) than the Masoretic text. The Dead Sea scroll 4QJerb supports some of these absences. One scroll contained the Hebrew of Psalm 151, which is also in the Septuagint.

**The Apocrypha and Other Books:** 2Q18 (= 2QSir) contains chapter 6 of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), and Cave 7 contains fragments of Tobit. Cave 4 also contains 5 fragments of Tobit (4Q196 through 4Q200). The *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* p.114 says that unlike the books of the Bible, the copies of the apocryphal manuscripts were not written by scribes living in Qumran, but were brought in to Qumran. While the apocryphal books were undoubtedly written before the time of Christ, *When Cultists Ask* p.287 observes that we cannot say for certain whether they were added to the Septuagint before or after the time of Christ.

One scroll, 11QPs, contains additional Psalms, so-called Psalms 152-155. Apart from the Dead Sea scrolls, various versions of these are known only in the Syriac language.

The Dead Sea Scrolls also had a number of hymns and other books not in the apocrypha, including 1 Enoch (except section 2), 14 copies of Jubilees in Hebrew, and many known only among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, Sirach and Tobit among the Dead Sea scrolls does not prove that anyone, even the Qumran community necessarily thought of them as scripture.

The Dead Sea scrolls are useful for shedding light on Jewish thought back then. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.441 says that the Dead Sea scrolls show that the Gospel of John and Paul’s writings, rather than just being 2nd century Hellenistic documents, in fact have some parallels with the Dead Sea scrolls.

**Summary:** The Qumran caves provided a wealth of Old Testament manuscripts from the time of Christ, and about a thousand years older than the Masoretic texts. Other writings also provide background to some of the New Testament.

See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.434-441 for more info on the Dead Sea Scrolls in general.

**Q: What are some of the differences in reading from the Masoretic text and the Dead Sea scrolls?**

A: Here is a sampling of some of the “most significant” readings. Except where noted, the Masoretic text (MT) is the first reading and a Dead Sea scroll is the second.

**Dt 5:5** “word” (MT) vs. “words” (Dead Sea Scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Targum)

**Dt 10:13** “Lord” vs. “Lord your God” (Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac)

**Dt 31:1** “went and spoke” vs. “had finished speaking all” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:8** Masoretic: “children of Israel” vs. Septuagint: “angels of God” vs. a Dead Sea scroll: “sons of God”

**Dt 32:15** “Jeshurun” vs. “Jacob ate his fill; Jeshurun” (Dead Sea scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:19** “saw it” vs. “saw it and was jealous” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** “nations” vs. “Heavens” (Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** (absent) (Masoretic text) vs. “Let all God’s angels worship him.” (Septuagint, Hebrews 1:6, and Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), John Chrysostom (died 407 A.D.) *Homilies on Hebrews* Homily 4 no.2 p.382-383)

**Dt 32:43** “servants” vs. “children” (Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** (absent) vs. “he will repay those who hate him” (Dead Sea scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** “cleans his land his people” vs. “cleans the land for his people”) Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Dt 33:8** “your Thummim” vs. “Give to Levi your Thummim” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 33:17** “His firstborn bull” vs. “a firstborn bull” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

**1 Sam 1:23** “his word” (MT, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)) “your word” (Septuagint, Syriac)

**1 Sam 1:24** “with three bulls” vs. “with a three-year old bull” (Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)), Septuagint, Syriac)

**1 Sam 2:1** “the LORD” vs. “my God” (Septuagint)

**1 Sam 2:1** “your victory” vs. “my victory” (Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:20** “give you” vs. “repay you” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:20** “petition that she asked of” vs. “gift that she made to” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:21** “When the LORD” vs. “And the LORD” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:27** “when they were at the house” vs. “when they were slaves to the house” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:29,32** “kick” vs. “look with greedy eye” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:33** “your eyes … your heart” vs. “his eyes … his heart” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 2:33** “die young men” vs. “die by the sword” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 3:4** “called Samuel” vs. “called, “Samuel! Samuel!” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)))

**1 Sam 14:49, 1 Sam 18:17** “Merab” vs. “Merob” in the Dead Sea Scroll 4Q51 (=4QSam(a)) for 1 Sam 14:49, Dead Sea Scroll 1Q7 (=1QSam) for 1 Sam 18:17, and Septuagint (*Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.669)

**Job 22:8** (absent) vs. “And you say” (Dead Sea scroll targum of Job 11Q10 (=11QtgJob)).

**Job 22:17** “to them” vs. “to us” (Septuagint, Syriac, Dead Sea Scroll Targum)

**Ps 119:37** “in your way” (Hebrew Masoretic text, Septuagint, Vulgate) vs. “according to your word” (two Masoretic manuscripts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Aramaic Targums)

**Isa 7:14** Masoretic: “she shall call his name” vs. Septuagint and Dead Sea Great Isaiah scroll “His name shall be called.” The difference is one consonant. See *General Introduction to the Bible* p.368 for more info.

**Isa 53:9** “suffering of his soul and be satisfied” vs. “suffering of his soul he will see the light of life and be satisfied”

**Isa 61:1** (absent) (MT, Septuagint) vs. “the dead are raised” Dead Sea scroll 4Q521. (See *The Case for Christ* p.142 for more info.)

**Jer 3:1** “Saying, if” (MT) vs. “If” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac)

**Jer 3:8** “I saw that I gave” (MT) vs. “She also say that I gave” (1 MT manuscript, Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac)

**Dan 10:16** “one who looked like a man” vs. “something that looked like a man’s hand” (Septuagint, Dead Sea scrolls, one Hebrew Masoretic text)

**Hab 2:16** “be exposed” (MT) vs. “stagger” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint, Aquila the Jew (126 A.D.), and Syriac.)

For the details of all the differences in a passage, see the comparison of Isaiah 53 at the end of the questions on Isaiah.

**Change in conclusions:** Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, the Septuagint was considered merely an inferior translation of basically the Masoretic text. However, many of the differences between the Dead Sea scrolls and the Masoretic text are places where the Dead Sea scrolls and the Septuagint agree. Thus, it seems the Septuagint was more of a translation of a different Hebrew manuscript family than the Dead Sea scrolls. (though there are still places where the Septuagint translators were confused or mistaken)

**Bibliography for this question:** The footnotes in the NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV Bibles, and *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. The Masoretic translation was compared with Jay P. Green’s *Literal Translation* and the Septuagint rendering is from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton’s translation of *The Septuagint : Greek and English*.

#### Q: What is the Masoretic text?

A: The Masoretes were scribes, in the Pharisee tradition, who lived after Jesus’ time. There are many Masoretic manuscripts, but they are after 900 A.D. Codex Leningradensis 1008 A.D. was a well-preserved Masoretic text that was a basis for the NIV translation, according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary volume 3* p.246.

**Q: Is the God of the Old Testament a different being, and an evil or misguided one, compared to the God of the New Testament?**

A: This is one of the two or three teachings common to all branches of an ancient heresy called Gnosticism. Some of their arguments were because the New Testament repealed Old Testament dietary laws, the universe had a contrast between the visible and invisible, and the belief that since matter was all evil, only an evil god would create matter.

Outside of the Bible, as early as Clement of Rome (96-98 A.D. *1 Clement* ch.4 vol.1 p.6) Christians affirmed that the God of the Old Testament was good. We can say that He who is a friend of Abel and a friend of Abraham, is a friend of mine.

Theophilus of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) was one of the earliest Christian writers who mentioned Creation and explicitly said “for nothing evil was made by God.”(*To Autolycus* book 2 ch.17 p.101).

Tertullian effectively refuted the theory of a different Old Testament God in his work *Five Books Against Marcion* in 207/208 A.D.. Here is an incomplete condensation of what he wrote.

**a.** Tertullian says you cannot find a church of apostolic origin that denied the Creator. “But if the churches shall prove to have been corrupt from the beginning, where shall the pure ones be found?… Show us, then, one of your churches, tracing its descent from an apostle, and you will have gained the day.”

**b.** Why would the good god rescue man, if he did not create him?

**c.** Why did the bad god prophecy the coming of Christ in the Old Testament? The New Testament refers to these as prophesying the good Christ.

**d.** If the bad god prophesied a bad Christ, why did the good god prevent the bad Christ from coming and send the good Christ in his place. The good god should have let the bad Christ come first, instead of misleading people to think the bad god prophesied the good Christ.

**e.** Why did Jesus quote from the Old Testament as authoritative?

**f.** Why did Marcion have to reject parts of Luke and other parts of the New Testament to support his view?

**Bible Query from the Apocrypha**

**Q: Where did the term “apocrypha” originate?**

A: When Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, these books existed in the Greek Septuagint Old Testament but not in the Hebrew. Early in his life Jerome accepted the entire Septuagint as divinely inspired, but later he only accepted the Hebrew originals as such for the Old Testament, and Augustine (letter 71 p.327 403 A.D.) urged Jerome to translated all of the Septuagint. Jerome coined the term “apocrypha” from the Greek word for hidden, to distinguish these from both “true scripture” and other religious writings.

## **Q: What exactly is the apocrypha?**

A: There are different collections of apocryphal books. These are books and additions to books which both Jews and Protestant Christians, (along with a small number of Catholics) say are not part of the Old Testament. Catholics and Orthodox Christians generally say they are a part of the Old Testament, though for they are often thought to have a lesser status. There are actually at least four lists of apocryphal books: 11 books accepted by the Catholic Church today, and 14 books accepted by the Orthodox Church, original (1611) King James Bible, and the Catholic church throughout most of its history. Here is the list, errors, and the number of pages in English.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tobit (Tobias) | -5 historical errors. Salvation by works Tobit 12:9 | 9 pgs |
| Judith | -14 historical errors | 14 pgs |
| Additions to Esther (8 places) | -2 historical errors | 4 pgs |
| Wisdom of Solomon | -2 contradictory doctrine | 19 pgs |
| Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) | -8 contradictory doctrine | 44 pgs |
| Baruch | -4 historical errors | 7 pgs |
| Letter of Jeremiah in Baruch |  | 73 verses |
| Song of the 3 Holy Children (Prayer of Azariah) | (placed in Daniel) | 2 pgs |
| Susanna | (placed in Daniel) | 2 pgs |
| Bel and the Dragon | (placed in Daniel) 1 error | 2 pgs |
| 1 and 2 Maccabees | -2 historical errors. 2 Macc 12:43 offer sin offerings for the dead | 41 pgs |
| **The following are not in today’s Catholic Apocrypha** | | |
| 1 Esdras (also called 3 Esdras) |  | 9 chapters |
| 2 Esdras (also called 4 Esdras) |  | 16 chapters |
| Prayer of Manasses/Manasseh (also called Book of Odes) | 1 contradictory doctrine (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob never sinned against God) | 15 verses |
| There are also the following: | | |
| 3 Maccabees (Greek and Slavonic Orthodox only) |  | 7 chapters |
| 4 Maccabees (Greek Orthodox only in appendix) |  | 18 chapters |
| Psalm 151 (Greek Orthodox, and Slavonic Orthodox, and Nestorians)  The Greek Orthodox apocrypha is the same as the Catholic Apocrypha plus Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151, 1 Esdras, 3, 4 Maccabees  The Slavonic Orthodox apocrypha is the same as the Catholic plus Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151, 2 Esdras, 3 Esdras, and 3 Maccabees. (See *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.161) |  |  |
| Psalm 152-155 | Short Psalms in Syriac used by Nestorians | 4 |

To read many of these for yourself, one can browse http://wesley.nnc.edu/noncan/acts.htm.

The Letter of Jeremiah is appended to Baruch and considered the 6th chapter of Baruch in the Catholic Bible and the original King James Version. In the Revised Standard Version it is a separate letter.

Note that Catholics and Protestants both agree that the apocryphal books contain errors. 1 Esdras was in some but not all copies of the Septuagint. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls there were both Hebrew and Septuagint Greek copies of the Old Testament, but only one and possibly a second apocryphal book. (Sirach and possibly fragments from Tobit.) Also, since the earliest complete copies of the Septuagint date from the fourth century, *When Cultists Ask* p.287 points out that it is not certain when prior to the fourth century the Apocrypha was put into the Septuagint.

**Q: What how many different sets of apocryphal books are there among churches?**

A: There are at least four different sets of apocrypha.

**Catholic:** 1 and 2 Maccabees, Baruch, Daniel additions, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Esther additions, Judith, Letter of Jeremiah in Baruch, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon.

**Slavonic Orthodox:** Same as the Catholic Apocrypha plus 2 Esdras, 3 Esdras, and 3 Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151.

**Greek Orthodox:** Same as Slavonic Orthodox Apocrypha plus 4 Maccabees in the appendix.

**Historical Coptic:** 1, 2, 3 Maccabees, Baruch, Daniel additions, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Esther additions, Judith, Letter of Jeremiah, Psalm 151, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon. However, under Cyril V (1874-1927), The Coptic church later rejected these books as part of the Bible. See *The Coptic Encyclopedia* vol.1 p.161 for more info.

**Protestants** in contrast, the same Old Testament is the Jews, except for the order and splitting of books. All the churches above agree on the books of the Protestant/Jewish Old Testament.

## **Q: Where did the apocryphal books come from?**

A: The Septuagint apocrypha books first appeared after the Old Testament was translated to Greek about 200-100 B.C. This translation, called the Septuagint, was well done for the Pentateuch, and not that well done for some of the prophetic books. Jews in Palestine never called it scripture. Greek-speaking Jews and Christians outside of Palestine assumed it was scripture, since it was in the Septuagint.

When the early Christian monk Jerome translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew into Latin, he had to answer a question: “Should he include these books or not?” Early in his life he thought so, but later in his life he only accepted the Hebrew originals for the Old Testament.

In 90 A.D. the Jewish Council that met in the town of Jamnia excluded from the Old Testament all but the writings Jews and Protestants accept today. At Jamnia there was some discussion of Ruth, Esther, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes, but all of them were accepted. Among Christians there was no consensus about the apocrypha until Augustine championed the Apocrypha at the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. (after Jerome’s death). These writings were in Bibles used by Christians for over 1,100 years. Even the King James Bible of 1611 originally included it. After Puritan protests, it was excluded from 1644 onward.

For more on the canon of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, see *Today’s Handbook* p.36-42.

**Q: What are the earliest copies we have of the apocryphal books?**

A: Among the **Dead Sea Scrolls** are fragments of 5 scrolls of Sirach (4 in Aramaic and 1 in Aramaic) and some of Tobit. A scroll at Masada contains Sirach 39:27-44:17c in Hebrew according to *Responses to 101 Questions on the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.25. It also says the Dead Sea Scrolls in cave 4 had fragments.

**Vaticanus** (325-350 A.D.) and **Alexandrinus** (c.450 A.D.) contain the entire Apocrypha including 3 and 4 Maccabees (early version, not just modern Catholic version). **Sinaiticus** (340-350 A.D.) contains Tobit, Judith, 1 and 4 Maccabees, Wisdom, and Sirach.

*Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.573 says that Baruch, also called “The Letter of Jeremiah”, was written around 100 B.C. primarily as an argument against idol worship. It is in some Greek and Syriac versions of the Bible.

**Q: How much of Tobit is in the Dead Sea scrolls in cave 4?**

A: Combining the verses in five different scrolls listed in *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.424-425, the preserved verses are Tobit **1**:17,19-22; **2**:1-3,10-11; **3**:3,4?,5-15,17; **4**:2-9,21; **5**:1,2,9,12-14,19-22; **6**:1-19; **7**:1-11,13; **8**:17-19,21; **9**:1-4; **10**:7-9; **11**:10-14; **12**:1,18-22; **13**:1-4,13-14,18; **13**:3-18; **14**:1-7,10

See *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.424-425 for the individual manuscripts, and a photogram of Tobit 6:12-7:10 in 4Q197 on p.184.

**Q: How much of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls and at Masada?**

A: At Qumran in cave 2 is a scroll with Sirach 1:19-20? Or 6:14-15? And 6:20-31

At Masada was found Ecclesiasticus **39**:27-28c,29-32; **40**:10-19,28-30; **41**:1-22; **42**:1-25; **43**:1-25 (omit 26029), 29-30; **44**:1-17; **51**:1-11,23 (13-20,30 in the Septuagint).

See *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.425 for more info.

**Q: When did the Catholic Church officially recognize the 11-book Apocrypha?**

A: When both some Catholic theologians and all Protestant reformers excluded apocryphal books from the Bible, the Catholic Council of Trent in 1546 A.D. took action. Besides using their authority to condemn Luther to Hell, the Council officially recognized all the books of the Council of Carthage as being in the Bible -- except for the Prayer of Manasses and 1 and 2 Esdras. (Some Catholic Bibles call Esther and Nehemiah 1,2 Esdras, which changes 1,2 Esdras into 3,4 Esdras.) Thus, the Catholic Apocrypha today is three books shorter than the Apocrypha throughout most of history and eastern Orthodox churches today.

**Q: What is the official stance of the Anglican and Episcopalian churches on the Apocrypha?**

A: They are midway between the Protestant and Catholic/Orthodox position. According to Article VI of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, it is useful for “example of life and instruction in manners but are not a source of doctrine”.

**Q: What is the official stance of the Lutheran churches on the Apocrypha?**

A: According to a Lutheran website www.lcms.org, “Martin Luther regarded the Apocrypha as ‘useful historical’ writings which Christians should be familiar with and which should even be read in public worship from time to time. But neither Luther nor the Lutheran church has ever regarded these writings as canonical -- i.e., as part of the inspired and inerrant Word of God--since they do not meet the criteria discernible from the Scriptures themselves regarding what constitutes those books belonging to the canon of Scripture.”

**Q: Why do some people say apocryphal books do belong in the Bible?**

A: There are at least three reasons.

**1.** The apocrypha was in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. The Septuagint apocrypha was affirmed at the Council of Carthage 397 A.D. and the Catholic Council of Trent in 1546. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches have viewed it as scripture.

***Rebuttal:*** *If the Council of Trent was correct in declaring previous tradition wrong on the three extra books, tradition can be wrong on the others too. Since the Council of Trent actually reconvened in three of four different cities, since bubonic plague seemed to follow it, many would see Trent as a reason NOT to accept it.*

**2.** Many early Christian leaders taught it as scripture. Some are: Ambrose, Augustine, Clement of Alexandria, Clement of Rome (Holofernes from the Book of Judith in *1 Clement* ch.55), Hippolytus, Irenaeus, Lactantius, Origen, Patrick, Sulpitius Severus, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Theodotus. Are all these men in error?

**Rebuttal:** Many early Christian leaders did not believed it was scripture. Some are: Ambrose, Amphilochus, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nanzianzus, Jerome, and Julius Africanus (at least for Susanna). The Jews Josephus and Philo also rejected it. Many others, such as Justin Martyr, wrote volumes yet never once cited it. Ambrose was contradictory. Even many for it, like Augustine, believed it was inspired in a lesser way.

**3.** Since God’s true word endures, and the Apocrypha has been in some Bibles continuously for 2100 years, then none of the Apocrypha’s unique doctrines (prayers for the dead, etc.) corrupted God’s word. Since God’s revelation would be substantially different if these doctrines were excluded vs. included, and since God’s word cannot be corrupted (substantially altered), then these doctrines and the Apocrypha must be true.

***Rebuttal:*** *The Apocrypha were additions to the Bible, not corruptions of the Bible. The distinction of the Apocrypha was always known. God’s word enduring means that His truth will always be present; cultists make corrupt copies of the Bible all the time.*

**Bottom Line:** When the church speaks, the thinking is done. Since both the Catholic and Orthodox Churches say various apocryphal books are scripture, who are we to question the True Church with our private views?

**Q: Which early church writers quoted which apocryphal books?**

A: Here is a list of what I have found.

Cr *1 Clement* (of Rome) (16 pgs) 96-98 A.D.

Ba *Epistle of Barnabas* (13 pgs) c.70-130 A.D.

Pa Papias disciple of John (3 pgs) 110-113 A.D.

Ig Ignatius (21 pgs) c.110-117 A.D.

Di *Didache* (6 pgs) c.60-120 A.D.

Dg *Epistle to Diognetus* (6 pgs) c.130-200 A.D.

Po Polycarp, disciple of John (4 pgs) c.150 A.D.

JM Justin Martyr (119 pgs) c.138-165 A.D.

He *Shepherd of Hermas* (47 pgs) c.115-155 A.D.

Th Theophilus [Antioch](33 pgs)168-181/188 A.D.

Me Melito of Sardis (11 pgs) 170-177 A.D.

Ae Athenagoras (34 pgs) c.177 A.D.

Ir Irenaeus of Lyons (264 pgs) 182-188 A.D.

Te Tertullian [Rome] (854 pgs) 198-220 A.D.

MF Octavius of Minucius Felix 210 A.D.

CA Clement of Alexan.(424 pgs)193-217/220 A.D.

Hi Hippolytus, (233 pgs) 225-235/6 A.D.

Or Origen (622 pgs) 230-254 A.D.

Nv Novatian (39 pgs) 250-257 A.D.

an *Treatise Against Novatian*(7 pgs) c.255 A.D.

and *Treatise on Rebaptism* (11 pgs)

Cp Cyprian and friends (270 pgs) c.246-258 A.D.

Not shown is Julius Africanus (232-245 A.D.). [Neh,Dan by name, allude Ex]

**W** = Books or quotes mentioned by name or by writer

**G** = Mentioned as words of God + quoted

**B** = Mentioned as scripture or quoted + “it is written”

**m** = Mixed

Q = quote of 1 or more verses. ½ = quote ½ a verse

A = Allusion. – = no reference **X** = excluded

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| Writer | Cr | Ba | Pa | Ig | Di | Dg | Po | He | JM | Ae | Me | Th | Ir | CA | Te | Hi | Or | JA | Nv | an | Cp |
| Tobit | - | - | - | - | - | - | ½ | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | **B** | - | A | **W** | - | - | - | W |
| Judith | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | **W** | - | - | A | - | - | - | - |
| Wisdom | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | Q | - | - | m | - | - | - | **W** |
| Ecclus | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | Q | **W** |
| Baruch | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | Q | - | Q | - | - | - | - | W |
| Bel | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | - | A | - | W | - | - | - | A |
| Susan | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **W** | **X** | - | - | **W** |
| 3 Holy | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | - | - | A | - | - | - | - | **W** |
| Manass | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 3 Esdra | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | - | - | - | Q | - | - | - | - |
| Esdras -general | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **W** | - | **W** | - | - | - | - | - | **-** | - | - | - | W |
| 1,2 Mac | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | **W** | - | - | **W** | - | - | - | W |
| 3,4 Mac | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | **X** | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Writer | Cr | Ba | Pa | Ig | Di | Dg | Po | He | Jm | Ae | Me | Th | Ir | CA | Te | Hi | Or | JA | Nv | an | Cp |
| Time | 96-98 A.D. | | | | | | | 150 A.D. | | 168 A.D. | | | | 200 | | 225 A.D. 258 A.D. | | | | | |
| Pages | 151 pages | | | | | | | | 135 pgs | | | | 264 | 854 | 424 | 225 | 622 | 8 | 57 pgs | | 270 |

**Q: Specifically, which apocryphal books did Cyprian quote?**

A: Cyprian was a bishop of Carthage from c.246 to his martyrdom in 258 A.D.. Cyprian in his quotes almost always gives the book of the source of the quote. In *Treatise 12* the third book, in the given chapters he quotes from “The Maccabees” (for 1 and 2 Maccabees) (4,15,53), Ecclesiasticus (6,12,20,35,51,61,96,109,110), Tobias (62), additions to Daniel (20), Wisdom of Solomon (15,56,59). In Treatise 12 alone, Cyprian also directly quoted every single New Testament book except Mark, 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 2, 3 John, and Jude.

**Q: Why do some say the Apocrypha does not belong in the Bible?**

A: There are at least six reasons.

**1.** There are about 260 Old Testament quotes and about 370 allusions in the New Testament, but there is not even one quote from the Apocrypha. (Though the New Testament quotes Greek poets and pseudepigrapha). Thus, based only on quotes, Greek poets would have more evidence of being scripture than the apocrypha. Everyone would accept the Apocrypha as scripture if Jesus said so. He never did.

***Rebuttal:*** *The New Testament does not quote from the books of Esther, Ecclesiastes, or Song of Solomon either.*

**2.** The Jewish Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. excluded the Apocrypha. Jesus never criticized the Pharisees for not believing in the Apocrypha.

***Rebuttal:*** *Jews, not Christians, convened at Jamnia.*

**3.** Many Middle Age Christians also did not believe it was scripture. Some are: Pope Gregory the Great (1 Maccabees), Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534) a foremost Catholic Theologian, John Wycliffe, John Calvin, Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli. If the Apocrypha is scripture, then all of these were in error on this point.

***Rebuttal:*** *Zwingli did not accept Revelation as scripture. Comparing the doctrinal value (not canonicity) of James, Luther said, “--these are the books which show to thee Christ, and teach everything that is necessary and blessed for thee to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book of doctrine. Therefore, St. James’ Epistle is a perfect straw-epistle compared with them, for it has in it nothing of an evangelic kind.”*

**4.** The story of Susanna, added to Daniel hinges on two puns. The word “holm-tree” and the “saw asunder sound alike. Also “rend” and “mastich-tree” also sound alike. However, the words only sound alike in Greek, NOT in Hebrew. Thus, this was composed by Greek-speakers, and the Jews did not speak Greek until centuries after Daniel had died. Julius Africanus (c.400 A.D.) at first believed the Apocrypha was God’s Word. Then he noticed this, and changed his view, writing Augustine a letter about this.

***Rebuttal:*** *We do not know what a “holm-tree” or a “mastich-tree” are, and perhaps Greek speakers would not recognize this either. Perhaps the translators kept the names as puns rather than use the name of trees the Greeks might not recognize anyway.*

**5.** The Apocrypha teaches as God’s Word things found no where else. For example:

An angel named Uriel in 2 Esdras

Almsgiving delivers from death and purges away every sin. Tobit 12:9 and Tobit 14:12.

A good soul fell to Solomon’s lot. Wisdom 8:19, 20

The body weighs down the soul. Wisdom 9:15

Whoever honors his father atones for sins. Sirach 3:3

God is unaware the origin of some is evil. Wisdom 12:10

" That is why God gave them a chance to repent which they did not take.

To none has he [God] given power to proclaim his works;..." Sirach

Never use deceit (Sirach 25:26) vs. Deceive people for God. (Judith)

Divorce if your wife does not obey you-Sirach 25:26

"for from garments comes the moth, and from a woman comes woman's wickedness. Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good; and it is a woman who brings shame and disgrace." Sirach 42:14

# “Wine is like life to men, if you drink it in moderation. What is life to a man who is without wine? It has been created to make men glad.” Sirach 31:27

“Pamper a child, and he will frighten you; play with him, and he will give you grief.” Sirach 30:9

“Speak, you who are older, for it is fitting that you should, but with accurate knowledge and do not interrupt the music.” Sirach 32:3

“My son, do not lead the life of a beggar; it is better to die than to beg.” (and it goes on) Sirach 40:28-30.

Jeremiah, though dead, prays for Jews 2 Maccabees 5:12-16

We should pray for the dead 2 Maccabees 12:44

Jeremiah took the tabernacle of the ark to a cave in the mountain Moses from which saw Canaan. 2 Maccabees 2:1-16

Taking up a collection of money and sending it to Jerusalem as a sin offering for the sins of those whom had died. 2 Maccabees 12:39-46

Dead people who are saved but need to be delivered from their sin (purgatory?) 2 Maccabees 12:42,46

Other verses. Sirach 42:14

***Rebuttal:*** *A Catholic might say that all Christians should believe these.*

**6.** Since God’s Word is true, and the Apocrypha has the following provable falsehoods, the Apocrypha is not God’s inerrant word.

**Tobias** (=Tobit) used magic, the heart, liver, and gall of a fish, to drive away a demon. The Bible says we are not to use magic. An angel of God lies and claims to be Azarius son of Ananias.

**Tobit** 1:4-5 + 1:11-13 + 14:1-3 say Tobit saw the revolt of the northern tribes (997 B.C.); he was deported to Nineveh with Naphtali (740 B.C.) yet he only lived 102 years.

**(b)** In Tobit 1:14, the city of Rages was a part of Media, and never a part of the Assyrian Empire.

**(c)** In Tobit 6:1, they went from Nineveh to the Tigris River, and then east to Rage (Ragae). Nineveh is on the Tigris River, so they did not need to go to the river to go east.

**(d)** Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus did not destroy Nineveh, but Nabopolassar the Babylonian and Cyaxares the Mede destroyed centuries before (Tobit 14:5).

**(e)** Sennacherib was not the son of Shalmaneser, but Sargon II (Tobit 1:15).

**Bel and the Dragon** (added to Daniel) mentions the contemporaneous prophet Habakkuk in Judea. However, Habakkuk lived centuries before.

**Judith:** It is unclear where the Book of Judith was written. There are at least fourteen errors in the book covering falsehoods of the people and geography of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and even gross errors on the geography of Israel.

**(a)** Nebuchadnezzar was the King of Babylon, not Nineveh.

**(b)** He was not the king of the Assyrians, and the Assyrians (or Babylonians).

**(c)** He never sacked the cities of Ecbatana or Ragae.

**(d)** Assyrians and Babylonians did not rely predominately on their cavalry.

**(e)** The Babylonian and Assyrian rulers wanted people to worship their gods, but not themselves (unlike later Romans and Persians)

**(f)** The Jews had not returned from exile in the time of the Assyrians or Babylonians.

**(g)** The Moabites and Ammonites were descendants of Lot; they were not Canaanites.

**(h)** General Holofernes and his massive campaign in Palestine are unknown to history and archaeology.

**(i)** Nobody has ever found a city with towers called Bethulia, on the plain of Esdraelon near Dothan, able to resist 132,000 soldiers.

**(j)** Balbaim has never been found.

**(k)** Cyamon has never been found either.

The Catholic *New Jerusalem Bible* even says in its introduction, “The Book of Judith in particular shows a bland indifference to history and geography.”

**(l)** Mordecai taken by Nebuchadnezzar (617 B.C.)

2nd year of Artaxerxes court (~130 years later). Contradicts the regular part of Esther: (additions to Esther)

**(m)** Haman was an Agagite, not a Macedonian. -additions to Esther.

**(n)** Do not remember the dead (Sirach 38:21-23) vs. pray for the dead (2 Maccabees 12:44)

**(o)** Baruch was not really in Babylon. Baruch 1:1,2 vs. Jeremiah 43:5-7

**(p)** Baruch 6:2 says the Jews would serve Babylon for 7 generations. Jeremiah 25:11 and 29:11 says 70 years.

**(q)** The Babylonians probably did not worship and feed a living dinosaur-like creature. (additions to Daniel 14:23-27)

**(r)** In 2 Maccabees 8:10, Nicanor wanted to pay 2,000 talents to the Romans; the Seleucids were not under the Romans.

**(s)** In 2 Maccabees 8:20 8,000 Seleucids plus 4,000 Macedonians did not destroy 120,000 Galatians in Babylonia.

**(t)** Minor historical discrepancies between 1 and 2 Maccabees.

***Rebuttal:*** *Even the Catholic Encyclopedia admits it has errors on details.*

**Inference:** Writers of Sirach (prologue) and 2 Mac (2:24-43; 15:38-40) indicate they were not inspired.

*Rebuttal: A writer might not know he was inspired.*

**Bottom Line:** When we have to choose between a human viewpoint and the truth of God, we follow God. We, who together are the True Church, must not cease to recognize and follow God’s truth.

**Bible Query from the Torah**

**Q: Exactly how do you pronounce “Torah”, and what does it mean?**

A: The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* pronounces it as TOR-ah with a long “o”, schwa on the “a”, and the accent on the first syllable. The Torah consists of the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy.

Torah is often translated as “Law”. However, it has a broader meaning than just “Law”, and a better translation is “instruction”. For example, Clement of Alexandria in *The Stromata* (193-202 A.D.) book 1 ch.28 p.340 divided the Torah into four topics: a) Historic b) Legislative / ethical c) Sacrifice / physical science d)Theology / vision.

It can also be divided into other classifications.

**Q: Why do people think Moses wrote the first five books (called the Torah)?**

A: There are at least three reasons.

**1.** Jesus referred to these as written by Moses in Mark 1:44; 10:3-5, 12:26; Luke 16:29,31; 20:37; John 3:14; 5:46; 6:32; 7:19; 7:23.

**2.** Others recognized the Torah as written by Moses. Matthew 12:19; Luke 2:22; 5:14; 20:28; 24:27,44; John 1:17; 1:45; 8:5; 9:28; Acts 3:22; 6:11,14; 13:39; 15:1,5; 15:21; 21:21; 26:22; 28:23; 1 Corinthians 9:9.

**3.** Moses could have written all of this down himself (he had 47 years to do so) or he may have had a secretary write down some or all of it. A secretary may have appended some things, such as the chapter on Moses’ death, but regardless of how they were written down, God gave the books through Moses.

For more information, read Gleason Archer’s *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Moody Press p.108-123, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.45-51, and *Evidence That Demands a Verdict volume 2* p.95-120. The Talmud (Baba Bathra 146) says Joshua added the part about Moses’ death.

**Q: Did Moses write every single word of the Torah?**

A: Probably not. But that is OK because it is God and not Moses whom we trust for giving and preserving what He wants us to read. Exodus 6:26-27, 16:33-36 could have been written by Moses if Moses chose to write these parts in the third person. Moses was a prophet, but writing about his own death in Deuteronomy 31:9,24 would be unusual. However, none of these three examples indicate anything written later than Moses’ time. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.112-113 and p.153-154 and *When Critics Ask* p.132 for more info.

**Q: In general, how could the first five books be by Moses, since people [allegedly] could not write back then?**

A: In the mid-nineteenth century, many liberal so-called Christian teachers taught that the Bible came through centuries of oral tradition since people could not write in Moses’ time. Since then, the first writing we have found was 1,800 years prior to Moses. 30,000 Sumerian tables have been found, including 4,000 in the city of Uruk, dated 3,000 B.C., and 20,000 tablets in the important city of Mari. 14,000-15,000 inscriptions on clay tablets have been uncovered in the city of Ebla, (2500-2200 B.C.), including one mentioning the name Abraham. By Moses’ time, even slaves could read and write. Of course, Moses was raised in the Egyptian court and had a thorough education (See Acts 7:22).

Even a common slave could learn from simply reading all the inscriptions on the walls of the various temples and tombs. One might say that for people who still cling to the oral tradition theory, they need to read the writing on the wall, too. For more discussion see *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.51-54. For more on Ebla, see the *National Geographic Magazine* December 1978 p.731-759.

**Q: Would you have an answer to this question: The number of Israelites killed by God for disobedience and rebellion in the wilderness years?**

A: There are two different ways to answer this question.

a) Almost all of the Israelites who came out of the wilderness died there because of disobedience. Many of them died natural deaths of old age, but God said that none who came out of Egypt would reach the promised land except for Joshua, Caleb, and those under the age of accountability. (Also, some others were not killed out of disobedience, but died because of the Amalekite attack in Exodus 17:8-13, and a few may have died (obediently) fighting the Midianites in Numbers 31:7-12.)

b) But if you want only the people who were directly killed by God (including by plague) for disobedience,   
b1) Exodus 32:35 says many were killed, without giving a number, by plague after they made a golden calf.

b2) Leviticus 10:1-3 two sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu were killed for offering unauthorized fire.  
b3) Numbers 1:33-34 records a severe plague, but does not give any numbers.

b4) Numbers 14:37-38 The individuals who spread a bad report about Canaan were struck down and died of plague.

b5) Numbers 16, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their families were swallowed up by the earth.

b6) Numbers 20:22-26 Aaron died because he and Moses rebelled at the waters of Meribah. (Aaron was 123 at the time according to Numbers 33:39, but he died at God's express command.)

b7) Numbers 21:6-8 Many people died of venomous snakes after speaking against God.

b8) Numbers 25:8-9 A plague after the Israelites worshipped the Baal of Peor killed 24,000.

b9) Finally Moses was commanded to go up to Mount Nebo in Moab just across from Canaan, where God told Moses He would take his life. God told him to go there to give Moses a view of the land, even though Moses could not enter it. So, Moses went up there to view the land and then to die as God commanded him.

c) There were executions too.

c1) 3,000 Israelites were killed for idolatry after the worship of the golden calf in Exodus 32:28.  
c2) A blasphemer was stoned in Leviticus 24:10-16.  
c3) Numbers 15:32-36 One who gathered wood on the Sabbath was stoned.

c4) Numbers 25:4-8 Israelites were killed who worshipped the Baal of Peor.

Also note that in the second census in Numbers 26, the overall number is slightly smaller than the first census 40 years ago. So, their wandering in the wilderness for 40+ years did not increase their numbers at all.

We learn in other places in the Torah, as well as later, that God is merciful and loving, but the preceding passages show that God is strict and full of wrath too. It could have been that these deaths could have been passed over in silence and lost to history, but they were deliberately recorded here, and I think it was because God wanted to make a point. Even though God can be gracious and merciful, don't take those for granted. Don't rebel against God, because God is the most wrathful as well as the most loving Being in the universe.

May you experience God's grace and mercy, and not His wrath.

**Q: Is there any historical evidence for a “hexateuch” or collection of the Torah plus just the Book of Joshua?**

A: There is none whatsoever. Three pieces of contrary evidence are that:

**1.** The Samaritans accepted only the Torah (first five books) as scripture.

**2.** The Sadducees likewise accepted the same five books as having full scriptural authority.

**3.** Orthodox Jews accepted the same Old Testament as Protestants, but they divided it into three parts, Torah, prophets, and writings.

**Q: What is the JEPD Theory, what are arguments for it, and why is it wrong?**

A: The JEPD Theory, or Documentary Hypothesis, is taught in many university Bible courses today. It was developed in the 19th century by Julius Wellhausen and others, when scholars thought few could write in Moses’ time. It claims the Bible’s first five books (as well as Joshua) were oral tradition written down many centuries after Moses, by at least four or five different authors.

**Jehovist** source (c.850 B.C.) for passages where the divine name is used, such as Gen 1-2:3; 7:2-3.

**Elohist** source (c.750 B.C.) where the word Elohim is used for God, such as Genesis 2:4-3:3.

**Priestly** source (c.450 B.C.) for verses pertaining to the temple, such as Leviticus and Gen 6:19-20.

**Deuteronomist** source (c.622 B.C.) for most of the Book of Deuteronomy.

**Holiness** source (575 B.C.) for Leviticus 17-20 is a variation on the JEPD theory.

**In general**, the JEPD theory used to teach that the Bible misrepresents itself and the Torah was edited into the form we have today about 200 B.C. However, we have a copy of Exodus and Leviticus from the Dead Sea scrolls dated 250 B.C.

**…What the Bible Writers Said**

**Moses** wrote down what the Lord had said in Exodus 24:4-7 and Exodus 34:27.

**The LORD** spoke in Joshua 1:7-8 about being careful to obey all the law Moses gave him in the Book of the Law. See also Joshua 8:31-34; 23:6.

**In Josiah’s time,** 2 Chronicles 34:14 mentions that they found the Book of the Law which Moses gave.

**Jesus and the gospel writers** mention the Law being through Moses in Mark 7:10; 10:3-5; 12:26; Luke 2:22; 5:14; 16:29-31; 20:28,37; 24:27,44; John 1:45; 5:45-47; 7:19,23; 8:5; 9:29

**The apostle Paul** in refers to the writings of Moses in Romans 10:5; 1 Corinthians 9:9; and 2 Corinthians 3:15.

**Other New Testament books** mentioning Moses are Acts 3:22; 6:14; 13:39; 15:1,21; 26:22; 28:23; Hebrews 9:19; Revelation 15:3.

Other verses which *Evidence That Demands a Verdict volume 2* p.95-98 mentions as saying were written by Moses and/or in his time are: Deuteronomy 31:9,24-26; Exodus 17:14; Numbers 33:2; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 23:25; 1 Chronicles 22:13; 2 Chronicles 5:10; 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 33:8; 35:12; Ezra 3:2; 6:18; 7:6; Nehemiah 1:7,8; 8:1,14; 9:14; 10:29; 13:1; Daniel 9:11,13; Malachi 4:4.

**Isaiah 59:21** promises, “‘As for me, this is my promise to them,’ says the LORD. ‘My spirit, which is upon you, and my words, which I have placed in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth or from the mouths of your children and descendants from this time forward,’ says the LORD.” (NET)

Now Moses might have written all the Torah on parchment himself, since he had over 40 years. Alternately, he might have had scribes do it. A few words might have been edited later, and Moses probably did not write of his own death. Apart from these exceptions though, the Bible writers, all Jewish teachers (Philo, Josephus, etc.), early Christian writers, and those who trust the Bible today believe

**a)** The Torah (Law) was written in the time of Moses,

**b)** by Moses or through scribes under his direction,

**c)** as a reliable transmission of God’s word.

The JEPD theory denies all three points.

**…Criteria for Judgment**

When people say something is true or false, they should state their criteria for making their assessment. In general, when a document claims to be written by someone in a particular time period, the benefit of the doubt goes to the claim, unless there are substantial reasons to think otherwise. For example, we have no record that Julius Caesar ever took his armies on campaigns in Gaul, except for his own history. Yet no one doubts he did this. It is not being objective to have one standard for secular history, and a more skeptical standard for history by religious people.

The following are arguments for and against the JEPD theory, with rebuttals to each point in *italics*. The “terrain” of the battlefield has changed significantly since the JEPD theory was introduced, with each tiny blow from the archaeologist’s pick gradually tearing down the wall of respectability of this 19th century theory.

**…Multiple Author Arguments for JEPD**

**Difference in divine names** used for God: *Elohim* is used 33 times in the first 34 verses, and *Yahweh-Elohim* 20 times in the next 45 verses.

**Answer:** This is not quite accurate, as Elohim alone is used 3 times In Genesis 3:1-5 when the serpent and Eve are talking. But the use of one term versus the other was deliberate. This expressed first the universal, transcendent nature of God, followed by His more personal aspects. There is a similar situation in the Muslim Qur’an. “Allah” predominates in later, Medina suras, while “Lord” is often is used, and Allah is seldom used in the earlier Meccan suras. Likewise the first chapter of Hebrews never uses the words “Jesus” or “Christ”, but only “Son” 5 times. Yet Hebrews 2-3:3 uses “Jesus” 4 times. Yet no one doubts the unity of the Book of Hebrews. John 1:1-16 never uses the words “Jesus” or “Christ” either but only “Word” or “Son” 6 times. Yet no one thinks John 1:1-16 was by a different author.

As an aside, the Book of Jonah only uses the divine name, except when the sailors are speaking up through Jonah 3:4. After that the narrative uses *Elohim* to refer to the True God also.

**Supposed Anachronisms:** In Exodus 6:2-3 God says He did not make Himself known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob by His Name of Yahweh. This name appears 197 places prior to Exodus 6:2-3.

**Answer:** Saying “Columbus landed in America” is not anachronistic, and do not forget Genesis was not written down until the time of Moses. Also, it does not say never revealed before then, only not revealed to these three people. Of course, most of the dialogues are likely paraphrases.

**Doublets of Separate Events:** Gen 1 & Gen 2. Gen 4:17-24 & Gen 4:25-32. Gen 12:19-20 & Gen 26:7-11. Gen 15 & Gen 17.

**Answer:** Similarity does not prove repetition. For example, Genesis 1 is the creation of the earth, and Genesis 2 is the creation of man in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 12:19-20, if a son looked up to his father, and his father passed his wife off as his sister and never told the son this was wrong, the son would be more likely to do the same. Isaac did the same in Genesis 26:7-11.

**Doublets of summary or qualification:** Gen 9:19-20 & Gen 7:2-3. Gen 12:1-5 & Gen 4b-9. Gen 32:22-32 & Gen 35:9-10.

**Answer:** Ancient literature often summarized too.

**Alleged contradictions:** Gen 1:12,26 & Gen 2:5-7. Gen 1:24,27 & Gen 2:7,19.

**Answer:** God created plants before man, but the plants of the field (crops) were all after man in Genesis 2:5-7. Genesis 2:7,19 shows the animals had been created, that they were not created until then.

**Different writing styles** are present.

**Answer:** The same person can use various writing styles for different topics, and at different times in their life. For example, C.S. Lewis wrote children’s stories, science fiction, and theology, and his style is more varied than differences in the Torah.

**…Time Period Arguments Against JEPD**

**Who would know these time period details?** In the 19th century, Bible critics could point to many details of the Torah that had no extra-Biblical backing. Hittite cities in Palestine, no evidence of Sodom and Gomorrah, names such as Abram and Arioch, all the peoples, etc. In the 20th century we have found evidence for all of these, including 51 or the 68 peoples mentioned and 13 of 16 cities. For example, 15,000 tablets are preserved from the city of Mari (2800-1760 B.C.) There are names of Noah, Abram, Laban, and Jacob.

**Who would know the details of ancient Egypt?** Even Bible critics today sometimes make the mistake of saying things like Egypt must have had a closed border, there is no evidence of Hebrews, etc. However, archaeologists have found evidence of Asiatic long-tail sheep in Goshen first appearing in exactly this time period. Lists of slaves in Egypt around 1540 B.C. specifically mention slaves from the tribes of Issachar and Asher. A large villa has been found that might have been Joseph’s home. Asiatic names of only that time period have been found such as Shiphrah.

**For “J”:** Genesis 1 appears as a contrast, almost to refute the Gilgamesh Epic, which was written about 2500 B.C.

**For “E”:** Genesis 2 has some similarities to the Sumerian Dilmun poem, written about 2400 B.C. Clearly if two works of literature have similarities, which suggest a similar time period.

**For “P”:** There is now no valid reason to date Levitical sacrificial laws late, according to scholar Joseph P. Free, because similarities appear in Ugaritic material from the 14th century B.C.

**For “D”:** The outline of Deuteronomy is very similar to Suzerainty Treaties prior to 1000 B.C.

**…Unity Arguments Against JEPD**

**Over 92 verses are split** between different “authors” according to the liberal *Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary.*

Gen **2**:4; **7**:16,17; **8**:2,3,13; **10**:1; **12**:4; **13**:11,12; **16**:1; **19**:30; **21**:1,2,6; **25**:11,26; **31**:18; **32**:13; **33**:18; **35**:22; **37**:25,28; **41**:46; **42**:28; **45**:1,5; **46**:1; **47**:5,6,27; **48**:9,10; **49**:1,28

Exodus 1:20; 2:23; 3:4; **4**:20; **7**:15,17,20,21; **8**:15; **9**:23,24,35; **10**:1,13,15; **12**:27; **13**:3; **14**:9,19,20,21,27; **15**:21,22,25; **15**:13,15; **17**:1,2,7; **19**:2,3,9,11,13; **24**:12,15,18; **25**:18; **31**:18; **32**:8,34,35; 33:5,19; **34**:1,11,14

Numbers **13**:17,26; **14**:1; **16**:1,2,26,27; **20**:22.

(Deuteronomy is considered entirely “D”.)

Just how many verses would need to be split in the middle by this theory, before this theory is no longer tenable? 91 verses is too many, yet that is how many would be split.

Here is a translation of the actual text from the Brooklyn Papyrus that mentions Issachar, Asher, and Shiphrah from *Pharaohs and Kings : A Biblical Quest* by David M. Rohl. Crown Publishers 1995 p.276-277.

“(b) At lines 13, 14, 16, 22 and 67 we have variants of the tribal eponym 'Issachar' the name of the fifth son of Leah by Jacob;

(c) At line 23 the name of the clan 'Asher' occurs, named after its eponymous ancestor, the second son of Zilpah by Jacob.

(d) And finally at position 21 we read 'Shiphrah',”

**Q: Did God reliably preserve the Torah?**

A: Yes, both scripture and archaeology indicate there are no significant changes in our copies today for four reasons:

**1.** God promised to preserve His word in Isaiah 55:10-11; 59:21; 1 Peter 1:24-25, Matthew 24:35.

**2.** Jesus and the New Testament confirmed the Old Testament scriptures in Matthew 19:4; 22:32,37; 39; 23:35; Mark 10:3-6; Luke 2:23-24; 4:4; 11:51; 20:37; 24:27,44

**3.** Archaeological evidence: In the Septuagint, the Torah translated into Greek around 400 B.C. The Dead Sea Scrolls were from about 100 B.C. to after the time of Christ, and we can compare them with our Bibles today. Aramaic Targums are translations made around the time of Jesus. The Dead Sea Scrolls are about 95,000 fragments from around 867 manuscripts of the Old Testament and other writings. About 1/3 of the Dead Sea scrolls are manuscripts of the Old Testament according to *The NIV Study Bible* p.1432.

**4.** Confirmation by the early church writers, including Ignatius and Polycarp, who were disciples of the apostle John.

For more info, see Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Moody. p.321-382.

**Q: For Muslims, what evidence is there from their *Qur’an* that the Bible was originally from God?**

A: Muslims I have spoken with will freely acknowledge the Bible was originally given by God, but here are reasons, from their own Qur’an, why they should believe this.

**1. The *Qur’an* mentions many prophets and godly people in common with the Bible.**

These include: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elishah, Jonah, John the Baptist, Jesus, and his apostles.

Sura 8:84-85 “We gave him [to Abraham] Isaac and Jacob, all (three) We guided; and before him we guided Noah and among his progeny David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron; Thus do we reward those who do good; And Zakariya and John [the Baptist] and Jesus and Elias [Elijah] all in the ranks of the righteous.”

Sura 32:23 “We did indeed aforetime give the book to Moses. Be not then in doubt of its reaching (thee): and We made it a guide to the children of Israel.”

Sura 6:91 “No just estimate of Allah do they make when they say: ‘Nothing doth Allah send down to man (by way of revelation)’: say ‘Who then sent down the book which Moses brought? - a light and guidance to man;...”

**2. The *Qur’an* says Allah gave His words to these prophets**

Sura 4:150-151 “Those who deny Allah and his messengers, and wish to separate between Allah and his messengers, Saying: ‘We believe in some but reject others’: and wish to take a course midway, (151) They are in truth unbelievers;...”

Sura 3:48 says, “And Allah will teach him [Jesus] the book and Wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel.

Sura 29:46 shows you should believe in the Bible: “...’We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you...”

**Q: For Muslims, what evidence is there from their *Qur’an* that the Torah is reliably preserved today?**

A: From my experience, I feel many Muslims apparently are not clear on what their own Qur’an teaches on this topic. Here are four points, followed by an explanation of each point.

**1.** The *Qur’an* never says it was corrupted

**2**. Rather it says Allah preserves His word.

**3.** Jesus confirmed the Bible in His time, and

**4.** Archaeological evidence goes back to the time of Jesus.

**1. The *Qur’an* never said the Bible was corrupted.**

Sura 2:75 says some people, perhaps Jews of Medina, perverted God’s word knowingly after they understood it. It does not say they corrupted scripture, either their own or all the world’s. Also, they could not pervert God’s word knowingly unless they still had God’s word. Also see Sura 3:48.

**2. The *Qur’an* says that Allah preserves His word.**

Sura 5:46 says, “And in their [the prophets’] footsteps we sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: we sent him the gospel; therein was guidance and light. And confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah”. Jesus had to have the authentic Torah to confirm.

It goes on. Sura 5:47 says, “Let the People of the Gospel Judge by what Allah hath revealed Therein....” If the People of the Gospel are to judge by what God has revealed in the Gospel, how can the Gospel they are to judge by not be the Gospel God told them to judge by?

Sura 5:48 says, “To thee [People of the Book] We sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee....” See also Sura 5:66,68,70.

Notice that Allah a) confirmed the scripture that came before it, and b) guarded it in safety. Dear Muslim, do you believe what the *Qur’an* says about God guarding the scripture of the people of the book?

Sura 15:9-10 says, “We have, without doubt, Sent down the Message; And We will assuredly Guard it [from corruption]. We did send messengers before thee Amongst the sects of old:” Sura 15:9 does not say just the “Qur’an” was guarded, but “the message.”

Sura 10:94 says doubters should ask those who have been reading “the Book” before Mohammed.

**3. Jesus’ Confirmation of the Torah in His time.**

Sura 3:48 says, “And Allah will teach him [Jesus] the book and Wisdom, the Torah, and the Gospel.

The *Qur’an*, Sura 5:46 says, “And in their [prophets’] footsteps we sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: we sent him the gospel; therein was guidance and light. And confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah”

If Jesus confirmed the Torah that was preserved in His time, it is perilous to reject what Jesus confirmed.

The *Qur’an*, Sura 3:50 says, “‘I [Jesus] have come to you), to attest the Torah which was before me. ... I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. So fear Allah, and obey me.” People have a near impossible time trying to do the following.

**1.** Fear God, yet think He is unable/unwilling to preserve the revelation His followers are obeying.

**2.** Obey Jesus, yet reject both His words and the Torah He confirmed.

**4. Archaeological evidence of the Old Testament**

Archaeology shows the Bible Jesus knew was preserved. See the question, *Did God reliably preserve the Torah?* for more info.

**Bible Query from Genesis**

**Q: In Gen, how do we know that Genesis should be in the Bible?**

A: Among other reasons, because Jesus and so many others in the Bible authenticated the Old Testament and referred to Genesis as scripture. See Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:4-9 for two examples where Jesus quotes from the Book of Genesis as scripture.

**Q: In Gen, who first answered questions on Genesis?**

A: As far as I am aware, the first person to write answers to questions on Genesis was Philo, a Hellenistic Jew from Alexandria, who lived from about 20 B.C. to 50 A.D. Today we have an Armenian translation of his work. He wrote a three part work, *Questions and Answers on Genesis.* We have preserved his answers to 244 questions from Genesis 1 to 17, according to the standpoint of a pious Jew who was heavily influenced by Greek Platonic philosophy. You can get this in *The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged* – new updated version translated by C.D. Yonge Hendrickson Publishers 1993 fourth printing 1997.

**Q: In Gen 1, since some things have to be true, like 1 = 1, and 1 + 1 = 2, did God create mathematics and numbers? How could He create them any other way?**

A: God created everything; however, a tautology, which is something that by definition is true like red things are red-colored, is not a thing. We can speculate that God created every “thing” in mathematics that is not a tautology.

**Q: In Gen 1, since God created everything, did He create darkness, evil, and holes in the ground? If He created evil, He does not sound like a perfectly good God. If not, then whoever did sounds like they are a creator also.**

A: God created every thing. Darkness is not a thing, but an absence or reduction of light. Evil is not a thing, but an absence or twisting of good. Holes, darkness, and evil were not directly created by God, but they came into existence as tautologies, or “existential byproducts” of matter, light and good. Likewise a shadow is not an independent thing, having matter, energy, or spirit. Nevertheless, plants can die in the shadows. Thus, shadows have a “parasitic existence” but they still really exist.

**Q: In Gen 1, since God created everything good, why do tornadoes, plagues, and other disasters strike?**

A: Everything was originally good. However, Romans 8:20-22 reveals that since the Fall, the earth was “subjected to frustration” too. The whole world is under the dominion of the evil one (1 John 5:19), and the prince of this world is Satan according to John 12:31; 14:30.

**Q: In Gen 1, what is the cosmological argument?**

A: First, here is a simple, **logically loose way** to phrase it.

You can’t get something from nothing. Every created thing had to be created. Even the first created thing(s) had to be created by something or someone that was already there. Therefore, something or someone had to be uncreated and eternal.

Here is a **more rigorous formulation**; the definitions are my own.

**We assume** that everyone knows enough to have a suitable definition of logic, contradiction and non-contradiction, event, process, “in”, object, collection, time, sequence, matter, energy, spirit, cause, affected by, and affects.

**Actual existence** is defined here as being in this universe, has the ability to be affected by something in this universe, or has the ability to affect something in this universe. This would be too narrow a definition of “existence”, as it fails to consider ideas, patterns, and other things. So, let’s call this “actual existence” and restrict our discussion here actual existence.

**Real thing** is defined here as an object or collection of matter, energy, spirit, or combination that has actual existence. Logical truths, logical contradictions, and mathematical proofs are not considered things here.

**Parasitic existence,** as an aside, is defined as the actual existence of things that are not real things. Holes, darkness, shortages, incorrectness, and evil are not matter, energy, or spirit, yet as a shadow can kill plants that need sun, or a lack of food can kill a person, shadows and lack of food have actual existence without being real things.

**The universe** is defined here as a collection of real things that actually exist. Note that in this particular definition the universe is self-contained, and God (assuming God exists, is spirit, and can affect things) is in the universe.

**Nothing** is defined here as something that never actually exists or does not have actual existence at a particular time. In other words, before it is created [or after it is destroyed], a real thing is not in the universe, does not affect the universe, and is not affected by the universe.

**A cause** is defined as having actual existence since it affects other things in the universe that have actual existence. A cause is a real thing by definition if it can have matter, energy, spirit, or a combination of the above.

**Creation** is defined here as the event or process of making a new real thing. Creation is differentiated from “modification”, which does not necessarily require any cause outside of the thing itself. Creation of a new real thing can include modification or destruction of a pre-existing real thing, but it does not have to do so. However, see the next point.

**Something cannot come from nothing.** Every created real thing requires a cause for its creation. In other words, nothing can be created unless some thing(s) or being(s) created it. Something cannot be created without any cause.

**Something cannot create itself.** Nothing can create itself. While real things sometimes can change themselves, or destroy themselves, nothing can be its own cause of creation.

**A first cause.** While created real things can create other created real things, ultimately there had to be a first cause. In other words, in a sequence of causes, at least one cause had to be before all other causes that require a cause.

**Uncreated.** Since at least one cause has to have no prior cause, and every creation requires a cause, at least one thing or being with actual existence is uncreated and existed from eternity past, because it had had no creation.

**Summary:** Every real thing that exists either had a point in time or a time period at which it first existed, or else it did not. If it did not, it is eternal and uncreated. If it did, then some real thing was a cause for its existence.

**Limitations:** This argument does not prove the first cause is a living being, or that there is only one uncreated cause, or whether any uncreated causes still exist. It simply proves that there was at least thing of actual existence (personal or impersonal) that existed eternally without being created.

**One of the first writers** to clearly see the cosmological argument and speak of God as the first cause was Philo the Jew, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, from 15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.. R.C. Sproul and Norm Geisler have many good materials on the cosmological argument.

**Q: The argument that “the complexity of the world indicates that there must be a creator” sounds good, until taken to its logical conclusion. What about God’s complexity? If an intricate being requires a designer, then God must require an even greater designer, and so on up the scale. Where does it end? The argument ends up in an “infinite regression,” and there is no answer to it. Is there?**A: Before answering this argument, let me amplify on “the problem” first. Apart from complexity, this is also an issue with a defective form of the cosmological argument. If everything has a cause, then God too must have a cause. But of course God does not required a cause for His creation if God is eternal and uncreated.

Since something must have an end, or else not have an end, there are only two possible answers:

a) there is no end to the backward regression

b) there is an end to the backward regression, an uncaused first cause.

**If a),** there were no end to the backward regression, then not everything has a cause, because the regression itself ultimately had no cause. Therefore, either way there is someone/something that has no cause.

**If b),** there is an end to the backward regression, then there must be a first cause, of unspecified complexity. Of course, then this means that God is not a caused being, a product of any creation.

I wonder though, if God might find this whole argument so simplistic, because we think of causes in time. If God exists outside of time as well as in it, and if time too is a creation of God, then speaking about what was it like in the time before God existed is an oxymoron.

**Q: In Gen 1, could God have created other beings and worlds?**

A: He certainly did create other beings: angels and demons. As to creating other worlds with beings on them, the Bible does not tell us all we desire to know, only what we need to know — and we need to make sure we at least read that. God could have created other universes, and perhaps that is what Heaven and Hell are.

**Q: In Gen 1, why did God make Adam and Eve, since God knew beforehand that they would disobey Him?**

A: Despite God foreknowing that they would sin, God tells us a number of things as to why He created people.

**For His glory:** God created His children for His glory. Isaiah 43:7; 61:34.

**People to love:** God greatly loves us. Psalm 145:9,17; 1 John 3:1.

**To be His children:** 1 John 3:1-2; Galatians 3:28, Romans 8:15-17

**To live in us:** 1 John 4:12-16; Romans 8:9-11

God desires that none perish. Ezekiel 18:23,32; 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9. Yet, God feels no regret about creating those who, given the opportunity, freely choose to reject Him. God foreknew that they would sin, and still chose not to interfere with their choice or “uncreate” them.

Perhaps part of the reason God chose to create beings who would be in His image is similar to the reason parents choose to have children. Yes, the children will be expensive, with diapers and food, and yes the children will cause heartache by their ills, hurts, and disobedience, but through it all, the love makes it worthwhile.

## **Q: In Gen 1:1, did God create because He needed to create?**

A: The Bible provides no support for this speculation. God has no needs, in the sense that He would be harmed or cease to exist if He did not create something. On the other hand, God’s desire was to create, and God fulfilled His desire on a grand, wonderful scale.

**Q: In Gen 1:1, were there more creations after Genesis?**

A: Scripture does not say either way, and God is free to do as He wishes. If God created other creatures, they could be like the angels, like Adam and Eve prior to the Fall, like us, like demons, like animals, or something entirely different.

**Q: In Gen 1:2, if the spirit of God was moving over the waters, does this mean the Holy Spirit is not an intelligent, living being, but instead an active force as Jehovah’s Witnesses claim?**

A: No. The fact that the Holy Spirit does not have a physical body and can move over the waters does not contradict the fact that Scripture shows the Holy Spirit is a living being with a personality.

The following is a duplicate of the discussion on 1 John 5:6-8.

A witness can be a living being as well as an inanimate object. A mistake of Jehovah’s Witnesses is that since the Holy Spirit has many attributes a human being does not have, therefore (by some stretch of logic) the Holy Spirit cannot have personality. 1 John 5:6-8 shows there are three witnesses to the fact that Jesus had a physical body. The blood refers to His crucifixion, and the Spirit is an inward testimony to Christians. The water refers either to Jesus’ baptism by John, or possibly the water surrounding a baby at birth.

Following are various facts the Bible teaches us about the personality of the Holy Spirit.

*Parakletos* (the comforter, the one alongside us). John 14:16,26, John 15:26

Can know the innermost thoughts of God 1 Corinthians 2:10-11

Speaks to us. Acts 13:2, Hebrews 3:7

Reminds us. John 14:26

Like a parent, so we will not be orphans (*orphanos* in Greek). John 14:18

Guides us. John 16:13

Teaches us. John 14:26 1 Corinthians 2:13

Lives in us. 1 Cor 3:16, 2 Timothy 1:14, Romans 8:9,11, Ephesians 2:22

In our hearts. 2 Corinthians 1:22 Galatians 4:6

He intercedes for us (inanimate objects do not pray or intercede). Romans 8:26-27

Can be insulted. Hebrews 10:29

Testifies of Christ. John 15:26

Has a mind. Romans 8:27

Can be grieved. Isaiah 63:10, Ephesians 4:30

Makes choices. 1 Corinthians 12:11

Possesses love. Romans 15:30

Can think things are good Acts 15:28

Searches deep things of God 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

Groans (and thus cares) for us Romans 8:26

See *When Cultists Ask* p.299 and *Jehovah’s Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse* p.21-22 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:10, how could God create the earth, since the earth was already created in Gen 1:1?**

A: The Hebrew word (*eres*) is the same in both cases. As in English, (*eres*) can mean the world under the sky, and it can mean ground or dry land. Thus, God created the planet in Genesis 1:1, and the dry ground in Genesis 1:12. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.65-66.

**Q: In Gen 1 and Gen 2, why do there seem to be two creation accounts?**

A: Look at what is created in each account. Genesis 1 is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and Genesis 2 is the creation of humans in the Garden of Eden. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.66-68, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.133-134, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.21-22, and *When Critics Ask* p.35 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1 and other places, why is God called Elohim, while in other places, such as Gen 2, God is called Yahweh?**

A: God has a great number of names and titles in the Bible. It seems that the name Yahweh focuses on God’s personal relationship to us in contrast to the name Elohim, which emphasizes His impartial, transcendent aspects. Genesis 1 has no names for Adam, Eve, or any animals either, while Genesis 2 has them. This is such a contrast that it had to be deliberate.

*735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.21-22 says it was common in ancient cultures to have more than one name for the same god. Here are examples:

Osiris – Wennefer, Khent-amentius, Neb-abdu

Bel – Enlil, Nunamnir

Sin – Nanna

El – Latpan

Baal – Larpan

See *When Critics Ask* p.33-34 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.66-68 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1, could God create the earth in literal six 24-hour days?**

A: Regardless of whether they think the earth is old or young, all Christians should answer this question “yes”.

Instead of six days, the Almighty could have created it in six seconds if He had wanted. The issue is not how God had to create, but how scripture and nature reveal He chose to create.

As a side note, Scripture does not say how long a day with God is in Genesis 1. Deuteronomy 9:1 shows that a “day” could indicate a period of time greater than 24 hours, as it was understood in Moses’ “day”. Psalm 90:4; 2 Peter 3:8 indicate God’s days could be very long. See *When Critics Ask* p.32-33 and Archer, *Survey of Old Testament Introduction* p.187-199, for outlines of various views. See also the next two questions.

**Q: In Gen 1 do the similarities between this and the Babylonian creation accounts prove they were from a common, human origin? (*Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.1197 claims this is very likely)**

A: Babylonian accounts are similar in many physical details, but almost diametrically opposite in terms of cause. In contrast to Marduk struggling against the chaos of the dragon Tiamat, God commands what happens. If there is some truth in non-Biblical culture that should not be a surprise. In addition, the style of Genesis 1 appears to be a deliberate contrast with pagan concepts.

**Q: In Gen 1:26 and 3:22, why is the word “us” is used for the One True God?**

A: There are two possible answers.

**1.** The “us” refers to the One true God, but plural is the proper sense for a conversation among the Trinity.

**2.** The “royal we” was used of kings and gods for one person. As an example of this in the Mideastern religion if Islam, the Muslim Qur’an uses “us” and “we” when Allah is referring to himself. Muslims and non-Muslims can agree that use of the “royal we” in the Qur’an does not suggest Mohammed taught that Allah was multiple gods.

However, Philo the Jew (15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) interpreted this not as the royal “we”, but that God used assistants in *On the Creation* chapter 24 no.75 p.11.

See *When Critics Ask* p.30-31, *When Cultists Ask* p.20-21, and *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.180-182 for this and other views.

**Q: Does Gen 1:26 mean that we should be educated to acquire divine perfections and the focus of divine blessings, as Bahai’s teach in *Some Answered Questions* p.8,9?**

A: No, because Genesis 1:27 says that God did what He said in Genesis 1:26. When Adam and Eve were created, they were perfectly sinless before the fall, and they did not need education. While we are still in the image of God, Genesis 1:26-28 refers to what God already accomplished.

**Q: Does Gen 1:26 mean people are “little-gods” themselves, as Kenneth Hagin and some word-faith teachers say?**

A: No. The word in Genesis is “like” not “is”. Even word-faith teachers would agree that creatures like us were never to be worshipped. The bodies of Adam and Eve were given an immortality that could be forfeited, a righteousness that could be ruined, and a perfect love for God that could be thrown away like an old piece of fruit. See *When Cultists Ask* p.21-22 for more info and a partial enumeration of the ways we are not.

**Q: In Gen 1:26-27, was this a conversation among the members of the Trinity, or created beings such as angels?**

A: While angels might have overheard these words too, this was a conversation among the Trinity. Our creation was not the work of angels but of God in Trinity. The first Christian writer known to have observed this could not be angels was Justin Martyr (wrote c.138-165 A.D.) in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* chapter 62 p.228.

**Q: In Gen 1:26-27, since God made people higher than the angels, could God later make beings higher than humans?**

A: Scripture does not say either way, and God is free to do whatever He wishes. However, Scripture says that believers are “sons of God” and we will “reign with Christ” and be “co-seated with Christ” (Ephesians 2:6). It is hard for a finite creature to be much higher than that.

**Q: In Gen 1:26, was Adam a “superman” with ability a million times greater than ours, as Watchman Nee taught in *The Latent Power of the Soul* (1933 p.15)?**

A: Scripture never taught this strange speculation. It also never taught that Adam was already like God in outward appearance, as Watchman Nee taught in the same book page 18. Unfortunately, people often try to add their own teaching to what God actually said. See *The Berean Call* April 1998 p.3 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:26, if we are created in God’s image, doesn’t that prove God (or at least the Father) has a man’s physical body? (Mormons mention this.)**

A: Most would agree the Holy Spirit does not have a physical body and Jesus did not have a physical body at that time. If “us” is referring to a discussion with the Father, Son, and Spirit, then image cannot refer to a mere physical body. By the way, Genesis 9:6 shows that since the Fall, we still have God’s image. See *When Cultists Ask* p.22 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:27, are people still made in the image of God since the Fall?**

A: Yes. Genesis 9:6, after the flood, shows that even though we are marred by sin, we still have God’s image. See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.152-153 for essentially the same answer and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.20 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:28, since man was to fill the earth and subdue it, did this give permission for man to destroy the environment?**

A: Not at all! We have never heard of a Christian or Jew who read the Bible with that interpretation. This new rendering, first advanced in 1967 [see Kaiser’s reference at the end], only seems to makes sense if you read part of Genesis 1, and you define “subdue” as “destroy”, rather than “wisely rule”. Actually, the Bible says six important things about taking care of the land and animals.

**1. They were “tenants” on land that really belonged to God**

**1a.** Thus, the land could not be sold permanently (Leviticus 25:23)

**1b.** All things belong to God (Psalm 24:1)

**2. God will judge those who defile the land in general**

**2a.** Isaiah 24:5 says the earth was defiled by its people.

**2b.** Zechariah wailed over the destruction of mighty forests and rich pastures. Even more, wailing over the spiritual calamity for which these natural calamities are allegories. (Zechariah 11:1-3)

3. God condemns physically defiling the land

**3a.** God will destroy those who destroy the earth. (Revelation 11:18).

**3b.** God will judge the “sheep” who not only eat what they need, but trample the rest of the pasture. They not only drink clear water, but they muddy the rest of the water with their feet (Ezekiel 34:17-22).

**3c.** Numbers 5:3 speaks of not defiling the camp, in the context of infectious diseases.

**3d.** Even in war, do not cut down the fruit trees that make the land productive (Deuteronomy 20:19-20). An olive tree can live for over 1,000 years.

**4. God condemns defiling the land with evil**

**4a.** Numbers 35:33-34 commands us: “do not pollute the land” in the context of killing people.

**4b.** Do not defile the land with idolatry (Jeremiah 16:18).

**4c.** Jeremiah 32:34 mentions people defiling the valley of Topheth with infant sacrifice.

**4d.** In Ezekiel 7:22, the wicked will defile God’s treasured place.

**5. God’s Law includes wise resource management**

**5a.** Adam was put “in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15).

**5b.** Not planting two kinds of crops together (Deuteronomy 22:9). Instead, alternating crops reduces insect pests.

**5c.** Letting the land rest every seventh year during the Jubilee (Leviticus 25:3-7,11-12,18).

**5d.** God would judge Israel for breaking this rule (Leviticus 26:34-35).

6. Animals: owned by God, made for our use, but we must treat animals kindly

**6a.** Animals belong to God (Psalm 50:10) and He takes care of them (Psalm 36:6; 104:11,14; 147:8-9).

**6b.** Eating meat is fine, and in some instances commanded (Genesis 9:2-5; Acts 10:13).

**6c.** Jesus was sinless (Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 3:22; 1 John 3:5). He ate fish (Luke 24:42-43) and being a good Jew, ate meat as was commanded during the Passover (Exodus 12:8-10).

**6d.** Wearing leather is fine, as John the Baptist had a leather belt in Mark 1:6.

**6e.** Hunting is OK (Leviticus 17:13).

**6f.** Killing animals for sacrifice was even commanded (Exodus - Deuteronomy).

**6g.** We are to be kind to animals (Proverbs 12:10).

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.89-90 and the next question for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:28, even though the Bible does not explicitly say we should squander God’s gift of our environment, does Christianity implicitly teach that we can trash the environment?**

A: No. You cannot blame the ecological problems caused by greed and over-population on Christianity, any more than one can blame problems on Animists in Africa, Hindus in India, atheists in China, and Muslims in Indonesia and the Mideast. There are ecological problems in every continent, just as there are people who will sacrifice the environment for personal gain on every continent. For a discussion of what the Bible does say about the environment, see the previous answer. See also 735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered p.20-21 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:29 were Adam and Eve given every seed-bearing plant, or could they not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as Gen 2:17 says?**

A: While we do not know whether the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had seeds or not, that is not relevant here. Regardless, the meaning was they could eat of every seed-bearing plant, with the exception of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

**Q: In Gen 1:29 if all the plants could be eaten by people, how is the Bible logical and reasonable, because there are poisonous plants and seeds we cannot eat? (A Muslim brought this up)**

A: In the Qur’an Sura 5:46-48 says that Jesus confirmed the Torah and the gospels. It is a very serious charge for a Muslim to make, that Jesus verified something that was wrong and not from God. But to answer the objection, regardless of whether it was understood as every single plant or every herb and grain, God told this to Adam prior to the fall, before the earth was cursed. Nature radically changed when Adam and Eve sinned. Before the fall, God gave dominion of the earth to Adam and Eve, but when they sinned in following the serpent's suggestion, Satan became the prince (though not the king) of this world. But the fall brings up an interesting point: if Muslims today say that the prophets are sinless, and if Adam and Eve sinned and brought all curse on us when they sinned, why do Muslims say Adam was a prophet?

**Q: In Gen 2:2-3, why did God rest from working on the seventh day?**

A: “Rest” here means to cease from the work of creating. God does not grow weary (Isaiah 40:28). Scripture never says God needed to rest, but that He chose to do so. See also *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.184-185 and *Bible Difficulties “& Seeming Contradictions* p.212-213 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 2:2, was the concept of the Sabbath Babylonian in origin that was added to Jewish tradition later, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.19,847-848 says it is tempting to suppose?**

A: Two answers, one for Christians and one for non-Christians.

**1. (for Christians):** If you assume that Jesus was from God as proved by his resurrection, since Jesus accepted the original accuracy and preserved reliability of the Old Testament, and the references to the Sabbath in Genesis and Jeremiah can be proved to be written before Jesus, it was not a Babylonian invention, and there is nothing more that needs to be said.

**2. (for non-Christians):** In *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.847 he says the Babylonians called the 15th day of the month *sappatu*. Of course, that is only one day a month not four. On p.19, Asimov was astute to notice that the Sabbath seemed of little consequence to the Israelites in Pre-Exilic times and of great importance in Post-Exilic times. However, to postulate that the Babylonian and Post-Exilic Jews were universally “hoodwinked” into a) believing their exile was due to failure to obey a command that was not in their Scriptures, and b) this was added in 59 places (35 of which were in the Torah) without anybody noticing the new concept, is incredulous. By the way, not all the Jews went to Babylonia. Jeremiah records that some went instead to Egypt. It was descendants of those Jews who translated the Old Testament into Greek, and in the Greek Septuagint translation has the Sabbath verses, too.

Any and every speculation about errors in the Bible might be seem completely believable to someone who thought it very important to show there were errors in the Bible and they did not have to follow it. However, even Isaac Asimov at least recognized the tenuousness of this theory by not mentioning it as any more than a temptation.

**Q: In Gen 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 36:9, and 37:2, Num 3:1; Ru 4:18, does the Hebrew word (Toledot) start a section, or conclude a section?**

A: Either it always refers to the beginning, always refers to the end, or sometimes goes either way.

**Ambiguous:** Here are some “toledots” that could be interpreted Either way: Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 36:9; 37:2.

**Beginning:** Here are some “toledots” that context demands they be at the beginning: Genesis 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; Numbers 3:1. Philo the Jew (15/20 B.C.-50 A.D.) mentions Genesis 2:4 as “summing up his [Moses’] account of the creation of the world” in *On the Creation* 44:129 p.18.

**At the end:** There is not a single “toledot” that provably belongs at the end of a section. Therefore, the ambiguous sections are probably “toledots” at the beginning.

The most conclusive prove that “toledot” is at the beginning of a section is Genesis 25:19, which says is it the account of Isaac. The immediately following section speaks of Isaac’s children. The immediately preceding section speaks of Ishmael and has nothing whatsoever to do with Isaac.

See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* (Victor Books 1985) p.22-23 for more on why “Toledot” belongs at the beginning.

**Q: In Gen 2:5-7, did God create plants after man, or before man as Gen 1:12,26 says? (An atheist named Capella asked this.)**

A: Three points to consider in the answer.

**1. Plants first:** Genesis 1 clearly says plants were created on the earth prior to man. These of course, would include the ancestors of all modern plants.

**2. World vs. Garden:** Genesis 1 is the Creation account of the heavens and the earth, while Genesis 2 is the creation account of the Garden of Eden.

**3. Crops after man:** Genesis 2 shows that shrubs of the field came after man, at least in the Garden of Eden. In both occurrences, the Hebrew word for “field”, *saday,* is used, rather than just saying plants.

As a side note, the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.23 says that at Beersheba they found calcinated grains of wheat, barley, lentils, and grapes from 4000 B.C.

**Q: In Gen 2:5-7, what are the grains we use today, as well as grains used in the past?**

A: People often think of grains as just the three largest food crops: wheat, rice, and corn, but actually you could eat three meals a day for a weak, and have a different grain at every meal.

**Maize (corn):** Archaeologists tell us that maize was domesticated in the new world about 5000 B.C. There was no corn (maize) in Europe, the Mideast, Africa, or Asia prior to Columbus. Corn came from a grain called teosinte. Teosinte had about 50 loosely held kernels, and the cob was less than an inch long. In contrast, corn today has 500 to 1,000 tightly held kernels on each cob. Because the kernels are tightly held, corn today is *unable* to grow in the wild without the help of man. See *Food and Nutrition* (Life Science Library 1967) p.37-38 for more info.

**Wheat:** Archaeology has found ancestors of wheat in the Middle east in Iraq around 7,000 B.C.. It is called Emmer and loses its seeds when the wind blows. Today there are thousands of strains of wheat. See *Food and Nutrition* (Life Science Library 1967) p.39 for more info. Kamut (=khorasan, = King Tut’s wheat), is probably a type of durum wheat. As a side note, some see the 2,000 year difference between the time of cultivation of wheat and maize as one of the two reasons (horses being the other reason) that when the Spanish came to America, Indian culture was 1,000 to 2,000 years behind European culture.

**Rice** was the newcomer of the three main grains. *Food and Nutrition* p.34 says it was domesticated about 3500 B.C.

**Emmer** (=emmer wheat, =faro) has been found in pre-pottery sites in the Middle east as early at 9800-8800 B.C. Domesticated emmer is different from wild emmer, but it came from wild emmer. Later emmer spread to Europe and India.

**Spelt** has a somewhat mysterious origin. It was grown in the Roman Empire, Great Britain, and Asia, prior to cultivation of wheat. It might be a hybrid between emmer and wheat, or between emmer and wild goat-grass (Aegilops tauschii), or it might have had two origins. Some think spelt had its start about 6,000 B.C.

**Sorghum** came from a grass in Africa. It somewhat resembles corn (maize) in appearance. Sorghum is one of the eight major grain crops grown today; it is used today for animal feed, but is also probably the fifth largest crop for human consumption.

**Barley** was probably first grown around 8,000 B.C. in the Israel, Jordan area. It spread eastward to the Himalayas.

**Rye** is guessed to have started in the Mount Ararat and Lake Van region of eastern Turkey shortly after the domestication of wheat. It grows places where wheat and barley will not.

**Oats** are a grain we know little about except that some were found in an Egyptian tomb in 2,000 B.C., and they were likely started in Asia Minor.

**Buckwheat** (*Fagopyrum esculentum)* was first grown in the Yunnan and Sichuan provinces of China around 1000 A.D.. It does not have a high crop yield, but matures quickly and is good in arid and cool climates. There are at least 14 varieties.

**Palmer’s grass** (=nipa grass, = *Distichlis palmeri*) was grown only in the Sonoran Desert in western Mexico and the western United States. It was the main food source for the Cocopah tribe. It is somewhat similar to wheat except that it can grow in arid conditions and can absorb seawater and secrete out the salt.

**Millets** are a collection of at least 13 small-seeded edible grasses that are good to grow in arid conditions. Millets such as broomcorn were also the primary grain in China and Korea in the earliest times. Some times of millets are barnyard millet, broomcorn, browntop millet, Finger millet, fonio, foxtail millet, Japanese millet, Job’s tears, kodo millet, little millet, pearl millet, proso millet, and teff. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millet> for more info.

Potatoes are not a grain, but there are the fourth largest food crop today. They are believed to have started about 6,000 B.C. in Peru and Bolivia in the region of Lake Titicaca.

Other non-grain crops are beans, pulses, soybeans, groundnuts, cassava, sweet potatoes, peas, breadfruit, coconuts, bananas, plantains, and taro. Kesari seed was grown in India, but it has long term paralyzing effects.

**Q: In Gen 2:7, did God create matter, or did He just “organize” it as many Mormons teach, or was matter uncreated because matter is not a real thing, as Christian Science and some eastern religious groups teach?**

A: No. God being almighty means God can do anything, and God being the Creator means God created everything. God created the universe “ex nihilo”, which means from nothing. Thus, to be precise, God not only created the “things of matter and energy”, but God created matter and energy themselves.

See *When Cultists Ask* p.24-25 for a different but complementary, answer.

**Q: In Gen 2:7,19 did God create man before the animals, or after the animals as Gen 1:24,27 says? (An atheist (Capella) asked this).**

A: Three points to consider in the answer.

**On the earth,** God created man after the animals, as Genesis 1:24,27 says.

**In the Garden of Eden,** God had to have created man before showing man the animals.

**Even in the Garden,** the animals might have been there before man. Genesis 2:19 refers to the animals that had been created by that time. It does not mean there animals were not created until that time.

**Q: Does Gen 2:7 prove that people do not have an immortal soul like Jehovah’s Witnesses say?**

A: No. The Hebrew word here, *nephesh,* means “soul” in some places, and “life” in other places such as this one. How could the believers under the altar in Revelation 6:9-10 be under the altar if they did not have existence after death? See *When Cultists Ask* p.23-24 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 2:10-14, where are the rivers that flowed out of the Garden of Eden?**

A: First of all, the Garden of Eden does not exist on earth today. We do not know where the Pishon River was, and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers are in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. The Gihon is usually thought to be the Nile River, which flowed from the region of Cush, south of Egypt. However, it could have been a smaller river originating in “Cush” (*Kashshu*) in west Elam, which is very close to the Tigris and Euphrates. The Kassites (Greek: *Kossaeans*) were from there. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.69-70, *When Critics Ask* p.34, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.22 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 2:15, why did God say you (singular) may eat from any fruit of the garden, except that you (plural) must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?**

A: Either one of them could choose any particular tree; they did not have to eat the same food. However, neither was allowed to eat from the one tree. The plural form adds emphasis; this command was not just to Adam, but to everyone.

Philo the Jew (15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) first answered this question in *Questions and Answers on Genesis, I* p.794.

**Q: In Gen 2:16, why did God create Adam, knowing that he would fall?**

A: God can do anything, but a logical impossibility is not a thing. God cannot create a being who chooses to loving obedience to God, if that being is not able to choose to obey God. Being able to choose to obey God means being able to choose to disobey God. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.22 and the discussion on Genesis 3 for more info.

**Q: Since Gen 2:17 says, “the day you eat of it you shall surely die”, how did Adam and Eve die “that day”?**

A: Spiritually and judicially. Three points to consider in the answer.

**Spiritual death** occurred that day.

**Judicially,** that day sentences of both eternal and physical death were pronounced against them. In *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.91-92, Walter Kaiser, Jr. shows the Hebrew idiom means the certainty of their death, not the immediacy of the death.

**For another example** of the use of this idiom of speech, see 1 Kings 2:37, where Solomon gave a similar warning to Shimei on the day he leaves Jerusalem.

The first person we know who gave an answer to this question was Philo the Jew (15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) in *Questions and Answers on Genesis, 1* p.794, and *Allegorical Interpretation, I* 33 (105) p.46-37, where he mentions the death of the soul.

A second ancient writer, who gave a different answer is Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* book 5 ch.23 (182-188 A.D.) p.551-552. Since Irenaeus notes that a day with the Lord is 1,000 years, he interprets this as one of God’s days, and he sees it significant that Genesis 5:6 says that Adam died when he was 930 years old, which is less than 1,000 years.

See *When Critics Ask* p.34, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.72-74, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.134-135, *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.45, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.190-191, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* 23-24, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.91-92 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 2:18, why does it say man was alone, since man was with both God and the animals?**

A: Adam did have rule over the animals, and Adam did worship God, but Adam had no one else like Him. He was alone in not having anyone to relate to in a horizontal way as an equal.

**Q: Does Gen 2:18-22 show that women were created as an afterthought, as *Born Again Skeptic’s* p.164 claims?**

A: No, it shows just the opposite. God took a great deal of time, with Adam having to name the animals and all, to demonstrate to Adam his need for a mate. Most of the things in Genesis 1 and 2 were simply created with little explanation. However, God first “set the stage” and explained her purpose as Adam’s co-laborer before creating Eve.

**Q: Does Gen 2:18 show that women are inferior to men, since Eve was made differently from Adam?**

A: No it does not. Six points to consider in the answer.

**1. Different does not prove unequal**. Different people speak different languages, but that does not mean every language is either inferior or superior to another. As one Christian said, Eve was not made from Adam’s foot to be under him, nor from his head to be above him, but from his side to be with him.

**2. Helper does not mean inferior.** Some might think that Eve was less than Adam because she was a “helper” in Genesis 2:18. However, God is our helper (same Hebrew word) in Psalm 70:5 and this does not mean God is inferior to us! Thus, translating the Hebrew as “helpmate” is rather imprecise. A better translation is ‘I will make a power [or strength] corresponding to man.’ according to Walter Kaiser’s detailed study of the Hebrew in *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.92-94. So, the woman is to be a “full partner” and not just an assistant.

**3. Genesis 1:27 shows both are in the image of God.** It was not just Adam that is in the image of God, but both male and female are in the image of God. By the way, being in the “image of God” in no way means God is limited to having two feet, two hands, a stomach etc. Rather, as a two-dimensional image is an imperfect outline of a real, three-dimensional object, the character of the infinite God and our finite being have some similarities.

**4. Equal in nature, value, importance, etc.** In the Bible, Galatians 3:28 says, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female, - for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (NET)

**5. Yet different in role:** Ephesians 5:22-24 shows that wives are to submit to their husbands, for husbands are the head of the wife. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church in Ephesians 5:25-26. Paul said that women were not to teach men or have authority over men in 1 Timothy 2:12.

**6. How does this work out in practice?**

**6.1** Deborah was a godly judge of Israel in Judges 4-5. Based on this, there is no difficulty voting for a woman for president or prime minister.

**6.2** They could inherit things, including land in Numbers 36:8 and Job 42:15.

**6.3** For a more thorough description of how a wife is to be a full partner with her husband, read Proverbs 31:10-31. Among other things it says:

She works with her hands (Proverbs 31:13,22) and profits from this in Proverbs 31:24,31.

She shops for food (Prov 31:14) and cooks. Prov 31:15

She manages others. Prov 31:15

She herself decides to buy real-estate in Prov 31:16.

She plants a vineyard. Prov 31:16 (Note that a family does not own an entire vineyard just for their personal consumption; it was a source of profit.)

She is physically strong. Prov 31:17

She also trades, not just for necessity but for profit. Prov 31:18

She herself gives to the poor. (She had to have control over money to do so.) Prov 31:20

She manages the household. Prov 31:21

She is wise, and teaches wisdom. Prov 31:26

**In summary:** Women are not inferior to men in nature, value or importance. They do have a different role than men, as any expectant mother can tell you.

See also *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.191-193 for more on how woman was made “as like” man, and equal with him.

**Q: In Gen 2:19 why did Adam need to see all the animals here?**

A: God gave Adam dominion over all the animals in Genesis 1:26, and God wanted to see what Adam would name the animals in Genesis 19.

In addition to this, there might have been a more subtle reason. Prior to making Eve, God recognized the importance of filling what was lacking in Adam, but Adam did not. Thus, Adam could learn three things about the animals relevant to his current situation.

Family:

a) Showing Adam that all the higher animals had male and female showed how God made them complete and able to propagate their species.

b) Adam could look at all the creatures, and see that there was none like him.

c) Adam could see that he needed another to make him complete, too.

Incidentally, teaching children how plants reproduce, and how animals reproduce, is a good approach to teaching kids how God ordained the way children are made.

Community:

a) Even dogs and deer have communities in which they live.

b) Adam could see that He did not have anyone like him in a community to share his life with, and people need other people to be around.

**Leadership:**

a) Since God gave Adam dominion over the earth, Adam would need to know the animals that were on the earth.

b) Since Adam had dominion, God honored Adam by having him name the animals. Philo the Jew mentioned this in *Works of Philo* p.882.

**Q: In Gen 2:19-3:19, what evidence is there from early Mormon writings that Mormons believed the crazy doctrine that Adam was God?**

A: Here are the quotes from the Mormon *Journal of Discourses*, followed by twelve other writings as evidence.

**a.** *Journal of Discourses* vol. 1 p.50. (Sermon by Brigham Young) “Now hear it, O inhabitants of the earth, Jew and Gentile, Saint and sinner! When our father Adam came into the garden of Eden, he came into it with a *celestial body*, and brought Eve, *one of his wives*, with him. He helped to make and organize this world. He is Michael, *the Archangel*, the Ancient of Days! about whom holy men have written and spoken He *is our* Father *and our* God, *and the only God with whom* we *have to do*. Every man upon the earth, professing Christians or non-professing must hear it, and *will know it sooner or later*.” (italics and small caps are in the original)

**b.** *Journal of Discourses* vol. 1 p.51. (same sermon) “Jesus, our elder brother, was begotten in the flesh by the same character that was in the Garden of Eden, and who is our Father in Heaven.”

**Note** that Mormons often respond that this is a printing error. It is interesting to note that the volumes of the great Christian preacher Charles H. Spurgeon were published about the same time, and there were no printer’s errors saying some created being was God in Spurgeon’s works. Following is corroborating evidence that the Mormon prophet really said this.

**1.** Wilford Woodruff’s *Journal* under 2/19/1854. (Look in the BYU Library)

**2.** *Deseret Evening News* 6/14/1873

**3.** *Deseret Evening News* 6/18/1873

**4.** *Diary of Hosea Stout: On the Frontier* vol. 2 p.438.

**5.** *The Millennial Star* vol. 16 p.543.

**6.** *The Millennial Star* vol. 15 p.769-770. one and a half years after this.

**7.** *Journal of John Nuttall* vol. 1 pp.18-21.

**8.** *Diary Journal of Abraham H. Cannon* vol. 11 p.39 (taught for 50 years)

**9.** *Sacred Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* 1856 p.375

**10**. *Women of Mormondom* p.179

**11.** *Journal of Discourses* vol. 4 p.1 (President Heber C. Kimball is speaking on 6/29/1856)

“...and I also know that if we are not one with brother Brigham, our leader, we are not one with Christ. Yes, I know this, and my feelings are and have been with brother Brigham all the time. I have learned by experience that there is but one God that pertains to this people, and He is the God that pertains to this earth the first man. That first man sent his own Son to redeem the world, to redeem his brethren.”

**12**. Finally, a much later book:

*The Position of Adam in L.D.S. Scripture and Theology*: “The identification of Adam with God the Father by President Brigham Young is an irrefutable fact.” p.58

## **Q: In Gen 2:20, how could Adam name all the animals, unless the forbidden fruit was an Apple Macintosh computer?**

A: Someone once quipped that if Adam had to name all the species of animals (including 1.5 million bugs and insects) within 24 hours on the sixth day, no wonder we mistake the forbidden fruit for an Apple, hard drives and all!

On the other hand, Paul S. Taylor has correctly noted that the phrase “gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts” in Genesis 2:20 does not necessarily mean naming every species on earth. It simply could be naming the genera and families of animals in Adam’s immediate vicinity.

For those who like trivia, there are about 26,000 living species of vertebrate land animals and birds and 9,500 known fossil species on the earth. (Of the fossil species, almost half were reptiles, and 1,000 were birds).

There are roughly 5,600 living genera land animals, including 1,900 genera of birds. There are about 6,500 genera of known fossil land animals, including almost 1,000 genera of birds and 1,500 genera of reptiles.

**Q: In Gen 2:21-23, was Adam both male and female prior to the creation of Eve?**

A: Nothing in Scripture suggests this. Genesis 3:16 says that the husband will be the head of the wife. Since this was after the fall, how “male” Adam was prior to Eve does not have any bearing on anything. However, in regard to church authority in general, Paul sees it as significant that Adam was formed prior to Eve in 1 Timothy 2:13. Paul’s point would be misleading if Adam was both male and female.

**Q: In Gen 2:21-23, was the account of Eve being formed from a rib taken from the Sumerian Dilmun poem?**

A: No. First some background information, then the answer, and finally two lessons we can learn from the answer about how God inspired the Bible.

**B1.** Samuel Noah Kramer, in *The Sumerians* (University of Chicago 1963), mentions that the Sumerian word for rib, *ti*, also means “to make live”, and in the Dilmun poem, Nin-ti was the “lady of the rib” as well as the “lady who makes live” who healed the god Enki’s sick rib.

**B2.** This is a pun in Sumerian, but not in Hebrew, which makes this similarity rather striking.

**B3.** Except for “lady who healed the rib” vs. “Eve who was from Adam’s rib” in Genesis, there are not any other similarities between the two stories. See *The Sumerians* p.148-149 or *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.94-95 for the Sumerian narrative.

**B4.** Tablets from the Dilmun poem are from 2400 B.C. or later. Regardless, they still predate Abraham, who left Ur before 2050 B.C.

**B5.** This story might have been well-known in ancient times.

The Answer has four points.

**A1.** This is just one of a number of examples of similar recountings of events mentioned in Genesis. Another example is the more than 200 world-wide flood stories of various peoples around the world.

**A2.** The play on words about the rib may show that other early cultures had a preservation of at least incomplete knowledge of the creation of mankind.

**A3.** Even more than that, other parts of Genesis 1 seem almost to be written in a deliberate manner to contrast with Sumerian, Akkadian and other accounts. The other accounts present gods quarreling, in Genesis the One God calmly creates. Other accounts present the hero fighting against chaos. Genesis presents God moving over the “abyss/waters”, and commanding and ordering.

**A4.** While some similarities of details between Genesis versus the Dilmun poem and other ancient works could point to common knowledge of some events. However, it is untenable to say that one was copied from the other, not just because the common details are few, but because there are almost no similarities in meaning behind the details.

Lessons to Learn from the Answer:

**L1.** Genesis was not written in a vacuum. God does not just reveal truth to us, He reveals timeless truth, yet in a practical way, relevant to the time and culture. One reason (but not the main reason) Genesis might have been given by God was to correct the wrong views of man’s origin that people had, while acknowledging some of the correct things that had survived.

**L2.** God uses culture. God uses even people’s evil actions for His glory (Genesis 50:20). How can we even attempt to forbid God to use culture too, as He wishes. Moses was a learned man, and perhaps He might have read this story, and God used Moses’ reading to show Him what was true and what was not true.

**L3.** Most importantly, do not take the phrase “scripture is inerrant” to mean the Bible had to be mechanically dictated. 1 Peter 1:21 says that prophecy was men speaking as moved by the Holy Spirit. Thus, when different parts of the Bible obviously reflect different human styles of writing, that does not preclude divine authorship. It merely demonstrates that God used various people’s writing styles as He saw fit.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.94-95 for more info.

## **Q: In Gen 2:22, who is Lilith during this time?**

A: The name Lilith is never once mentioned in the Bible. There was a fable in the Middle Ages about a woman named Lilith who was Adam’s first wife. She refused to submit to Adam, and God then created Eve. Lilith, according to the myth, was turned into a demon that kills newborn babies.

Lilith also was a vampire in Sumerian mythology, according to *The Sumerians* p.198, 258. *Civilizations of the Ancient and Near East* p.1890 mention that the unmarried who died became a special class of demons called *Lilu* (male) and *Lilitu* (female). They would ask the living to marry them, promising them wealth, but if the living person consented, they died early.

All Bible manuscripts, Jewish or Christian, do not have any more hint of Lilith than they do of Donald Duck.

**Q: In Gen 2:22, how could God make Eve from a rib?**

A: -Any way God Almighty wanted. If God had to use a rib, and if you think God had to take away the entire rib, then I suppose you might conclude that Eve would be counting all of Adam’s ribs every morning!

Seriously, God might not have utilized all the rib; one cell could have been enough.

*735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.23 adds that if God had made her from clay, one could argue that women are intrinsically different (and perhaps inferior to men). However, since Eve was made from a rib, she had the same equal identity with man.

**Q: In Gen 2:22-23, should men have one less rib than women?**

A: No. If a man has his arm cut off, his subsequent children and grandchildren are not all born missing one arm. Likewise, if you take a few cells from a person’s rib, both the parents and their children will still have the same number of ribs.

Tertullian writing 198-220 A.D. interprets this as God “borrowing a rib in *Tertullian On Exhortation to Chastity* ch.5 p.53. He also adds that God could have borrowed more ribs for more wives but chose not to, as an example that monogamy was the norm and not polygamy.

**Q: In Gen 2:25, were man and woman originally created naked, and were they supposed to wear clothing?**

A: Yes, they were created naked, and had no shame. However, after the Fall, God clothed them, and we have been clothed ever since then. See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.317-318 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3, since God made humans ultimately to be higher than the angels, could that have been a factor in Satan choosing to fall?**

A: Scripture does not say either way, but it is certainly a possibility.

**Q: In Gen 3, were Adam and Eve white, black, brown, yellow or red skinned?**

A: The Bible is totally silent on this. Since Adam and Eve were the ancestors of us all, it does not matter. All of use are equally a descendants of Adam and Eve.

**Q: In Gen 3, why did God allow Adam and Eve to be tempted?**

A: The Bible does not say. However, we can speculate that God did not just want people who loved him, but people who were allowed an alternative, yet still chose to love God.

**Q: In Gen 3, if Eve introduced original sin, how is it that Satan committed the sin of pride against God? Am I missing something here?**

A: Satan sinned and fell before Adam and Eve. But the sin of Eve and Adam introduced a sinful nature into the human race.

**Q: In Gen 3, I have a question that I have been unable to get answered. In the Bible it is written that God creates Man. God tells man not to eat the forbidden fruit-fruit from the tree of conscience for its fruit will open your eyes to make you aware of right and wrong, good or bad. Man eats the forbidden fruit and is changed. Man now see that being naked is wrong. How can it be a sin for Man to disobey God when Man had no knowledge of right or wrong at the time when Man ate the forbidden fruit?**

A: I will be happy to answer your question. Permit me to start the answer to your question by asking a question: since the fall, how does a person know what is right and wrong? We know directly by all that God has revealed to us on what is right and wrong, and everyone has a rough idea by the conscience inside them. (Of course, a person can dull their conscience though.)

After the fall, Adam and Eve both had a conscience, a sense of guilt that they had done wrong by disobeying, and they and their descendants had a sinful nature. The effects of the fall were profound.

Before the fall, they had none of this, and no knowledge of right and wrong. Their nature was good, and whatever they did would be right, - almost. They had no commands to worry about disobeying except for one: do not eat from the forbidden tree of knowledge of good and evil. Their choice, whether to eat or not, what not one of right or wrong, because they did not know what those were. Rather, their choice was quite simply whether to obey God or not.

Sometimes today, people can have weird ideas of right and wrong, such as Muslim fathers thinking it is right to kill their daughters because they believe their daughters have brought shame upon the family, including by doing things like marrying someone whom their father did not approve of. Even Christians sometimes can get too hung up on “does the Bible permit this”. More important than asking “is this right or wrong” is “does God want me to do this” or “is this pleasing to God”. The answer will actually be the same as “is this right or wrong”, but the point should not be to do things solely to ease our conscience, or follow a bunch or rules, but to please God.

So, the short answer to your question is that Adam and Eve did not sin by choosing evil instead of good, for they did not know what evil and good were. They sinned by knowing God's simply command to them, and choosing to disobey God.

**Q: In Gen 3, was this an unfair test, since Adam and Eve did not yet have the knowledge of good and evil, as an atheist (Capella) claims?**

A: No. Is it an unfair test to tell somebody not to use illegal drugs, such as cocaine, until they have first had a chance to use it? Of course not. Likewise, it was not unfair for them to receive the prohibition without experiencing evil and guilt. While one could argue that they did not know everything about good and evil at this time, they knew that their Creator commanded them not to eat of that tree, and that knowledge alone was sufficient to make this a fair test.

Today we do not know every single reason why God forbids us to do something, but if God has commanded us not to do it, we know all we need to know to obey God.

**Q: In Gen 3, what exactly was wrong with eating of the tree?**

A: It was not that a particular fruit was evil; perhaps they could have eaten of the tree later. As Theophilus, bishop of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) wrote in his letter *Theophilus to Autolycus* book 2 ch.25 p.104 “For it was not the tree, as some think, but the disobedience, which had death in it.” *Ante-Nicene Fathers vol.2* p.104. Some also see in the phrase “like God, knowing good and evil”, as them wanting to appropriate to themselves God’s prerogative of defining good and evil.

**Q: In Gen 3, was this test sort of like parents putting a 40,000 volt battery in the living room and telling their baby not to touch it?**

A: No, the danger was in their disobedience, not in the tree. Four points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Unlike a dangerous battery, it was not the tree that was deadly. It was the disobedience to God that was deadly, and caused them to die spiritually that day, and physically later.

**2.** Adam and Eve were not babies. They could reason as adults can, they were fully conscious of what they were doing and what God said the consequences would be.

**3.** Adam and Eve had all their needs met, and they had no way to disobey God except by eating of the tree. Whether we like it or not, God gives people choices to serve Him or not. Some might feel, “God should not have done that, God should have made us all robots incapable of disobeying.” Regardless of how people feel, God can do as He wishes, and God chose to give everyone the free will to disobey Him, and to live with the consequences of their obedience or disobedience.

**4.** The fruit might have been eaten eventually. Theophilus bishop of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) taught that if Adam and Eve had not sinned, they would have matured, become perfect, and ascend to heaven in possession of immortality. Mankind had a middle nature, neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, or Paradise was between earth and heaven. *Theophilus to Autolycus* book 2 ch.22 p.24 p.104

**Q: In Gen 3, should we be proud that Eve ate the apple, as Laura Schlesinger says?**

A: No. Dr. Laura is right about many things, but she is incorrect here. Here is what she said in *Modern Maturity* September-October 1999 p.67.

“I have great pride that she ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge. Because if she hadn’t, we’d still be animals in the Garden. God didn’t put that tree there just for shade. We became human with that step.”

First of all, the tree was not just the tree of knowledge, but the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Schlesinger is right that people were not the same. All the murdering, war, oppression, and moral irresponsibility people committed happened after this. However, people are still human in Heaven, when they will not sin anymore. It is not impossible to be fully human and not sinful, as Adam and Eve prior to eating, and as Jesus Christ is.

Later in the interview, when Dr. Laura said Adam was wrong to try to blame Eve, Schlesinger was correct, because Genesis 3:6 says that Adam was with Eve when she ate.

**Q: In Gen 3, was the fruit of the tree a metaphor for an unlawful spiritual sexual union between Eve and Satan as Rev. Moon of the Unification Church (Moonies) teaches in the Divine Principle (fifth ed. 1977) p.75-79?**

A: There was no sexual metaphor with the tree, fruit, or Satan. If Rev. Moon was right, then:

What were all the other trees that were allowed?

Eve ignored Satan when she ate the fruit of the tree

In Genesis 3:13, Eve, in trying to put all the blame on the serpent, merely said the serpent deceived her. She never said that the serpent did anything to her.

See also the previous question.

**Q: In Gen 3, do any other cultures have a similar story of the first people, in a garden, and eating a forbidden fruit?**

A: Yes. Here are at least three cases.

**S’gaw Karen people of eastern Burma:** the almighty, all-knowing God named Y’wa created everything. He created two persons, a man named Thanai and a woman named Eeu, and placed them in a garden with seven kinds of fruit trees. One kind they could not eat, though. The evil Mu-kaw-lee deceived the two persons, telling them they would have miraculous powers and ascend to Heaven. Mu-kaw-lee persuaded them to eat the fruit of the tree of trial. They ate and became subject to sickness, aging, and death.

Don Richardson explores the possibility that this might have come from Nestorian or Roman Catholic influence, and concludes it did not, because Richardson found no concept of the incarnation or a redeemer dying for man and rising from the dead. See *Eternity in Their Hearts* p.77-83 for more info.

**Santal of northeast India:** They believed in “Thakur Jiu” (Thakur = genuine, Jiu = God), who created the first couple, a man named Haram and a woman named Ayo and put them in Hihiri Pipiri, which was west of India. The evil Lita tempted them to make rice beer and pour part of it on the ground as an offering to Satan. They did so and became drunk on the rest of the beer. When they woke up, they knew they were naked and felt ashamed. They later had seven sons and seven daughters. Their descendants became corrupted, so Thakur Jiu hid a “holy pair” on Mount Harata (=Ararat?), and destroyed the rest in a flood. Eventually their ancestors traveled (east) from forest to forest, until they came to high mountains, which blocked their path. Finally, they got through (perhaps at the Khyber Pass) and they came to their homeland near Calcutta. See *Eternity in Their Hearts* p.41-44 for more info.

**Sumerians:** The Sumerians believed they came from a Paradise they called Dilmun. There are not many other parallels to the Garden of Eden, though. Dilmun was a place where all the gods were, as well as Ziusdra, a human who had attained immortality. The Dilmun poem dates from around 2400 B.C.

**Q: In Gen 3, since Adam and Eve were perfect, how can perfect beings do imperfect things, such as sin?**

A: Regardless of how someone defines “perfect”, the Bible never says Adam and Eve were perfect. It also never says they were incapable of sinning. Rather, the Bible only shows that they were very good, and they were “sinless”, in that they had not sinned. They were still capable of exercising free agency and able to make a choice about sin.

Clement of Alexandria in *The Stromata* (193-202 A.D.) book 6 ch.12 p.502 was one of the first to answer this question. He said among other things, that man “was not perfect in his creation, but adapted to the reception of virtue. … Now an aptitude is a movement towards virtue, not virtue itself. All, then, as I said, are naturally constituted for the acquisition of virtue.”

**Q: In Gen 3, since a perfect God only creates perfect beings, how could Adam and Eve sin?**

A: Five points to consider in the answer.

**Tertullian** answered this question way back in 207/208 A.D. in *Five Books Against Marcion* book 2 chapters 5-9. Tertullian’s lengthy answer can be summed up in his own words: “Therefore it was proper that [man,] the image and likeness of God should be formed with a free will and a mastery of himself; so that this very thing - namely freedom of will and self-command - might be reckoned as the image and likeness of God in Him.” In other words, it was suitable for a perfect God to make creatures like Himself, possessing free-will.

**Theophilus bishop of Antioch** (168-181/188 A.D.) answered a related question, were Adam and Eve mortal or immortal, by showing that they were in process, and capable of going either way. (*Theophilus to Autolycus* book 2 ch.27 p.105)

**Not robots:** Would you have a perfect God be restricted to creating robots, and incapable of creating people that have free will? God does not create logical impossibilities, and for God to create people who freely choose to love and obey Him, God also created them capable of not loving and obeying Him. The Bible never says Adam and Eve were “perfect” in a sense of never being able to sin. Rather, the Bible says they were “very good” and “sinless”, in that they had not sinned.

**God’s perfection:** Between mankind and demons, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that God’s perfection does not confine Him from creating beings with the ability to disobey Him.

**Who’s Definition?** If someone’s definition of a perfect God is one who is unable to create people with moral choices, then the burden of proof is on them to find at least one verse that substantiates that opinion. Otherwise, that definition does not fit the God of the Bible. The root issue here is:

**a)** should you try to impose your definition of “God’s perfection” on the God of the Bible, or

**b)** Let God speak for Himself in the Bible about how He is perfect and how He chose to create.

As for why God chose to “go through the trouble” of creating Adam and Eve, knowing they would sin, see the discussion on Genesis 1.

**Q: In Gen 3:1 and 2 Cor 11:3, why were Adam and Eve tempted by Satan in the form of a serpent, instead of something else, like a lion, or a bunny rabbit?**

A: Scripture does not say, but we can speculate. Large animals could be intimidating and put people on their guard. Tiny animals might be ignored as insignificant. A snake might imply that “slyness” is OK. For many in society to go and sin en masse, many people must first be persuaded that a sin is not wrong.

*Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.96 makes the interesting point that some people view the serpent as an analogy of intelligence devoid of conscience. The snake is amazing in how it slyly waits for and creeps up on its prey. Matthew 10:16 says we are to be a shrewd as snakes but as innocent as doves.

**Q: In Gen 3:1, how could an unintelligent, mute animal such as a serpent tempt Adam and Eve?**

A: This was no ordinary serpent. Satan assumed the form of a serpent, and Satan could speak and is highly intelligent. Satan is also called the serpent in Revelation 12:9,14,15 and Revelation 20:2. There are three possible ways Satan could have been a serpent, and the simplest interpretation suggests all of them are true.

**Physical Transformation:** Satan either transformed himself or was transformed into the physical form of a snake that could speak.

Possession: It is possible Satan entered into an existing animal, and spoke through that.

Regardless of whether the serpent Eve saw was Satan himself or just a regular snake, Satan “spoke behind” this form to suggest the sly, insidious approach of a snake.

**Q: In Gen 3:1-16, what are some general things we can learn about sin from this example?**

A: We can learn many things, but here are just a few of them.

1. Sin brings death. Adam and Eve would have never died, but they were headed towards death the day they sinned.

2. Sin has consequences even after forgiveness. God forgave them, but they would still die, and they did not get back the gift of the tree of life. (-at least not until Revelation 2:7; 22:2,14).

2. Scripture does not mention whether or not they even saw death before God killed some animals to clothe them with skins. Sin could not be covered by a bunch of leaves that would grow back next year. It could only be covered by blood, in an animal that died.

3. They could eat from almost any tree in the garden, but they thought God stingy for withholding that one tree. After the fall, God was merciful to forgive them and clothe them with animal skins, but they would have trouble for the ground would now be stingy to them.

4. Even the consequences of their sin were a mercy from God. Haddon Robinson mentions that pain plants the flag of reality in the fortress of the rebel heart.

5. Even after sin, God still has a redemptive plan. Even after we mess up badly, the promise of Romans 8:28 is still true. Even in this dark chapter, God had a promise in Genesis 3:15.

For more on Genesis 3, order the 5/27/2005 sermon by Gary Brandenburg from [www.FBCDallas.org](http://www.FBCDallas.org) (Fellowship Bible Church Dallas).

**Q: In Gen 3:1,14, since the serpent was cursed with crawling on it belly, does that mean snakes used to have legs?**

A: No. While some newts have arms but no legs, that is not what is intended here. While Scripture is not specific, Satan was cursed with lessened and degrading means of moving. Satan took the form of a lowly snake, and God punished Satan with a curse that part of the snake’s attributes would stay with Satan.

When people sin, the need for forgiveness for the external act is only part of the problem. The nature of sin is often such that part of the sin clings to our hearts on the inside, and we need cleansing as well as forgiveness. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.100 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3:1,14-15, did the snake have legs before the curse or not?**

A: There are two main views.

**Yes:** Possibly this particular “snake” in the garden might have resembled a monitor lizard, which holds its stomach off of the ground, and God changed that creature to lose all traces of legs. It could not have merely gone from a “monitor-like” stance to a crocodile-like crawling on its belly, because the use of the common word “snake” would imply there are no legs. The Nelson Study Bible p.10 says, “The text … implies that before this the serpent had some other bodily form.”

**No:** The New International Bible Commentary p.117 has the view that “The punishment of the snake (v.14) must not be understood as meaning that at one time it had legs. Rather, what had once seemed natural and beautiful would now be a perpetual reminder of what it had once done.” The Expositor’s Bible Commentary vol.1 p.55 says, “This curse does not necessarily suggest that the snake had previously walked with feet and legs as the other land animals. The point is rather that for the rest of his life, as a result of the curse, when the snake crawls on his belly, as snakes do, he will “eat dust.” The emphasis lies in the snake’s ‘eating dust,’ and expression that elsewhere carries the meaning of ‘total defeat’ (cf. Isa 65:25; Mic 7:17).”

**Regardless** though, the point is that the snake who was so crafty (‘arum in Genesis 3:1), is now cursed (‘arur in Genesis 3:14.) The word ‘cursed’ is used of the snake and the ground, but not the man or the woman.

**Q: In Gen 3:3-24, why were Adam and Eve punished more severely than many people today?**

A: God did not punish them simply for their action of picking; after all they could pick the fruit of other trees. God punished them for being without a fallen nature and yet disobeying God.

The severity of their punishment seems reasonable when we consider that God punishes based on what people know, and what they were capable of doing. Unlike people today, they were in the direct presence of God, and yet still did not trust that God knew what was best for them. Unlike people today, they did not have a sinful nature, which would always be tugging at them to sin.

See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.193-195 for a totally different answer that essentially arrives at the same conclusion.

**Q: In Gen 3:3-6, did Adam and Eve eat an apple?**

A: Scripture never said they ate an apple. It was a forbidden fruit, the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, which presumably is not found on earth today.

Some think the confusing the forbidden fruit with the apple in the Middle Ages happened because the Latin word for evil is *malum* and the Latin word for apple is *malus*. However, this idea germinated, there is no Biblical root for the core of this idea, however you slice it. ;-)

**Q: In Gen 3:5-22, does Adam symbolize the heavenly spirit, Eve symbolize the earthly soul, and the serpent symbolize attachment to the human world as Bahai’s teach in *Some Questions Answered* p.123?**

A: No. People have been trying to get spiritual meanings contrary to the plain meaning in Genesis for centuries. Adam is definitely a male human, and Eve a female human, and adding this unwarranted interpretation makes men higher “heavenly spirits” and women “earthly souls”. Instead, the truth is that men and women are of equal and the same value in the eyes of God (Galatians 3:28).

**Q: In Gen 3:5,22, if Adam and Eve would be “as gods” if they ate the fruit, is there more than one God as Mormons teach?**

A: It was only after that time they would acquire the knowledge of good and evil. Genesis 3:5 says like God. “Gods” with an “s”, is only in the KJV, in Hebrew it is *Elohim*, a name for God. So, Genesis 3:5 does not prove any actual plurality. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.74-75, *When Critics Ask* p.35, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.95-96 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3:5,22, could people could know everything, like God?**

A: No. Satan did not even imply they would be like God in every way (worship, Almighty, Trinity, etc.) Rather Satan promised they would be like God in that they would know of both good and evil. Of course, before they ate the fruit they knew only good. After they ate the fruit, they knew about both good and evil. So, in a way that Adam and Eve would deeply regret, the serpent was correct. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.95-96 for a similar answer.

There are five other passages that mention knowing good and evil: Deuteronomy 1:39; 2 Samuel 14:17; 19:35; 1 Kings 3:9; and Isaiah 7:5. These show that God is the one who determines what is good and evil, and perhaps Satan was promising them a “declaration of freedom” where they would decide for themselves what good and evil were. This “declaration of independence” actually trapped them in condemnation. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.24-25 for more on this view.

Satan makes a similar promise today. In many forms of Hinduism, the goal is not to have a relationship with God, or to be “good”. Rather the goal is to be “experienced”, experiencing both good and evil. Sometimes people are surprised to find a Hindu guru who is dishonest and cheats somebody. It may be that the guru is not being inconsistent with his religion. For some, the goal is mastery of both good and evil.

**Q: In Gen 3:6, why was Eve punished for seeking wisdom from eating the fruit, since getting wisdom is thought to be always good?**

A: Seeking wisdom is not good in and of itself. Seeking wisdom from God is good, but wisdom through disobedience is not good. Christians generally have not learned and experienced all the different varieties of evil, nor do they want to do so.

As Theophilus, bishop of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) wrote in his letter *To Autolycus* vol.2 ch.25 p.104 “For it was not the tree, as some think, but the disobedience, which had death in it. For there was nothing else in the fruit than only knowledge; but knowledge is good when one uses it discreetly. But Adam, being yet an infant in age, was on this account as yet unable to receive knowledge worthily.” *Ante-Nicene Fathers 2* p.104.

**Q: In Gen 3:6, how are Satan’s temptations of Eve similar to Satan’s temptations of Jesus in Mt 4:1-11 and Lk 4:1-13?**

A: While they are not identical, Satan often uses similar tactics over and over, and that is probably because they have not stopped working.

**Eve** saw that the forbidden fruit was

1. Good for food [physical appetite],

2. Pleasing to the eye [beauty, lust of the eyes],

3. Desirable for gaining wisdom, [eyes will be opened, and like God, knowing good and evil. [godlike power after following Satan’s command].

**Jesus**, who was fasting, was tempted with

1. Stones becoming bread [physical appetite],

2. Throwing himself from the wing of the temple [showing off],

3. Authority over all the kingdoms of the earth [godlike power under Satan’s command.]

1 John 2:16 mentions three kinds of sins in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

**Q: In Gen 3:8, since God is everywhere (Ps 139), how could Adam be away from God’s presence?**

A: God’s presence being everywhere does not prohibit God from having a direct, localized presence to relate to us. As *When Critics Ask* p.36 mentions, there are many other examples of God manifesting himself in certain places through different things. These include Abram’s three visitors (Genesis 18:1-33), the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-22), a dense cloud (Exodus 19:9), at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:11-12), on the Ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 8:11-13), leaving the temple (Ezekiel 10:3-18), and Jesus’ coming to earth.

See also the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1247 for more on God’s omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience.

**Q: In Gen 3:8, since God is everywhere, how could Adam and Eve hear God walking in the garden?**

A: God is everywhere, and He can do anything; anything includes having a localized presence too. This could be God in Trinity, but early Christians, such as Theophilus of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) in his *Letter to Autolycus* book 2 ch.22 p.103 says this was Jesus Christ. Theologians call appearances of Christ prior to His virgin birth Christophanies.

**Q: In Gen 3:9,11, since God knows everything, why did He have to ask where Adam was and what He did?**

A: God does know everything. Like a parent dealing with children, God sometimes asks questions for which He already knows answers, in order to give people the opportunity to confess to Him.

**Back then**, God asked them four questions:

**1. Where are you?**

**2. Who told you (where did you learn that)?**

**3. Have you eaten (disobeyed)?**

**4. What is this you have done?**

God’s questions gently led them towards repentance. God did freely forgive them, but they still suffered consequences and did not get the gift of the tree of life back.

Today, God asks people the same four questions!

**1. Where are you?** People in sin often do not know where they are, even though both God and the people around them can see how miserable they are making their own life. “For we too were once foolish, disobedient, misled, enslaved to various passions and desires, spending our lives in evil and envy, hateful and hating one another. But ‘when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared,” (Titus 3:3-4a NET).

**2. Who told you** (where did you learn that)? People today often believe too many falsehoods instead of the truth from God. “But I am afraid that just as the serpent deceived Eve by his treachery, your minds may be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Fir if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus different from the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different gospel than the one you accepted, you put up with it well enough!” (2 Corinthians 11:3-4 NET)

**3. Have you eaten (disobeyed)?** Whether it is a fount of forbidden (and often lying) knowledge, or forbidden experiences, or a heart set on lesser things, the Holy Spirit is asking: “are you disobeying?”

**4. What have you done?** Self-inflicted tragedies (both moral and physical) do not usually happen suddenly like a balloon popping, but have the foundation of sin built up over time, like a balloon with a slow leak. James 1:15 says that after desire has conceived it gives birth to sin, and sin, when full-grown, brings for death. Even though a guilty person is without excuse, still, look back and see what choices and heart attitudes led to this catastrophe.

**Early Christian writers** likewise saw God’s questions as revealing their situation to themselves and calling them to repentance.

**Theophilus** (bishop of Antioch 168-181/188 A.D.) in his *Letter to Autolycus* book 2 ch.26 p.105, was the first to address this question. He said, “And as to God’s calling, and saying, “Where art though, Adam? God did this, not as if ignorant of this; but, being long-suffering, He gave him an opportunity of repentance and confession.”

**Tertullian** in his work *Five Books Against Marcion* (207/208 A.D.) answers this question the following way. “…God was neither uncertain about the commission of the sin, nor ignorant of Adam’s whereabouts. It was certainly proper to summon the offender, who was concealing himself from the consciousness of his sin, and to bring him forth into the presence of his Lord, not merely by calling out of his name, but with a home-thrust blow at the sin which he had at that moment committed. For the question ought not to be read in a merely interrogative tone, Where art thou, Adam? But with an impressive and earnest voice, and with an air of imputation. Oh, Adam, where art thou? - as much as to intimate: thou are no longer here, thou art in perdition- so that the voice is the utterance of One who is at once rebuking and sorrowing.” (*Five Books Against Marcion* book 2 ch.26 p.317). Tertullian also answers this question (more briefly) in *Against Praxeas* (c.213 A.D.) ch.16 p.612

**Adamantius** (c.300 A.D.) says that God did not ask Adam “because he wanted to make enquiry, but rather to recall something to his [Adam’s] mind.” *Dialogue on the True Faith* first part stanza 17 p.61.

**Athanasius** (331 A.D.) also answered that God asked knowing. He also adds that if someone thinks God is ignorant of the answer when God asks the question, they are already a party of the Manichees. says, “Enoch, for instance was thus translated,” *Four Discourses Against the Arians* Discourse 3 ch.28.50 p.421

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.75-76 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3:14-15, the Lord God cursed the serpent to “eat dust all the days of its life.” I find it difficult to reconcile with the zoological evidence that snakes are carnivores and eat frogs, birds etc. I am not trying to say God is wrong; I believe He is infallible, but could you explain what this verse actually means? Is there a metaphor intended here?**

A: Let’s look first at snakes and then at the metaphor. Unlike worms, snakes are carnivores and do not get their nutrition from eating dust. But for most snakes, they crawl on the ground; their food is only what falls in the dust, and they cannot avoid eating some dirt with their food. Not just their food, but the snake’s entire life is low, surrounded by the dirty and insignificant. The Hebrew noun here, nacash, is a common word for snake, coming from the verb meaning to hiss or whisper. It has connotations of whispering magic. Thus, the word emphasizes the whispering of the snake, and Genesis emphasizes the dust, so the image here is “once a dirt whisperer, all your days a dirt whisperer.”

The New Geneva Study Bible p.13 says that dust can mean “abject humiliation”. The NIV Study Bible p.10 says that dust could also be the symbol of death.

Now the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve was no ordinary snake; it was Satan himself. There are two options: either Satan appeared as a snake, or he used an existing snake’s body. While Genesis 3:14-15 could refer to all snakes, or one amphibian/lizard/snake and all its descendants, it could also refer to Satan being somehow stuck to that physical appearance, since he used it then.

The most important emphasis in Genesis 3:14-15 is the judgment against Satan. Just as the snake crawls in a low, dishonorable way, eating only what is dirty, Satan, who made the choice to assume the form of a snake, likewise will never escape crawling in the dust from his formerly high position in heaven.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament p.33 observes that people seeing the snake crawling and eating dust served as a reminder of the fall.

During the time of the Millennium in Isaiah 65:25, the wolf, the lamb, and other animals will be changed and blessed, but the serpent will still “eat dust”. While none will harm, and there will not be carnivores on God’s holy mountain, the serpent will still “eat dust”. Revelation 20:1-10 tells us that believers reign with Christ on the earth for 1,000 years, but at the end of the 1,000 years, Satan will still go out and “whisper”, stirring up the nations against God.

**Q: Does Gen 3:15 mean that the Virgin Mary would be sinless, as some Catholics claim?**

A: No, for two reasons.

**Eve** is addressed here, not Mary. Of course, Eve was not sinless, but there is no problem as this verse never said she was sinless.

**The seed**, that is Jesus, is the focus of this verse. Nothing here, or anywhere else in the Bible, says that Jesus’ mother would be sinless. Furthermore, no record exists in almost 4,200 pages of preserved pre-Nicene Christian writings saying Mary was sinless.

See *When Cultists Ask* p.25-26 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3:15, who exactly are Satan’s offspring?**

A: In John 8:41,44 Jesus indicates it is those who reject Jesus.

**Q: In Gen 3:15,23-24 what is ironic about the words used here?**

A: This is a play on words. Adam was put in the garden for worship (*le’obdah*) and obedience (*lesomrah*), but after the fall would work (*la’abod*) and be kept (*lismor*) from the way to the tree of life. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.59 for more info.

Sometimes the same circumstances can be a blessing for us, or a curse, depending on our obedience to God.

**Q: Should Gen 3:16 be translated “A snare has increased your sorrow and sighing” or the traditional “I will greatly multiply”?**

A: Walter Kaiser, Jr. in *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.96-97, says the Hebrew consonants are almost the same in both cases. The vowels are very different, but the vowel marks were only added many years after Christ. The only difference in consonants is that the traditional translation has two consonants missing. Either the missing consonants were a typographical error, or else the other translation is correct.

If the other translation (“snare”) is correct, then Satan would be the snare. Regardless, having children is not evil, and it was originally part of God’s will for them (Genesis 1:28) and the Fall did not change this.

**Q: Should Gen 3:16 be interpreted to mean that the woman was cursed with overpowering [sexual] desire for her husband? Or, should the word be “turning/controlling” instead of “desire”?**

A: While the word itself can mean either way, the context indicates turning, controlling, or mastering. Of all the 120 times the English words desire/desiring/desirous is used in the Old Testament, this particular Hebrew word for desire, *teshuqah* (Strong’s 8669) is only used three times: Genesis 3:16; Genesis 4:7 and Song of Solomon 7:10. Song of Solomon is the desire of one to his beloved, and in Genesis 4:7 God warns Cain that sin desires to have him.

According to Walter Kaiser, the Early church writers Clement of Rome (96-98 A.D.), Irenaeus (182-188 A.D.), Tertullian (198-220 A.D.), Origen (225-254 A.D.), Epiphanius, and Jerome, and Philo the Jew, rendered this “turning”, and they were unfamiliar with the interpretation of “desire”. Thus, the passage means women would turn away from trusting in God and trust their husbands instead. Kaiser mentions that Katherine C. Bushnell discovered that the first use of “desire” in this passage was by an Italian Dominican monk named Pagnino. While the Wycliffe Bible was translated prior to this, unfortunately, all other English Bibles from the Coverdale version to the King James henceforth translated this as “desire”.

**Five reasons** indicate it means turning, controlling, or mastering vs. sexual desire

1. Symmetry of “desire for your husband”, and “he will rule over you.

2. Close proximity of the same meaning in Genesis 4:7

3. If it meant sexual desire, why no mention of men’s desire toward women too?

4. New Testament: wives submitting to husbands and husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the church in Ephesians 5:22-33. 1 Timothy 2:11-14 even talks about women not teaching or having authority over men due to Eve being the one deceived.

5. Evils in history: Men have often ruled over women in exploitive, improper ways too. When a Sumerian or Chinese Emperor died, his wives sometimes were killed with him. Before the British came, when a Hindu man died, his wife was usually burned alive at his funeral (called suttee). The Greeks did not view women too much higher than the Arabs and Muslims: When one is given a woman, servant, or cattle, one should seize its forehead and pray to Allah. *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.3 no.1918 p.157. According to the Muslim Sharia (Law), the witness of a woman is equal half that of a man, “because of the deficiency of the woman’s mind.” (*Bukhari* vol.3 book 48 ch.12 no.826 p.502)

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.97-99 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3:16, would the woman have great pain in childbearing, or was having children a blessing as Gen 1:28 says?**

A: Both are true. Three points to consider in the answer.

**Prior to the Fall** of Adam and Eve, having children would have been a blessing with no physical or emotional pain.

**After the Fall**, Genesis 3:16 says there would be physical pain. In addition, there would be the pain the children would bring because of their sin. *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.25 says it is most likely that the pain is the entire process of rearing children to adulthood. The pain Eve felt in delivering Cain and Abel must have been small compared to the pain of learning that Cain murdered Abel.

As a side note, animals generally do not have so much pain bearing children due to the size of the infant’s header versus the mother’s pelvis.

**However,** the blessing is not totally wiped out. Children are still a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5). See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.96-97 for a different but complementary answer.

**Q: In Gen 3:16, why was everything blamed on Eve? (A Muslim asserted this.)**

A: Everything was not blamed on Eve. While Eve ate first, and Eve was punished, Adam was punished too. He had to work hard to get out of the grand what came easily before.

In Biblical theology there is no hint of Eve being made “more stupid”. However, since the Muslim brought this up, the early Muslim theologian and historian al-Tabari said that Eve was originally intelligent, Allah made her (but not Adam) stupid after the fall of Adam and Eve. *al-Tabari* vol.1 p.280,281. Also, Mohammed said in the hadiths that the urine of a male baby is cleaner than that of a female. *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.1 no.522,525,526 p.284,285,286. The reason is: “He (the Prophet) said, ‘Verily, Allah the exalted created Adam and Eve (Hawwa’) was created from his small rib. Thus a lad’s urine became from water and clay and urine of a lass [girl] became from flesh and blood.’” Note that this is not because of anything related to the Fall, but from the very creation of Eve.

**Q: In Gen 3:20, as different as people are, how could all races come from Adam and Eve?**

A: Genesis 3:20 says Eve would be the mother of all living. Height, hair, and skin color are small differences, not only in people, but also in dogs, cats, and horses. Genetically, all people are very similar. A genetic study of 67 breeds of dog in the June 1997 issue of *Science* indicates dogs all had a common origin, too.

Other verses that confirm all came from Adam and Eve are Matthew 19:4-5; Romans 5:12-19; and 1 Timothy 2:13-14.

**Q: In Gen 3:20, if Adam and Eve had not sinned, would they still have had children? (my wife asked this)**

A: Yes. We do not know the physical age of Adam and Eve when they sinned; they could have been children, teens, or adults. The fact that there were no children prior to the Fall, does not mean God created them incapable of having children unless they sinned.

Two different scriptures prove they could have had children, regardless of the Fall.

**In Genesis 1:28**, prior to the Fall, God commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. Unless God was referring to mathematics, He commanded them to have children.

**In Genesis 3:16,** Eve was cursed with increased pain in childbearing. She was cursed with increased pain or sorrow in childbearing, not with childbearing itself.

**Q: In Gen 3:21, why did God clothe Adam and Eve in animal skins?**

A: Scripture does not explicitly say, but we can see this first sacrifice of animals as a symbol that God would use sacrifice of a living being as a covering for our sin. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.25-26 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 3:21 why did God “need” the dust from the ground to make Adam, and a rib to make Eve as *Born Again Skeptic’s* p.192 says?**

A: The Bible says God chose to use those, but it never said God was required to use dust and cells from a rib. God can use whatever he wishes.

**Q: In Gen 3:22, why did God prevent Adam and Eve from eating from the tree of life anymore?**

A: There are three aspects to this.

**Discipline:** This would show to Adam and Eve, and to us, the seriousness of disobeying God.

**Judicial punishment:** God promised them that the day they ate the forbidden fruit they would die. They died spiritually that day, and access to the tree of life was taken away from them so that they would die physically.

**Mercy and blessing:** If they could still eat of the tree of life, they would carry around the guilt and curse of their sin forever. So be allowed to die, and start everything off, culminating in Christ coming and bringing salvation for all was a mercy. Novatian saw this in his *Treatise on the Trinity* ch.1 p.612.

**Q: In Gen 4:3-6, why did God reject Cain’s offering?**

A: The *Wycliffe Bible Commentary* p.284 says that while perhaps Abel brought his best and Cain did not, there is no indication of that in Genesis.

Hebrews 11:4 says that Abel offered in faith. Besides Cain having a bad attitude (as his subsequent actions showed), it could also be that God wanted blood offerings, not vegetables, as a foreshadowing of Christ’s death. See *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.45-46, *When Critics Ask* p.36, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.201-202, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.76, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.26 for more info.

*Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.99-101 also mentions that this might be a contrast between Abel’s genuine worship and Cain’s formalistic worship. Abel’s offerings of the “fat portions” of the “firstborn” were the choicest parts of the firstborn. Cain merely brought “some” vegetables, not the first fruits.

**Q: In Gen 4:7 should the pronoun be translated as “it” referring to the temptation to sin, or “him” referring to Abel?**

A: I believe it should be “it”. The Hebrew word is third person singular, which, by itself, can mean “he”, “she”, or “it”. As to whether it means “he” or “it” you have to look at the context.

If it meant “he” (meaning Abel) this would be the only place where the older brother would be said potentially to have “mastery” over the younger brother. In Old Testament times the eldest typically got a double portion, but that is not mastery. In fact, if it meant “he” one could argue that either God told Cain to kill (have mastery?) over his brother, or else that Cain by doing the opposite of what God advised had mastery over Abel.  
 If it meant “it”, then God is talking to Cain about resisting what is crouching (like an animal) at the door, i.e. temptation to sin. I have only heard this interpretation, never the other one.

**Here are various translations:**

**“it”** NIV, NKJV, NET, Green's Literal Translation, RSV, NRSV, JPS (Jewish)

**“he”** Greek Septuagint, KJV, Irenaeus

I was curious what the Pre-Nicene Church fathers taught on this verse. While Tertullian and the (spurious) *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* refer to part of this verse, they don't address this question. The only pre-Nicene writer to address this was Irenaeus (182-188 A.D.) in *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 3 ch.23.4 p.456 and book 4 ch.18.3 p.485. Irenaeus, a Greek writer, apparently used the Septuagint. While he discussed Genesis 4:7 without quoting it, his discussion shows that he obviously interpreted it as “he”. Irenaeus' view is the Cain did not want to equitably divide things up with his brother, but wanted to domineer him.

My view is that it is “it”, because God is telling Cain that Cain is supposed to have mastery over “it/him”. Irenaeus completely mixed up the point of the verse here. Cain is supposed to have mastery over the temptation to sin, not Abel.

**Q: In Gen 4:10, how could Abel’s blood cry out?**

A: This is a metaphor of the injustice against Abel and Cain’s guilt. Taking the Bible literally means reading it as the writers intended. Not recognizing metaphors and allegories in the Bible is called taking the Bible hyper-literally. See the Introduction for more discussion on hyper-literalness versus taking the Bible as it was intended, and as Jesus took it.

**Q: In Gen 4:12, why was Cain not executed for murder? (my wife asked me this)**

A: Capital punishment was commanded in the Old Testament, not only in the Ten Commandments, but right after the flood in Genesis 9:5-6 and in Deuteronomy 13:10,11. However, these are all after the time of Cain and Abel. Apart from that, God knows all circumstances, and God Himself is not constrained by His laws for us.

At the time Cain was not told of any law for execution for murder, and God dealt with him by driving him from the soil.

See *When Critics Ask* p.36-37 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.258 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 4:12, was the prophecy proven to be unfulfilled since Cain built a city in Gen 4:17?**

A: No, this is not a proven unfulfilled prophecy for two reasons.

**Physical:** Genesis 4:12 simply says that Cain would be a restless wanderer; it does not when he would wander, how long he would be a wanderer, or if he would always be a wanderer. We know little about Cain's life after that. Genesis 4:17 says that Cain was building a city and named it after his son Enoch. Perhaps Cain was trying to build a city in defiance of God's prophecy, and after that he was driven out and wandered.

**Spiritual:** Cain was considered the “cursed” line, and there is no evidence he ever went back to following God. So this prophecy might have referred to Cain’s spiritual condition as well as his physical condition.

**Q: In Gen 4:13, why did Cain think that anyone who found him would want to kill him?**

A: It is very interesting that the Bible never says God or anyone told Cain this. For many moral wrongs, including murder, people have a conscience inside them that tells them this is wrong. Cain perhaps reasoned that if he killed a fellow person, who was made in the image of God, it would be just for him to be killed in return. In Genesis 4:15, God seemed to confirm this reasoning, and that is why God took extra care, putting a mark on Cain, so that others would know not to do this.

The video series, *Growing Kids God’s Way*, by Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo, session 6, has some insightful material on the human conscience.

**Q: In Gen 4:13-16, what was the mark God placed on Cain?**

A: Scripture does not say, except that it was something that others would recognize. However, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.202-203 observes that it was not a part of Cain’s curse. Rather, it was God’s grace in giving Cain a mark so that others would know not to kill him.

**Q: In Gen 4:13, was anyone else on the earth besides Adam and Eve and Cain?**

A: This refers not only to possible daughters from which Cain got his wife, but also people born after the murder. While all people came from Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:20; Acts 17:26; Romans 5:14-15), Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters according to Genesis 5:4.

**Q: In Gen 4:16-22, where did Adam and Eve’s sons get their wives? Is incest not forbidden?**

A: Genesis 5:4 it says that Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters. Incest was not forbidden back then: if our genes were pure of genetic flaws, incest would not manifest any of the 2,000+ human genetic diseases it does today.

As a historical note, Augustine of Hippo answered this basically the same way in *City of God* book 15 ch.16 p.297 (413-426 A.D.) See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.327, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.77, *When Critics Ask* p.37-38, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.27, and *Sword and Triumph*, March 2013 (reprinted in *Christian News* March 11, 2013 p.14) for more info.

**Q: In Gen 4:16-17, how did Cain get his wife from the land of Nod?**

A: Two points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Even assuming Cain did get his wife from the land of Nod, she would still be the offspring of Adam and Eve, since all people came from Adam (Acts 17:26) and Eve was the mother of all living (Genesis 3:20).

**2.** The Bible never said that Cain met his wife in Nod. Cain very well might have been married, and his wife traveled with Cain to Nod.

See *Difficulties in the Bible* p.53-56, *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.46, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.101 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 4:17-24 is this the genealogy of Adam, or is Gen 4:25-32 the genealogy of Adam? (A liberal brought this up as a doublet showing multiple authorship of Genesis)**

A: Genesis 4:17-24 is the genealogy of Cain, with no mention of Seth. Immediately following, Genesis 4:25-5:32 gives the genealogy of Seth, with no mention of Cain. There is no overlap or doublet here.

If this is not clear, you might look at a second example. 1 Chronicles 5:1-10 gives the genealogy of Reuben, one of the sons of Jacob. Immediately following, 1 Chronicles 5:11-22 is the genealogy of Gad, another son of Jacob.

**Q: In Gen 4:22, how could metals be used so early?**

A: Bronze has been found in: Thailand–4500 B.C., former Yugoslavia–4000 B.C., Greece–3000 B.C., and Anatolia–before 3000 B.C. Egyptians used iron from meteorites as ornaments and daggers prior to 3000 B.C. Also at the city of Eshnunna, near Babylon, archaeologists found an iron blade from 2700 B.C..

**Q: In Gen 4:22, is the name “Tubal-Cain” related to the region of “Tubal” in modern Turkey as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.33 says?**

A: While it cannot be proven either way, it probably is not related. Tubal was also the name of a son of Japheth, and the Tubal people likely were related to him. The “Tubal” people were mentioned in Assyrian records during the time of Shalmaneser III (859-824 B.C. and Sargon around 732 B.C. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1751 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 4:23-24, why did the man wound Lamech?**

A: Three speculations about the man are:

**A vigilante** thought he was doing what was right by trying to kill Cain’s offspring. However, God specifically showed that no one was to get vengeance on Cain in Genesis 4:15, so it is implied that they should not take revenge on his sons either.

**An excuse** for a robber trying to take Lamech’s goods was that Lamech was Cain’s offspring.

**It was not relevant** whose descendant Lamech was; the man was simply trying to rob and/or kill Lamech.

However, scripture attaches no importance to why this particular man was trying to wound Lamech. The point of Genesis 4:23-24 was to demonstrate that after the first murder, Cain and his descendants lived in hostility towards others.

**Q: In Gen 4:23-24, what was the ancestry of the man who wounded Lamech, and when was Seth born?**

A: Scripture does not say, so there are three equally probable possibilities.

**Abel** had children before he was murdered.

**Seth** was his ancestor. Nothing says that Genesis 4:23-24 happened chronologically before Genesis 4:25-26.

**Cain** was the ancestor of the young man.

## **Q: In Gen 5, could the “years” be really months?**

A: No. If they were, then Enoch was only 65 months old (6.5 years) when he became the father of Methuselah! See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.323 for essentially the same answer.

**Q: In Gen 5, does the Book of Genesis assume everyone spoke Hebrew prior to Abraham?**

A: No, quite the contrary. Genesis 11 in telling of the Tower of Babel says that after the flood different people spoke mutually unintelligible languages. Prior to the Tower of Babel there is no indication that Hebrew is what people spoke. Abraham himself probably did not speak Hebrew. He came from Ur, a Sumerian city. Sumerian was similar to Hebrew, since Hebrew came from Sumerian with heavy influence from the Arameans.

Secular linguists believe most of the Western languages, including Sanskrit in India, had a common origin around 4000 B.C.

## **Q: In Gen 5:3-29, what do all these names mean in Hebrew?**

A: Here are the meanings, based on the etymology (word-origins) taken from *Strong’s Concordance* and in some cases, what Genesis says the meaning is.

**Adam** - man. *Strong’s Concordance* says it means ruddy, or man. Genesis 2:23 indicates that Adam = man.

**Seth** - put/placed/appointed/substituted. Genesis 4:25 says Eve named him Seth because God appointed another in place of Abel.

**Enosh** - mortal. *The NIV Study Bible* p.13 says the name, like “Adam” means “man”.

**Cainan/Kenan** - fixed (like a nest or dwelling)

**Mahalaleel** - Praise of God, Praise God.

**Jared** - a descent

**Enoch** - Initiated, dedicated, trained up

**Methuselah** - man of the dart

**Lamech** - from an unused root of uncertain meaning

**Noah** - *Strong’s Concordance* says rest, and Genesis 5:26 says comfort, which is very similar.

**Irad** - fugitive

**Ham** - hot

**Shem** - name?

**Japheth** - expansion. According to the pre-Christian Greeks, Japetos was their ancestor.

One point we can learn from Japetos, is that the etymology or meaning behind every name is not necessarily significant.

A second point we can learn from Seth and Noah, is that the meaning behind some of the names is significant.

**Q: In Gen 5:21-27, is there a reason why Methuselah was the oldest human in the Bible?**

A: Perhaps. The flood occurred the year that Methuselah died. Perhaps this was a sign of God’s mercy in delaying the flood by giving him a long life.

**Q: In Gen 5:24, why did God take Enoch, a godly man?**

A: Perhaps for the same reason we bring beautiful flowers into our home. Enoch did not necessarily die; God just took Enoch with Him to heaven, similar to Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11-12. Another illustration was that like good friends Enoch and God went for a walk, it was getting late, and God said, since you are closer to my house than yours, why don’t you just come over to my house now. God does have most of his servants die to go to heaven though. This is not callous disregard, but Psalm 116:15 says, “Precious in the eyes of Jehovah is the death of His saints.” (Green’s Literal Translation)

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.104-106 for more on what happened to Enoch.

**Q: In Gen 6, why are there similarities between Noah’s flood and other accounts?**

A: They should be similar if they recorded a common event. The Babylonian account is similar in details, but very different in the reasons given. According to this account, the gods destroyed man because man made too much noise, but later they regretted this and gathered hungrily around “Noah’s” sacrifices.

One curious similarity is the Bible says Noah’s three sons were Ham, Shem, and Japheth. The Aryan *Institutes of Manu* say Satyaurata survived the flood with three sons: Jyapeta, Sharma, and C’harma. The Greek writer Aristophanes records the Greek tradition that Japetos (Iepetus the Titan) was the ancestor of the Greeks. All of this is corroborating evidence of a common event.

**Q: Does Gen 6:3 mean that God’s Spirit might leave someone and never come back?**

A: No. Genesis 6:3 is saying that the spirit given by God will leave a person’s physical body after 120 years.

**Q: Does Gen 6:3 man’s lifespan henceforth would only be 120 years, or that there would be 120 years of grace prior to the flood?**

A: It could be either way, because there is no evidence against either view. Either one could be correct according to *The NIV Study Bible* p.14, the *New International Bible Commentary* p.120. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.77 favors it being the lifespan of man. It says the view that it was the time until the flood was taught by Luther, Calvin, and *The Scofield Bible*. *The New Geneva Study Bible* p.18 mentions both views, but favors the years until the flood.

**Q: In Gen 6:3, did God set our lifespan at 120 years, or only 70 to 80 years as Ps 90:19 says?**

A: Some things are hard to understand until you see that God is free to set different rules at different times. The average lifespan of people has changed. God set the average lifespan was 120 years just prior to the flood. Much later, Psalms 90:10 shows that it was shortened. God it is said that a man lives to be 70 years, 80 if he has the strength. A plot of the lifespans given in Genesis decreases in an exponential curve.

Scientists are not sure of all the mechanisms of aging: microbes do not age. While DNA demethylation might be one mechanism, the dominant mechanism appears to be shortening of DNA strands. Every time the DNA in a cell in an animal divides some of the ends are shortened. Now there is extraneous material on the ends, and microbes have an enzyme, telomerase, that restores the ends. However, telomerase does not appear to restore the ends of DNA in animals.

See *When Critics Ask* p.41 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.424 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 6:3, how does this reconcile with paleontologists who say ancient people lived shorter lives?**

A: There are some flaws in this particular assertion of scientism that poses as science.

**1.** Notice that they never mention the basis on which they claim people had shorter lifespans.

**2.** They present no evidence that they have a statistically valid and unbiased sample. For example, a hypothetical future paleontologist, centuries from now, could dig up the refuse from a couple of abortion clinics, and “prove” that our average lifespan was less than one year. This “proof” would be statistically biased, too.

**3.** Lifespan estimates should say whether they include or exclude infant mortality. For example, in the 1970’s, the lifespan in many central African countries was less than 30 years. Yet, if you went to the country, you would still see many elderly people. If there was a hypothetical country, where every toddler lived to be a 60 years old, but 2/3 of all babies died, the average lifespan would be only 20 years.

**Q: In Gen 6:3, since God could never become flesh, how could Jesus come to earth? (An atheist asked this)**

A: Genesis 6:3 says no such thing. It simply says that men are indeed flesh. Now it is true that God is Spirit, and Jesus emptied Himself to come to earth in the flesh, but Genesis 6:3 itself neither confirms or denies anything about God coming in the flesh.

## **Q: In Gen 6:2,4-5, who were the Nephilim or “Sons of God”?**

A: Nephilim means “sons of God” and here are some theories of why people called them that.

**Godly line of Seth**, or believers who sinned by marrying unbelievers from Cain. *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.65,348 advocates this, and says this was Scofield’s view. This view goes as far back as Julius Africanus writing in 232-245 A.D., in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* volume 6 fragment 2 p.131. *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.28 mentions this view, as well as the “Some demonic beings” view.

**Mighty kings** is the interpretation of the Aramaic Targum.

**Another race** such as Neanderthals, Denisovans, or possibly Homo erectus.

**Technologically advanced:** The skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.73 thinks that the Israelites called them giants because of their high walls and technologically advanced weapons.

**Children of women and demon-possessed men**.

**Some demonic beings could interbreed** was the belief of the Jews Philo, Josephus (<100 A.D.), and the writer of 1 Enoch (chapter 6). Christians who taught this included *Second Apology of Justin Martyr* ch.5 p.190, Tertullian’s *On the Veiling of Virgins* ch.7 p.32 (198-220 A.D.), *The Instructions of Commodianus* (c.240 A.D.) ch.3 p.203, and Ambrose of Milan (c.378 A.D.). Augustine of Hippo in *City of God* (413-426 A.D.) book 15 ch.23 p.303-304 acknowledges that earlier Christians held this view, but points out that Genesis 6:3 goes against this view, because God says that His spirit will not contend with man forever, which would make no sense if it was just demons doing these things. See *Difficulties in the Bible* p.186 for more info on this view.

Perhaps this was Satan’s attempt to alter our gene pool. However, if demons could interbreed how could Jesus half-way atone for half-men, half-demons? Hank Hanegraaff mentioned this on the excellent radio show, the Bible Answer Man 10/29/97. See also *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.46-47, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* p.35, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.79-80, *When Critics Ask* p.40-41, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.106-108, and *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.208-209 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 6:6, how does God repent?**

A: The word can also be translated “grieved.” God expresses His emotions in time as events occur. Jeremiah 15:8 goes into detail on this. Also see the discussion on Genesis 20:3,6, *When Critics Ask* p.41,161, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.205-206, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.108-109, and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.80-81,173-174 for more extensive answers.

**Q: In Gen 6:9, how was Noah perfect in his generation?**

A: There is no indication that perfect here means sinless perfection. Rather, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.109-111 mentions that the Hebrew word means “conformity to the standard, and the original idea may well have been to be straight. The same word, with different vowel markings, is used in Leviticus 19:15 to judge your neighbor fairly”.

**Q: In Gen 6:12, since *all* had corrupted their ways, how could Noah be blameless in Gen 6:9 and Gen 7:1?**

A: The context clearly shows that “all” means with the exception of Noah and his family. Note that Noah’s father Lamech died in the year of the flood too.

**Q: In Gen 6:13 and 7:1, how did Noah know God was speaking to him, since He never saw God?**

A: Many times, people who have many years of relationship with God know when God is speaking to them. See 1 Kings 19:11-13 for another example.

The only warning people had of a flood was Noah, the guy who build a boat in a desert. From Noah’s perspective, he would either be the greatest hero or the greatest fool of his generation had even seen. He would not be anything in-between. That is the nature of great faith in God. (Sermon by Bill Counts 11/5/2005)

**Q: In Gen 6:14, how could Noah build such a large ark?**

A: He had a 100 years to build it with his three sons, and possibly some hired help. The ark was about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. It held 101,250 square feet. The is 1,103 cubic feet per year. A 10 foot by 15 foot by 6 2/3 foot stall is 1,000 cubic feet. According to *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.215-216, the Queen Elizabeth 2 is 963 feet (294m) long, 105.3 feet (32.09m) wide, and 171.3 feet (52.5m high). So, the ark was smaller than the Queen Elizabeth 2, except that the ark did not have a deep keel.

See also the next two questions for more info.

**Q: In Gen 6:14, how long were some other ancient boats?**

A: In ancient times a Roman boat was found in Britain 100 ft long, and later Viking ships were also long, with the longest known being the Roskilde ship at 115 ft. In the age of exploration the ships of the line could be 200 ft long, and later clipper ships were typically 150-250 ft long. The longest clipper ship, called the Great Republic, was 302 ft long. While there were a few metal clipper ships in Europe, most clipper ships were wood with metal reinforcements on the frame and inner keel.

Of course, they did not have 100 years to build those boats. Also, while most boats are built out of oak because it is strong, other woods, just as teak, ebony, Brazilian blackheart, and cocobolo (in South America) are much stronger. The ark was not built out of oak but gopherwood. We are not sure what gopherwood is; two theories are a very hard wood (perhaps still existing today under a different name or perhaps extinct today.) A second theory is that gopher wood was a mechanical way of pressing the wood to harden it so that it would hold up better. Finally, being built out of gopherwood does not mean it did not have other pieces, such as perhaps metal nails, bracing, etc. Genesis 4:22 shows they had bronze and iron (probably meteoritic) tools long before Noah.

**Q: In Gen 6:14, how do we know that a cubit is 17.5 inches?**

A: According to *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.215-216, when King Hezekiah had Siloam tunnel built, around 700 B.C.. His workers carved that it so that it was 1,200 cubits long. Dividing the length in inches by 1,200 cubits, gave about 17.5 inches per cubit. Of course, a cubit in the time of Moses could have been somewhat larger or smaller. That would make the ark somewhat larger or smaller.

**Q: In Gen 6:14 how could the ark survive Noah’s flood?**

A: There are at least three reasons.

**Gopher wood** might have been a strong species of wood, but it might be specially treated wood, too. Heavy wood is a good choice, because it has flexibility. Genesis 4:22 shows they had bronze and iron before Noah.

**The shape** was ideal for rough waters (1 by 1.67 by 10).

**God could**, of course, also supernaturally protect the ark as needed.

See *When Critics Ask* p.42 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 6:19, was Noah to bring two of each creature, or seven pairs of every clean animal as Gen 7:2 says? But did only one pair of each go in Gen 7:8-9?**

A: All are true; Genesis 6:19 does not specifically mention the clean animals. Noah was to bring two of all kinds, and in addition he was to bring seven of the clean ones. Genesis 6:19 says “two”; it does not say, “no more than two.” The extra animals were for food and to sacrifice in Genesis 8:20. This is not an imprecision on the Bible’s part as much as an example of a way God teaches us. God makes sure we understand the general concept “two to replenish”, and then adds a second concept: “seven extra to sacrifice.” It is similar to students learning arithmetic. They first learn how to subtract a smaller number from the larger number. Only later do they learn about negative numbers and that you can subtract a larger number from a smaller number.

Genesis 7:8-9 does not say exactly one pair of each kinds of animal. It says, “pairs of animals”, which would include both the one pair of unclean animals, and all the pairs of the clean ones.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.111-112 *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.81-82, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.135-136, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.30-31 for more info.

**Q: Does Gen 6:19-20 come from a “priestly” source around 450 B.C., and Gen 7:2-3 come from an “Yahwistic” source around 850 B.C.?**

A: As *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.111-112 points out there is no evidence that they ever were two separate stories, except for repeated occurrence. However, repetition is a literary technique for reinforcing a point. Back then, they may not have had the modern adage, “Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them”, but they were definitely aware of the effectiveness of repetition, as even a brief look at Psalms or Proverbs shows.

It is difficult for liberals to say the story of Noah’s flood was from either 850 B.C. or 450 B.C., as the Sumerian *Gilgamesh Epic* has a few of the same details about a worldwide flood, and it was written before 2500 B.C. (A Babylonian copy of Table 11 of the 12-table epic was in Ashurbanipal’s palace in Nineveh. A photograph of it is in the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.6126.)

To be fair though, the liberal JEPD theory that Noah’s flood came from two sources was from the nineteenth century, before the Gilgamesh Epic was known to the modern world. The only reason this question is addressed in this work is that there are still a number of liberal “Christians” who believe in the JEPD theory.

**Q: Does Gen 7 cast aspersions to the character of God and His concept of justice? God destroyed all mankind because he "repented" of making him. In essence, God admitted to making a mistake, and in order to correct that mistake, he plays judge, jury, and executioner, and annihilates all mankind a la "Robo-Cop" without a trial, thus committing genocide. I have no doubt that there was evil, but how evil is a one-year-old child or an unborn fetus?**  
A: Not at all, though it might blow away some people’s “soft” conceptions of God. Everybody who has ever lived, if they are not on the earth now, has died (with only two exceptions). The issue is not that they died, but when they died, and if they were allowed to have any descendants. God felt the emotion of grief, seeing what the world was like in Noah’s time. Like it or not, God is a judge. He also is a jury, and yes, an executioner. God has the right, and He exercises the right, of determining when and how people die.

**Q: In Gen 7:1, did the other people have “no chance” to repent as atheists have claimed?**

A: No, a century is plenty of time for repentance. As they saw the ark being built, they could listen to Noah, a “preacher of righteousness” (1 Peter 3:20). It took 100 years to build the ark, and over hundred years is ample time to have a chance to turn to God. Perhaps this is one reason 1 Peter 3:20 says God was waiting patiently while the ark was being built.

**Q: In Gen 7:2, how could Noah know how to take the clean animals, since there was no Old Testament law yet?**

A: Noah did not have the Old Testament scriptures; rather, Noah had God Himself talking to Him. While we do not know exactly how much God taught Noah about what would be in the Mosaic Law, God certainly knew Himself, and was capable of communicating to Noah of which animals Noah should take seven.

In this one-on-one conversation with Noah, we do not know whether or not God used the identical definition of clean that is in the Mosaic Law. Regardless, Noah was told which animals to take.

There is a lesson for us in this question. Whenever God tells us to do something we usually do not know every single detail about everything. We can procrastinate or we can simply obey what we know, and trust God to correct us if needed as we are obeying. If we wait until we know every single detail first, we will probably never obey.

**Q: In Gen 7:2, was Noah to take seven pairs of clean animals, or just two pairs of clean animals as the Bible critic Bart Ehrman (*Jesus, Interrupted* p.10) claims Gen 7:9-10 indicates?**

A: Ehrman might have had his notes mixed up here. Genesis 7:2 says seven pairs of the clean animals, and one pair of the unclean animals. Genesis 7:8-10 says, “And they went in to Noah into the ark, male and female of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean, and of fowl, and of every thing that creeps on the earth, (9) two by two, as God had commanded Noah. (10) And in time, after the seven days, the waters of the flood came into being on the earth.” (Green’s Literal Translation)

Genesis 7:9-10 says nothing about how many animals. Genesis 7:8 says that “pairs” (plural) of animals (plural) came. There were multiple pairs, one per kind of unclean animals. There were also multiple pairs of clean animals. In Genesis 7:8 there was no reason to be more specific on the number of pairs here, because six verses earlier it told us how many pairs.

**Q: In Gen 7:4 - 8:12, what is unusual about the literary structure here?**

A: This is called a chiasm, which is common in ancient Hebrew literature, in which each statement (except sometimes the middle one) have a symmetrical mirror statement. Here is the structure

7:4 - 7 days to wait for the flood

7:10 - - 7 days to wait for the flood

7:17a - - - 40 days of flood

7:24 - - - - 150 days of the waters rising

8:3 - - - - 150 days of waters retreating

8:6 - - - 40 days of waiting

8:10 - - 7 days of waiting

8:12 - 7 days of waiting

In addition, Genesis 7:21-23a is a chiasm within this chiasm.

- All the flesh died

- - Birds

- - - domestic animals and wild animals

- - - - swarmers

- - - - - Human beings

- - - - - - everything on dry land

- - - - - - all living things on the face of the ground

- - - - - Human beings

- - - - Animals

- - - Creepers

- - birds of the air,

- they were blotted out.

See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.90 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 7:12,24, did the flood last 40 days, or 150?**

A: Genesis 7:12 says it rained from the sky for 40 days, but the waters flooded the earth for a total of 150 days. See *When Critics Ask* p.42 and *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament* p.36.

**Q: In Gen 8, why does the Bible apparently teach that mankind only goes back about 6,000 years?**

A: According to radioactive dating methods, the first humans, whom scientists call Cro-Magnon man, lived from about 400,000 years ago to today. Neanderthals were descended from Cro-Magnon man and lived from 130/100,000 years ago to 35/30,000 years ago.

However, regardless of when God created man, the genealogies in Genesis allow for indeterminate gaps, as the word “son” also means “descendant”, and the word “father” also means ancestor. Isaiah 51:2 says Abraham is the father of the Jews, and the Jews told Jesus Abraham was their father in John 8:39.

As a sidenote, we can say for sure that the world was created in six days, but how long is one of God’s days? 2 Peter 3:8 says a day with the Lord is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like a day. Psalm 90:4 says a thousand years in God’s sight are like a day or a watch in the night. Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* book 5 ch.23.2 (182-188 A.D.) p.551-552 interprets one of the Lord’s days in Genesis as 1,000 years.

**Q: In Gen 8:1 and Ex 6:5, how could God “remember” unless He first forgot?**

A: God is all-knowing. While Noah may have felt forgotten, this is just an expression that God did not forget Noah. When we remember someone on their anniversary or birthday, it does not mean we forget them the rest of the year. See *When Critics Ask* p.43 for a similar answer.

**Q: In Gen 8:11, what is significant about the olive leaf?**

A: The leaf presumably sprouted after the flood, and olive trees do not grow at high elevations. The olive tree is often a symbol for God’s people.

**Q: In Gen 8:15, did all races come from Noah?**

A: On the father’s side yes, but on the mother’s side no. Noah’s wife, three sons, and their wives were on the ark too. The differences are not that great, given that in mixed marriages, two brothers can have very light and very dark skin. See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.312 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 8:15-21, what are the parallels with Gen 12:1-7?**

A: There are at least seven parallels with God calling Noah and God calling Abram.

God says to [him] Gen 8:15 Gen 12:1

Come out from the ark/country Gen 8:16 Gen 12:1

So [he] left Gen 8:18 Gen 12:4

Then [he] built an altar Gen 8:20 Gen 12:7

God blessed [him] Gen 9:1 Gen 12:2

Increase/become a great nation Gen 9:1 Gen 12:2

Establish a covenant / God gives them the land Gen 9:9 Gen 12:7

See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.91 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 8:21-22, will the waters cover the entire earth again?**

A: No, because Isaiah 54:9 reminds us that they will not. This is another argument against the local flood, for God said there would never be another flood to cover the earth again. If Noah’s flood had just been a local flood, then there have been other terrible local floods.

**Q: In Gen 8:21 will God again destroy all life, or will everything be destroyed in 2 Pet 3:7,10?**

A: Genesis 8:21 says God promised not to destroy all life “...as I have done”, and Genesis 8:22 adds “...as long as the earth endures.” God will destroy the earth with fire, sparing believers. See *When Critics Ask* p.43 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 8:22, why do we still have famines?**

A: Genesis 8:22 says that harvest and seed time will not cease. While there were many famines, there has been no worldwide, permanent famine. See *When Critics Ask* p.43-44 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 9, how could all the animals go back to the same place they came from?**

A: Christians disagree on whether the flood occurred 2600 to 3000 B.C., about 7000 B.C., about 14,000 B.C. or almost a million years ago. Those who believe the flood occurred from 2600 to 3000 B.C. believe archaeology and radioactive methods are jumbled up, so there would be no data to say whether the animals returned to the same place they came from or not.

However, if the flood occurred about 14,000 years ago, all of the animals did not stay in the same place. A land bridge connected America and Asia. After that, mammoths and horses died out in the Americas.

However, regardless of when the flood occurred, all Christians can agree that God has the power to influence the animals to go where he wants.

**Q: In Gen 9:3, can people eat meat, or only vegetables?**

A: Genesis 1:29 said Adam could eat fruits and vegetables. After the flood, Genesis 9:3 said we now could eat meat. See the discussion on Genesis 1:28 and *When Critics Ask* p.44 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 9:4 and Acts 15:28-29, is eating blood prohibited today?**

A: Some say no, because the Christ superseded the law, and in Acts 10:11-16, all “foods” were called clean.

Some say yes, because this was given prior to the Mosaic Law in Genesis 9:4. In Acts 15:20,28-29 the early, apostolic church believed taught Christians should abstain from blood. Of course, miniscule amounts of blood are OK, because Jews were permitted to eat game they hunted and [rapidly] drained in the field in Leviticus 17:13. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.84-86 for this view.

**Q: In Gen 9:4, Lev 7:26-27, Lev 17:11-12, and Dt 12:16,23-25, does the prohibition on eating blood mean people should never have blood transfusions, as Jehovah’s Witnesses teach?**

A: No. We should not be cannibals, yet organ transplants are OK. Likewise, people were told not to eat blood, and blood transfusions are OK.

As *Jehovah’s Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse* p.22-23 points out, even the Jehovah’s Witness Watchtower organization did not ban blood transfusions until 1944. In 1967, they also banned organ transplants (*Watchtower* magazine 12/15/67 p.702-704). Then they changed their mind and allowed them in 1980 (*Watchtower* magazine 3/15/1980 p.31). They also did not allow vaccinations from 1931 to 1952.

See *When Cultists Ask* p.26-27, 39-40 for more info, and *Jehovah’s Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse* p.22-23 and *Answering Jehovah’s Witnesses* p.48-53 for more extensive discussion.

## **Q: Does Gen 9:6 forbid executing criminals today?**

A: Not at all. Genesis 9:6 both prohibits only murder, and commanded execution as punishment for murderers. Remember that Genesis was one of the books of Moses, and in the Exodus through Deuteronomy a number of crimes had a punishment by execution. See also the next question.

## **Q: Does Gen 9:6 speak of capital punishment?**

A: It definitely speaks of capital punishment. It means execution and not mere physical death that happens to non-murderers and murderers equally.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.114-116 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.31 for a discussion of the Hebrew.

**Q: In Gen 9:12-13, does the rainbow as a sign of God’s covenant show that there were no rainbows before the flood?**

A: It implies this but does not prove it. As *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.220-221 says, God using a sign does not automatically prove it did not exist before. For example, the rite of circumcision was practiced before Abraham by other peoples, including the Egyptians and Ethiopians (Herodotus in his *History* book 2 ch.104 p.69). Egyptians practiced it according to *Epistle of Barnabas* (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.9 p.142. “Yea, the Egyptians also practice circumcision.”

**Q: In Gen 9:20-21, how could a godly man like Noah get drunk?**

A: First, the Bible does not hide the fact that people of God sin too. Second, with lower air pressure near the top of a mountain after the flood, it is easier to get drunk.

**Q: In Gen 9:20-21, why is this sad story in the Bible of Noah getting drunk?**

A: The Bible not only shows us why it is important to do what is right, but it also provides real examples of consequences of doing wrong. Clement of Alexandria (193-217/220 A.D.) answers this very clearly. “Noah’s intoxication was recorded in writing, that, with the clear and written description of his transgression before us, we might guard with all our might against drunkenness.” *The Instructor* book 2 ch.2 p.246.

**Q: In Gen 9:21-25, was Genesis a scaled-down version of an original story where Ham castrated Noah to prevent him from having more sons, similar to the Greek myth of Chronos castrating his father Uranus as an atheist (Capella) suggested?**

A: No, there is no hint of castration, here. As for Greek culture, bear in mind that the only Greek culture during the time of Moses was the early Mycenean Greeks. Much of what we know of Greek mythology was after that time. For reference, the Trojan War of Homer was around 1200 B.C., some 450 years after the Exodus.

Therefore, probably no borrowing took place here. If one still insists that there was borrowing, the later has to borrow from the earlier, and the Greek story here likely was later than Moses.

See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.221-222 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 9:22 what was wrong with Ham seeing his father naked?**

A: Sons should not freely broadcast their parent’s shortcomings, and Ham’s attitude was disrespectful in Genesis 9:22. Ham learned that his own son would be a reproach to him. Ham’s attitude was mocking according to Methodius (270-311/312 A.D.) in *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* Discourse 10 ch.2 p.348 and Justin (c.138-165 A.D.) *Dialogue with Trypho* ch.139 p.269.

**Q: In Gen 9:22-23, what do you do if you are embarrassed by your parents?**

A: First understand why you are embarrassed. Are your parents actually doing something morally wrong, is it a point where you are just being picky, or something in between. You must honor your parents (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2), but still you must not condone sin. You should obey your parents in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1). That means to obey them, but when they command something contrary to God, you have to obey God first.

**Q: In Gen 9:22-23, what do you do if your children are embarrassed by you?**

A: There are at least four ways they can be embarrassed:

1) because of a moral stand you are taking that is correct.

2) because of something relating to style, personal preference, or another morally neutral subject that is proper

3) Because of something you did wrong,

4) Because of something that was not wrong in itself, but is inconsiderate or not respectful of their feelings.

For the first reason, you can simply explain why you are taking your stand. For the second reason, you should not let what is good be spoken of as evil (Romans 14:16), but out of love you might accommodate them (Romans 14:14-15).

**Q: In Gen 9:22-23, why do children sometimes not honor their parents?**

A: There is an ancient Chinese story of a traveler seeing a man carrying is aged father in a wheelbarrow, with his young son walking behind. The traveler inquired of the man what he was doing, and he replied that since his father could no longer take care of himself and was a burden to the family, he was going to throw him in the river to drown him. The traveler was disturbed by that, and didn’t know what to say to dissuade the man from this evil. Finally he simply said, “Don’t forget to bring the wheelbarrow back!”. In other words, as he is doing to his father, he is teaching his own son to do to him.

When children do not honor their parents, it could be for one of at least five reasons.

a) They see no need to obey God who commands us to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2).

b) As children they do not want to obey their parents in the Lord, as Ephesians 6:1 tells them to do.

c) They might have honored them before, because they think their parents could help them. They no longer see their parents as being able to materially help them, so why honor them. This could be children when they go off to college, or adults who do not see any prospect of wealth coming from their parents.

d) They are ungrateful for the sacrifices their parents made for them growing up.

e) They might choose to disregard authority in general.

The wheelbarrow will always be there. When either your children or others decide how they are going to treat their relationship with you, they will remember whatever you did with the wheelbarrow, and relationships where you might no longer be the primary beneficiary.

**Q: In Gen 9:22-23, how should we respond to the sin in others?**

A: In all cases, we should not give the appearance of condoning the sin, but we can still love the sinner. We should not be in a situation where we are tempted ourselves. Besides that, there is a difference in whether the sinner is your child, your parent, a person older than you, a Christian, or an unbeliever.

If our brother sins against us, then according to Matthew 18:15-17, we should first try to talk with them privately, and if that works that is the end of the matter. But if he will not hear, then go again, take one or two other people. If that does not work, then tell it to the church. If that does not work, then they should be expelled from the church.

Do not entertain an accusation against elders unless it is brought by two or three witnesses (1 Timothy 5:19).

Corporal punishment (spanking) can be used with your children, but not other people (Proverbs 22:15; Hebrews 12:7-11).

Do not rebuke an older man harshly (1 Timothy 5:1).

**Q: In Gen 9:24 should it say “younger” (NKJV) or “youngest”?**

A: In Hebrew it can be either way according to *Strong’s Concordance*. Regardless, the meaning is that Ham was younger than Shem and Japheth.

**Q: In Gen 9:25, why was Canaan and not Ham cursed?**

A: Ham learned that his descendants would be an example of sin’s consequences. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.97 says that the Hebrew form of the verb is imperfect and not jussive, “so the sense is more likely that of prediction (‘He will be’) rather than a malediction (‘May he be’). *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.32 says the same. Thus, Noah’s words anticipate a central theme of the following narratives - separation of the chosen seed from the seed of the Canaanites”.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.86-87, *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.84-86, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.222-223, and Justin Martyr’s [wrote c.138-165 A.D.] *Dialogue with Trypho* chapter 139 p.268-269 for more discussion.

**Q: In Gen 9:25-26, what was the curse of Canaan?**

A: Genesis only says that the lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers. Note that the curse is not on Ham, but Canaan. No Greek or Hebrew manuscript says it was Ham, only an Arabic translation says so. (According to the *Origin of the Bible* p.307, the first Arabic version of the Pentateuch was translated by Saadya Gaon, who lived from 892 to 942 A.D.)

As Ham made Noah his father ashamed, Canaan and his descendants would make Ham his father ashamed. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.116-118 for a more extensive answer.

**Q: In Gen 10, who are these 68 peoples and 16 cities?**

A: This is the most ancient ethnographic document we have preserved according to *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.32. Scholars believe they can identify 51 of the 68 peoples and archaeologists have found 11 of the 16 cities. Sodom and Gomorrah were so thoroughly destroyed that they have never been found. However, the Ebla tablets, written 2400-2250 B.C. mentions towns of Si-da-mu (Sodom) and I-ma-ar (Gomorrah). Also, the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.124 says that a sanctuary called Bab ed-Dra was found just south of the Dead Sea. It was dated between 2800 and 1800 B.C.. See *The NIV Study Bible*, and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.42-44 for more info.

Here are the peoples known or conjectured.

**Japheth** - Greeks said their ancestor was Japetos

|->**Gomer** - Gimirra/Assyrian Cimmerian/Greek

| |->**Ashkenaz** - As-gu-za-a/Assyrian = Scythians

| |->**Riphath** - ? lived in Russia?

| |->**Togarmah** - Either the town of Tegarama in

| Asia Minor, the ancestors of the Armenians,

| or both.

|->**Magog** - Scythians? according to Josephus

|->**Madai** - Medes

|->**Javan** - Ionian Greeks

| |->**Elishah** - Aeolians? according to Josephus

| |->**Tarshish** - city in Asia Minor or else Spain

| |->**Kittim** - Cyprus

| |->**Dodanim/Rodanim** - Isle of Rhodes

|->**Tubal** - Tabali people in Cappadocia

|->**Meshech** - Mushki/Assyrian originally between

| Cilicia and the Caspian Sea

|->**Tiras** - possibly the Thrusa (=Tw-r’w-s3), who invaded Egypt in 1250 B.C.

**Ham** - No tribe, only descendants

|->**Cush** - Sudanese (Cush in ancient times)

| |->**Seba** - Northern Ethiopia. The name of the

| | place probably came from Sabean colonists

| | who came later.

| |->**Havilah** - Either near Indus River in

| | Pakistan, or else near Sheba and Hadramaut

| |->**Sabtah** - ? probably lived north of Sheba

| |->**Raamah** - Probably the Rhammanites in SW

| | | Arabia (*Strabo* 16.4.24)

| | |->**Sheba** - Sheba in the SW corner of the

| | | Arabian Peninsula

| | |->**Dedan** - NW of the Persian Gulf.

| | Mentioned by Chaldeans and Assyrians

| |->**Sabteca** - ? not otherwise known

|->**Mizraim** - Egypt

| |->**Ludites** - ? not otherwise known

| |->**Anamites** - ? known only in 1 Chr 1:11

| |->**Lehabites** - The Rbw/Libu were a hostile

| | tribe west of Egypt

| |->**Naphtuhites** - ? not otherwise known

| |->**Pathrusites** - Pathros was southern Egypt

| |->**Casluhites** - Philistines came from these

| |->**Caphtorites** - Crete / Aegean Islands

| | (Akkadian/Mari/Ugarit/Egypt)

|->**Put** - Libya according to Babylonian and Persian records.

|->**Canaan** - Canaanites

| |->**Sidon** - Phoenician city

| |->**Hittites** - Lived just north of Jerusalem

| |->**Jebusites** - lived in Jerusalem

| |->**Amorites** - Lived in Canaan. *Amurru* in

| | Akkadian means westerner

| |->**Girgashites** - Lived in Canaan, probably the

| | Qirkishites/Assyrian

| |->**Hivites** - Lived near Tyre, Sidon, and Shechem. Solomon used them in building the temple

| |->**Arkites** - Port of ‘Arqah in north Syria

| |->**Sinites** - Northern Canaanite port of Siannu

| |->**Arvadites** - north Phoenician City of Arvad

| |->**Zemarites** - Canaanite city of Simura 6

| | miles south of Arvad

| |->**Hamathites** - One of the oldest Syrian cities

**Shem** - probably Sumer

|->**Elam** - Elamites, capital was Susa

|->**Asshur** - First Assyrian capital

|->**Arphaxad** - ? Ptolemy mentioned Arrapachitis region between the lakes Van and Urmia

| |->**Shelah** - No tribe known, only descendants

| | |->**Eber** - No tribe known, only descendants

| | |->**Peleg** - No tribe known, only descendants

| | |->**Joktan** - many Arabian tribes, or else the

| | | South Arabian tribe of Qahtan (*al-Tabari*

| | | vol.6 p.xxii; vol.20 p.xv)

| | | |->**Almodad** - possibly? a southern Arab tribe

| | | |->**Sheleph** - A Yemenite southern Arab tribe

| | | |->**Hazarmaveth** - Hadrumaut in Arabia

| | | |->**Jerah** - Presumably an Arabian tribe?

| | | |->**Hadoram** - ? not otherwise known

| | | |->**Uzal** - ? not otherwise known.

| | | | However, Uzal/Auzal was an ancient

| | | | name of Sa’na in Yemen.

| | | |->**Diklah** - means “palm grove”. They

| | | | might? have settled at Wadi Sirhan,

| | | | c.250 miles southeast of the Dead Sea.

| | | |->**Obal** - unknown outside of 1 Chr 1:22

| | | |->**Abimael** - ? not otherwise known

| | | |->**Sheba** - Sabeans in south Arabia

| | | |->**Ophir** - Possibly Somalia or SW

| | | | Arabia. Josephus and Jerome thought

| | | | it was India.

| | | |->**Havilah** - Probably central Arabia

| | | |->**Jobab** - ? not otherwise known

|->**Lud** - Either the Lydians, or else the land of

| Lubdi between the upper Tigris and Euphrates

|->**Aram** - Arameans of Syria

|->**Uz** - Ausitai tribe? lived west of the Euphrates

|->**Hul** - ? not otherwise known

|->**Gether** - ? not otherwise known

|->**Mash/Meshech** - ? Either the Syro-Arabian Desert of Mash known to the Assyrians, the Lebanese Mt. Masius, or Meshech was a mingling of two ancestries

See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* and *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* for more info.

**Q: In Gen 10, why are Indians and Chinese are not mentioned in the table of nations?**

A: First what is not the answer, and then the answer.

**Not the answer:** While Sinites are mentioned, these are probably not Chinese but from the Canaanite port of Siannu in northern Syria. Josephus and Jerome thought Ophir was India, but it is more probably Africa.

**The answer:** All came from Adam, as all were cursed with Adam’s nature. Genesis makes no claim of listing every people, and of the hundreds of peoples, Genesis only mentions the nations some Israelites might recognize. See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.224-226 for a more extensive answer.

**Q: In Gen 10, are the Sumerians of Mesopotamia mentioned?**

A: Yes, they probably are, as “Shem”. The land of Sumer was often pronounced without the “r”, and Sum could easily become Shem. For scholarly support of this, refer to *The Sumerians* by Samuel Noah Kramer p.297-298. Kramer also cites *American Journal of Semitic Languages* vol.58 [1941] p.20-26.

## **Q: In Gen 10:2, who were the Gomer people?**

A: The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.710 says these were the people called “Gimirra” by the Assyrians and Cimmerians by the Greeks. Gomer lived in Ukraine and southern Russia. See the *New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.395 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 10:2 why are the Medes (Madai) mentioned, since these people were not mentioned anywhere else until 836 B.C. in the Shalmaneser III text?**

A: The Shalmaneser III text was after Moses’ time of 1407 B.C., but silence in preserved early writings does not prove non-existence. The Assyrians only noted when they fought and traded with the Medes for horses. According to *Persia and the Bible* p.35 “I.M. Diakonoff believes that the arrival of the Indo-Iranian tribes on the Iranian plateau took place in the first half of the second millennium B.C. [2000-1500 B.C.]. But the earliest archaeological evidence of newcomers seems to date to the early part of the second half of the second millennium B.C. [1500-1300 B.C.].

**In contrast to this,** the mighty Minni people were mentioned in Jeremiah 51:27. However, the Minni only go back as far as 1200 B.C., and the Minni are not mentioned in Genesis, because Genesis was written earlier.

**In summary,** archaeology supports the Medes existing in Moses’ time. See *Persia and the Bible* p.33-50 for more information.

## **Q: In Gen 10:2, who were the Javan people?**

A: They are the Ionian Greeks who lived on the islands and in Asia Minor. In Hebrew this was *yawan* which is equated to the Greek *iaones* or *iawones* in Homer’s *Iliad* 8.685, and *yamanu* in inscriptions of Sargon II and Darius I. Ionians are mentioned in Egypt from the time of Rameses II (c.1300 B.C.). Isaiah 66:19 and Ezekiel mention them, and the Septuagint translation translates this as “*Hellas*”.

See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.885 and the *New Bible Dictionary* (Eerdmans’ 1962) p.600 for more info.

## **Q: In Gen 10:2, who were the Tubal people?**

A: They were called the Tabal (or Tabali) by the Assyrians and lived in modern-day Turkey in the region of Cappadocia. The Greek historian Herodotus knew of them as the Tibarenoi. They are mentioned in Ezekiel 27:13; 28:2-3; 39:1, and Isaiah 66:19.

The Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (859-824 B.C.) received tribute from the twenty-four kings of Tubal. The Assyrians dethroned the king of Tubal in 732 B.C. Sargon mentions that precious metal containers came from Tubal. Sargon also crushed a revolt by Tubal, the Mushki (Meshech) and Ararat. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1751 and the *New Bible Dictionary* (Eerdmans’ 1962) p.811 for more info.

## **Q: In Gen 10:2, who were the Meshech people?**

A: The Assyrians first mentioned as the “Mus-ka-a-ia” as having an army of 20,000 during the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (c. 1100 B.C.). They are also mentioned under Shalmaneser III (859-824 B.C.). The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1105-1106 also says they originally lived between Cilicia and the Caspian Sea, but in the time of Sargon II (722-705 B.C.) they lived in the region of Phrygia in modern-day Turkey. Herodotus 3:94 lists them as the “Moschoi”, who comprised one of the 19 satrapies of Darius.

The *New Bible Dictionary* (Eerdmans’ 1962) p.811 also says they are equated with the Phrygians.

## **Q: In Gen 10:2, who were the Tiras people?**

A: We do not know much about the Tiras. While Josephus claims the Thracians came from them, people today think they were the Tursenich/Tyrsenians, who were pirates. The Egyptians mention a “Thrusa” (Tw-rw-s3) people invading Egypt around 1250 B.C. The apocryphal Book of Jubilees says the Tiras lived on four islands. See the *New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.1019 and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1716 for more info.

## **Q: In Gen 10:3, where was Togarmah?**

A: Togarmah was about 70 miles (113 km) west of the town of Malatya in Asia Minor. The Hittites called it Tegarama. The Assyrians called it Tilgarimanu, and they conquered it in 695 B.C. The Greeks called it Gauraena. The Armenians claim they descended from Haik, a son of Torgom, so they might be descendants of Togarmah. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1721 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 10:5,20,31, since there were different tongues, why did all the earth have one speech in Gen 11:1?**

A: Genesis 10 is an overview, and Genesis 11 speaks of one event within Genesis 10. Genesis 10:5 says, “from these...”, 10:18 “Later...”. These imply that Genesis 10 says how the descendants later spread. Genesis 11:1 talks of the event of the tower of Babel, that occurred prior to the spreading out of people. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.87-88 and *When Critics Ask* p.44-45 for more info.

A curious clay tablet fragment in Babylon tells of one temple that the offended the gods. They destroyed it in one night and scattered the people with strange speech. See *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.25-26 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 10:6,13, 1 Chr 1:8,11 why is Egypt not mentioned among these nations? (A Christian puzzled over this)**

A: It is mentioned; the Hebrew word for Egypt is *Mizraim*.

**Q: In Gen 10:8-12, were the deeds of Nimrod an amalgamation of the feats of Lugal-Zaggasi, Sargon of Agade, Hammurabi, and Shalmaneser I, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible says (p.52)?**

A: No. While we do not know much about these ancient Sumerian kings except for the tens of thousands of Sumerian tablets that have been preserved, the similarities between those conquerors and Nimrod are remote. The Bible simply mentions that Nimrod was a mighty hunter before the Lord, that Nimrod’s career began in four cities in Shinar (Sumer), and later he went into Assyrian built four closely spaced cities there, which later became very influential. The Bible does not say anything else about Nimrod, so it is hard to make a comparison. Nimrod could not have been Hammurabi, because Hammurabi (1803/1793-1760/1750 B.C.) lived long after Abraham. Nimrod might in fact be a Biblical reference to Sargon, except that we know too little about both Sargon and Nimrod to say.

**Q: In Gen 10:9, was Nimrod a good hunter “before the Lord”, or an ungodly predator “in defiance of the Lord”?**

A: Probably the best translation of the Hebrew word here *paniym* is “before”. Like the English word “before”, *paniym* is used in many contexts. For example, a leader could be before the congregation in Joshua 20:6,9, Israel was defeated before the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4:2, and Israel fled before the Philistines 1 Samuel 4:17.

In this case, *paniym* probably means an ungodly description, as in “fighting before” This name is related to the Hebrew word *marad* for meaning “to rebel” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.42) or “we shall rebel” according to the *New Geneva Study Bible* p.25. After the tower of Babel, Nimrod built the city of Babylon in defiance of the Lord.

Nimrod being a “mighty hunter before the Lord” is a negative ungodly connotation for Nimrod according to The *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.45-46, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* p.794,

**Q: In Gen 10:9, exactly what ethnic group was Nimrod/Nimrud?**

A: There are three possibilities.

**Assyria** is called the land of Nimrud in Micah 5:6, the city of Calah is also called Nimrud, and the Babylonian city of Borsippa is also called Birs Nimrud.

**Descendant of Kassites of Kish**, who lived in Mesopotamia and ruled Babylon c.3200 B.C., and Genesis 10:8 said that Cush was the father of Nimrod. Nin-Maradda is a non-Semitic name of a town southwest of Kish, according to *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* p.794. This view is also compatible with the first view.

**Ubaidians** were very early (c.3800-3500 B.C.) non-Semite inhabitants of Sumeria and Mesopotamia before the Sumerians who came from the south. Genesis 10:8-10 indicates Nimrod was first in Babylonia, and then went north to Assyria. We know very little about the Ubaidians, but with a connection to Ham they might have been related to the darker-skinned Harappan people of India. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1207-1208 for more on this view.

**Q: In Gen 10:11 (KJV), should it say, “Out of that land went forth [the person] Asshur”?**

A: It should say, “Out of that land he [Nimrod] went to [the place] Asshur”. This is essentially the meanings translated in the NIV, NKJV, uNASB., and NET Bible

**Q: In Gen 10:14, where did the term "Palestine" originate?**

A: We do not know for certain, but it appears likely it came from the land of Philistia.

**Herodotus** the Greek historian (c.484-c.425 B.C.) The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine themselves confess that they learnt the custom of the Egyptians; and the Syrians...say that they have recently adopted it from the Colchians. Now these are the only nations who use circumcision, and it is plain that they all imitate herein the Egyptians. *The History* book 2 (*Euterpe*) ch.104 p.69

**Aristotle** the Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C.) Again if, as is fabled, there is a lake in Palestine, such that if you bind a man or beast and throw it in it floats and does not sink, this would bear out what we have said. They say that this lake is so bitter and salt that no fish live in it and that if you soak clothes in it and shake them it cleans them. *Meteorology* II.3

**Philo of Alexandria** (20 B.C. to 20 A.D.) writes “Moreover Palestine and Syria too are not barren of exemplary wisdom and virtue,” *Every Good Man is Free* ch.XII (75) p.689

The Roman geographer **Strabo** (23 A.D.) discusses the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt to Palestine, which he heard form Jews in Alexandria.

**Josephus** (c.100 A.D.) “as to what hath befallen the Jews, as well in Egypt as in Syria, and in Palestine, and what we have suffered from the Assyrians and Babylonians,...” *Antiquities of the Jews* book 20 ch.11 p.426

Also, ten pre-Nicene Christian writers (all after 135 A.D.) refer to Palestine. They are Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Caesarea (in the title of the letter), Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Julius Africanus, Dionysius of Alexandria, Gregory Thaumaturgus, and Pamphilus.

When the Roman Emperor **Hadrian** put down the second Bar Kochba revolt of 132-35 A.D., he expelled the Jews from the land and renamed the territory Syria Palestine (Christ J. Seeman, ‘Judea’, *Dictionary of NT Background* [Downer Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000], 624).

**Q: In Gen 10:22, how do you pronounce “Arphaxad”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* say it is pronounced as “ar-FAKS’-ad” with the accent on the second syllable and no long vowels. While we do not know for sure if this was a tribe or just a collection of descendants, Ptolemy in his history (chapter 6:1-2) mentioned a region called Arrapachitis which was between Lake Van and Lake Urmia in ancestral Armenia. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.155 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 10:22 and Gen 22:21, was Aram supposedly born twice, as the skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.88 says?**

A: No, but there are two possible answers:

**Multiple individuals:** There were not just two, but three individuals in the Bible named Aram.

1. Genesis 10:22 says Aram Syria was a descendant of Shem. (The Hebrew is the same for son and descendant, just as the Hebrew is the same for father and ancestor.)

2. Genesis 22:21 mentions Aram, who was descended from Kemuel (nephew of Abraham), who was from Nahor, who was from Terah, who was descended from Shem.

3. Much later in 1 Chronicles 7:34 there was an Aram son of Shamer of the tribe of Asher.

The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.122 and *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.74 also mention three people.

**One individual:** Note that the two Arams in Genesis 10:22 and 22:21 are both descendants of Shem. So, they could in fact be one individual, with the Table of Nations mentioning Shem as an ancestor of Aram.

**Q: In Gen 11, did men have such a “low” concept of heaven that men could try to build the tower of Babel up to it?**

A: This was not the view of Moses, but of the people building the tower. Genesis 11 records, without endorsement, some of men’s foolish ideas. Of course, what is a foolish idea for the masses could be shrewd for the priests to ensure the people held them in awe.

*The NIV Study Bible* p.23 lists other pyramids/ziggurats archaeologists have found with similar pretentious titles.

**Larsa:** House of the Link between Heaven and Earth

**Borshippa:** House of the Seven Guides of Heaven and Earth

**Asshur:** House of the Mountain of the Universe

**Babylon:** House of the Foundation-Platform of Heaven and Earth

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* (p.44) notes the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* VI lines 55-64 said Babylon was built by the gods in heaven as a celestial city. *Babili* means “the gate of God.”

**Q: In Gen 11, what was sinful about building the Tower of Babel?**

A: It was not the construction of a building, but the arrogant motivation of (foolishly) thinking they could ascend to Heaven on their own. At the core of much of idolatry is the belief that people should be religious however they want, in “their own way”, instead of seeking the One True God. God’s reaction does not seem to be one of punishment but rather preventing them from additional evil. Wise parents do not want their children to totally ignore the law and their own commands, and God does not want people, whom He created, to do that either.

See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.226-229 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 11, what do we know about the Sumerian language?**

A: Sumerian was written in cuneiform, and it is not an Indo-European language. It has some similarities to Turkish, Hungarian, and some languages of the Caucasus Mountains. Scholars can read Sumerian today, and they know how the words were pronounced. Sumerian had no f, i, j, th, soft ch, v, w, or umlaut sounds. They had an “ng” (like Cantonese and Vietnamese), and they did not have inflections at the end of words like most Indo-European languages. There were also a number of Sumerian dialects. Just like there were ancient versions of English and Chinese, the *Encyclopedia Britannica* mentions there were four periods of Sumerian: archaic, classical, new, and post-Sumerian. Abraham lived at a time when they spoke “New Sumerian”.

Hebrew came in part, from Sumerian. Like Sumerian, Hebrew had no “j” sound. Read *The Sumerians* by Noah Kramer especially p.306-307 for more info.

**Q: Was Gen 11 out of sequence?**

A: No, nothing indicates it was out of sequence. Think about it. If all mankind were wiped out except for 8 people who were related by blood or marriage, it is very likely they all spoke the same language. However, somewhere along the line, people would start speaking different languages, and that would happen about the time they became geographically isolated. As an interesting side note, non-religious linguists think they can trace all Indo-European languages (from Celtic tongues to German, to Greek to even Sanskrit), to a common origin, which they think was spoken in Ukraine about 4,000 B.C.

**Q: In Gen 11:1-9, why was there one language before Babel, since Gen 10:5,20,31 says there were many languages that began after the flood?**

A: Both are true, because Genesis 10 tells how the tribes propagated both before and after Babel. Three points to consider in the answer.

**Genesis 10:5** states it is telling how the Sea peoples “spread out into their territories”. This spreading out occurred after Babel.

**Genesis 10:20** likewise states it is referring to the territories of the sons of Ham, and the Hamites moving to their territories would be after the tower of Babel.

**Genesis 10:31** is almost identical to Genesis 10:20, except that it refers to the sons of Shem.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.118 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 11:5 and Gen 18:21, since God is everywhere, how did “the Lord came down to see the city...”?**

A: This is an expression to communicate that God took special notice of the city. See *When Critics Ask* p.45 for more info, and *Now That’s A Good Question* p.20-22 for a different answer.

**Q: In Gen 11:7, as far as we know, were early beliefs always polytheists with monotheism being a later development, as the skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.18 says?**

A: No. As far as we know from history, the early Chinese religion was monotheistic, as well as some other southeast Asian cultures. The early Chinese name for this monotheistic God was *Shang-di*, which is used for God in Chinese Bibles today.

**Q: In Gen 11:7-9, was the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel copied from the Greek story of Aloadae?**

A: Origen (230-254 A.D.) investigated this in *Origen Against Celsus* book 4 ch.21 p.505 and concluded it could not be because:

a) No Greek person was known to him (or us) that had heard of this prior to Homer.

b) Homer lived centuries after Moses.

By the way, there are conflicting dates about when Homer lived. The ancient Greek historian Aristarchus says 1044 B.C., authorities in Philostratus says 1159 B.C., and pseudo-Herodotus *The Life of Homer* puts it as 1102 B.C.. In contrast to that the historian Theopompus said Homer lived as late as 685 B.C.. Herodotus says it was not earlier than about 730 B.C.. The Exodus was about 1447 B.C. See The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* under Homer for more info.

*Theophilus to Autolycus* (168-181/188 A.D.) book 3 ch.20 p.117 also points out that “Moses and his followers are proved to be 900 or even 1000 years prior to the Trojan War.” However, the Trojan War actually was a little over 400 years after, not 900 to 1000 years after.

**Conclusion:** Either the Greeks picked up the story from the earlier Hebrews, the Greeks picked up the story from somewhere else outside of Greece, or the Greek and Bible accounts are based on the same event.

**Q: In Gen 11:9, was deriving the name “Babel” from the Hebrew word *balal* meaning “mixed, confused, or confounded” false, because the in Babylonian *Bab-ilu* means “gate of God”, as the skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.55 says?**

A: No. Asimov assumes that Babel is on the site of the city of Babylon. The Bible does not say the Babylonians or Sumerians said it was because the languages were mixed, confused, or confounded. Rather, Genesis was saying that wherever Babel was, the people afterwards, (including the Hebrews who read Genesis), could call it Babel because the languages were confused there.

**Q: In Gen 11:11, how old was Shem when the flood came?**

A: Here is what one can observe from the scriptures, and then the conclusion:

Genesis 11:11 says that Shem was 100 years old two years after the flood.

Genesis 5:32 says that Ham, Shem, and Japheth were born when Noah was 500 years old.

Genesis 7:6 says that Noah was 600 years old when the flood came on the earth.

Nothing in scripture indicates that Ham, Shem, and Japheth were triplets. Genesis 7:6 was a round number; the three were born, probably one at a time, when Noah was approximately 500-600 years old.

**Q: In Gen 11:18-24, is there any extra-Biblical record of Reu, Serug, and Nahor?**

A: No one can expect that we have we have an independent record of every individual. However, in this case we probably do have an independent record. The Assyrian chronicles record villages in modern Syria named Paligg, Reu, and Sarugi, and Nakhur. The Mari records also mention Nakhur.

**Q: In Gen 11:22, how do you pronounce “Nahor”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* both say it is pronounced as NA-hor with a long “a” and the accent on the first syllable.

**Q: In Gen 11:24, how do you pronounce “Terah”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* says it is pronounced as TAR-a with no long vowels and the accent on the first syllable. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* and *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* say the “e” is long, and the accent is also on the first syllable.

**Q: In Gen 11:27 and Gen 17:5, what is the etymology (origin) of the names “Abram” and “Abraham”?**

A: According to the *New Bible Dictionary* (1962) p.5, and the KJV footnote, the origin of the name is uncertain. It is a West Semitic name, and probably means “the father is exalted” or “exalted father”. In tablets preserved from the city of Mari (2800-1760 B.C.) there are names of Noah, Abram, Laban, and Jacob. The name “Abraham” means, “father of multitudes” or “father of a multitude”.

**Q: In Gen 11:27 and 17:5, how do names, nicknames, and titles subtly influence people?**

A: These can do at least eight things:

**Inform** and give a first impression to a stranger of the job or importance of a person. In one company I worked at, the majority of people, and all who had a fair amount of experience, had the title of “vice-president”.

**Persuade** people you can do the job. Why would you hire someone with a Master’s degree to do a job, when you could have a Ph.D. Of all the conquerors of history it is interesting that “William the Conqueror” was one of the very few given that nickname. While he conquered England, Scotland, and later Ireland, there were so many times where it was touch and go whether his army would win or be wiped out.

**Remind** ourselves and others exactly who we are.

**Clarify** to others who already know us exactly what our primary identity

**Obscure** to others exactly what we are doing. Think of a Planned Parenthood “counselor”, or the hereditary health courts and Marital Health Law of the Nazis.

**Put down** others by mispronouncing their name or giving them a belittling nickname. Bloody Mary was the last Catholic Monarch of England. She tried to kill or get exiled all Protestants, after some Protestants attempted to assassinate her. After she was beheaded, all Catholics in England were exiled or killed.

**Be a joke** such as Robin hood’s friend “Little John”, or the Detroit Lions football player “Refrigerator Perry”. (Tackling him was like tackling a refrigerator). The country singer Johnny Cash had an interesting ballad called A boy named Sue”.

**Build up** others in the eyes of themselves or others. Think of Alexander the Great, Alfred the Great, Otto the Great, Suleiman the Magnificent, or Ivan the Great (called by his enemies Ivan the Terrible). On the other hand, one could build up their ferocity. Romanians sought to persuade Muslims not to try to invade Romania, because their king was called Vlad the Impaler. There was also the Turkish ruler Selim the Grim who massacred many ‘Alawites.

Occasionally a Chinese mother might nickname her last kid “*duo duo*”, meaning “more”. This could mean an additional blessing, or it could mean an unintentional, undesired extra burden.

**Q: Does Gen 11:27 teach that Abram, Nahor, and Haran were born in any specific order?**

A: While some people mistakenly think a list in the Bible always implies who was born first, that is not true. For example, in 1 Chronicles 3:15, Zedekiah was listed as Josiah’s third son, and Shallum/Jehoahaz was list as fourth. Yet when Jehoahaz became king in 609 B.C., he was 23 years old, and Zedekiah was only ten years old. For another example, Ham is mentioned before Shem and Japheth, yet Genesis 9:24 shows that Ham was younger. Thus, if the Bible gives a list without saying they are in order, we should not try to read in to the Bible what is not there.

In this particular case, since Abram was 75 when he left Haran after Terah died (Genesis 12:4), and Terah died at 205 years (Genesis 11:32), Abram was not the son who was born when Terah was 70. Abram was not born until Terah was at least 130.

Q: In Gen 11:28, was Abram from the city of Ur, or was he from the town of Haran in Gen 24:4?

A: Abram was originally from Ur of the Chaldeans in southern Mesopotamia, but prior to coming to Canaan, Abram and his relatives first settled in the town of Haran in modern-day Syria. See *When Critics Ask* p.35, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.33-34 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.88-89 for more info.

**Q: Why does Gen 11:28 mention Ur of the Chaldeans, since Ur was a Sumerian city?**

A: This gives us a hint of when this was written. The Chaldeans and Sumerians of Iraq were assimilated in Moses’ time, and Moses mentioned the land of modern-day Iraq as it was known in Moses’ time. Also, Ebla documents mention a town called Uru which was in Padan Aram (modern Syria). So just to be sure there was no mistake, instead of just saying “Ur”, it said “Ur of the Chaldeans”. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.32 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 11:28, could Abraham have left from another city named Ur?**

A: No. There was a city near Haran called Ur/Urfa (modern day Edessa), a Hittite town called Ura in Northeast Anatolia / Armenia, and a Hittite seaport also called Ura near Tarsus. However, these towns are first mentioned 500 years after Abraham. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1761 and the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.602,603 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 11:28, what do we know about the Mesopotamian city Ur apart from the Bible?**

A: We know much about Ur, thanks to extensive excavations. The city was probably the largest in the world at that time, with a population of estimated at 180,000, 200,000, and 300,000. It was oval shaped, and the mound is 3000 ft long by 800 feet wide. It had a three-stage Ziggurat, 70 foot above the plan. The walls were thirty feet high. It was a wealthy city, with spectacular artwork. The people of Ur were relatively sophisticated, with a mathematical text showing cube roots.

**Geography:** Ur had the Euphrates River on one side, and canals on the other sides. The land was somewhat alkaline, but great for wheat and barley with irrigation. There were about 50 kinds of fish in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. There were no trees around, so they imported wood from 400 miles away.

**Civilization:** About 40% of all grain was used to make beer. A board game was found. The had one and two story mud brick houses, and unpaved streets. Often a family tomb was beneath the house.

**Literature:** The first Sumerian writing was about 3,200 B.C., 1,200 years before Abraham. 100,000 tablets have been recovered from Ur, Umma, Lagash, Puzrish-Dagan, and Nippur.

**Science:** A mathematical tablet of cube roots was found. They did not have a decimal system, but instead used 1, 10, 60, 600, 3600, 36,000 etc. A relic of this is that we divide circles into 360 degrees. Their calendar had 360 days, and they practiced astrology. The main Ziggurat was very well built.

**Temples:** The main Ziggurat was to the moon god (not goddess) named Nanna/Nannar in Sumerian, and Sin in Akkadian/Semitic. The main Ziggurat had three tiers. The lowest, 210 by 140 by 20 feet was built by Ur-Nammu and Dungi. Ur-Nammu lived around the time of Abraham. Nabonidus (c.560 B.C.), built the second tier, and a small building was the third tier. There were temples to E-num-mah, Nirgal/Ningal (Nanna’s wife), and the shrine of Nannar.

**History:** The first Dynasty of Ur (2600-2500 B.C.) had kings named Mesanepada and Aanepada. The Gutians conquered Ur and ruled it from 2150-2070 B.C. until Ur-Nammu threw them off and started the Third Dynasty of Ur. The people of Ur sacked Susa, the Elamite capital about 50 years later. Abraham left Ur before 2000 B.C., when Ur might have looked like one of the safest places to live. In 2004 B.C. (some say 1950 B.C.) the Elamites sacked Ur, and the city of Ur never regained its prior prominence. So, if Abraham had disobeyed God and stayed in Ur, either he or his descendants would probably have been enslaved or killed.

See *The Sumerians*, *TimeFrame 3000-1500 B.C: The Age of the God-Kings*, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1956) vol.22 p.885, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* p.1126-1127, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.6 p.766-767, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.34, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1758-1760, the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.596-604 *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.1045-1046 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 11:31, did Abram leave for Canaan from Ur, or from Haran as Gen 12:5 says?**

A: Genesis 12 does not say Abram was in Haran when God called him. There is no mention that Genesis 11:31 is chronologically before Genesis 12. Many modern biographies are strictly chronological, but there is no requirement that they be so, and often it is was not strictly chronological in the Old Testament and the Gospels. We can only be sure it was intended to be in chronological order when the writer makes a claim that it is in chronological order. Genesis 24:4 does not say, “land of by birthplace” in Hebrew, but rather “my country”, meaning where Abram lived for a while and where his closest relatives still lived.

**Q: In Gen 12:1, 28:10-15; 32:22-32, why did God choose the Jews instead of the Chinese or someone else?**

A: First of all, God has the right to choose whomever He wishes. Here God did not choose a people, but rather one man: Abraham. Later the covenant and offspring were reckoned through Isaac in Genesis 17:21 and 21:12. Later Jacob was chosen in Genesis 26:23-24. Abraham was willing to leave his culture and city (Ur), which was probably the largest city (100,000 to 180,000 population) and most civilized city on the earth at that time. Many people have some desire to do what is right, but fewer wealthy men would be willing to sacrifice their ties to their culture and religion to follow God above all, even to a place he did not know (Hebrews 11:8).

Today, Romans 10:12 and Galatians 3:24 teach there is no difference to God between believers who are Jewish and non-Jewish. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.171 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 12:1, is there any evidence, outside of the Bible, of the true God revealing Himself to anyone else in Abraham’s time, or before?**

A: Yes. First two background facts from the Bible, and then the answer.

**B1.** In Genesis 14:18-20, Melchizedek was a king of Salem and a priest of the Most High God, whom he called *El Elyon*. However, we will not count Melchizedek as he is only mentioned in the Bible, and Melchizedek could have been a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

**B2.** In Genesis 24:50, Abram’s relatives in Syria (among the Arameans) believed in the Lord.

**The answer:**

**A1.** Ugaritic texts (from the culture that was in modern-day Syria and Lebanon), also mention, a personal God named “El”, and used the phrase “El Elyon” for God most high, as Melchizedek did. Unfortunately, for the Ugaritic culture, syncretism was at work and they eventually only worshipped “El” as one god among many.

**A2.** In China prior to Buddhism coming just after Christ, and prior to Confucianism and Taoism a few hundred years before Christ, they worshipped a number of idols. However, prior to that, they worshipped one Supreme God, whom they called *Shang-di*. The earliest written references to *Shang-di* in China are dated at 2600 B.C., which are about 400-500 years prior to Abraham! Unfortunately, during the Zhou Dynasty, about 1000 B.C, they decided that nobody was good enough to worship Shang-di except the Emperor, and worship of Shang-di among the masses died out. A few centuries ago, Christians in China disagreed greatly about whether the Chinese Bible should always use the generic term for deity *Sheng*, or also use the ancient word *Shang-di*. The latter party prevailed, and Chinese Bibles use *Shang-di* as well as *Sheng*.

The Chinese Emperor worshipped Shang-di by sacrificing a bull on a white marble altar during the “Border Sacrifice” which was recorded by Confucius in the *Shu Jing* (Book of History), where he said Emperor Shun (2256-2205 B.C.) practiced it. It stopped in 1911 A.D.. Here is part of what was said during the sacrifice

“Of old in the beginning, there was the great chaos, without form and dark. The five elements [planets] had not begun to revolve, nor the sun and moon to shine. You, O Spiritual Sovereign, first divided the grosser parts from the purer. You made heaven. You made earth. You made man. All things with their reproducing power got their being.” For more info on Shang-di, see an article by Ethel Nelson in *Creation ex Nihilo* vol.20 no.3 June-August 1998 p.50-53. See also *The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits* p.24-25 by James Legge (Hong Kong Register Office 1852), and *God’s Promise to the Chinese* (Read Books, 1997).

Koreans have a similar ancient tradition of a Shang-di, whom they call Hananim. An ancient Korean Tan-gun tradition said that Hananim had a son who desired to live among people. You can read more about Shang-di, Hananim, and other early revelations that were apparently of the true God in the book *Eternity in Their Hearts*.

**Q: In Gen 12:1-3,7, how did God keep His promises to Abraham?**

A: God kept them unconditionally, regardless of what Abraham did.

God made Abraham into a great nation. Actually, Abraham was the ancestor of both the Israelites and many of the Arabs. (Genesis 12:2)

God would bless Abraham. Abraham lived and died a very wealthy man, as well as having many descendants. (Genesis 12:2)

God made Abraham’s name great. His name is in high regard wherever Christians, Jews, and Muslims are found. (Genesis 12:2)

God will bless those who bless Abraham, and curse those who curse Abraham. Countries that welcomed Jews have seen a great blessing, and those that cursed them, such as Nazi Germany have suffered greatly. (Genesis 12:3)

Abraham’s offspring have had the land of Palestine. (Genesis 12:7)

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.34-35 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 12:1-5 is God speaking to Abram here, or is this a duplicate of when God spoke to Abram in Gen 12:4b-9?**

A: This is not a doublet. In Genesis 12:1-4a God commanded Abram to do something without saying whether or not Abram did it. Genesis 12:4b-9 tells us that Abram did what God said, except that Abram took Lot also.

**Q: In Gen 12, could Abraham have written what the Mormons view as scripture, called The Book of Abraham?**

A: No. First some background on the Mormon “Book of Abraham”, and the importance of the fraud, and then proof that it is a fraud. This material was taken from previously written material on Mormonism.

Background:

The Mormon Book of Abraham is a part of the Mormon Scripture the Pearl of Great Price. It is the basis for the Mormon anti-black doctrine, that kept blacks from ever getting the Mormon priesthood. The anti-Black doctrine was altered (by the Mormon god?) in 1978.

The Mormon *Book of Abraham* was written from ancient Egyptian scrolls Joseph Smith obtained in July 1835, which he stated contained the writings of Abraham and Joseph. He did not know ancient Egyptian, which few could read at that time. He proclaimed that God divinely inspired him to translate some of these scrolls into English, and this is how the Mormon *Book of Abraham* came to be.

These Egyptian scrolls were once thought lost and destroyed, but eleven of them were found in the Metropolitan Museum in New York and given to the Mormon church in 1868.

Importance of the fraud:

The Book of Mormon was said to be translated from the same language as the *Book of Abraham*. If Joseph Smith could not translate the one then he did not translate the other, and none of his scripture can be trusted. Moreover, if the scroll is a pagan scripture to an idol god Joseph Smith would be a Prophet, Seer, and revelator of his guide, the idol of the scroll.

Here is what Joseph Smith stated about translating: “A Translation of some ancient Records, that have fallen into our hands from the catacombs of Egypt. -- The writings of Abraham written by his own hand, upon papyrus.” *Pearl of Great Price* p.29.

Proof of the Fraud:

There are three ways we know these are the Egyptian scrolls Joseph Smith tried to translate.

**1.** Three of the four handwritten original *Book of Abraham* manuscripts had the Egyptian Hieroglyphs in the margin. Of the eighty-odd Egyptian hieroglyphs on the scroll, 20, 13, and 10 hieroglyphs were written on manuscripts #1, #2, and #3 respectively. When there were gaps in the scroll 7, 6 and 6 restored hieroglyphs were added on the three manuscripts. From this we can be confident this Egyptian scroll was the one Joseph used.

**2.** Joseph invented a language of the Egyptian language. The bound, thirty-four page book, called the *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar*, is still in the church’s possession. This language book illustrates many of the Egyptian hieroglyphs of the scroll. A very similar English “translation” is in the *Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* as in the *Book of Abraham*. Some view this as one of the more damaging facts against the inspiration Joseph claimed to have.

**3.** The pictures at the beginning of both the Egyptian scroll and Smith’s *Book of Abraham* are the same. The only difference is a penciled in spot on the Egyptian picture that was filled in on the Mormon picture. Not only are the pictures copied the same, but the captions in pictures #2 and #3 referring the Egyptian idols are also copied into the Mormon scripture.

The Actual Translation:

Smith thought he was translating these hieroglyphs. Read the actual translation by Dr. Klaus Baer on the next page. (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*: Autumn 1968 p.119-120.)

“Osiris shall be conveyed into the Great Pool of Khons --and likewise Osiris Hor, justified born to Tikhebyt, justified --after his arms have been placed on his heart and the Breathing Permit (which [Isis] made and has writing on its inside and outside) has been wrapped in royal linen and placed under his left arm near his heart; the rest of his mummy bandages should be wrapped over it. The man for whom this book has been copied will breathe forever as the bas of the gods do.” (bas are souls.) On p.111 Dr. Baer stated, “Joseph Smith thought that his papyrus contained the *Book of Abraham*.”

Smith translated thousands of English words from these hieroglyphs. Joseph said this was the writing of Abraham and the word of his god. Actually, it was a variant of the Book of the Dead a pagan Egyptian magic book filled with heathen gods and goddesses, often buried with mummies.

Dr. Richard Parker of Brown University in a personal letter to Marvin Cowen dated Jan. 9 1968 said, “5. I have seen Joseph Smith’s Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar. The interpretation of the signs purported to be Egyptian have no resemblance to the meaning ascribed to them by Egyptologists.”

Fifty years ago Dr. A.B. Mercer said, “Any pupil of mine who would show such absolute ignorance of Egyptian as Smith does, could not possibly expect to get more than zero in an examination in Egyptology.” (*Improvement Era*, vol. 16, p 615.) This is still true today.

Dr. John A. Wilson said, “...as far as I am concerned I see pieces of two or possibly three different papyri and every one of them looks like a traditional Book of the Dead.” (letter Jan. 5, 1968.)

#### Details of the Pictures

Let’s look next at the three pictures in the *Book of Abraham* and the accompanying captions from one of the scrolls and *Times and Seasons* volume 3.

The writing and pictures are typical Egyptian funeral scenes of Egyptian idols. Joseph taught these images represented Abraham and the Real God.

Facsimile #1:

Hor Justified son of the holder of the same titles.

Facsimile #2

Grant that the soul of Osiris Sheshonk may live

I (Min) am a copulating bull without equal.

May this tomb never be desecrated.

Facsimile #3

O gods of . . ., gods of the Caverns, gods of the south, north, west, and east, grant well-being to Osiris Hor justified

Conclusion:

Smith’s god deceived him. Joseph Smith’s translation is worthless. If you seek the Lord, dear Mormon I pray you leave the Mormon Church reject Joseph’s hoax, and give your life to the Most High God through Jesus Christ His Son.

**Q: In Gen 12:4, how could Abram be 75 years old when he left the town of Haran after Terah died? In Gen 11:26, since Terah was 70 when he had his three sons, Acts 7:4 says Abram left Haran after Terah died, and Terah died at 205 (Gen 11:32), then his three sons would be 135 years old.**

A: Unless Abrah, Nahor, and Haran were triplets (which is unlikely), Genesis 11:26 refers to Terah being 70 years old when he started having children. Abram was not born until Terah was at least 130. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.136-137, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.378, *When Critics Ask* p.45-46, and *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.309-310 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 12:8 have archaeologists unearthed the town of Ai?**

A: No. They have not found the remains of a small town that was said to be totally destroyed.

Q: In Gen 12:10-19, is there any extra-Biblical evidence of people from Canaan or other parts of the Mideast coming to Egypt?

A: Yes there is. A tomb painting at Beni Hasan in Egypt shows “Asiatics”. Tomb 3, of Khnumhotep, shows 37 Semites coming to Egypt for trade. They had black hair, pointed beards, long cloaks, bows, and throw sticks. The *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.139 says this is dated at 1892 B.C.

The alphabet was first known to be used by Semites in Egypt in 1800 B.C. or earlier north of Luxor. (See *BAR* Jan/Feb 2000 p.12)

Camels on wall paintings on the temple of Hatsheput near Thebes also date back to Abraham. See *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.26 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 12:10-19 did Abraham say his wife was his sister in Egypt, or did Isaac do so in Gerar in Gen 26:2-11? (A liberal Christian brought this up as a doublet, showing that multiple authors wrote Genesis.)**

A: This is not a duplication; these are two separate events. Isaac probably got this bad idea from the example of his father.

**Q: In Gen 12:10-20 and Gen 20:1-18 did God condone Abram lying?**

A: No. The Bible honestly recorded, but never approved Abram’s lying because of His lack of faith in God’s protection. Even great men of God still sin, and so we should not lose heart when we sin.

God blessed Abraham because of His faith, not because he was sinless, but despite his sin.

Only God is perfect. Our goal is to strive toward perfection, which we will attain only in Heaven. See the discussion on Genesis 19:30-36. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.89-90, *When Critics Ask* p.46, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.118-120, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.35 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 12:16, what other evidence do we have for camels in the Mideast, outside of Egypt, during this time period?**

A: We have at least four pieces of evidence

1. A Sumerian text says, “O Dummuzi, provide me with camel’s milk – the milk of the camel is sweet, the cream of the camel is sweet (Oppenheim, A. (1960) Chicago Assyrian dictionary, vol.7)

2. A plague at Tell Asmar in Iraq, from 2500-2000 B.C. show a rider on a dromedary camel (Dostal, W. (1959) “The Development of Bedouin Life in Arabic Seen from Archaeological Material” In A. Abdalla et al., *Studies in the History of Arabia* vol.1. p.16, 13

3. An 18th century B.C. seal from Syria shows two people riding a Bactrian camel (Porada, E. 1977) “A cylinder Seal with a Camel in the Walters Art Gallery.” *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 36.

4. An 18h century Syrian list mentions “one [measure] as fodder for the camel” (Wisemann, D (1950) “Ration Lists from Alakh VII” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 13.

See Stephen Caesar “Science, Scholarship and Scripture - Domesticated Camels in Genesis in Christina News August 6, 2001 p.17.

Q: In Gen 13, did Lot choose where Abraham would live, or did God give Abraham the Promised Land to live?

A: Both. “Concurrency” is the doctrine that God uses events and people, even misguided and evil people, to accomplish His will and keep His promises. Abram (Abraham) allowed Lot to choose either the east or west side of the Jordan, and Lot chose the east side. While God had Abram move into the general area, God also specifically planned that Abram would have the western side of the Jordan River. God used Lot’s choice to accomplish His will.

**Q: In Gen 13, what do you do when there is disagreement between two people, or two parties, and you see no hope of solving the disagreement?**

A: It is good to first work together to try to solve the disagreement. One thing that helps is to try to look at the situation from the other person’s perspective. Then try to help them look at it from your perspective. Show them what your best alternative is if you do not reach an agreement. Ask them what they would do if they were in your place. Sometimes, like threading the needle” there is a way to go in between and give each side most of what they want.

Sometimes there is no compromise or resolution possible. Sometimes separation is best, and there is only a need to part as friends. When you separate, separate on the best terms possible, with forgiveness if needed. While Abraham and Lot did not have any disagreement between them, there was not enough grass in one area for both of their herds combined. So, they had to separate; there was no other way.

Of course, reconciliation is better that separation. But for reconciliation to work for both parties, not just one, must be willing to reconcile.

**Q: In Gen 13:8, how do you pronounce “Mamre”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* both say it is pronounced “MAM’-re”, with a long “e” and the accent on the first syllable.

**Q: In Gen 13:8, 29:15, how were these men brothers?**

A: In Genesis 13:8 Abram is calling Lot his brother, while in Genesis 29:15, Laban is calling Jacob his brother. The Bible is recording that Abram and Laban were expressing both their close feelings and their blood kinship, but they were not actually brothers.

The skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.819-820 does not see any problem with this, but adds that in these cases enough genealogical material is usually given so that we know the exact relationship. This is not the case with Jesus’ brothers, so they likely were biological half-brothers.

Q: In Gen 13:12, did Lot pitch his tent near Sodom, or did Lot live in Sodom in Genesis 14:12?

A: Both are most likely true, at different times. Being nomadic meant that you could easily move around. Lot certainly had his tent far from Sodom prior to separating from Abram’s group. Then he certainly had it near Sodom, and in the surrounding area controlled by Sodom (greater Sodom) later. Then he lived in Sodom (in either a tent or a house.). Later in Genesis 19:3, Lot had a house in Sodom.

**Q: In Gen 14:1, how do you pronounce the name “Chederlaomer”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* says it is “KED-ur-LA-o-mer”, with the u and first e short, the last e with a tilde over it, and the a and o long. The accents are on the first and third syllables. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* and *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*. It says the same, except that it places the accents on the first and fourth syllables as KED-ur-la-O-mer.

In general, in the Old Testament “ch” is pronounced as “k”, with cherubim being an exception. When in doubt on accents, the accent usually falls on the first syllable.

**Q: In Gen 14:1-2, who are these kings?**

A: This occurred around 2000 B.C., so it is not surprising we cannot find some of these rulers. However, Elam was a major power, having conquered Abram’s city of Ur around 2004 B.C. Shinar is the word the both the Old Testament and Egyptians used for Babylonia. Chederlaomer sounds like *kudur* (Elamite for servant) and Lagamar (an Elamite goddess). Cheder (=Kudur) was the first part of the name of many Elamite kings. Tidal seems related to the Hittite name Tudhaliya, and there were at least five later Hittite kings named Tudhaliya. Towns of Si-da-mu (Sodom) and I-ma-ar (Gomorrah) are mentioned in the Ebla tablets, written 2400-2250 B.C. We do not have a record of Arioch of Ellasar, but there is independent historical evidence of a king Ariochu of Larsa, a major Sumerian city. Also, *History of Israel* p.61 says that Arriyuk(ki) or Arriwuk(ki) is known in both Mari and Nuzi as a Hurrian name. See *When Critics Ask* p.46-47 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.90-91 for more info.

According to John Warwick Montgomery in *Evidence for Faith* p.157, people formerly identified Amraphel with Hammurabi, but this is incorrect. He also says that Arioch is preferred over Ariochu, because Arioch was a common name of that time. It was a Hurrian name, also a name of a king of Mari (about 1750 B.C.), and in the tablets at the city of Nuzi (1500 B.C.) Since it was a common name, any number of kings from any number of minor provinces unknown to the modern world.

**In summary,** these strange names were only used during this narrow time period. It is highly unlikely anyone would have written these names, unless they had accurate knowledge of history at this time.

**Q: In Gen 14:1-2, how could you have “confederacies” of kings fighting?**

A: There would be very few confederacies of kings prior to the fall of the strong city-state of Ur in 2004 B.C. There would be very few confederacies after the rise of Hammurabi of Old Babylon around 1700 B.C. However, between the time the Elamites destroyed Ur in 2004 B.C., and the Elamites raided Babylon in 1725 B.C., Montgomery notes that confederacies were common.

Nobody in Moses time would try to make up a credible-sounding history of confederacies of kings, because monolithic Empires predominated. For someone to mention confederacies like this shows that he had an accurate knowledge of that time-period. According to *Evidence for Faith* p.157-164, a letter found at Mari mentions coalitions of ten, fifteen, and twenty kings. In addition, at least five other confederacies are known. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.35-36 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 14:1-17, is there any extra-Biblical evidence for Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities?**

A: Yes. There used to be none until archaeologists found the Ebla tablets. They mention si-dam-mu (Sodom) and sa-ba-i-im (Zeboiim). (Julius Africanus 200-245 A.D.) calls this Seboim.) I-ma-er is probably Gomorrah. For a discussion of the Ebla tablets see *Ready with an Answer : For the Tough Questions About God* p.282-286.

**Q: In Gen 14:5, what does Ashteroth-Karnaim mean?**

A: There are two possibilities according to both the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.160 and the *New Bible Dictionary* (Eerdmans’ 1962) p.97.

**1.** It could possibly mean Ashtarte of the two horns, since this goddess was shown wearing two horns at Gezer and Beth-Shan.

**2.** It more probably means the town Ashteroth which is near Karnaim, to distinguish it from other towns names after the goddess.

**Q: In Gen 14:5-6, 36:20, and Dt 2:12,22, who are the Horites?**

A: The Horites came from modern-day Armenia, according to the *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* p.176. They were first mentioned in the time of Sargon of Akkad in the 24th century B.C..

**Q: In Gen 14:7, how do you pronounce the word “Amalekite”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* says it is pronounced as “AM-a-le-kit” with the “i” and second “a” long, and the accent on the first syllable. *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* has only with “i” with a long vowel, and the accent is also on the first syllable. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* says the accent is on the second syllable.

**Q: In Gen 14:14, how could Abram and his allies, only 318 men, defeat an invading army of an alliance of 4 great kings?**

A: Genesis 14:15 suggests this was not a pitched battle. It was probably a surprise night raid by mounted troops on an unprepared army. There would be few horses in the desert, and few people east of Egypt had camels, except for Abraham. So, a lightning attack by mounted troops would be totally unexpected from the desert. Second, Abraham was allied with three other chiefs, and their participation in the spoils showed that they were apart of the raid too. Of course, God may have helped also.

Q: In Gen 14:14, how does Abram’s raid compare to other surprise attacks in history?

A: The army apparently retreated from Dan to Damascus, around 40 miles (64 km) away, so Abram’s army won “the field of battle”. Let’s look at surprise attacks, attacks against larger armies, and finally let’s look at it from the enemies’ perspective. Some of these numbers are from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

**First we will look at surprise attacks**.

In the **Battle of San Jacinto** in 1836, Sam Houston and 743 raw troops made a raid in the daytime against 1,800 Mexican troops and won.

In the **Battle of Trenton**, Washington crossed the Delaware at night surprising the Hessian mercenaries and capturing 1,000 of them.

At **Teutoburg Wald**, Arminius the German kills 14,000 seasoned Roman troops in a surprise battle.

Now let’s look at victories against great odds.

At the **Battle of Marathon** in 490 B.C., 10,000 Greeks defeated 20,000 Persians.

At **Canae** in 216 B.C., 56,000 Carthaginians (with effectively used cavalry) defeat 86,000 Romans.

At **al-Qadissiyat** in 636/7 A.D., 30,000 Muslims defeat 120,000 Persians.

At **Pharsalus** in 48 B.C., Julius Caesar and 20,000 troops defeated Pompey and 45,000 troops.

At **Dorylaeum** in 1091, 70,000 Crusaders defeated 250,000 Muslims, killing about 30,000 of them. (The Crusaders had armor, but then again Abram’s soldiers might have had armor while the invading army had taken theirs off.)

Alexander the Great against the Persians, Julius Caesar against the Gauls and the Helvetians, Belisarius, Napoleon, and others also defeated vastly superior forces, though on a larger scale. We do not have the numbers for these armies, except that Julius only had 10,000 men when he invaded England.

**The enemies’ perspective:** Suppose you are an Elamite soldier, picked to be a part of an elite group to go on a mission far away to punish Sodom. You know there are a large number of the enemy just outside your tent, but they are captives; unarmed and well-guarded. In the middle of the night you are awakened by mounted troops from a new, unknown enemy swooping in and killing your comrades. Not only are they doing that, but if they run off your animals, or free and arm the captives, then you are doomed. You do the sensible thing and flee in the opposite direction of the attack, regrouping with your comrades later.

Of course, apart from all these factors, God likely aided Abram’s troops to cause panic and route the enemy. For an even greater example of God aiding a successful surprise attack, see the battle of Gideon and the Midianites in Judges 7:6-25.

**Q: In Gen 14:17-20, was it interesting about this structure?**

A: Genesis 14:17-20 brings a temptation of victory, and encounter with two kings. This is presented as a chiasm, which is a common Hebrew poetic device.

The King of Sodom 14:17

- The king of Salem met Abraham 14:18

- - The king of Salem blessed Abraham 14:19-20

The king of Sodom offered Abraham the plunder 14:21

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.54 mentions that it might have been easier for Abraham to reject the offer of the king of Sodom after Melchizedek's blessing.

**Q: In Gen 14:18-19, how could Melchizedek, presumably a cursed Canaanite, be in a position to bless Abraham?**

A: Melchizedek is a mysterious person in the Bible. A few people have thought Melchizedek was pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. Others say Melchizedek was a godly man (perhaps Canaanite or perhaps not) who was simply a type of Christ. Even if Melchizedek were a Canaanite man, God is not restricted from teaching and sanctifying people of any nationality. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.120-121 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.35-36 for more info.

As a side note, the Jewish sect at Qumran placed great importance on Melchizedek as a heavenly deliver, who will proclaim God’s salvation. See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.441 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 14:18, how old is the city of Jerusalem?**

A: We think it was founded about 3000 B.C. Early Egyptian chronicles call the city “Urusalim”, which implies that the “salem” part of Jerusalem goes back as least as far as the “Jebus” part.

**Q: Does Gen 14:18 teach a “Melchizedek priesthood” of people as Mormons teach?**

A: No. Genesis 14 only mentions one individual named Melchizedek. Hebrews 7:23-24 says this Melchizedek was a type of Jesus. Nothing in the Bible suggests we need any more priests today besides Jesus. See *When Cultists Ask* p.27-28 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 14:23 (KJV), why are shoe latchlets mentioned, when they did not have shoes with latchlets back then?**

A: This King James Version expression is better translated as “sandal thongs”.

**Q: In Gen 15, what exactly is a covenant, and how was the covenant between God and Abraham unusual?**

A: A covenant is a mutual agreement between parties; the parties can be equal, such as a trade agreement, or it can be between a high king and a lower vassal. Besides being a covenant between man and God, this covenant was unusual because it was unilateral promise from God; Abraham did not have to do anything.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.37 for more a more extensive answer..

**Q: In Gen 15, did God make a covenant with Abram here, or in Gen 17 after Ishmael was born? (A liberal Christian brought this up as evidence that multiple authors wrote Genesis.)**

A: Both the original covenant in Genesis 15 and later confirmation in Genesis 17 are true. Perhaps decades later, in Genesis 15, God made a formal covenant with Abram, complete with a sacrifice, and promised him a child. In Genesis 17:2, after Ishmael was born, God confirmed his covenant with Abram, and a sign of it was the rite of circumcision. The confirmation of the covenant was essential here because God needed to correct Abram’s thinking. Abram mistakenly thought that the promises of the covenant would occur through Ishmael.

For a second example of confirming a covenant, after God allowed the Israelites to be defeated at Ai, they confirmed the covenant the made at Mount Ebal in Joshua 8:30-35.

Sometimes a Christian, who has already made a covenant with God, should have a time of confirming his covenant too.

It is interesting to compare that God made a covenant with Abraham, and confirmed it right before Isaac was born. Later God made a promise to send the Messiah, and confirmed it with John the Baptist right before the start of Jesus’ public ministry.

**Q: In Gen 15:2, what is unusual about Eliezar’s name?**

A: Perhaps nothing, but *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.131-132 says it “could hardly be a coincidence” that the value of the letters of Eliezer’s name in Hebrew is 318, the same number of warriors Abraham had in Genesis 14:14.

**Q: In Gen 15:2, was this common to designate an heir not of your bloodline?**

A: We don’t know how common it was, but the Nuzi tablets says that in Ur, a coupe could adopt a son who would help in them in their old age, and in return the son would become an heir. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.10 p.48 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 15:12, was Abraham wrong not to cut the birds in half, as the false Christian teacher Rev. Moon teaches in the Divine Principle 5th ed. 1977 p.269,507?**

A: No. Priests were never to cut birds in half in Leviticus 1:17 and 5:9.

**Q: In Gen 15:13, were the Israelites in Egypt for 430 years, or oppressed for 400 years?**

A: Both are true. See the discussion on Acts 7:6 for how the Israelites lived in Egypt for 30 years before they were enslaved for 400 years.

**Q: In Gen 15:16, how could the Israelites be enslaved for only four generations, since they were enslaved for 400 years in Gen 15:13?**

A: In Genesis 15:13,16, Abraham, who would likely have understood a generation as 100 years, was told: 400 years, 4 generations. Moses for example, lived to 120.

**Q: In Gen 15:16 did the Exodus occur in the fourth generation, or the sixth as 1 Chr 2:1-9 and Mt 1:3-4 imply?**

A: Two points to consider in the answer.

**1.** It all depends on how long you consider a generation. Abraham and Sarah had Isaac when they were 101 and 91. God was speaking to Abraham here.

**2.** Hypothetically, there would be no error even if the Bible had said it would have been any number, as long as the same passage had defined a generation appropriately. Actually, “four generations” in Genesis 15:16 is defined as being enslaved exactly “400 years” in Genesis 15:13.

See *When Critics Ask* p.47 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.416 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 15:17 and Gen 19:23, why does the Bible claim the sun “goes down” and “comes up”?**

A: I will tell you after sundown. Seriously, just as we employ common idioms and slang to express ourselves, the Bible uses Hebrew and Greek idioms, too. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.93 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.38 for more info.

#### Q: In Gen 15:18, what is the River of Egypt?

A: This is not the Nile River, but a small stream called the Wadi el-Arish, that is in the eastern part of the Sinai Peninsula. See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.56, *The NIV Study Bible* p.28, the *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.54 and the *New International Bible Commentary* p.126 for more info. *The New Geneva Study Bible* p.35 and *The Nelson Study Bible* p.33 say it could either be the Wadi el-Arish or else the eastern branch of the Nile River.

**Q: In Gen 15:18, since God gave Abram’s descendants all the land up to the Euphrates River, why did they not receive the land?**

A: David and Solomon’s kingdoms did extend to the Euphrates. Also, they may have the land in the future Millennium.

**Q: In Gen 16:1, since Abraham and Sarai had no children, how could Abraham have more children after Isaac? (a Muslim asked this)**

A: Genesis 16:1 shows it was Sarai, not Abraham, who was sterile. Abraham had more children (with his wife Keturah), but Sarai did not. See *When Critics Ask* p.54 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 16:1-4, did Abraham commit adultery with Hagar? (a Muslim brought this up)**

A: No, Ishmael was not the product of adultery; he was not illegitimate. Four points to consider in the answer.

**Concubines were legal:** Polygamy was permitted in the Old Testament, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham as a concubine. So, what Abraham did was “legal” according to both God had revealed to Him and later Mosaic Law, as well as Mesopotamian law of the time.

**Similar examples:** Furthermore this is not so unusual as it might seem to some modern readers. According to *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.121-122, similar examples of a maidservant standing in for a barren wife are found in the laws of the Code of Hammurabi, the Nuzi Tablets, the Alalakh Tablets, and the Mari Tablets. However, if something is both commonly practiced and “legal”, that does not necessarily mean it pleases God. Genesis 16:4-5 shows that Sarah soon regretted her action.

**Hagar was proud of her status:** Hagar did not have any objection to becoming Abram’s wife. In fact, Hagar later taunted Sarai (Genesis 16:4,5). In the Old Testament, while marrying a captive was OK, nowhere was sex outside of marriage justified as anything but wicked immorality.

**In contrast**, Muslims are permitted to force their captives to have sex with them, even though they are not married to them. See *Bukhari* vol.3 book 46 ch.13 no.717,718 p.431-432 p.432; vol.9 book 93 ch.18 no.506 p.372; *Sahih Muslim* 2:3371-3374; *Abu Dawud* vol.2 no.2150,2167 for more info.

**In conclusion,** God is holy, Abraham was not an adulterer, and Christians have a higher standard of holiness than Mohammed had for his companions in the Hadiths.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.38 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 16:1-4, what are some ways you know of, or through history, that believers have compromised?**

A: When Constantine became Emperor, it appeared like the golden age of Christianity on earth had begun.

Abraham calling Sarah his sister twice (Genesis 12:11-20; 20:1-2)

Achan’s beautiful Babylonian robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold (Joshua 7:20-23)

Christ to Peter: Get thee behind me Satan (Matthew 16:23)

Judas for 30 pieces of silver. Perhaps to force Jesus to act too. (Matthew 26:14-16)

Ananias and Sapphira selling the field and claiming to give all of the money. (Acts 5:1-11)

Demas because he loved this world (1 Timothy 4:10)

Martin Luther and Jews

The “normalcy” of slavery in America. 1/3 of southerners were slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation freed about 3 million slaves.

Some of the church in Germany and Mainland China compromised from fear

C5 missionaries: Trinity

In Genesis 25:1 marrying Keturah. Here children, the Midianites, were a thorn in the side of the Israelites later. When Abraham died, Isaac and Ishmael buried him, but the other sons did not even show up.

Nationally

In general, people seem to be better at following orders than asking if those orders should be followed.

Native Americans: Breaking treaties with the Sioux when gold was discovered in Montana in 1874, Nez Perce, and others.

Nez Perce in violation of the 1855 Treaty of Walla Walla, which granted the tribe 7.5 million acres in their ancestral lands and the right to hunt and fish in lands ceded to the government. However, later gold was found, and white settlers illegally founded the city of [Lewiston](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewiston,_Idaho) on Nez Perce lands. Nez Perce War June-October 1877

Doing nothing about the 1.5 million killed in the Armenian genocide starting in Jun 5, 1915. In 1939 Hitler used that excuse to start exterminating the Jews.

Abortion: How many abortions since 1970 in the U.S.? The correct answer is that we do not know, since some states did not report. But from 1970 to 2012, it is more than 44 million That is about 1/5 to ¼ of all pregnancies. In Canada from 2007 to 2014 it is 720K. In Europe it is about 1/3 pregnancies. In Asia it is high too.

**Q: In Gen 16:1-4, what lessons can we learn from why other Christians have compromised?**

A: Compromise is often because of some motivating factor. It can be safety, monetary greed, or other bad motives. We can compromise and displease God from good motives too, such as a desire to win more people to our message.

**Q: In Gen 16:1-4, what is sinful compromise in a Christian’s life like?**

A: Compromises can be both deadly and subtle. While a frog dropped into a pot of boiling water has enough sense to immediately jump out, a frog dropped in warm water, that is gradually brought to a boil, will stay there until it cooks to death.

Temptations to compromise are like dirt or grit coming into your life, and they are unavoidable. But what do you do with the grit? Do you let it infect or do you let it become as pearl and part of an eternal treasure? When you have temptation to compromise, rejoice! Your victory over that is an opportunity to please the Lord and have rewards in heaven.

**Q: In Gen 16:1-4, compromise itself is not a bad word; sometimes compromise is OK. What is the difference between a good compromise and a bad compromise?**

A: Not all easier ways are bad. Compromise is often agreeing to things, or to do things in a way you would ordinarily not want to do, in order to get the cooperation of someone else. On non-moral things, in relationships, and many times at work compromise is a good and necessary thing. In church, compromise can be good on things that are neither Biblical nor anti-Biblical, such as what kind of music to use. However, when compromise involves explicitly doing things displeasing to God, denying our faith, it is better to lose the negotiation, the sale, the relationship, or the job, than compromise. But compromise can also involve implicitly doing things displeasing to God too. What about volunteering your time, money, or skills to help a charitable organization that funds Planned Parenthood? Planned Parenthood is a large abortion provider.

**Q: Gen 16:1-4, what are forces in our lives today that are telling us to compromise in a bad way?**

A: There are many influences.

**Media:** Internet, TV, movies, newspapers, etc. How many of you knew that Facebook has had some censorship of conservative information? If you are on AOL, how many of you know that AOL tries to play up anything that is negative about Christianity or Christian pastors.

**Laws:** Congress shall make no law regarding the establishment of religion.

**Courts:** Should a beer company be allowed to let go a driver, if the Muslim driver’s religious beliefs prevent him from distributing alcohol? Should a court rule in 2015 against a Christian couple owning a bakery in Oregon, and force them to pay more than $136,000, because they would not make a cake for a homosexual wedding?

**Work:** In some jobs there is pressure to lie and be dishonest. One Christian manager I know was taken to a strip club by his boss. Sometimes there are almost-mandatory parties where there is a lot of alcohol, and a person might feel pressure to drink or take a shot.

**Sometimes friends:** I met a Christian in Dublin Ireland who was an alcoholic most of his life. Once he became a Christian, he knew he should not get drunk, but it was difficult for him to leave his old ways, because his friends always asked him to go to the pub with him. He finally solved the problem by not carrying any money. When his friends asked him, he said he could go, but they would have to pay because he did not have any money with him. After one or two times they stopped asking.

**Sometimes family:** In north Africa a Muslim teenage boy became a Christian, so his mother put rat poison in his food. Sometimes a spouse will divorce because the other became a Christian, or stopped going to their religious group. In Utah Sandra Tanner said there were Mormon men she talked with who said they knew Mormonism was not true, but they could not publicly leave Mormonism, because their wife would divorce them, and take the kids with them. I personally know of one non-religious couple that got married many years ago, and when the husband became a Christian, the wife would not have intimate relations with him for a whole year unless he stopped being a Christian. Eventually it was resolved when she became a Christian. Sometimes it is more subtle, like always planning to go to the lake or other activities on Sunday mornings.

**Q: In Gen 16:1-8, since Hagar was a slave, was Abraham’s sexual union with her forced rape, like some Muslims are permitted by their religion to do? (See *Bukhari Hadiths* vol.3 book 46 ch.13 no.717,718 p.431-432)**

A: Genesis 16:4 says Hagar became Abram’s wife, and she apparently did not object. In fact, Hagar was proud of her pregnancy and mocked Sarai (Genesis 16:4,5). In the Old Testament, while marrying a captive was OK, nowhere was sex outside of marriage justified as anything but wicked immorality.

**Q: In Gen 16:3; 17:20; 21:13 does Hagar being the mother of Ishmael refer to Mohammed?**

A: Hagar the concubine of Abraham and her son Ishmael are mentioned in the Bible. There is some uncertainty about ‘Adnan (Mohammed’s ancestor) descending from Ishmael though. The noted early Muslim historian *al-Tabari* vol.6 p.37 says, “The genealogists do not differ concerning the descent of our Prophet Muhammad as far as Ma’add b. ‘Adnan, … they differ concerning what comes after that.” However, in the end this is a red herring, because Ishmael being in the Bible does not show Mohammed is from God.

**Q: In Gen 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; Ex 6:3, what exactly does God’s name of *El Shaddai* mean?**

A: *El-Shaddai* is a name for God that most literally means *El* “God” *Shaddai* “Almighty” according to *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* p.1000-1001, *The New NIV Dictionary of the Bible* p.309-310, and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.695. This name was one of the main names for God that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob knew. Even if they had been taught God’s “personal” name of Yahweh, God Himself did not reveal Himself to them as Yahweh as he did to Moses according to Exodus 6:2,3.

Names for God apply to Jesus as a member of the Holy Trinity, but there is no suggestion that *El Shaddai* applies to Jesus more than to the Father or Holy Spirit.

The Hebrew word *el* was used very similar to the way we use the English word “God/god” today. We refer to the One and Only Almighty Creator as God, we refer to an idol as a “god”, etc. The word *Shaddai* (Almighty) without *el* is used in Genesis 49:25; Numbers 24:4,16; Ruth 1:20,21; 31 times in Job 5:17-40:2; and Psalms 68:14; 91:1.

Some liberal critics claim that *El-Shaddai* was derived from a pagan term for “mountain god”, but there is no evidence the Bible means this.

*El Shaddai* is used in Genesis to Abraham in 17:1; to Jacob in 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; and Moses in Exodus 6:3.

Similar names for God are *El Elyon* “Most High God” used by Melchizedek in Genesis 14:18; Numbers 24:16; Deuteronomy 32:8; 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalm 9:2; Isaiah 14:14; Lamentations 3:35,38), *El Hai* “Living God” Joshua 3:10, or simply *El* “God” in many places.

**Q: In Gen 17:3, what does it mean that God is Almighty? God might not choose to do some things, but what are four things God cannot do?**

A: God could have made all of us just robots if He had wanted to. However, God wanted to create beings that had the free will to choose to love Him, or not. This means that people such as Joshua could “choose to serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). People such as the Pharisees could “reject God’s purpose for themselves (Luke 7:30). Some could “cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.” (Jonah 2:8).

Here are four things God Almighty cannot do.

Lie (Hebrews 6:18)

Be tempted by evil (James 1:13)

Disown/Deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13)

Swear by anyone greater than Himself (Hebrews 6:13)

**Q: In Gen 17:5 what is the significant of changing Abram to Abraham?**

A: According to the *New Bible Dictionary* (1962) p.5, and the KJV footnote, the origin of the name Abram is uncertain. It is a West Semitic name, and probably means “the father is exalted” or “exalted father”. The name “Abraham” means, “father of multitudes” or “father of a multitude”.

This could be considered “a joke come true.” While Abram means “father”, an ironic name for a childless man, the name Abraham really takes the cake, meaning “father of a multitude”. As *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answers* p.39 puts it, “We can almost hear the snickers as childless Abram announced to his many herdsmen and their families that from now on he was to be called Abraham.” Having children was especially important in ancient society, yet you can see how childless Abraham’s faith in God would make him so easy to laugh at. Yet God fulfilled His promise, and Abraham in heaven could smile at the joke God played to fulfill Abraham’s heartfelt wish.

**Q: In Gen 17:5, how seriously do you think God takes what we are called, and what we call people?**

A: I would venture that God takes names we give ourselves, or that we give others, more seriously than most people do.

Genesis 35:10 – Jacob was called a new name: Israel.

In Isaiah 62:2 God promises a new name for His people.

Luke 1:13,60-63. God really wanted John the Baptist named John.

Luke 1:31 – The angel told Mary to name her child Jesus. The name of Jesus/Joshua was in mind in Zechariah 3:8-9.

Matthew 5:22 calling people empty-headed, lame-brained, or air-head

Matthew 12:35-37 we will be judged for every idle word we speak

Revelation 3:12 those in the church of Philadelphia will be given a new name.

**Q: In Gen 17:5, there is a Christian song with the lyrics “Tell me, once again, who I am in You”. Why do we need reminders of who we are?**

A: It is not because we lose all idea of who we are. Rather, our primary identity, as a child of God, can get crowded out by all of the secondary things that we are. We can be a spouse, parent, child, friend, co-worker, shopper, fan, and a thousand other things. These are not necessarily bad. But as believers we are first and foremost a child of God. It is important not to forget that, identify things that tend to make us forget that, and mitigate their effects

**Q: In Gen 17:12, why did God command circumcision on exactly the eighth day?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, newborn infants do not have blood that clots as well as adults. After they eat and taken in vitamin K, their blood has more prothrombin, which is used in clotting. For babies who are not given shots of vitamin K, prothrombin levels peak on the eighth day. So, this was the ideal day for performing circumcision.

As a side note, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.354 records that the Egyptians practiced male circumcision; one picture shows it being done on a 13-year-old boy. It says that most Semitic peoples apparently practiced circumcision. Later Ethiopians also practiced circumcision. Arabs, who trace their descent from Ishmael, also practiced circumcision prior to Islam. Circumcision was not practiced by the Philistines, Babylonians, Assyrians, and later Edomites.

**Q: In Gen 17:12, what other peoples practiced circumcision?**

A: The Greek historian Herodotus in his *History* book 2 ch.104 p.69 says that only the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Colchians practiced circumcision. He makes the case that the Colchians emigrated from Egypt. He also said some Phoenicians and Syrians practiced this some, they themselves claiming they learned this from the Egyptians.

The early writer Bardesan/Bardesanes (154-224-232 A.D.) says that the people of the Roman province of Arabia practiced circumcision, but the Romans made them stop when they conquered it. This is in *The Book of the Laws of Diverse Countries* p.730. After Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D., a temple to Jupiter was built in the site in 130 A.D. by the Roman Emperor Adrian, who also forbade the Jews to practice circumcision.

**Q: In Gen 17:17 and Gen 18:12, did Abraham and Sarah laugh with disbelief, or did Sarah laugh with joy in Gen 21:6?**

A: Both verses are complementary. Abraham and Sarah laughed with disbelief before Isaac was conceived. Sometimes when a person really wants something, and someone offers to give it to them, human nature can be such that they disbelieve and laugh it off to protect themselves from disappointment.

However, Sarah laughed again with joy when Isaac was born.

**Q: In Gen 17:17 and Gen 18:12-15, why did God rebuke Sarah for laughing and not Abraham?**

A: Laughing in surprise the first time you learn of something is different from laughing in skepticism in subsequent times after you have already been told. The Hebrew word for laugh, *sahaq*, means both. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.122-123 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.39 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 17:19, was Abram’s child of promise named Isaac here, or in Gen 21:3?**

A: Prior to Isaac’s birth, God said he should be called Isaac in Genesis 17:19. This verse does not specify whether they named him that or not. After Isaac was born, Genesis 21:3 tells us they did name him Isaac. It is sort of like the angel Gabriel telling Mary to name her son Jesus, and after he was born, they obeyed what the angel said.

**Q: In Gen 17:27, why did Abraham circumcise all males born in his house, whether slave or free?**

A: Abraham was not just interested in his own offspring being a part of God’s covenant family on earth, but all in his household. This would signify that their children would also be apart mean that their descendants would also be a part of God’s covenant people.

Philo the Jew (15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) gave basically the same answer in *Questions and Answers on Genesis, III* (62) p.863.

**Q: In Gen 18:1-10, do you think Abraham was hospitable because He recognized God was visiting Him, or because he was generally hospitable?**

A: We do not see the exact point where Abraham realized these were no ordinary visitors, except that it was before verses 13 and 14. Hebrews 13:2 might indicate that initially Abraham did not realize this. In general we are to be hospitable, as 1 Peter 4:9 says.

**Q: In Gen 18:1-10, what risks would there be to Abraham of being hospitable?**

A: Abraham was extremely wealthy, so it might have been safer to not allow strangers to possibly spy out his camp, with the number of guards and the locations of valuables. It might have been safer initially to be a worker under Abraham talk with them, rather than risking ambush. Finally, it might have been safer to go to their place rather than them come to him. However, Abraham apparently thought of none of that. Abraham was a hospitable man.

However, Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9; and 1 Timothy 5:10 command us to be hospitable to strangers. The safest thing might to never be hospitable, but in that case, we have to choose between what appears to be the safest thing, and obeying God’s commands.

**Q: In Gen 18, what were the Christophanies and theophanies in the Old Testament?**

A: Christophany is a term to describe an appearance of Christ on earth, prior to His being born of Mary. A theophany is an appearance of God, whether it be the Father, Son, Spirit, or Trinity. Since some disagree on a Christophany versus a theophany, and sometimes it is unclear whether an angel is an appearance of Christ or just an angel, here is a list of possible theophanies of the Old Testament.

In the Garden of Eden before the Fall. (Genesis 1:29-3:24)

Possibly Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-20)

Conversation with Hagar, who saw the angel (Genesis 16:8-14)

Abraham’s three visitors (Genesis 18:1-33)

God appearing to Abram (Genesis 17:1-2)

Probably not Jacob’s ladder, as this was only a dream (Genesis 28:12-15)

Probably not Jacob wrestling with the angel (Genesis 32:30)

God appearing to Jacob at Bethel (Genesis 35:9-15)

Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-22)

The dense cloud (Exodus 19:9)

At Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:11-12; 24:9,10)

Moses seeing the back of God (Exodus 33:19-20)

Joshua and the Commander of the Lord’s army (Joshua 5:13-15)

Gideon seeing an angel (Judges 6:11-24)

Angel appearing to Samson’s mother (Judges 13:3-5)

Cloud on the ark of the Covenant (1 Kings 8:11-13)

Elijah in the cleft of the rock (1 Kings 19:9-18)

Leaving the Temple (Ezekiel 10:3-18), and Isaiah 6 probably do not count, since these were visions.

One key point is that for some of these, such as Joshua and the commander, The human did not realize at first that this was God.

**Q: Genesis 18 and 19 has two distinct parts: 18:1-19 and 18:20-19:33. What are the two things that both tie together and contrast these two parts?**

A: These are two visits; in the first a godly married couple wanted to have kid but could not. In the second people wanted to do homosexual rape. Abraham showed great hospitality, and in the second, the townspeople were murderously inhospitable, and Lot was hospitable in a strange, desperate way.

**Q: In Gen 18:2, since Abraham bowed before kings, does this support the Catholic and Orthodox practice of bowing before images?**

A: No, veneration of images is unbiblical because we are not to have graven images for worship according to the Second Commandment. However, regardless of a persons’ belief about veneration of images, this verse cannot be used to support bowing to images. In contrast to images,

**1.** Abraham bowed to show respect to a real person.

**2.** Abraham was showing respect to a pagan king, there was no veneration or any kind of religious honor.

**3.** Abraham did not pray to these kings. He also did not pray to God through these kings, as Orthodox claim to pray through the images to God.

One reader claimed that veneration is no different than respect within orthodox Christianity. However, that is not true, because the eastern orthodox pray to (or more precisely through), images to God and various saints. Yet they would not take their wife, child, parents, or someone else they respect, put them in front of them, and pray to them.

**Q: In Gen 18:2, when should we bow and when should we refuse to bow?**

A: We should not bow to any religious images; this includes Hindu pictures, statues, or table spreads during the festival of Divali. Bowing to show respect to someone, as Japanese often do, is fine.

**Q: In Gen 18:6, God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, and if God were somehow hungry he would not need to tell anyone (Palm 50:10-12). If God had wanted to eat something, God certainly did not need Sarah and Abraham to put to the test their cooking and waiter skills. Why do you think God “stooped” to have them serve them?**

A: God wanted to interact with them. It is sort of like a father and his eight-year-old boy building a fence together. Does the father need the boy? Couldn’t the father do it faster without the boy even being there? Wouldn’t the fence look better without the little boy’s “contribution” These questions miss the point; the point is for the father and son to build something together as a team. The father understands that. Sometimes the child might realize that, or sometimes not.

Of course, as humans things don’t always go according to our plans. Once when one of my daughters was in fourth grade, she told me she wanted to do an art project together with me. I thought that was a great idea, so we made a paper-bag “owl” together as she wanted. I thought the end result looked OK, but when it was done she cried and asked why she could not have been born to the lady across the street, who was an art teacher. Sometimes we might spoil the moment with God too, crying because something did not live up to our expectations, or was impressive in the way we wanted it to be.

**Q: In Gen 18:16-33, what is it that made Sodom and Gomorrah not only bad, but so bad that God was going to destroy them?**

A: First what is not the answer, and then three answers, all of which might be significant.

While there was no substantial witness of God in those cities, there was no witness of God in many cities, so that alone was not the reason.

a) Canaanites in general practiced infant sacrifice, and religious prostitution. Genesis 18:32 says that there were not even ten righteous people in the city.

b) But the people of Sodom and Gomorrah also did homosexual practices, and their rampant homosexuality were detestable to God.

c) They wanted to homosexually rape the angels who appeared as men. However, God had already decided to destroy the city before the angels arrived. However, their general inhospitable attitude towards visitors would give them the impudence to want to try to rape them.

**Q: In Gen 18:16-33, how could God be talked out of destroying Sodom and Gomorrah? (The Bible critic Bart Ehrman says that Marcion brought this up in *Lost Christianities* p.196)**

A: Three points to consider in the answer.

1. God was not talked out of destroying Sodom and Gomorrah; he did destroy them.

2. God did not need Abraham to plead, any more than he learns knowledge from our prayers.

3. Rather, God interacts with us, in ways that we understand. While sometimes God’s revealed will changes when we change, even in this case Genesis 18:16-33 gives no indication that God changed what he intended to do as a result of talking with Abraham. Sometimes God has condescended to let us know what He was thinking and why.

**Q: In Gen 18:10,14 and Gen 21:1,2, does this teach that God impregnated Sarah, as Born Again Skeptic’s p.217 claims?**

A: No. The atheist missed the point that God was not returning to impregnate Sarah, but God returned after the son was born. God only said three things about Sarah’s son.

**1.** God would visit them again next year as Genesis 18:10,14 says.

**2.** God would fulfill his promise of Sarah having a Son as Genesis 21:1 says.

**3.** Most importantly, the son will be from Abraham (Genesis 17:15,17). To be precise, the son was from Abraham’s own body as Genesis 15:4 says.

**Q: In Gen 18:27, why is Abraham especially saying he is only dust and ashes here?**

A: Abraham, the experienced negotiator and diplomat, realizes he is making a very bold request of God. Abraham wants to first acknowledge that he is nothing before God, and has no claim to obligate God to do anything, before Abraham asks God to change what God has revealed.

**Q: In Gen 19, was the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah really a lack of hospitality as Ezekiel 16:49 says?**

A: That is only part of the story. Some homosexuals quote Ezekiel 16:49 but ignore Ezekiel 16:50, which mentions “committing abominations.” Genesis 19:5-7 emphasizes the homosexuality. Jude 7 also speaks of the “sexual immorality and perversion.” Genesis 13:13 shows that Sodom’s wickedness was prior to Lot’s arrival. See *When Cultists Ask* p.28-29 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 19, why would someone like Lot live in this place anyway?**

A: What was Lot thinking? Perhaps there were economic incentives to being in the town. Perhaps Lot was honored as one of the leading citizens of the town. Perhaps his wealth was all gone, after the kings captured the people of Sodom.

What was Lot not thinking? There is no indication that Lot ever asked the question, “Is this a good environment for me spiritually?” He also apparently never asked, “Is this a good environment for my children?”

**Q: In Gen 19:1-3, how did “three men in Genesis 18:2 become two angels/men in Genesis 19:1, and why did they appear to need shelter?**

A: These were theophanies, or appearances of God. God could change the number seen easily. Two strangers might appear to need shelter. While Abraham, who had prior visits from God might have quickly figured out the three were no ordinary men, Lot might not have been able to see that they were not ordinary men. We don’t know. But they could have appeared as just ordinary men. Lot could have just ignored them, knowing that the public square in that town was quite dangerous. Once they told him they did not need his help, Lot could have just thought “well I tried to help, but if they want to be in danger I won’t care. But Lot did not; he insisted that they get his protection from the dangerous situation.

Who protected whom? Ironically, it appeared at first that they only came to Lot’s house because Lot insisted on protecting them. It might have seemed humorous to angels in heaven to watch this mortal man decide to protect these angels. But it turned out that the angels protected Lot and his family for that night, and ultimately protected all of Lot’s family, minus his wife, from death later.

**Q: In Gen 19:8, why did Lot offer his virgin daughters to a crowd?**

A: Scripture does not tell us of Lot’s motives for this evil action, but we can see three things.

**1.** Lot was in a desperate situation, and he perhaps panicked and took matters into his own hands.

**2.** He knew the men of Sodom had no interest in his daughters.

**3.** Lot had lived in Sodom for a long time, and Lot probably knew these men had no interest in his daughters. Lot was probably trying to stall them.

**4.** A combination of all of the above. The daughters were already pledged to be married, and if the men had abused his daughters, both they and Lot knew the clans the prospective husbands belonged to would get revenge on the men. If a clan did not get justice/retaliation for an obvious wrong done to them, they might appear weak and other clans would not respect them. So, in later times, a murder or rape could set off a clan war, unless the perpetrators were turned over for punishment or blood money was agreed to by the victimized clan and paid by the offending clan.

The Bible does not condone Lot’s action here; it merely records it. If the Bible were merely “propaganda”, you would expect it to record every positive thing and never mention anything negative. However, the Bible is not propaganda, but God’s true word, and it honestly talks about people’s lives, warts and all.

**Q: In Gen 19:23-26, the angels protected not just Lot, but his entire family. So, if Lot’s wife was in fact protected, then why did she die and become a pillar of salt?**

A: The angels did protect all of them, Lot’s wife included. But Lot’s wife stepped out of their protection. Or to be more precise, she stayed put when she should have moved on. Sometimes when God commands us to go somewhere to do something, it can appear much safer, to us, to just stay put. But God knows best. A second example where staying put turned out to be dangers was with Abraham himself. Abraham left Ur, probably one of the largest cities in the entire Mideast, and possibly the world, around 2000 B.C. By 1950 B.C. the Elamites destroyed the entire city, in retaliation for the city of Ur destroying the Elamite capital of Susa before. Disobeying God and staying in Ur would have resulted in death or enslavement of Abraham. Of course, Abraham would not have known that at the time though.

**Q: In Gen 19:24-26, exactly how were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed?**

A: The Bible simply says the LORD rained down burning sulfur, and that Lot’s wife who stayed back became a pillar of salt. While we do not have more details, we know that the area is rich in pitch (petroleum) and asphalt on the surface. Image a storm, wind, and lightning that would ignite the pitch. The resulting fire would cause its own wind, and the whole area is not somewhere you would want to be. On the other hand, it could have primarily been a volcanic eruption, sort of like a mini Mount St. Helens in Washington State in 1980. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.39 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 19:26, do we know of others since then besides Lot’s wife who have become “a pillar of salt”?**

A: Physically, people and dogs have been instantly killed and their bodies preserved by being covered with ash at Pompeii when Mt. Vesuvius erupted. Undoubtedly this happened during other major eruptions too.

Metaphorically, Lot’s wife was hardened into insensibility by her love for the life left behind. Many since then, have been hardened by their love for the world too. As obvious examples, the drug addict, when looking for a fix, the alcoholic, when looking for a drink, are not really aware of the simple joys of life around them. Sin in general, or desiring anything above God, can make you less mindful of the good things God has given us. Clement of Alexandria (wrote 193-217/220 A.D.), was among the first to see this application in *Exhortation to the Heathen* ch.10 p.201.

**Q: In Gen 19:30-36, why does the Bible teach that Lot had sex with his daughters? I just cannot believe this was right.**

A: Good, the Bible does not say it was right. Incest and fornication are evil, and the Bible was honestly recording what Lot did.

In Lot’s defense, Irenaeus *Against Heresies* ch.31 (182-188 A.D.) points out the Bible shows that Lot did not participate because of lust, but his defenses were down after too much to drink.

Origen (225-254 A.D.) said that stories such as Lot and his daughters are in sacred scripture to the Bible show the desire for truth of the Bible writers, who would not conceal even what was to their discredit. *Origen in Against Celsus* book 4 ch.45 p.518

**Q: In Gen 20 and Ex 23:31, how could the Philistines be in Israel in Abraham’s time, about 2000 B.C.?**

A: The skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.85 mentions this. While there was a massive migration in 1200 B.C., the earliest levels of Ashdod were occupied way back in the 17th century (H.F. Vos, *Archaeology in Bible Lands*). Somebody lived in that fertile land back then, and there is no historical evidence which says it was not the Philistines. After the Egyptians defeated the Philistines in 1190 B.C., they came to Palestine in force, and makes sense they would retreat to where they already had towns. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.94-96, *When Critics Ask* p.50, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.40 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 20:3,6 why did God contradict say Abimelech was a dead man, yet Abimelech lived?**

A: God does not change (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8). However, Ezekiel 33:12-20 shows that God’s revealed will towards people can change when they change.

See the discussion on Exodus 33:5-6; Deuteronomy 20:17; Jeremiah 15:6; Jonah 3-4; Jonah 3:10; and Jonah 4:1-2 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 20:3,8-10, Gen 26:1, Jdg 8:31, and Jdg 9:1, what does Abimelech mean?**

A: *Ab* means father, and *melech* means king or ruler. It either means father of the king, or father is king. Besides being the name of two kings of Gerar, and Gideon’s son, Cyril Aldred in *Akhenaten King of Egypt* p.186 records that Abimilki was a ruler of Tyre mentioned in the Amarna letters (1400-1370 B.C.). Photographs of a couple of the Tell el-Amarna (ancient Akhetaten) letter tablets are in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.80 and *The Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1828.

**Q: In Gen 20:12, why did Abram marry his half-sister Sarai?**

A: Incest was not expressly forbidden then. Also, Abram was not necessarily a believer when he married. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.139-141 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 21:8-14, was Abraham right to send Hagar away?**

A: Normally, it would be wrong for Abraham to send Hagar, the mother of his child, and her teenage boy away alone without protection and with little water, even though Hagar had mocked Sarah in Genesis 21:9. This is why Sarah’s request greatly distressed Abraham in Genesis 21:11. However, in this particular case, God told Abraham to go ahead, and that everything would be all right. God himself gave Hagar and Ishmael water (Genesis 12:17-19), and God was with Ishmael as he grew up (Genesis 21:20).

As a side note, Hagar was actually a Semitic name according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 footnote 15 p.307. There were many Semites who lived in the northern part of Egypt.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.123-124 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.41 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 21:14 If you read the Old Testament, it is clear that in Genesis the first born son (meaning God’s chosen, the inheritor of his father), is ISHMAEL and the lies interpolated by the Jews into the Old Testament to disinherit him (why? Because they could not accept someone from outside their tribe) clearly becomes visible when they wrote that ISHMAEL with his mother HAGAR were banished away from the tribe of ABRAHAM forever?, but when we read more of Genesis we find that the true story is that “ISHMAEL died in the presence of all his brethren” (family) and further “ISAAC” died in the presence of all his brethren”. These statements from the Bible clearly show up a further Jewish interpolation which is that they had to make up the incident about the permanent banishment of HAGAR and ISHMAEL so that they could replace ISHMAEL who was the original “only son of ABRAHAM” at the time when ABRAHAM was willing to sacrifice anything for the love of and obedience to God’s will, it also shows that the promise of the savior of mankind was made through ISHMAEL (firstborn son) and not ISAAC (second son). (A Muslim said this)**

A: First of all, some Muslims might not be aware that the Qur’an does not specify whether the son that was offered in sacrifice was Ishmael or Isaac.

Your assertion that Ishmael died in the presence “of his family” fails to prove he was not banished. The only thing the Bible says on that is Genesis 25:17b where is says, “He breathed his last and died, and he was gathered to his people.” This was a common euphemism for saying he died. Of course, his children and in-laws could have been near him. This cannot prove he was buried with his ancestors, because Abraham too was “gathered to his people” in Genesis 25:8, and that does not mean he was buried back in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Contrary to your question, it never said, Abraham was to sacrifice his firstborn son. Rather, Abraham was to sacrifice his only son, because Ishmael had already been sent away and Isaac was the only child of promise.

I have a question for you though, could the Qur’an be wrong?

1. Sura 32:23 “We did indeed aforetime give the book to Moses. Be not then in doubt of its reaching (thee): and We made it a guide to the children of Israel.” So, do you agree that the Torah, as it was originally given, was correct and from the true God?

2. Sura 5:46 “And in their [the prophets’] footsteps we sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Torah that had come before him: we sent him the gospel; therein was guidance and light. And confirmation of the Torah that had come before him: a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah”. So, do you agree that the Torah in Jesus’ time, as he confirmed it, was the true word of Allah?

3. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain many copies of Old Testament manuscripts from the time of Christ and before. Three points where you think the Bible of being in error are:

3.1. Isaac was the child of promise, the covenant. Genesis 17:19,21

3.2. Ishmael and Hagar were banished Genesis 21:8-19

3.3. Abraham sacrificing Isaac vs. Ishmael Genesis 22:1-18

The Dead Sea scrolls mention that Isaac is the child of promise. Philo was a Jewish scholar who lived in Alexandria Egypt, dying in 50 A.D. He wrote a commentary on Genesis, and his commentary, on Genesis in his time, shows it is the same as we have today.

Clement of Rome was an early Christian bishop, probably the Clement mentioned by Paul, who wrote a letter to the Corinthians in 96-98 A.D. He mentions that the son Abraham offered to sacrifice was the son of his old age. [He does not actually say Isaac though].

4. You cannot blame Christians for judging your accusations against the Gospel of both Jesus’ time and Mohammed’s because of Sura 5:47. It says, “Let the People of the Gospel Judge by what Allah hath revealed Therein....” ? So, do you agree that Christians should judge by the Gospel, of which we have copies long before Mohammed’s time? If not, then is the Qur’an wrong?

Sura 5:48 says, “To thee (People of the Book) We sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety: so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee....”. If you are a Muslim who disagrees with these words, then how does Allah differentiate between His words, which He allows devout worshippers to learn only in corrupted form, and His words that remain uncorrupted?

Most Muslims believe in the hadiths, which are the authoritative collections of the sayings and doings of Mohammed, as the highest authorities after the Qur’an. Of the six major recognized hadith collections, Bukhari is the highest. I thought you would like to read what it says about Hajar [Hagar] and Ishmael.

*Bukhari* vol.4 book 55 ch.9 no.583 p.373 “Abraham brought her [Hagar] and her son Ishmael while she was suckling him, to a place at the Ka’ba under a tree on the position of Zam-zam, at the highest place in the mosque. During those days there was nobody at Mecca, nor was there any water. So he made them sit over there and place near them a leather bag containing some dates, and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Ishmael’s mother followed him saying, “O Abraham! Where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?” She repeated that to him many times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, “Has Allah ordered you to do so?” He says, “Yes”. ... (p.374 same hadith) “The Prophet said, “This is the source of the tradition of the walking of people between them (i.e. Safa and Marwa). When she reached the Marwa ( for the last time), she heard a voice and she asked herself to be quiet and listened attentively. ... She saw an angel at the place of Zam-zam digging the earth with his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from that place.” So, your view is not consistent with either Bukhari of the Bible.

The famous early Muslim historian al-Tabari (839-923 A.D.), investigated whether it was Ishmael or Isaac that was almost sacrificed, and he said it was Isaac, not Ishmael (*al-Tabari* vol.2 p.68). He had a ten-page discussion of the Muslim authorities who said it was Isaac and the ones who said it was Ishmael (*al-Tabari* vol.2 p.82-92), while concluding it was Isaac.

However, I think that this issue, of which of Abraham’s sons was which, is a small thing compared to being able to answer the question of Proverbs 30:4f: “Eho has made all the ends of the earth to rise? What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son’s name? Surely you know.” (Green’s Literal Translation)

**Q: In Gen 22:1 (KJV), how could God “tempt” Abraham, since Jms 1:13 says God does not tempt people?**

A: The word “tempt” is only in the King James version, translated 400 years ago. Both modern translations and the Hebrew word here, *nâcâh,* mean “to test or prove”. The difference between tempt and test is that God does not entice us to do evil, but God does allows us, like Abraham and Job, to have tests of our faith. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.207-208, *Now That’s A Good Question* p.475-476, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.124-125 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 22, why did God encourage human sacrifice with Abraham and Isaac?**

A: Four points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Abraham had already shown that He loved God more than His people and culture, but God tested Abraham to see if He loved God more than his own dear son.

**2.** The Ten Commandments (do not murder, etc.) were not given until Moses at Mt. Sinai.

**3.** Even in this solitary case of God initially commanding the sacrifice, God stopped it from being carried out. No person died.

**4.** God the Father did not ask Abraham for anything that He did not do Himself, in sacrificing Jesus for us.

As Chip Ingram (5/20/2007 wrote), “At some point God will ask you for your Isaac. You will find God’s greatest power when you surrender. … Surrender to God is what’s missing in the church today.”

See *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.48-49, *When Critics Ask* p.51, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.96, *Difficulties in the Bible* 57-60, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.125-127, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.41, and *Now That’s A Good Question* p.573 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 22:1-18, could the boy who Abraham almost sacrificed be Ishmael, not Isaac, as Muslims claim? Otherwise, how could Isaac be Abram’s “only son”?**

A: It was Isaac who was sacrificed and not Ishmael for at least four reasons:

**Even the Qur’an does not say it was Ishmael:** Genesis 22:2 says it was Isaac. For Muslims, while the Muslim *Qur’an* discusses this in Sura 37:99-111, no where in the entire *Qur’an* does it say whether it was Ishmael or Isaac.

**Only boy Abram had at the time:** Ishmael was 14 when Isaac was born based on Genesis 17:25 and Genesis 18:10. Hagar and Ishmael were sent way to a different place the day Isaac was weaned in Genesis 21:8-10. Abraham was tested “a long time” after this in Genesis 21:34, and a “boy” was on the altar in Genesis 22:12.

**Only son in God’s eyes:** God declared that is was through Isaac and not Ishmael that Abraham’s offspring would be reckoned in Genesis 21:12. Abraham did not have Ishmael because Ishmael and his mother were “gotten rid of” by being sent away according to Genesis 21:10-12.

**Only heir in this world:** Isaac was the only heir, and only son also means “beloved son”. While the culture of the time accepted taking concubines for procreation, inheritance and the right of the firstborn would go to sons of actual wives, not the sons of concubines. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.141 for more info.

**Only son of promise:** Genesis 21:12 says, “through Isaac your offspring shall be reckoned”. Abraham had other sons too, but they were born after this.

See *When Critics Ask* p.52 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 22:2, how was Isaac Abram’s “only son”?**

A: While Ishmael was born first, he was sent away by this time, and Isaac was the only son Abram still had with him. Isaac was the only heir, and only son can also mean beloved son. Genesis 21:12 says, “through Isaac your offspring shall be reckoned”. Abraham had other sons too, but they were born after this. While the culture of the time accepted taking concubines for procreation, inheritance and the right of the firstborn would go to sons of actual wives, not the sons of concubines. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.141 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 22:2, does the Holy Spirit ever lead people to disobey what has been revealed in the Bible?**

A: No. Three points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Of course, God did not lead Abraham to do anything against revealed Scripture, since no Scripture was written down in Abraham’s time.

**2.** Since scripture has been revealed, God does not tell anyone to do things contrary to His revealed commands. Even when the Holy Spirit also drove Jesus out into the wilderness, where Jesus was tempted by Satan, the Holy Spirit did not tempt Jesus or tell Jesus to do anything wrong.

**3.** God does not desire anyone to perform actions contrary to His desires. Even when God commanded Abraham to take Isaac as a sacrifice, God did not permit Abraham to carry through killing Isaac.

So, God could tell Abraham that back then, because the Mosaic Law was not written yet. But then as well as today, God never wants someone to go through sacrificing a person.

See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.67-69 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 22:12, since God said “Now I know that you fear God”, did God not know what Abram would do?**

A: Of course, God knew, but the expression means that it was at this point in time that Abraham proved what he would do.

Isaac was Abraham’s most important natural thing in life. But was Isaac more important than God? Abraham showed that God was first in his life. James 1 says that the testing of our faith produces perseverance. But while we might want a faith that never takes risks, that is not the faith that God grew in Abraham or others. Abraham had no choice in the type, circumstances, or timing of the test of his faith, and we usually do not either.

See *When Critics Ask* p.52 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 23 and Ex 3:8, how could the Hittites be in Palestine?**

A: The Hittites were a wide-ranging people, and a colony settled in the mountains of Palestine. The Indo-European Hittites sacked Babylon in 1590 B.C. Others believe this refers to the Hatti, a non-Indo-European people who were conquered before 2000 B.C. Hatti and Hitti are written the same in Hebrew. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.96-98 and *When Critics Ask* p.52-53 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 23:2, why was it mentioned that Kiriath-Arba is also called Hebron?**

A: There are two possible complementary reasons why Hebron is mentioned here.

**Remember** that while Abraham lived around 2000 B.C., the Book of Genesis was written in Moses’ time, 1447-1407 B.C., so that town might have been called Hebron by the Israelites and/or the Canaanites in Moses’ time. The Israelite spies knew the geography of Canaan and perhaps used this name for the city in Moses’ time.

**Regardless,** the Israelites called the city only Hebron, not Kiriath Arba, shortly after the conquest under Joshua. This simple explanatory note saying Kiriath Arba is now Hebron, might have been added shortly thereafter.

**Q: In Gen 23:2, negotiation is typically a give and take. For example, a seller says $300. The buyer says $100. The seller says $250; the buyer says $150. Maybe they agree on $200. How is this the opposite of a regular negotiation?**

**Why did Abraham say, “I am just an alien and stranger here”?**

Gen 23:5-6 Hittites: You are a prince among us. Bury your dead in any of our tombs for free.

Gen 23:7-9 Abraham bowing, please intercede with Ephron to let me buy the cave on his property

Gen 23:10-11 Ephron: You can have the cave for free.

Gen 23:12-13 Abraham bowing, I want to pay for the case. What is the market value of the property?

Gen 23:14-15, it is 400 shekels

Gen 23:16 Abraham did not argue or negotiate, but simply agreed to pay 400 shekels.

A shekel was a unit of weight ant this time, and only later became a unit of money.

In Joshua Achan stole 200 shekels of silver. In Abraham’s time a male salve was worth about 20 shekels. A few centuries earlier a slave was worth 10 to 15 shekels. In Moses’ time 500 or so years later, a slave was worth 30 shekels. So, the price of the field was about ten slaves.

The answer is that as wealthy as Abraham was, Abraham did not care about this small amount of money. He cared more that they would see that Abraham paid market value for it, and be more inclined to leave the tomb undisturbed. Sometimes it is more advantageous for you not to press your advantage as much as possible, but give some to the other side to build goodwill, especially when you cannot be there to ensure they will keep their side of the bargain.

**Q: In Gen 23:2-3 even though Abraham wept over Sarah, how was he gracious to the Hittites?**

A: Abraham honored them in his speech. Financially, he not only did not try to get the bottom price, but he let them have the initiative and set the price. Sometimes, even with our small children, it is good to let them have the initiative.

In Luke 14:9-11, Jesus said at a banquet take the lower place. When you host a banquet, invite the poor, crippled, and others who cannot reciprocate.

**Q: In Gen 23:3-20, Abraham was highly successful in business. But here, if he wanted to get the land for free, or for a very low price, he did not appear to be a good negotiator. – or was he?**

A: One adage to remember is: “keep your eye on the prize”. Sometimes a good business person knows that the lowest prices is not the only goal. Who would be around the land and the grave when Abraham and his family were away? It would be good not to drive a hard bargain that would leave hard feelings, but rather leave goodwill. He always wanted the Hittites to have a good memory of him, so they would not desecrate or re-purpose the gravesite when he was gone. In Genesis 25:9-10, Abraham was buried in the same cave, next to Sarah, as was Jacob in Genesis 50:12-13. In Genesis 50:25, Joseph did not want to be buried in Egypt.

**Q: In Gen 23:5, why did the Hittites consider Abraham a mighty prince among them?**

A: Abraham was very wealthy. Abraham also had apparently cultivated close relations with them and they counted him as not only a friend, but also one of their own.

**Q: In Gen 23:7, did the Hittites really exist?**

A: Modern archaeologists found out about the Hittites as early as 1892. However, some scholars still doubted their existence even ten years later (1902, E.A.W. Budge). See *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* volume 2 p.339-341 for more information. Today entire books have been written on the Hittites. One excellent and very readable one is *The Secret of the Hittites* by C.W. Ceram (Dorset Press 1955).

**Q: In Gen 23:9, how do you pronounce “Machpelah”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance,* the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, and *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* all say it is pronounced as “mak-PE-la”, with only the “e” as long and the accent on the second syllable.

Q: In Gen 23:15-16, why did Abraham have to weigh out the silver?

A: The shekel was a unit of weight, and only later became a unit of money also. Abraham had to “weigh” out the silver because coins were not used until about 800 B.C. according to *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament*? p.27. Likewise, Achan stole gold and silver “weighing” 50 and 200 shekels. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1798 says the first known coins were from Lydia about 700 B.C. It also notes that the Latin word *pecunia* (from which English gets the word pecuniary meaning monetary) came from the Latin word *pecus* which is a word for cattle.

**Q: In Gen 23:15-16, how do we avoid being “penny-wise and pound-foolish” in our negotiations?**

A: In English money a pence or penny is like an American penny. A pound is a little more than a U.S. dollar, except until recently it was almost $2.

One way this was not done, was in a company I worked for a number of years ago. They decided to implement “defensive benefits”. What this term meant was that if you were married and your spouse had a birthday where the month and day were earlier in the year than years, they would no longer provide benefits to your spouse and kids, only you. During an employee meeting, where the HR rep was unenthusiastically explaining this, I asked a question. About how much money do they anticipate this would save the company? She said it would save a lot, around $50,000 per year. I suppose that no one considered that if even only three or four people per year left the company because of this, and they used recruiters to replace them, that would be more than $50,000 right there.

**Q: In Gen 23:15-16, how do we show grace in our relationships?**

A: We can be quick to forgive, but not let people walk over us. Love them, not just with sentimentality but express it in caring and action.

**Q: In Gen 24:1; 25:8, why does God allow some of His children to suffer from old age?**

A: We do not suffer from old age in Heaven, and the eternity of bliss in Heaven will make our brief time of troubles on earth seem small. See the discussion on Joshua 13:1 for the answer.

**Q: In Gen 24:4, why would Abraham insist on a wife from his own people?**

A: The Canaanites thought it proper and religious to sacrifice their infant children in the fire, have religious prostitution. The Hittites were different. They were Indo-European, a colony of the Hittite Empire in Anatolia (modern-day Turkey.) It is not as obvious why Abraham did not want a daughter-in-law from the Hittites, except that they did not believe in the One True God either.

**Q: In Gen 24:5-8, what was so wrong with Isaac going back to Aram [Syria] to live?**

A: Then everything about God’s promise to Abraham to leave his people, and go to the promised land, would have been for nothing, due to Abraham’s descendants abandoning the promise.

**Q: In Gen 24:5-8, what would be wrong with Isaac going back to Aram just to visit, and to pick out a wife for himself?**

A: Given his kinship and wealth, his relatives would probably want Isaac to stay, just like Laban had Jacob stay for fourteen years. Abraham likely would not want any chance of Isaac being lured to go back and live permanently where his wife would be.

**Q: In Gen 24:15, what was the relation between Isaac and Rebecca?**

A: Rebecca was daughter of Abraham’s nephew, which would make her the daughter of Isaac’s cousin.

Isaac and Rebecca could not have disobeyed Leviticus 18, because it was not written yet. However, it turns out their marriage was still within the guidelines of the future rules in Leviticus.

**Q: In Gen 25:1 was Keturah a wife or a concubine?**

A: A concubine is considered a type of wife. Genesis 25:1 can mean either wife or concubine. See *When Critics Ask* p.53 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 25:2, what happened to Keturah’s sons with Abraham?**

A: Abraham and Keturah had six known sons.

**Zimran** is possibly the ancestor to an Arabian tribe, the Zimri in Jeremiah 25:25. Today there is a town of Zambran on the Red Sea west of Mecca.

**Jokshan**, is never heard of again, except that he was the ancestor of Sheba and Dedan. Sheba was a nation in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula. The Dedanim of Isaiah 21:13 were Arabs who probably were descended both from Jokshan and Ham through Cush (Genesis 10:7; 1 Chronicles 1:9). The city of Dedan was 100 miles (160 km) southwest of Tema on the el-’Ula oasis, 175 miles (280 km) north of Medina. Dedan is also mentioned in proto-Arabic Sabean and Minaean inscriptions.

**Medan** is possibly mentioned outside of the Bible. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1093 says that the consonants “m” and “b” are interchanged often in Arabic, so these might be the Bedana tribe, which the Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser III conquered.

**Midian** was a well-known tribe that oppressed the Israelites in Judges 8.

**Ishbak** started a tribe that settled in north Syria and was mentioned in the Assyrian Annals of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.).

**Shuah** was apparently the tribe from which Bildad the Shuhite came in Job 2:11.

See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* for more info on these names.

**Q: In Gen 25:2, if Abraham and Sarah were both infertile, how could Abraham have children after Isaac?**

A: First what is not the answer, and then the answer.

**Not the answer:** It was Sarah who was barren, not Abraham. After all, Abraham had a child, Ishmael, by Hagar. The is the answer given by Augustine of Hippo in his work *City of God* book 16 ch.28 p.327.

**The answer:** Sarah was always infertile, but by the time Abraham was 100, both were incapable naturally of having children according to Romans 4:19 and Hebrews 11:12. So after God granted Abraham the gift of fertility, God did not take it away.

See *The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary Romans 1-8* p.293 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 25:6, how many wives and concubines did Abraham have?**

A: While it does not really matter, we do not know the exact number. After Sarah died, Abraham had Keturah as a wife in Genesis 25:1. Hagar was one of his concubines, but Genesis 25:6 indicates that Abraham had more than one concubine. See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.284 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 25:8,17 and Gen 49:33, how did the patriarchs “give up the ghost”?**

A: This is a rough translation of the Hebrew word *gâva’*, which literally means to breathe out or expire. A more precise translation would be “breathed his last”.

**Q: In Gen 25:8,17 and Gen 49:33, Abraham and Jacob were “gathered to his people”, so how could there be life after death?**

A: This is an expression meaning the person died, and it sounds much better than “kicked the bucket”. See the previous question, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.98-99, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.127-129 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 25:13, do the references to Kedar relate to Mohammed?**

A: Genesis 25:13 mentions Kedar, the son of Ishmael, but there is doubt on Mohammed’s ancestry of Ishmael and Kedar. Regardless, though, Genesis 25:13 mentioning twelve sons of Ishmael, including Kedar, does not say anything good or bad about them. *al-Tabari* vol.6 p.6, records three things:

1) There are differences among genealogists about Mohammed’s ancestry after ‘Adnan (p.37)

2) Many but not all genealogies include Mohammed … ‘Adnan … Nabt b. Qaydhar [Kedar?], b. Isma’il [Ishmael]

3) “These differences arise because it is an old science, taken from the people of the first Book (the Old Testament).”

So, if the early Muslim historian al-Tabari acknowledges that they took genealogy names from the Jews and the Old Testament, it is not a completely independent witness.

**Q: In Gen 25:22-23, Rebekah’s question concerned the present and near future, yet God’s answer told of the far future. Why does God do that?**

A: Five points to consider in the answer.

**1.** God apparently wanted to reveal this prophetic truth about Jacob and Esau.

**2.** Like good human teachers, God knows that a point will be remembered better if it is an answer to a student’s question.

**3.** Regardless of whether God caused the babies to jostle solely to prompt Rebekah to ask the question, the jostling did prompt here to ask the question.

**4.** Perhaps Rebekah was not thinking long-term at this point, but here question was open-ended enough that God’s revelation still answered her question.

**5.** When we ask things of God, we should ask in an “open way” and not just on our terms. We should be prepared for God to show us truths we did not expect and for which we did not directly ask.

**Q: In Gen 25:31-33, was Jacob’s birthright gained by buying, or by lying?**

A: Both.

**1.** Jacob “bought” it from Esau for a bowl of lentils (Genesis 25:29-34).

**2.** Jacob later deceived Isaac in giving the birthright Esau had already chosen to relinquish. (Genesis 27:19)

*Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.345 points out that Jacob bought only the birthright, but lied to get the blessing.

**Independent** of both the purchase and the deception, God chose to have His people, the Jews, come through Jacob Genesis 26:24-24). See *When Critics Ask* p.55 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 26:2, were the Israelites supposed to go down to Egypt, or not?**

A: Isaac was told not to go down to Egypt in Genesis 26:2. Jacob, not Isaac, was told to go there in Genesis 46:3. In a similar way, In 2 Samuel 7:5,12-13 David was told that is was not he, but his son that was to build the Temple in Jerusalem. The lesson here is not that going to Egypt is good or bad, but that that we should go where God wants us to go, when God wants us to go.

**Q: In Gen 26:3-5, Gen 12:1; Gen 17:1, 9-14; and Gen 22:16 did God bless Abraham because of Abraham’s works?**

A: No. For either Abraham or people in general, there are two distinct issues here: salvation and blessings.

**Salvation:** Abraham’s works were not important, in the sense that they did not get him to Heaven. Abraham’s works were very important in being the visible expression of his faith in God, and inseparable from his faith in God.

**Blessings:** Because of works, both Abraham and us often receive both blessings this life and rewards in the next.

James gives Abraham as an example of Abraham being justified by works. Abraham “believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness” a decade or two before he almost sacrificed Isaac.

God’s covenant had both an invariant element and a conditional element. Leviticus 26:44-45 shows that even if God’s people fail on the conditional element, the invariant element still stands. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.129-130 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 26:6-7, why is Isaac a role-model for us, since Isaac lied here?**

A: No. See the answer to Genesis 12:10-20.

**Q: In Gen 26:8-9, was this the same Abimelech of Gerar as in Gen 20:2-3?**

A: Based on the name, probably not. Abimelech means “Father is king”. On one hand there are many instances of a father and son or descendant having the same name. On the other hand, here it is probably a title, not a personal name, as *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.42 say.

Other rulers who shared the same name were Tobias I, II, III, IV, and V from 590-200 B.C., Sanballat I, II, and III from 445-330 B.C.. Shalmaneser I, II, III, Antiochus I, II, III, IV, and Tiglath-Pileser I, II, and III.

**Q: In Gen 26:33, did Abraham name the town of Beersheba, or did Isaac?**

A: In Genesis 21:31, it was called Beersheba in Abraham’s time because of the oath between Abraham and the Abimelech. Isaac certainly knew this from living in Beersheba with his father in Genesis 22:19. In order to remind Abimelech, who was probably the son of Abimelech in Abraham’s time of the previous covenant, he named a new well a similar name, “Shibah”. See *When Critics Ask* p.55-56 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 26:34 and Gen 36:2-3, who were Esau’s four wives?**

A: **Wives 1-2:** At 40, Esau married two Hittites, Judith and Basemath daughter of Elon (Genesis 26:34-35).

Adah, daughter of Elon the Hittite (Genesis 36:2), is probably another name for Basemath.

**Wife 3:** After Jacob left, Esau married the Ishmaelite Mahalath, sister of Nabaioth (Genesis 28:8-9)

Basemath, the daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nabaioth (Genesis 36:3), is probably another name for Mahalath.

**Wife 4**: Esau married Oholibamah daughter of Anah (Genesis 36:3).

Judith was probably not mentioned in the genealogies in Genesis 36, because she bore no children.

See *When Critics Ask* p.56 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.99-101 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 27, why did God allegedly approve Jacob deceiving Isaac, and tricking Laban in Gen 31:20?**

A: God did not approve of Jacob’s lies. First, the Bible accurately and honestly records the evil things as well as the good things people did. Second, even God’s people in the Bible have done wrong things. As *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.43 says, “God did not bless Jacob because he lied and used deceit but in spite of it.” See also *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.101-102 and *When Critics Ask* p.57-58.

**Q: In Gen 27, why was the blessing important?**

A: Normally, the firstborn got the blessing, which meant a double share of inheritance, as well as being the family head. A 15th century B.C. tablet from Nuzi tells of a lawsuit between three brothers, as to who would marry a woman named Zululishtar. One brother won because he could show that his father authorized the marriage on his deathbed. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.42-43 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 27:29, what does the Hebrew word “lord” literally mean?**

A: The Hebrew word here, *gebiyr* (pronounced gheb-EER) can be translated two ways: master or hero. In the case of Esau and his descendants it was an [unwanted] master. In our lives, if God has placed someone over you that you dislike, you can choose to treat them as an unwanted master or a hero.

**Q: In Gen 27:39-40, why couldn’t Isaac bless Esau as he blessed Jacob?**

A: The Bible does not say why Isaac held the belief (whether right or wrong) that he could not bless both of them. However, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict vol. 2* p.328-329 says that according to the tables of that time found in the city of Nuzi, deathbed wills were considered valid and irrevocable. See also the answer to the next question.

**Q: In Gen 27:39-40, why did God not bless Esau as he blessed Jacob?**

A: There are three complementary reasons.

**1.** Romans 9:10-15 shows that God can do as He pleases without telling us his reasons.

**2.** Esau was heathen (godless) (Hebrews 12:16), and Jacob was a deceiver; God would have been just to curse both. Instead both received blessing (Hebrews 11:20).

**3.** God has the right to choose to give special mercy and love to only some as He sees fit. — just ask Paul.

**Q: In Gen 27:42-44 did Jacob go to the town of Haran to flee Esau, or to get a wife?**

A: Both. Sometimes there are multiple reasons to do one thing. Rebekah told Jacob to go to flee Esau in Genesis 27:42-46, but she told Isaac the reason was to find a wife in Genesis 27:46. Isaac’s reason to send Jacob was to find a wife in Genesis 28:1-6. See *When Critics Ask* p.56-57 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.345 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 27:45, does “both” refer to Jacob and Isaac or Jacob and Esau?**

A: *The NIV Study Bible* p.47 says linguistically it could be either way. However, it was Isaac and not Esau because Isaac was near death, Esau would kill Jacob right after that, and there was no threat to Esau. Unfortunately Rebecca might have been thinking about “both” of those she loved, and not “two out of three”.

**Q: In Gen 27:46, were Esau’s wives Hittite, or Canaanite?**

A: Can someone be both a Texan and an American? The Hittites in Canaan were one of the peoples of Canaan.

**Q: In Gen 28, were Rebekah and Jacob successful in getting what they wanted?**

A: On the surface yes, but in actuality, no. They wanted Jacob to have the birthright, and by wrong means, lying and deception, they got it, so they were successful.

However, the son with the birthright usually had an honored place in the family afterwards; yet, Jacob had to flee for his life. Rebekah succeeded in helping her favored son; yet, she would never see Jacob on earth again. As *Women in the Bible* points out, Rebekah would have to live with the son she had wronged for the rest of her life. See *Women in the Bible* (by Georgia B. Settle 1978) for more info.

**Q: In Gen 28:12 is “on it/him” ambiguous?**

A: Not really. According to the *New International Bible Commentary* p.1236 the phrase “on it” was interpreted by some rabbis as “on him”. In other words, either the angels of heaven were ascending and descending on the ladder/stairway, or else they were ascending and descending on Jacob himself. This is brought up because Jesus said in John 1:51 that Nathaniel will see the angels of God ascending and descending on the son of man [Jesus].

**In favor of “on it”**: the analogy makes sense, with the ladder (or stairway) being present and Jacob in the dream seeing multiple angels going about their business. Metaphorically Jesus is the ladder by which God’s blessings come down to earth, and the ladder by which we get taken to heaven.

**Against “on him”**, are the angels stomping on Jacob to get to the ladder? Are the angels climbing on Jacob to get to heaven; than what is the ladder/stairway for? Jesus was descended from Jacob, but Jesus is more like a ladder than like Jacob who often tricked people.

**Q: In Gen 29:15-25, why should we admire Laban in the Bible, since he deceived and lied to Jacob?**

A: Whoever said we should admire Laban? We should not. This question presupposes the Bible can only talk God’s people in a vacuum, and it cannot mention the other people with whom they had to deal. Of course, the Bible talks of evil people as well as good people. Furthermore, the Bible shows us that even the good people were not good all the time either.

An analogy might help here. Someone might say, “you cannot admire American heroes. Look for example at John Wilkes Booth, who shot Abraham Lincoln.” Well, we can read how John Wilkes Booth played a significant role in American history, but he was no American hero.

Laban played a role in the history of Israel, but he was no hero either. The analogy of Booth might seem a bit silly, since no one looks up to Booth as a hero, but bringing up Laban to criticize people who we should look up to in the Bible, (as an atheist actually did), seems out of place, too.

**Q: In Gen 29:21-30, when was Rachel given to Jacob?**

A: Jacob worked for seven years, was given Leah, waited a week, and then was given Rachel at that time in return for the promise of another seven years. See *When Critics Ask* p.57, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.44, and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.101 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 29:28, why did Jacob marry two sisters, since Lev 18:18 forbids marrying two sisters while both are alive?**

A: Leviticus 18:18 was a part of the Mosaic Law, which was given over 400 years after Jacob married his wives. Certainly one could not demand Jacob obey a law he had not heard, and God had not commanded them yet.

**Q: In Gen 29:31, why did God not just tell Jacob to love Leah too, instead of just making Rachel barren?**

A: Sometimes people can only learn lessons the hard way. Are we any different?

**Q: In Gen 30:8, how do you pronounce “Naphtali”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance*, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, and *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* all say it is pronounced “NAF-ta-li”, with short, a long i, and the accent on the first syllable.

**Q: In Gen 30:14-15, doesn’t using mandrakes sound like a superstition?**

A: Much of folk medicine does not work. The long time Rachel was childless afterwards clearly indicates that mandrakes had nothing to do with God opening Rachel’s womb. This passage shows that even believers can make mistakes and hope in foolish cures.

**Q: In Gen 30:27, how could Laban use divination to find out about Jacob?**

A: Assuming Laban was telling the truth here, sometimes people get correct answers by divination. However, even if divination gave all truth instead of a mixture of truth and error, believers should not follow Laban’s example because God said not to practice divination in Deuteronomy 18:10,14. By the way, Laban’s divination did not give him the result he desired in Genesis 31:1-2,9.

**Q: In Gen 30:37-43, doesn’t Jacob “causing” sheep and goats to become spotted sound like superstition?**

A: There is no hint of superstition, only faulty ideas about animal genetics. God blessed Jacob without regard for this, as Jacob himself knew in Genesis 31:7-13.

**Q: In Gen 31:23 and Gen 37:25, is Gilead an anachronism, since Num 26:26 says that Manasseh was the grandfather of Gilead?**

A: Not at all. First a point that is not relevant to the answer, and then the answer.

**Not a part of the answer:** Gilead was a somewhat common name. Gilead was not only a descendant of Manasseh (Numbers 26:29-30 and Joshua 17:1), but a different Gilead was Jephthah’s father (Judges 11:1), and a third Gilead was from Gad (1 Chronicles 5:14).

**The answer** is that the word “Gilead” shows the time of the writing. Jacob and Joseph would not have called the region Gilead, but nobody claims the Book of Genesis was written in the time of Jacob and Joseph. Rather, Genesis was written in Moses’ time. The two and a half Transjordan tribes were already going to receive their land before Moses died.

**An anachronism** is when a document that claims to be written at one time uses words or terms that would only be used at a later time. It is not an anachronism to use words at the time of writing to describe a prior time. For example, it is no anachronism, when someone in the twentieth century says the region of Gilead was in the country of Jordan. Jacob, Joseph, and Moses did not know of the modern country of Jordan, but then, nobody claims that they did.

**Q: In Gen 31:32,34, how could the Bible [allegedly] approve Rachel stealing idols from her father?**

A: It does not approve of Rachel’s theft. The household gods not only had religious connotations, possessing them meant the right of inheritance according to the tablets, written around Moses’ time found in the city of Nuzi.

*Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.130-131 gives the text of the Nuzi tablet, but it also advocates that Rachel’s religious attachment to these idols might be involved. *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.28 also mentions these tables.

While some might sympathize with Rachel’s spiteful attitude, the Bible does not condone this, it only records this. Rachel died in childbirth only a few years after taking the Gods in Genesis 35:17-19, so those household gods certainly did not do her any good. The Bible is not a book about perfect superheroes, but about very real people who had many faults, — like we have. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.101-102, *When Critics Ask* p.58, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.45 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 31:47, since Genesis was written at an early date, why are two Aramaic words in this verse?**

A: This indicates that Aramaic existed side by side with Hebrew at an early date. Remember, the Arameans were living in Syria where Laban lived. Jacob’s wives were from there. Alternately, these may be words common with early Hebrew.

**Q: In Gen 32:1-2; 33, how does God prepare us for conflict?**

A: The issue is not just strength for the conflict, but also endurance. We can be strengthened in at least three ways.

a) We need to be reminded of what to set our eyes on, the goal ahead of us, and the love to strengthen us to carry on.

2) God can strengthen us by giving us new spiritual gifts, and deepening the spiritual gifts we already have. We might need to learn new skills and practice newly found abilities.

3) But paradoxically in Genesis 33, God weakened Jacob. By putting his hip out of socket, Jacob would be even less likely to resist Esau physically. God needs to help us part with extra baggage that we don’t need, that weighs us down, in serving him. Sometimes something is not bad, but if we trust in it too much instead of God, God might want us to serve Him without it.

**Q: In Gen 32:1-3-6, what do you think were two purposes of Jacob sending messengers to Esau?**

A: As God sent angelic messengers to him, perhaps this is how Jacob got the idea to send messengers to Esau. It has been 20 years since Jacob and Esau saw each other. What kind of reception would Jacob receive? On one hand Jacob was afraid to find out, but on the other hand Jacob knew he did not want to run from this, and remain with Laban forever. Note that Jacob does not tell Esau “your brother” but rather “your servant”.

See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.79-80 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 32:6-7, what do you think are two reasons Esau decided to meet Jacob with 400 men?**

A: First of all, why would Esau have 400 men? Esau was probably quite wealthy, and he might have needed that army to fight the Horites who lived in the land.

At this time, perhaps Esau was coming to do what he vowed to do before; kill Jacob. Or perhaps Esau was undecided what he was going to do, but he wanted enough warriors to have all of his options open. Regardless, Esau wanted it clear that he was in control. If he had intended to frighten Jacob, he succeeded; Jacob was scared stiff.

**Q: In Gen 32:6-7, with Jacob’s wives, what do you think were their first impressions of Canaan, and of Jacob?**

A: Remember that Jacob narrowly escaped problems with Laban. One would wonder how close and trusting the relationship was between Rachel and Laban, given that he gave Leah to Jacob first. So, she might be relieved to have some distance between her and Laban. The land looked similar, except that there were many fortified towns of Canaanites that Jacob had to get along with.

**Q: In Gen 32:7-23, what were the three strategies that Jacob tried simultaneously?**

A: First Jacob tried to pave the way with large gifts for Esau. Second, Jacob separated his family into groups; if group was attacked and killed, the others might be able scatter and escape. Finally, Jacob, decided to go last. Jacob was really feeling desperate here, and that he was on his own. But as the *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.68 says, “By human security systems, we often protect ourselves from a dynamic prayer life. Why do we do ourselves this wrong?”

**Q: In Gen 32:22-32, was Jacob renamed to Israel here, or was Jacob renamed to Israel in Gen 35:9-10? (A liberal Christian mentioned this as evidence that multiple authors wrote Genesis.)**

A: Genesis 32:22-32 is very detailed, and tells how Jacob wrestles with God, and God renames him to be Israel. Genesis 35 gives a summary of Jacob’s life, and two verses, 35:9-10 mention Jacob being renamed so that we can place where the narrative in Genesis 32 occurred. Yes, these two verses are repetition, but this is helpful to the story, not an inadvertent inclusion of something twice. Today, when people write, they often repeat what they say in the body of an essay in the conclusion, but that does not mean the different parts of the essay were by multiple authors.

**Q: In Gen 32:27-28, why was Jacob renamed Israel?**

A: While the Bible does not say there are two possibilities, and both may be true.

**The act of renaming** showed that God is in control of their whole life, even their name, and that they were a different person, with a different destiny, because of God. I suppose when we get to heaven we can just ask Abram, Simon, and Saul of Tarsus about this, or rather should I say Abraham, Peter, and Paul.

**Names had great meaning** in those times, and Israel apparently means “God perseveres” or else “He perseveres with God.” as *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.45-46 says, and is linked to “you have struggled with God” according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.210.

**Q: In Gen 32:24,27, since Jacob wrestled with a man, who turned out to be an angel or God, is God an angel or man?**

A: God can appear as even a burning bush, but that does not make God a plant. While still being everywhere, God can also have a localized presence as anything He desires.

Here is what Clement of Alexandria (193-217/220 A.D.) thought. “Again when He [Jesus] speaks in His own person, He confesses Himself to be the Instructor: ‘I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt.’… And He most manifestly appears as Jacob’s instructor. He says accordingly to him, ‘Lo, I am with thee, to keep thee in all the way in which though shalt go; and I will bring thee back into this land; for I will not leave thee till I do what I have told three.’ He is said, too, to have wrestled with Him. ‘And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled with him a man (the Instructor) till the morning.’ This was the man who led, and brought, and wrestled with, and anointed the athlete Jacob against evil.” *The Instructor* book 1 ch.7 p.223

See also the answer for Genesis 3:8 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 32:24-32, was Jacob wrestling with a literal angel, or was he just wrestling with an issue?**

A: Nothing indicates we can add to Scripture that this was not a real angel.

See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.571-572 for more on the following three points:

**1.** Taking the Bible literally is the only honest way to interpret it

**2.** Taking the Bible literally does not mean to impose a wooden, concrete literalism

**3.** Taking the Bible literally means to interpret the book as it was written.

While the Jews Josephus and Philo interpreted Jacob’s wrestling as a dream, dreams do not leave hip joints permanently out of socket. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.131-133 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.46 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 32:24-30, is the Allah [God] of Christianity so weak that He takes all night to wrestle Jacob, as a Muslim mentioned?**

A: First of all, it was God’s angel (whom Jacob called a man), not God Himself who wrestled. Jacob said He saw God face to face, but Jacob only encountered God through the angel. Regardless though, God sent this angel, who had the power to crush Jacob.

If a father wrestles his strong-willed two-year-old, and even let’s the two-year-old win at times, that does not make him a weak father. In like manner, God’s intention was to contend with Jacob’s stubbornness, not to destroy Jacob and his tenacity. God wanted to bring Jacob to an understanding of who he was, not kill him.

Imagine how great it would be if your body were the same except that it was 1,000 times stronger. You could excel at athletics, break through walls, and run extremely fast. However, every time you tried to pick up a flower, you crushed it, every time you held a little child’s hand you broke it, and every time you held your spouse, she went to the hospital. Maybe just having your muscles be 1,000 times stronger is not so good after all.

God is all-powerful, but God also has gentleness and finesse. God is infinitely times more powerful than us, but God has greater control over His own strength than we do of ours. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV) gives an example of how the Almighty is gentle: “The LORD your God is in you, his is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.”

In 1 Kings 19:11-13 God tells Elijah he will experience the presence of the Lord. It was not in the ensuing powerful wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in a gentle whisper.

**So to summarize,** Christians worship a God who is gentle without being any less the Almighty.

**Q: In Gen 32:30, can someone see God’s face, since Ex 33:20 says nobody can and live?**

A: Jacob saw an appearance of an angel; he at first thought it was a man, and he certainly did not see God in his glory face-to-face. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.213-214, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.399, and *When Cultists Ask* p.29-30 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 32:26, why do you think Jacob was so intent on being blessed by God?**

A: Jacob could have asked for more wealth, for safety, or for Esau to be kindly disposed towards him, but Jacob asked for none of the above directly. He only asked that God bless him. Jacob was not expecting God to enable him to avoid Esau, but Jacob wanted God to bless him to come through seeing Esau alive.

**Q: In Gen 33 and Gen 36:7 did Esau and Jacob separate because their possessions were too great, or because of Jacob’s fear of Esau?**

A: Both.

**Q: In Gen 33:18-19 and Josh 24:32, did Jacob purchase the land at Shechem, or did Abraham purchase it as Acts 7:15-16 and Gen 23:16-20 say?**

A: Abraham purchased land in Mamre near Hebron for Sarah in Genesis 23:16-20, but that is not in the same place. As for the land purchased in Shechem, there are three possible answers.

**Jacob and Abraham bought it:** Both Joshua 24:32 and Genesis 33:18-19 say Jacob, Abraham’s grandson, was the person who purchased the land near Shechem. Regardless of whether Abraham came to witness the purchase of the land with the money he passed on to Isaac or not, one could say that the clan of Abraham purchased the land. Even today, a teenager, with his father’s consent, can buy a car in his father’s name.

**Stephen might be mistaken:** Since Jacob purchased the land his sons were buried on, yet Jacob himself was buried at Mamre with Abraham, Stephen might have been accidentally combined these two separate events. Even if Stephen were mistaken, the Bible would still be inerrant. The Bible simply recorded, inerrantly, what Stephen said, mistake and all.

**Reburied:** Once they settled in the land permanently, they decided to rebury Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Rebecca to be all together.

See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.142-145, *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.309, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* 379-381, and the discussion on Genesis 50:13 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 33:18-19 what else do we know about the city of Shechem?**

A: Though the city was in ruins in Abraham’s time, the site of the city was known, as *Can Archaeology prove the Old Testament?* p.26 says. Abraham did not purchase the city, but rather land near Shechem.

The *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.518-522 gives a lot of detail on Shechem. It was always being rebuilt because it was on a hill that could be fortified and had an excellent spring. Shechem was rebuilt around 1900 B.C., but Pharaoh Senusert III (ca.1880-1840 B.C.) captured it. Shechem was destroyed again about 1750 B.C. It was rebuilt but was destroyed again by the Egyptians c.1550 B.C.. It was rebuilt, in the time of the Amarna letters (1500-1370 B.C.) which mention it as the center of the king Lab’ayu who was in confederation with the “Habiru” invaders. It was rebuilt, but destroyed by the Assyrians by the Aramaeans, King Menaham of Israel, and the Assyrians in 723 B.C.

**Q: In Gen 34:13-17, how could God [allegedly] condone Jacob’s sons replying deceitfully about Dinah?**

A: God did not condone it, and Jacob’s two sons who killed the Shechemites were cursed for that.

**Q: In Gen 34:25-30, how could Simeon and Levi alone destroy an entire city?**

A: They led the raid, but they had other servants, hired soldiers, and/or relatives under their leadership.

**Q: In Gen 35:1-5, what was the sequence of events here?**

A: Here is the order.

**1.** Jacob was apparently lax about permitting foreign idols among his nomadic group.

**2.** God told Jacob he wanted Jacob to live in Bethel and build an altar to Him.

**3.** Jacob correctly saw that if they were going to build an altar to God, it would not do to have any idols among them.

**4.** Once they fully dedicated themselves to the Lord, they had nothing to fear from the surrounding peoples.

**Q: In Gen 35:21, were all of Jacob’s sons born in Migdal Eber, or were they born earlier as other parts of Genesis say? (A liberal Christian brought this up as a contradiction.)**

A: Genesis 35:21-26 does not say every single son of Jacob was born in Migdal Eber, especially since in Genesis 35:19-20, Rachel, mother of two sons, had just died prior to them moving there. Genesis 35:21-26 simply lists the sons, following the account where Israel (=Jacob) pitched his tent beyond Migdal Eber.

**Q: In Gen 36 are Esau’s descendants are listed in such detail?**

A: Admittedly this is not the most important chapter in the Bible. While the individual names are not important, we learn five things from this.

1. This shows the Bible’s claim of historical accuracy and attention to historical detail.

2. Esau’s descendants (the Edomites), and the Israelites were familiar with each other. In the book of Job, Eliphaz was a Temanite, a descendant of Teman in Genesis 36:11,15,42 and 1 Chronicles 1:45. Later, Jeremiah 49:7,20 poetically uses Teman as a synonym for Edom.

3. The two related peoples, though separate, were very friendly towards each other, at least at this time. Later, Amos 1:9-11 speaks of the “brotherly covenant” that the Edomites broke. This was not a formal covenant, but an informal relationship from the time of Genesis 33:4-16.

4. The Edomites basically combined with the Horites who had already lived in the land in Genesis 20-29. This combination is probably similar to what the Shechemites proposed to the Israelites. Centuries later there was actually a powerful middle-eastern nation, called the Mitanni, or also called the Hurrians, that were a combination of two peoples. The group that domination with partnership were the Hurrians, who apparently were from India.

5. As Canaan was given to the Israelites, the Edomites had Edom and Mount Seir. God said He gave Mount Seir to the children of Esau in Deuteronomy 2:5.

6. The number of Esau’s descendants, plus the assimilation with the Horites, plus the early start at government showed that the Edomite nation was advancing rapidly, and they could be powerful rivals later.

Here are the battles between Edom and Israel.

1 Samuel 14:47 They fought in Saul’s time

1 Kings 11:14-22 The Edomites under Hadad fought in Solomon’s time

2 Chronicles 20:1-23 the Edomites made an alliance and fought in Jehoshaphat’s time

2 Kings 8:21 The Edomites fought in Jehoram’s time

2 Chronicles 28:17 The Edomites fought in Ahaz’s time

Psalm 137:7; Lamentation 4:21-22; Obadiah 10-14 The Edomites aided the Babylonians against Judah.

Malachi 1:2-5 around 433 B.C., after the return from exile the Edomites were still enemies.

In Ezekiel 25:12-17, after the fall of Jerusalem, the Edomites waited at the crossroads to kill and rob the fleeing Jews.

**Q: In Gen 36:2 was Zibeon a Hivite city, or a Horite city as Genesis 36:20 reads?**

A: There are two possibilities:

**Misspelling:** Many scholars assume this is a misspelling in the Masoretic text, since in Hebrew Hivite is *h[i]wwt*, and Horite is *h[o]rrt*. The Septuagint has Horites in Genesis 34:2 and Joshua 9:7.

**Two names for one group or two merged groups:** Horites (Hurrians) also settled in Palestine in the areas where Hivites lived, as evidenced by Hurrian personal names. Even the prince of Jerusalem in the 14th century B.C. had the Hurrian name of Abdi-Hepa.

See the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.801 for more info on both views.

**Q: In Gen 36:31, does the phrase “before any Israelite king reigned” show the date of authorship as Saul’s time or later?**

A: No. Not only was Moses able to know there would be a king over Israel (Deuteronomy 17:14-15), but all the Israelites back to Jacob’s time, would know Israel would have a king from Judah, because of Jacob’s prophecy in Genesis 49:10.

**Q: In Gen 37:1-11, what set Joseph up for bad relations with his family? Do you think Joseph was aware of this?**

A: There were five things.

1. Snitching on his brothers in Genesis 37:2

2. Jacob loving Joseph more than the others in Genesis 37:3.

3. Jacob giving Joseph, but not the other brothers an ornamented robe in Genesis 37:3-4.

4. Not Joseph having the dream, but Joseph telling his brothers his dream of the grain sheaves in Genesis 37:5-8.

5. Joseph telling his brothers and father another dream of the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing to him in Genesis 37:9-11.

Joseph, a seventeen-year old boy, seemed totally unaware of how other people would take what he said. Jacob, who was much older, likewise apparently never thought about how he might be inciting jealousy between brothers. You would think Jacob would know something about that. Apparently, Jacob learned the “bad lesson” of playing favorites, but not the “good lesson” that playing favorites has bad consequences.

**Q: In Gen 37:1-11, why exactly did Joseph’s brothers actually hate him?**

A: Joseph’s brothers probably thought that his dreams likely came from himself. It would be easy to feel that Joseph was proud and egotistical, because his father loved him (and his mother Rachel) more.

**Q: In Gen 37:1-11, what kinds of things do people do today that set up bad relations with others?**

A: out of a heart of pride, envy, or malice, they can be controlling, boastful, slanderous, or gossiping. Our of a lack of empathy they can be insensitive. Out of insecurity they can be back-stabbing. Sometimes they deliberately do those things, and sometimes they are not self-aware that they do those things. We naturally have self-centered hearts.

We need Jesus in order to love our neighbors as ourselves, and in order to continue to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Q: In Gen 37:3,23,32, is there any extra-Biblical evidence for a coat of many colors?

A: Yes, though not Joseph’s actual robe. Archaeologists have found “Asiatics”, with coats of many colors, were drawn on the walls of the tomb of an Egyptian noble named Khnumhotep. See *Pharaohs and Kings : A Biblical Quest* p.332,360 for pictures and more info.

Q: In Gen 37:17, is there any extra-Biblical evidence of making people “disappear” by throwing them into wells?

A: Yes. *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.29 says a cistern at Dothan (13 miles north of Shechem) was found with several skeletons in it. By the way, Joseph’s brothers were near Dothan.

**Q: In Gen 37:17, if you were to ask Joseph’s brothers why they intended to kill him, what would they say?**

A: Joseph gets them in trouble (Jacob had sent Joseph to tell on them.). Joseph gave Jacob a bad (*ra’ah*) report about them, and they would report to Jacob that a bad (*ra’ah*) animal ate Jacob.

They called Joseph a dreamer.

Self-interest, jealousy that their father loved Joseph more. If the dreams were from God (as they ultimately proved to be), even God favored Joseph more.

Shechem was about 50 miles north of Hebron where Jacob was. Dothan was about 13 miles north of that. So that were probably too far away from Jacob for anyone to tell Jacob what happened.

It is ironic that early in his life, Jacob used clothing to deceive is own father Isaac about being Esau. Now, clothing would be used to deceive him by his own sons.

**Q: In Gen 37:17, were Joseph’s brothers planning to kill him, or did they decide to sell Joseph to Midianite traders as Gen 37:28-29 says?**

A: Both are true, because people can change their plans. Originally they planned to kill Joseph, except that Reuben planned to rescue him. However, when the saw the Midianite traders, they figure they could make some money through Joseph and changed their plans. Naturally speaking one might think Joseph would have a “right” to become bitter over this. However, Joseph followed God, and hard times did not make him bitter, only better.

**Q: In Gen 37:25, were the traders Ishmaelites, or Midianites as Gen 37:28 says?**

A: From a distance the brothers could not tell which people were coming, or if there were some of each. It did not matter to the brothers though, they just wanted the money. Either the word Ishmaelite or the word Midianite might be a copyist error. Or, the brothers thought they were Ishmaelites, but they actually were Midianites.

**Q: In Gen 37:28, was 20 shekels of silver about the right price for a slave like Joseph?**

A: Yes. According to K.A. Kitchen in *Ancient Orient and Old Testament Introduction* p.52-53, this is the correct price about 1800 B.C. Centuries earlier they were 10 to 15 silver shekels, they were 30 silver shekels about the time of Moses, and later they were more expensive. In Hosea 3:2, a slave was worth about 30 shekels. See the *Biblical Archaeology Review* volume 21 no.2 p.53 for a graph of the price of a slave versus time.

**Q: In Gen 37:28, why didn’t God make things easier for Joseph?**

A: God could have made things a lot easier for Joseph. He could have not given Joseph those dreams, he could have had Joseph save his brothers so they would be grateful to him. God used Joseph to save his family when there was a great famine, but God could have done something else to save them from famine too.

We don’t know why God chose the means that He did to accomplish His will. However, we can observe that Joseph’s comfort was not God’s primary goal; God used Joseph’s time on earth to accomplish things in the lives of Joseph and his brothers.

**Q: In Gen 38:1-21, why is this account of Judah and Tamar in the Bible?**

A: On a scale from a low (not as bad) of 1 to a high (worst) of 10, with sexual immorality being a 10, what would you call intentionally never intending to keep a promise someone was depending on for the rest of her life? - It certainly is more than a 1. There are at least three things we can learn from this.

**1.** Lest we think that Judah and the other patriarchs were more righteous than everyone else, this and other accounts bring us back to the reality that they were not particularly righteous.

**2.** The Bible gives us a candid, accurate account of how people lived back then. The Bible does not sugarcoat their history in the least. We can learn from what they did wrong as well as what they did right.

**3.** This shows a type of sin that is present today but is not often discussed: shirking responsibility. This is considered a very serious sin in God’s eyes, since Onan was killed because of it. Judah too did not act responsibility toward his daughter-in-law, and he broke his own word. Judah did not give his son in marriage to Tamar, because he feared for his son’s life, because he mistrusted God’s goodness. Obviously, Jacob did not think Onan deserved death for refusing to fulfill his responsibility.

**Q: In Gen 38:29-30, what do Zerah/Zarah and Perez/Pharez mean?**

A: First what they mean, and then two applications. *Strong’s*, Bible dictionaries, and commentaries all agree that Perez/Pharez means breakthrough or a breach. He breached or opened the womb. There is a slight difference of opinion on Zerah/Zarah though.

**Scarlet:** Because of the scarlet thread tied on his hand, “Zerah therefore may mean ‘scarlet’” according to the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1844.

It means brightness or redness according to the *New International Bible Commentary* p.139.

It means ‘scarlet’ according to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.89.

**Rising:** Zerah comes from the Hebrew word *Zerah*, ‘rising’ according to *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.1085.

A reason for the difference of opinion can be found in *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* (word 2226).It says it is the same as 2225 “zerach, *zeh’-rakh* from 2224; a *rising* of light:- rising.” 2224 says “zarach, *zaw-rakh’*; a prim. Root; prop, to *irradiate* (or shoot forth beams), i.e. to *rise* (as the sun); spec. to *appear* (as a symptom of leprosy): - arise, rise (up), as soon as it is up. So, the word Zerah came from the sunrise, and it could refer to the actual rising, or it could refer to the scarlet red color of the dawn.

**The Messianic line** in Matthew 1:3 briefly mentions the births of both Perez and Zerah. In His first coming Jesus said that He would bring division in Luke 12:51. Paul speaks of the brightness of Christ’s second coming in 2 Thessalonians 2:8. So the twins came in the order of the two comings of Christ. However, on the other hand, John 1:5,9 mentions that Jesus was the true light that gives light to every man, and that He came into the world.

**Achan**, who was executed in Joshua 7 was a descendant of Zerah. so a person having a special or godly ancestry does not guarantee they are necessarily righteous or can escape judgment. It has been said that “God has no grandchildren.” In other words, either you are child of God or you are not. But you cannot claim a relationship with God solely because of your parent’s faith and not your own.

See also the *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.73 and *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* p.232-244 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 39:7-10, since the Ten Commandments were not written yet, what would have been wrong with Joseph sleeping with his master’s wife?**

A: Joseph did not need the Ten Commandments to know that doing this would totally betray the trust his master had in him. Joseph also said this would be a sin against God.

Some people operate according to the letter of the law, only. However, that was not the way Joseph acted, and that is not the way Christians are supposed to act. Instead of just asking “can I get away with this”, or “is there any absolute black-and-white prohibition against this”, we should instead be asking “what would be pleasing to God”.

Jesus lost his coat twice now! But as someone once said, it is better to loser your coat and keep your character than to lose your character and keep your coat.

There is an interesting Arab tale illustrating the mindset of only obeying the letter of the law. Once a man made a deal with an evil genie. They both signed a paper, where the genie’s part of the deal was to provide him with the most beautiful woman he could imagine as his wife and that the genie would not harm him. The genie disappeared, and later a beautiful woman came and wanted to be his wife. Unknown to the man, the woman was the genie in disguise. One night the “woman” asked the man to see the agreement. When the man picked up the agreement, the genie caused some wax from the candle to cover over the word “not” in “not to harm the man”, and the genie killed the man.

It is interesting that, to some, a bit of candle wax is all that was required to justify invalidating the promise the two made. Today some people think it is fine and proper to renege on an agreement for reasons that are hardly any more substantial. For true believers in God, not only do we keep our word to the letter, but we also keep the intent of our word, and do not let flimsy reasons serve as excuses for being dishonest.

**Q: In Gen 39:7-20, are there any other stories like this?**

A: There is nothing very close to this, but there is one fictional story with a slight similarity. The idea of the wife straying when the husband is gone is not unique to Joseph. About 600 years after this time, in the thirteenth century B.C., there was an Egyptian story, called *A Tale of Two Brothers* that had a few similarities. When a husband was absent, the wife tried to seduce his brother, who refused her advances. When the husband returned, the wife made a false charge against his brother. Eventually the truth came out and in the end the wife was executed. See *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* p.32 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 40:15, how was Joseph carried off from the land of the Hebrews?**

A: On one hand Jacob was coming from the land that was the promised and future possession of the Israelite Hebrews. On the other hand, we think of Hebrew as synonymous with Israelite, but it was not the case back then. A Hebrew, or *‘Apiru*, also meant a nomad, and Abram was called a Hebrew. Thus, Joseph either meant his descent from Abraham and living in Abraham’s new land, or else that he was from a land of nomads, or both.

**Q: In Gen 40:20-22, Mt 14:6, and Mk 6:21, are birthdays bad to celebrate since the only birthdays [allegedly] in the Bible are when Pharaoh executed the baker and Herod executed John the Baptist?**

A: No. Jehovah’s Witnesses try to use an argument from silence to prohibit birthday celebrations. Both Pharaoh and Herod were cruel, arbitrary rulers who killed people on non-birthdays too, but there are two stronger reasons why celebrating a special day for someone’s birth is OK.

Job was a godly man, and each of his sons celebrated banquets at their house “on their own day” in Job 1:4. The phrase “their own day” means their birthday as showed by Job cursing “his day”, which was the day he was born in Job 3:1-3.

Also, the angel Gabriel announced that many will rejoice over the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:14) and if angels could celebrate the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:13-14, it is OK for us to celebrate His birth too.

See *Jehovah’s Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse* p.24-26 for a more extensive discussion.

**Q: In Gen 40:23, how could the cupbearer so easily forget Joseph?**

A: At the time the cupbearer was concerned about what the dream meant. But after he was restored, he could reason that Joseph was not the one that restored him, and Joseph was not benefiting him now, so he focused on what and who could benefit him. He both forgot his gratitude to Joseph and his promise to Joseph to remember him and mention him to Pharaoh. By his brothers, Potiphar’s wife, and the cupbearer, Joseph was abused, slandered, and forgotten. But God could still act despite the cupbearer’s forgetfulness; it is just that it would take two full years. It is interesting that Joseph’s first born was named Manasseh, which means “to forget” according to the *Evangelical Bible Commentary* p.33. The jealousy of Joseph’s brothers, the character assassination of Potiphar’s wife, and the forgetfulness of the cupbearer were insignificant compared to the defining verse of this chapter: Genesis 41:32, which says, that God has firmly decided.

**Q: In Gen 41:18, why are cows in the river?**

A: In most places cows would not remain in the river. But in Egypt, cows are often there to get relief from the heat, and for some protection against flies. But a writer would have had to live in Egypt to know this. See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament* p.91 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 41:32, why would Pharaoh make a non-Egyptian second-in-command?**

A: While kings can sometimes do strange things, in this case it made very good sense. If Joseph tried to rebel, Egyptians would not follow him. It is recorded that Canaanites, such as Meri-Ra, Ben-Mat-Ana, and a Semite Yanhamu deputy of Amenhotep III had high positions in the Egyptian Court. (Amenhotep III became Pharaoh after the Israelites had left Egypt.) In much later times the Turkish Ottomans often had Armenians in high court positions, knowing that the people would never support a non-Muslims who tried to take power. See *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* vol.2 p.331, *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.29, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.47 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 41:45, was Joseph’s Egyptian name, Zaphenath-Paneah, a title or an Egyptian name?**

A: It probably meant “he who is called life” or similar. There is no evidence of any Egyptians having a title like this, so it probably was a name. Pharaoh probably wanted Joseph to be able to appear more Egyptian to many of his officials. It does not mean Joseph abandoned his original name though. It is sort of like when people came from China to the West, many times they also assume a western name, and when people go from the West to China, many times they also assume a Chinese name.

**Q: In Gen 41:45, is there any extra-Biblical evidence for Joseph’s Egyptian name, Zaphenath-Paneah?**

A: Yes. While scholars do not know any of the names of the viziers of Egypt during the centuries around Joseph’s time, archaeologists have found a connection.

**Zaphenath:** Joseph’s Egyptian name in Genesis 41:45 was probably transmitted down to us with the ‘t’ and ‘p’ switched. *Zat-en-aph* means “he who is called” which was a common phrase. Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 shows many examples of Asiatics given Egyptian names. Many of these names have “he/she who is called as the first part.

**Paneah:** “Pa” or “Pe would represent the Egyptian *Ipi* or *Ipu*. “anea” is similar to the Egyptian *ankh*, which means “life” or *ankhu* which means “is alive”. *Pharaohs and Kings : A Biblical Quest* p.350 concludes by saying the name Ipiankhu and variations were common in the time of Joseph but not very common earlier or later.

**Q: In Gen 41:45 remembering how Isaac got his wife, and Jacob got his wife, what is different about how Joseph got his wife? How did Joseph cope with that?**

A: Pharaoh was not a believer, and Joseph’s wife probably was not either, at least initially. We do not see any care by believing people in choosing a wife for Joseph; but Joseph still got by. As God gave Adam governance of the land and a wife, Pharaoh gave Joseph governance of the land and a wife.

By the way, Potiphar and Potiphera are likely not the same person. There is a monument called the Potiphar stele in Egypt, which says, “Putiphar son of ‘Ank h-Hor”. This is probably neither of these men; rather Potiphar was a common name.

**Q: In Gen 41:53-57, how was Joseph a type of Christ?**

A: Joseph suffered himself so that he could provide provision for all of God’ people. See the *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.75 for more info. From the time Joseph was sold as a slave to the time he became second in command was about 13 years. During that time Joseph had to be patient, even though he was given no external indication that his situation would ever improve. Think of how patient God is with us!

**Q: In Gen 41:57, did what happened to Joseph ultimately benefit Joseph?**

A: In this case it benefited him secondarily, in that he was not in Canaan when famine occurred. But primarily it was not to benefit Joseph; after all, Joseph could have just slipped into Syria and lived alone there, as Jacob did. No the primary benefit was to the 70 people in his clan. God did not have this trouble on Joseph primarily for Joseph’s benefit, but for his family’s.

On the other hand, Joseph did benefit greatly in a different way. Imagine Joseph had stayed in Canaan or Syria, and done nothing his whole life. He might still have an upright character, but would not be considered a great hero of faith in the Bible without these experiences that molded him, though the molding was painful at times.

**Q: In Gen 41:51, how do you pronounce “Manasseh”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* says it is pronounced as man-A-sah with the first “a” as long and the accent on the second syllable. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* and *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* do not have any long vowels, but also have the accent on the second syllable.

**Q: In Gen 41:57, since the famine was severe in all the world, why did every place in the world not experience famine?**

A: This phrased expressed that the famine was severe beyond Egypt too.

**Q: In Gen 42:3-4, what did the family learn about favoritism?**

A: In Jacob’s case, apparently nothing. He did not send Benjamin down with the others on this adventure, because it appeared that he loved Benjamin more than them. In Jacob’s mind his deceased wife Rachel (his (thought) deceased son Joseph and Benjamin were linked together, and he did not want to lose the last of them. Apparently, the other brothers were though more expendable. This was an awful way to parent.

However, the brothers, feeling bad after sending Joseph off and keeping this a secret from their father all these years. But since then, given that Jacob was unfair towards them, and that was not going to change, they now learned to live with that.

**Q: In Gen 42:7, why were Egyptian officials selling grain?**

A: Under Joseph’s leadership Egypt had saved up food for the severe famine. Either the Egypt government had taken more from the farmers than they needed, or some Egyptians would have less than they needed because they were selling the people’s grain for a profit. Millennia after this, it was an all too common occurrence for food to be exported for a significant profit while the farmers who produced the food starved to death.

**Q: In Gen 42:8, why wouldn’t Joseph’s brothers recognize him?**

A: Nothing indicates this was miraculous or supernatural. They last saw a helpless, frightened seventeen-year-old boy with a beard, and now they see a wealthy, powerful 30-year old man who, if he followed Egyptian customs, would have no beard. Even when people notice a resemblance, they often jump to the conclusion that it cannot be the same person, if circumstances seem to make it impossible that it is the same person.

**Q: In Gen 42:6-20, why did Joseph treat his estranged brothers this way?**

A: While the Bible neither approves nor criticizes this strategy, this proved shrewd on Joseph’s part. Joseph wanted to know what their attitude was toward the other son of his mother, and what they had learned over the years. He wanted to see what was in their hearts before opening his heart to them.

While no one today will likely be in the same situation, the general principle is still valid of trying to know something of what is in a person’s heart before taking them into your confidence. In a different context, Jesus said not to throw your pearls before swine in Matthew 7:6.

**Q: In Gen 42:21-23, why did they feel so guilt-ridden here?**

A: This was a big secret that nobody but the brothers knew. (They did not know that Joseph was before them and knew Hebrew.) Imagine having a secret festering in your past of what you did to someone close to you that you could not tell them. Think of how hard it was for the brothers all of these years because of their sin.

Reuben had an idea to rescue Joseph back in Genesis 37:21-22. Reuben did not agree to selling Joseph in Genesis 37:29, but he acquiesced in taking Joseph’s robe and dipping it in blood. Here Reuben was still guilt-ridden like the others, but also had an “I-told-you-so” attitude blaming them.

**Q: In Gen 42:25-28, after they had the jolt of having to leave Simeon behind in prison, how do you think they felt when they saw the silver money back in the sack?**

A: Genesis 42:28b probably understated it when it said “their hearts sank.” They were sorry for Simeon, and they were sorry for their father, and they dreaded telling their elderly father. Jacob later aid that if Benjamin were lost too, “you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.” (Genesis 42:38b (NKJV).

Reuben’s plan was to return to Egypt alone with only Benjamin and the silver, and try to get Simeon back. But Jacob loved Benjamin more than trying to get Simeon back.

**Q: In Gen 42:37, why would Reuben say, “you can put both of my sons to death if I did not bring Benjamin back?**

A: Jacob had no interest in putting any of his grandchildren to death. Reuben said this for effect to try to persuade Jacob. But it is a somewhat strange relationship where Reuben would offer this deal to Jacob. It seems that even though Jacob did not know the truth about Joseph, there was not a lot of trust between Jacob and his sons. Unfortunately, that can be true in some families today too.

**Q: In Gen 43-44, the brothers were being tested. Why were they being tested?**

A: Let’s look at this situation from Joseph’s perspective. One day, after so many years, Joseph’s brothers show up in his court asking for help. At this point, what did Joseph know about them and their character? The only thing Joseph knew at this point was these were the same brothers, who are supposed to be loving, who discussed how to kill him and then sold him into slavery. Oh, and they knew how to tie a person up well. We don’t know if the idea of revenge crossed Joseph’s mind or not, but for other people it might have been only natural. What should Joseph do?

Joseph did not get any enjoyment from deceiving his brothers. But Joseph had a serious thing to decide; if his brothers had not changed from the time they sold him into slavery, then he saw no reason to provide deliverance for them.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.93-94 says, “Joseph, already brilliantly successful in creating tensions during their two visits, now produced his master stroke. He tested their concern for Benjamin in order to get them to recognize their evil. If they failed this test, if they had no compassion for this second son of Rachel, then they would have no part in the fulfillment of the promises. God could start over again and make Joseph into a great nation if the others proved unworthy (cf. Ex. 32:10).”

## **Q: In Gen 43:9 (KJV), what is “surety”?**

A: This means a guarantee. The King James Version translated this accurately; however most people today might not know what this means, so “formal guarantee” is a better translation today.

**Q: In Gen 44, when should we test others? Usually how should we test others?**

A: Do you usually test your brothers and sisters this way? – I hope not. While we don’t see godly people testing others as severely as Joseph did, people need to be asked questions and tested for leadership. People can learn when they are being tested, but that is not the primary point. The main point is to see if the person can be trusted to do something, or that they can be trusted to teach sound doctrine.

1 Timothy 3:10 says, “But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, because *found* blameless.” (NKJV) Revelation 2:2 speaks approvingly here of the Ephesian church, saying, “And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;” In Romans 16:10 Apelles was tested and approved; however, it was likely God who did the testing

On the other hand, if a person has passed the test, trying to trick them up under the ruse of further testing is wrong. The Pharisees were wrong to come to test Jesus by asking for a sign in Mk 10:2; Lk 11:16.

They tested Jesus with questions in Mt 16:1; 22:35.

Naomi tested Ruth and Orpah in Ruth 1:11-15. There was no point in them going to Israel, a land they had never seen, just because they liked Naomi. If they were not following the same God, they should just stay where they were.

King Saul was tested in 1 Samuel 13:7b-14, but it is unclear whether Samuel was accidentally a few hours late, or Samuel deliberately meant to be a few hours late.

I read one time that back in the days of the Soviet Union, one time some non-uniformed soldier with guns burst into an underground church service as it was about to start. They asked who the Christians were and said that all the non-Christians could leave. Then they put down their guns, and worshipped too; they wanted to get all of the spies out of the service.

**Q: In Gen 44:2-13, how would the silver cup in Benjamin’s sack seam similar to Rachel stealing her father’s gods?**

A: The brothers might have known the story of Rachel stealing the idols of her father Laban. Laban and Jacob agreed that whoever was found with these idols would be killed. At the time they did not know that Rachel stole them. If Laban and Jacob agreed on that punishment, what kind of punishment would the high court official of Egypt give for stealing something that was (apparently) close to him and had a high monetary value?

**Q: In Gen 44:5, how could Joseph, a godly man, claim to use divination?**

A: It does not say Joseph ever used that cup, only that he told his brothers he used that cup for divination. According to Genesis 44:15, Joseph was apparently not very concerned about the cup. We should not use divination (Deuteronomy 18:10, but we should avoid even the appearance of evil (2 Corinthians 8:22; 1 Thessalonians 5:22), and even Joseph was not a perfect person.

The *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* p.34 says water divination was common in Egypt. They would look at the drops of water and make predictions.

**Q: In Gen 45:3, what are four reasons why Joseph’s brothers might be speechless?**

A: The brothers were both 1) speechless because they were in shock, not only at seeing Joseph, but also at Joseph’s position. 2) speechless because they had been discovered, and 3) speechless thinking what would happen to them now. 4) They had said, “Do you intend to reign over us” (Gen 37:8). Now Joseph ruled over all Egypt Gen 45:8.

**Q: In Gen 45:5,8; 50:19-20 who did Joseph say sent him into Egypt? Why?**

A: How many times have you heard that when someone planned it murder it turned out well for them? It turns out well for the brothers.

Joseph specifically said it was not the brothers, but God. Joseph saw his difficulties and tough times coming from God, and He praised God for that, because now, and only now, Joseph saw the result.

**Q: In Gen 45:6 and Gen 47:28, did the Israelites become slaves while Joseph was still alive?**

A: Yes. Looking at Genesis 37:2; 41:1; 41:29-39; 45:6; 47:28, Joseph was in Egypt for 71 years of his 110-year life. So the Hebrews became slaves again while Joseph was still alive, because they were slaves in Egypt for 400 years, and in Egypt for a total of 430 years.

**Q: In Gen 45:8, 50:19, does God enslave godly people? Did God enslave Joseph, or Joseph’s brothers?**

A: This is an example of the theological concept called concurrence. God not only knew the evil they would freely and voluntarily decide to do if in that situation, God enabled them to be in that situation and carry out their heart’s intent. Furthermore, God planned for and used their evil to bring about good. As Romans 8:28 says, “...in all things God works together for good for those who love Him...”. All things include even evil things.

**Q: In Gen 45:25-28, what are two reasons why Jacob is stunned to hear that Joseph is alive?**

A: He thought he knew for certain that Joseph was dead; after all, he saw the blood-stained coat of many colors. Second, he would be stunned, either now or later, when he found out that his ten sons all conspired to deceive him for over twenty years.

**Q: In Gen 46:3-4, is God speaking to Joseph as an individual, or his descendants?**

A: Both. God is merging the two when he tells Jacob that “you” will be made into a great nation. While Jacob did die in Egypt, his body was brought back to Palestine for burial. This was a sign that “you” plural would come out Egypt 430 years later.

**Q: In Gen 46:1-6 what as Jacob’s reactions to this shocking news?**

A: First he agreed to go down to Egypt like his sons said. Perhaps he saw no choice, with the famine in Canaan. But before Jacob went he went down to Beersheba where they had built an altar and offered sacrifices to God in Genesis 46:1. Beersheba was more or less in the same direction as Egypt, so he might have only had a short delay to go to the altar. Then that night God gave Jacob a vision telling him not to be afraid to go down to Egypt in Genesis 46:3. This is in contrast with Genesis 26:2 where God told Isaac don’t go down to Egypt. Then Jacob and his clan hurried to Egypt. Later, in Genesis 46:7,10, Jacob went before Pharaoh and blessed Pharaoh in Genesis 47:7,10

Curiously it says that Jacob would be brought up again in Genesis 46:4. Of course both his descendants and his body were brought up from Egypt, though Jacob died there. But God mentioned that Jacob would die, for He said that Joseph would put his hand on Jacob’s eyes to close them one last time in Genesis 46:4.

**Q: In Gen 46:3-4, is God speaking to Joseph as an individual, or his descendants?**

A: Both. God is merging the two when he tells Jacob that “you” will be made into a great nation. While Jacob did die in Egypt, his body was brought back to Palestine for burial. This was a sign that “you” plural would come out Egypt 430 years later.

**Q: In Gen 46:4, why did Jacob die in Egypt, since God promised he would take him out of there?**

A: People thought in terms of their descendants as well as themselves. Jacob’s descendants were taken out of Egypt. In addition, Jacob’s body was taken out of Egypt in Genesis 50:13-14. See *When Critics Ask* p.59 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.345 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 46:8-27, are there 12, 13, or 14 tribes?**

A: There were 12 sons of Israel (10 + Levi + Joseph)

There were 12 fighting divisions and tribes with land (10 + Joseph’s two sons Manasseh and Ephraim and not Levi.)

See *When Critics Ask* p.59-60 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.103 and for more info.

**Q: In Gen 46:8-27, I would like to know the 11 sons who Jacob had in the land of Israel, who were their wives? In The Bible exodus it is confirmed that 70 people went to Egypt including Jacob. Can you list them for me?**

A: Actually, the “Exodus” is a different event; when they went out of Egypt. But to answer your question, the eleven sons of Jacob are:  
Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali. Of course, Joseph was Jacob's son, but Jacob was living in Egypt, not the land of Israel.

Jacob’s descendants who went to Egypt are listed in Genesis 48:8-27; however, it does not list those not biologically related to Jacob. The sons and male descendants of Jacob who travelled to Egypt then were 64 men. Jacob's daughter Dinah and Asher's daughter Serah went, too. When you add four more people, Jacob, his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, and Jacob, that is 70 persons listed. Of course, wives and others would have gone too, and the Bible does not say no more than 70 people went, only that 70 descendants of Jacob, including Jacob himself, went.

**Q: In Gen 46:33, is there any extra-Biblical evidence that shepherds were detestable to the Egyptians?**

A: We do not have any direct proof, but we do have a couple of pieces of information.

**1.** When the foreign Hyksos ruled Egypt, later Egyptians called the despised foreign rulers “the shepherd kings”.

**2.** During the time of Joseph, archaeologists say a large group of Asiatics lived in the Nile Delta. According to *Pharaohs and Kings: A Biblical Quest* p.354 analyzing the skeletal remains of sheep showed that about this time Asiatic settlers first brought long-haired sheep into the Nile Delta region of Egypt.

**Q: In Gen 47:11, how could Jacob’s family live in the region of Rameses, when the city of Rameses had not been built yet?**

A: They settled in the region of the Nile Delta where the Hebrew slaves would later build the city of Rameses. While it was not known as that when Jacob settled there, the city of Rameses had been built by the time Moses wrote Genesis.

**Q: In Gen 47:20-21, how could God approve of Joseph enslaving the people of Egypt to Pharaoh?**

A: God did not comment on it, but allowed this income tax of 20% in Genesis 47:23-26.

**Q: In Gen 47:31, did Jacob die at the head of his bed, or leaning on his staff as Heb 11:21 says?**

A: While one could be in a bed leaning on a staff to sit up to speak, there is a simpler explanation. The consonants for “bed” and “staff” are the same in Hebrew, and the Old Testament was originally written with only consonants. The Masoretic text put the vowels in to make this “bed”, while the Septuagint translated this as “staff”. Hebrews 11:21 in Greek says staff. See *When Critics Ask* p.522-523 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.421 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 48:5, what was the significance of Jacob saying that Manasseh and Ephraim belonged to him?**

A: Apparently, in the future dividing up of the land, Manasseh and Ephraim were considered in the same category as Jacob’s immediate sons. Thus, Joseph’s descendants received two shares of land, not one. Often the firstborn received a double share. While Joseph was not the firstborn chronologically, he had been given the right of the firstborn.

**Q: In Gen 49 and Dt 33, how were these prophecies fulfilled?**

A: For each son, a summary of the prophecies is given, and then the fulfillment. In general, Genesis 49 gave many prophecies, and Deuteronomy has only a few hints of the future in Moses’ prayers.

**Reuben**, though biologically the firstborn, would excel no longer. Reuben settled on the east side of the Jordan River, and was never a large tribe. According to the *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.103, Moab subjugated Reuben in the ninth century (900-800 B.C.), according to an inscription on the Moabite stone (850 B.C.). This was after the time of Solomon between the reigns of Asa and Joash in Judah.

**Simeon** would be dispersed in Israel. Simeon settled in the middle of Judah (Judges 1:3), and they lost much of their tribal identity as they were dispersed within Judah.

**Levi** would also be dispersed in Israel. The Levites were not given land, only towns to live in throughout Israel. They were to be the teachers of Israel. During the days of the divided kingdom, many of them moved south to Judah.

**Judah** will be praised of his brothers, his hand will be on the neck of his enemies, and other sons will bow down to him. Judah will be like a lion. The scepter will not depart until Shiloh comes. David and subsequent rulers of the southern kingdom all came from the tribe of Judah. Jesus was from David’s descendants, both biologically through Mary, and “legally” by His adopted father, Joseph. Genesis 49-10-12 are Messianic according to the Targum Jonathan, the Targum pseudo-Jonathan, the Targum Onkelos, and the Babylonian Talmud.

**Zebulun** will live by the sea and his border extended toward Sidon in Phoenicia. This prophecy of their location was fulfilled.

**Issachar** would be in a good and comfortable resting place, and will do forced labor. Issachar was subject to foreigners along with the other northern tribes under the Assyrians in 732 B.C.

**Dan** will provide justice, like a vicious serpent. Like a lion’s cub, he would spring out of Bashan. Dan inherited in the central part (far from Bashan), but when they viciously attacked Laish in Judges 18, they moved to the north near Bashan.

**Gad** will be attacked, but will attack them in return. They are blessed who enlarge Gad’s domain. This might prophetically refer to Jephthah the Gadite, who defeated the Ammonites.

**Asher** would have rich and delicate food. Asher will be strong all his days. Asher had few difficulties in warfare, though they had some assimilation into the Phoenician culture.

**Naphtali** will be like a female deer that bears beautiful fawns. Naphtali will inherit southward to the lake. Naphtali did not play a major role in many wars, and they settled by the Sea of Galilee.

**Joseph** will be a fruitful vine, whose branches climb over a wall. Archers will shoot at him, but his bow will remain steady. Like a prince among his brothers. Joseph will have abundance. The two half-tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, were the most populous after Judah. Indeed Ephraim later became a synonym for the northern kingdom, just like Judah became a synonym for the southern kingdom.

**Benjamin** would be a ravenous wolf. Ehud the Benjamite was a judge who killed Eglon of Moab. Benjamin, though a small tribe, fiercely fought against the other tribes in Judges 20.

**Q: In Gen 49:3 and Dt 21:17, what does "the beginning of a man's strength" mean? Some translations suggest this is talking about the beginning of a man's procreative ability or his virility. Ps 127 may suggest something else in reference to the term when it speaks about the children of a man's youth being like arrows in the quiver of a mighty warrior.**

A: A man can be fertile and never have kids, though without children it is not proven that he is fertile. But to split hairs, there are four possibilities for its precise meaning.

a) a baby, which also shows that a man can have more children after this.

b) a male son, who can support the family when the man is old and fight for the country.  
c) This is a phrase of the right of the firstborn son.  
d) a descendant, which means the man can have an enduring line.

I think d) is probably in view here, because having offspring to carry on the line was very important in that culture. In fact, when a married man died with no offspring, his brother was to marry his wife and the first son would carry the dead brother's name.

c) is definitely also in view in Deuteronomy 21:16-17  
But I also think b) is in view here, as Psalm 127:4-5 says.

However, “the beginning...” is not something multiple children have, or that they together were “the beginning”. This implies that the child was the beginning of the man's strength when the child was born, which would show that a) was in view. Reuben lost the right of the first born, but in Genesis 49:3 he was still biologically the firstborn, the “first sign of my strength”.

So, my view is all the above.

**Q: In Gen 49:3-4, why was it proper that Reuben, who excelled in honor and power, should no longer excel? Has that happened to other parts of the church?**

A: this is actually a pun on the word “excel”. This is because of what Reuben did in Genesis 35:22 and 1 Chronicles 5:1-2.

**Q: In Gen 49:5-7, how could Jacob curse Levi, since Moses later blessed Levi in Dt 33:8-11?**

A: Levi’s descendants were scattered throughout Israel because of this cruel act. Levi’s descendants were blessed by being given the privilege of teaching Israel. There is a lesson to learn here. A curse, when we bear up under it and follow God, can turn into a blessing. See *When Critics Ask* p.60-61 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 49:7, when should a people or nation have fury and cruel anger?**

A: In Genesis 49:6 they even crippled the oxen because of their fury: they were not agents of justice, they were agents of uncontrolled fury.

The answer to this question is: never. We are to be loving. Having hate is a sign of not being saved, according to 1 John 4:8,20. “For the anger of man does not bring about the righteousness of God.” according to James 1:20.

Simeon and Levi were the next oldest sons after Reuben. They were disqualified solely because of their fierce anger. Likewise today sometimes competent, experience, and intelligent people are not considered for a position, or fired from it, because of their temper. We can miss out on a whole lot of good things, and good relationships, because of anger.

**Q: In Gen 49:9 why was not Judah disqualified because of Tamar in Gen 38?**

A: Judah is the next oldest, after Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. All four were the children of Leah. Judah tried to have Tamar killed, but after his own sin was found out, Judah made things right, or at least as right as he could, in the end.

**Q: In Gen 49:9-11 what exactly does this prophesy?**

A: Shiloh is simply “one to whom it belongs”. The Jews themselves understood Genesis 40:10 as a Messianic prophecy. In the *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin*, Chap.4 following 37, recto. Rabbi Rachman said, “When the members of the Sanhedrin found themselves deprived of the/their right over life and death, a general consternation took possession of them; they covered their heads with ashes, and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming: ‘Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come!’”

In a Dead Sea Scroll Commentary on Genesis (4Q252 [=4QpGena), fragment 2 in discussing Genesis 49:10, says, “Whenever Israel rules, there shall [not] fail to be a descendant of David upon the throne. For the ruler’s staff is the Covenant of kingship, [and the clans] of Israel are the divisions, until the Messiah of Righteousness comes, the Branch of David.” See *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.* p.300-302, which also points out that this commentary sees the Jewish Hasmonean kings as illegitimate rulers, since they were not from Judah.

*Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 98b, Rabbi Johanan wrote, “The world was created for the sake of the Messiah, what is this Messiah’s name? The school of Rabbi Shila said ‘his name is Shiloh, for it is written; until Shiloh come.”

*Jerusalem Talmud*, Sanhedrin folio 24. “A little more than forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the power of pronouncing capital sentences was taken away from the Jews.”

*Targum Onkelos* says, “The transmission of dominion shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor the scribe from his children’s children, forever, until Messiah comes.”

*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 49:11a, “Kings and rulers shall not cease from the house of Judah … until King Messiah comes”

An additional Jewish source that indicates the Jews understood this was a Messianic prophecy are Targum Jonathan on Genesis 49:10,11a.

Early Christians who referred to this messianic prophecy are Irenaeus of Lyons (c.160-202 A.D.), Hippolytus of Portus (222-235/236 A.D.), and Origen (225-253/254 A.D.). Among heretics the Ebionite *Clementine Homilies*(-188 A.D.- uncertain date) mentions this.

**Q: Since Gen 49:10 says the scepter will not depart until “Shiloh” comes, how could this be the Messiah?**

A: The Greek and Latin translations have “the one to whom it belongs.” This was understood to be Messianic by historic Jewish interpreters, as the Aramaic targum translates this “Messiah”. This is also Messianic according to the Targum Jonathan and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan (=Targum Yerushalmi I, = Targum Ezez). The Jews lost the right to capital punishment in 11 A.D., as the *Babylonian Talmud* mentions in Sanhedrin chapter 4 following 51b; chapter 4 following 37; recto. Ezekiel 21:27 has a parallel construction as Genesis 49:10.

Others would see this as the official ruler of Palestine. Under the Romans, the Jewish king Archelaus was dethroned and the Roman procurator Coponius replaced him.

As a side note, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.1 p.224 says the Babylonian Talmud states the Targum Jonathan was written by Jonathan bin Uzziel, who lived in the first century B.C. and was Hillel’s most prominent pupil.

In a Dead Sea Scroll Commentary on Genesis (4Q252 [=4QpGen(a)), fragment 2 in discussing Genesis 49:10, says, “Whenever Israel rules, there shall [not] fail to be a descendant of David upon the throne. For the ruler’s staff is the Covenant of kingship, [and the clans] of Israel are the divisions, until the Messiah of Righteousness comes, the Branch of David. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.* p.300-302 also points out that this commentary sees the Jewish Hasmonean kings as illegitimate rulers, since they were not from Judah.

Josephus in his book, *Wars of the Jews* (93-94 A.D.) book 2 chapter 8 says, “And now Archelaus’ part of Judea was reduced into a province, and Coponius, one of the Equestrian Order of the Romans, was sent as a procurator, having the power of life and death put into his hands by Caesar.” Josephus also mentions that the Sanhedrin lost power over capital cases in *Antiquities of the Jews* 20.9. (written about 93-94 A.D.)

The Jews themselves understood this as a Messianic prophecy. In the *Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin,* chapter 4 following 37, recto. Rabbi Rachman said, “When the members of the Sanhedrin found themselves deprived of the/their right over life and death, a general consternation took possession of them; they covered their heads with ashes, and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming: ‘Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come!’” This happened around 7 A.D. (Taken from Josh McDowell’s *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* vol.1 p.169., and *Jesus Before the Sanhedrin* by Augustin Lemann, 1886 translated by Julius Magath, NL#0239683, Library of Congress # 15-24973. See also Pugio Fidei, Martini, Raymundus, published by De Vosin in 1651 (p.148).

*Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 98b, Rabbi Johanan wrote, “The world was created for the sake of the Messiah, what is this Messiah’s name” The school of Rabbi Shila said ‘his name is Shiloh, for it is written; until Shiloh come.” (p.147)

*Talmud* “A little more than forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the power of pronouncing capital sentences was taken away from the Jews.” Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin folio 24. (p.147)

*Targum Onkelos* says, “The transmission of dominion shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor the scribe from his children’s children, forever, until Messiah comes.” (*The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation; The Messianic Exegesis of the Targum*, Samson H. Levy (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion 1974) p.2 (p.146)

*Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Genesis 49:11a, “Kings and rulers shall not cease from the house of Judah … until King Messiah comes” ibid p.7

An additional Jewish source that indicates the Jews understood this was a Messianic prophecy are Targum Jonathan on Genesis 49:10,11a. (See *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* vol.1 p.148 for more info.) Justin Martyr (wrote c.138-165 A.D.) mentions this as referring to Christ in his *First Apology* ch.32.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.134-135 and *The Creator Beyond Time and Space* by Mark Eastman and Chuck Missler for more info.

**Q: In Gen 49:10 what exactly does the Hebrew word Shiloh mean here?**

A: The original Hebrew text did not have vowels, and because of that there is some uncertainty.

a) It could be a name referring to a person: *Shiloh*

b) It could mean “whose it is” or “belonging to him” *siloh* / *selloh.* The NIV uses it this way. There is some support for this from the Septuagint and Syriac Peshitta. Ezekiel 21:26-27 relates to this.

c) It could mean “tribute to him” *say loh*. This is in the NIV margin. This would be a parallel to the verse after this.

d) It could be the place Shiloh, according to the *New Geneva Study Bible* p.87

e) Finally, as *The New International Bible Commentary* p.146 reminds us, there are many wordplays in the Bible. so it could be more than one of these.

See also *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.98 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 49:10 says of the royal scepter, until “Shiloh” comes. How could this warlike prophecy refer to Jesus?**

A: Jesus was spiritually warlike in defeating Satan in His first coming. In addition, Jesus will be warlike and kill many in His Second Coming in Revelation 19:11-16.

**Q: In Gen 49:10, since the scepter would not depart from Judah until the Messiah came, why were there no kings from Judah after the exile except the Maccabees?**

A: Genesis 49:10 did not guarantee there would be independent kings. It only says there would be a ruler, and Gedaliah and many others did so as governors under Babylon, Persia, and other governments. See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.28 for a different but complementary answer.

**Q: In Gen 49:10, since Judah was to reign until the Messiah came, why was Saul from the tribe of Benjamin?**

A: There was no king when this prophecy was given. Saul was rejected as king, but once David (from Judah) was king, it was recognized that Judah was the royal line until the Messiah came. Jesus was from Judah “legally” as Joseph was his legal father, and biologically, as Mary was also from Judah. See *When Critics Ask* p.62 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 49:14-15, why did Jacob prophesy slavery for Issachar, but Dt 33:18-19 prophesy blessing?**

A: Both prophecies were fulfilled. Issachar had great blessing in their fertile land. However, in the time of the Assyrians, they became slaves and their tribe remained that way. God’s blessings, when we take them for granted, can tend to make us be lazy and prone to submit to sin. See Judges 8:27,33 for another sad example in Gideon.

**Q: In Gen 49:16-17, what could this refer to?**

A: Samson was from Dan. Dan is the northernmost tribe ever since the time of Judges 18. Dan was supposed to provide justice, but instead they provided idolatry in Judges 18:30. Jeremiah 4:15-16 and 8:16 says that disaster will be coming from Dan.

Gilead, Dan, and Asher failed to support Deborah and Barak in Judges 5:17.

Revelation 7:5-8, none of the 144,000 are from the tribe of Dan. Some think the Antichrist might be a Jew from the tribe of Dan.

**Q: In Gen 50:3, why did they take 40 days to embalm Jacob’s body, and not more or less?**

A: There is no need to try to read in an allegorical meaning here, when the Bible gives the reason. Genesis 50:3 says that 40 days was the time required for embalming. The Magazine *KMT : A Modern Journal of Ancient Egypt* vol.3 no.3 Fall 1993 p.7 says that experiments on mummification of rats shows that forty days is the time needed to complete the drying of the body with natron salts. It also mentions that forty days is still the mourning period in modern Egypt.

**Q: In Gen 50:13, was Jacob buried in the cave that Abraham bought near Mamre, or were some of the Patriarchs buried near Shechem as Acts 7:15-16 implies?**

A: First three points related to the answer, and then two possible answers.

**First,** The two were distinct places, as the distance between Mamre and Shechem was roughly 45 miles (72 kilometers).

**Prior to the Exodus,** Genesis 50:13 says that Jacob was buried near Mamre. Genesis 50:24-26, says Joseph’s body was embalmed and stored in a coffin in Egypt, with the anticipation that it would later be buried in the Promised Land.

**After the Exodus,** over 477 years later, Jacob’s sons were buried near Shechem as Acts 7:15-16 says. Joshua 24:32 also adds that Joseph’s bones were buried in the tract of land near Shechem.

Here are two separate answers.

**“they”:** Acts 7:15 says, “And Jacob went down into Egypt and expired [i.e. died], he and our fathers.” (Green’s Literal Translation) “They” in Acts 7:16 refers to the twelve sons of Jacob (our fathers) who were buried after the Exodus, and not Jacob, who was buried over 477 years earlier.

**Stephen’s mistake:** If Stephen had incorrectly “merged” these two events as one when he spoke, then Acts 7:15-16 is still inerrant. Acts 7:15-16 inerrantly records a trivial mistake that Stephen made. Nothing indicates Stephen had to be inerrant in all that He spoke. However, given Stephen’s track record on other things in Acts 7, one might favor the first answer.

However, even if the second answer is the correct one, there is a lesson for us. When believers today are in the center of God’s will, and speaking to others as God wants us to, God has not promised that all our words and doctrines are inerrant, either. But that is OK. God works in us despite our mistakes, and even through our mistakes to get out His truth.

Regardless of whether Stephen did not use modern precision with his pronouns or whether Stephen was mistaken on a small point of history, God’s message is not whether Jacob was included in the “they” buried at Shechem or not. God’s message is that God guided the Israelites in a Covenant relationship with Him, and God used the Israelites for thousands of years to set the background for the greatest event of all time, the coming of God’s own Son, Jesus Christ.

See also the discussion on Genesis 33:18-19 and *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.142-145 for more info, and *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.309 for more on the cave of Machpelah.

Q: In Gen 50:16, did Joseph’s brothers lie when they said Jacob commanded Joseph not to harm them?

A: The Bible does not say whether Jacob ever explicitly commanded this, so the brothers might have been lying. On the other hand, certainly Jacob implicitly desired that Joseph not get revenge on his brothers. Today, we hear many things from people without knowing for certain whether the person is completely telling the truth or not. We still need to respond wisely, and the way God would want us to reply, even when we cannot prove or disprove the truthfulness of what is said.

**Q: In Gen 50:19-20, how can we make our own choices, since God “intends” that we make the choices we make?**

A: Three simple points that explain this concurrency.

**God never coerces** people to sin or makes them choose this evil. God does not tempt anyone, according to James 1:13.

**God foreknew their choices** and allowed them to make those choices. Charles Hodge refers to this concept as “permissive decrees”.

**God used their evil choices** as a part of His plan. Indeed, everything is included in God’s plan, according to Ephesians 1:11 and Proverbs 16:4. Louis Berkhof coined the term “concurrence” for this concept.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.135-136 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 50:23, how do you pronounce “Machir”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* says it is pronounced as “MA-ker”, with no long vowels and the accent on the first syllable. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* and *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* both have a long vowel mark on the “a” and the accent is also on the first syllable.

**Q: In Gen, why was the word *Elohim* mentioned 33 times in the first 34 verses, followed by *Yahweh-Elohim* 20 times in 45 verses, followed by *Yahweh* 10 times in 25 verses (*Evidence That Demands a Verdict volume 2* p.121). Does this indicate multiple authors?**

A: This was not coincidence, but was to deliberately express first the universal, transcendent nature of God, followed by His more personal aspects. See *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.189-190 for more info. *Evidence That Demands a Verdict volume 2* mentions a very similar situation in the Qur’an. The word “Allah” predominates in later, Medina suras, while “Lord”, not “Allah” is mainly used in the earlier, Meccan suras. Here is my count in the Medinan Suras. 4(~211x), 9(~152x), 24(75x), 33, 48, 49, 57(33x), 58(37x), 59(29x), 60-66. Here is my count of the word Lord in the Meccan suras, followed by the approximate number of times the word Allah is used. 15(3x), 32(1x), 50-53, 54-55(0x), 56(2x), 67(4x), 68(0x), 75(0x), 78(0x), 85-96(9x), 100-109(1x), 110-112(6x), 113-114(0x).

Likewise in the Book of Hebrews I the New Testament, chapter 1 never uses the words “Christ” or “Jesus” but only refers to Him as the “Son”. But “Jesus” and “Christ are used frequently in the rest of the book of Hebrews.

This does not show that the Qur’an had multiple authors, or that the Book of Hebrews had multiple authors, any more than the evidence shows that Genesis had multiple authors. Rather, this shows asymmetric use of names was not unusual in Mideastern literature.

**Q: In Gen, when was this book written?**

A: Early Jewish and Christian writings unanimously say it Moses wrote it. Whether Moses actually held the pen, or a scribe under his direction did, it was still in Moses’ time.

The liberal Julius Wellhausen in 1885 said they were created during or after the Babylonian exile (598-539 B.C.). Nobody, not even liberals, believe that today though. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.13 for more info.

Liberals today believe it was written centuries after Moses’ time.

**Q: In Gen, how do we know that what we have is what was originally written?**

A: As Christians we trust that the Old Testament that Christ validated the Old Testament we have. For that matter, for Muslims their Qur’an says that Jesus was given the Torah in Sura 5:46. We have early manuscripts from the time of Christ, which the next question addresses. However, there is an additional line of evidence. **Philo of Alexandria** was a Jewish scholar who lived from 15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D. He wrote a commentary on Genesis, and answered questions on the Old Testament. He wrote in Greek, but it is curious that his Greek quotes of the Old Testament agree more closely with the Hebrew Masoretic text instead of the Greek Septuagint. He went into great detail into what different verses mean. Out of 1,533 total verses in Genesis, Philo referred to all or parts of 410 of them. Here are verses he referred to in Genesis.

**1**:1-2,4,26,27,31; **2**:1-10,13-25; **3**:1-24; **4**:1-12,14,25-26; **5**:1,3,23-24,29,32; **6**:1-12,14-17; **7**:1-2,4-5,10-11,16-17,19,21-24; **8**:1-18,20-22; **9**:1,3-8,10-11,13,18,20-28; **10**:1,6,8; **11**:1-2,4,6-8,10,29; **12**:1-4,6-7; **13**:1,9; **14**:1,3,7,17,18,20-24; **15**:1-3,5,20; **16**:1-9,11-16; **17**:16,8,10-22,24,26,27,32; **18**:1,3,6,7,9-11,15-17,22,23,27,32,33; **19**:4,11,20,20,32,33,35; **20**:7,12; **21**:1-2,5-7,11-12,14,19-20,33; **22**:1-2,4,6,7,9,16,22,62-63,67; **25**:5,8,11,17,21,23-25,27,29,33; **26**:2,3,5,9,12,32-33; **27**:1,20,28,30,33,36,40-43,45; **28**:1-2,7,11-17,21-22; **29**:4,13,26,31,35; **30**:1,2,13,16,18,24,30,36,37,42;

**31**:3-5,10-14,20,27-28,33,35,43; **32**:10,25,28-29,31; **33**:5,11; **34**:1,3; **35**:2,4,16,18,25; **36**:12; **37**:2-3,7-9,12-13,15,33,36; **38**:7,9,11,20,25; **39**:1,3,7,21; **40**:8-10,15-17,20; **41**:17,28,45,49; **42**:1,11,16,18,36; **43**:9; **45**:5,11,16,18,22,26,28; **46**:1,4,2733-34; **47**:3,9,24; **48**:1,5,13,15-16,22; **49**:2,15-18,22,33; **50**:7-8,19,24

However, there are four differences in his verse references, all in Genesis.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Verse** | **Masoretic Hebrew** | **Philo’s Greek** |
| Gen. 4:13 | My crime is greater than I can bear. | My crime is too great to be forgiven. (3 times) |
| Gen. 5:22 | Enoch lived 65 years before Methuselah, and walked with God 300 years | Enoch lived 165 years before repentance, and 200 years after that. |
| Gen. 6:13 | It repented God that he had made man upon the earth | God considered anxiously, because he had made man upon the earth; and he resolved the matter in this mind. |
| Gen. 10:29 | He was a mighty hunter before the Lord | began to be a giant upon the earth |

As you can see by the preceding list, he commented heavily on the earlier chapters of Genesis and was lighter on the later chapters. For any Muslims reading this, in Genesis 22 Philo says that it was Isaac, not Ishmael that was sacrificed, just like the copies of Genesis among the Old Testaments we have today. See *The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged*. new updated version for more info.

**Q: In Gen, what are some of the earliest manuscripts that still exist today?**

A: **Dead Sea Scrolls:** (before Christ) 20 copies or fragments (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.*), estimated as 15 separate copies (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.30) or 18 copies *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.*. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says 15 copies. These manuscripts are called

1Q1 - fragments of Genesis

2Q1 Genesis

4Q1 Genesis + Exodus

4Q2 Genesis, identical to the Masoretic text

4Q3 Genesis 40-41

4Q4 Genesis 1

4Q5 Genesis, similar to the Masoretic and Samaritan texts

4Q6 - Part of Genesis 48

4Q7 fragments of Genesis 1 and 2

4Q8a Genesis 2:17-18

4Q8b Paraphrase of Genesis 12:4-5

4Q8c Title of a Genesis manuscript

(4Q8a, b, and c are from three different manuscripts)

4Q9 Genesis, similar to Samaritan text

4Q10 Genesis 1-3

4Q11 Genesis 50:26 through Exodus 36

4Q12 Genesis 26 in palaeo-Hebrew letters

6Q1 a fragment of Genesis 5

8Q1 Two fragments of Genesis 17:12-19 and 18:20-25.

Overall, preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls are the following verses from Genesis.

**1**:1-28; **2**:1-3,6-7,14-19; **3**:1-2,11-14; **4**:2-11; **5**:13/14; **6**:13-21; **8**:21; **10**:6; **12**:4-5; **17**:12-19; **18**:20-25; **19**:27-28; **22**:13-15; **23**:17-19; **24**:22-24; **26**:21-28; **27**:38-39,42-43; **32**:4-5,30,33; **33**:1,18-20; **34**:1-3,5-10,17-21,30-31; **35**:1,4-10,25-29; 36:1-17,19-27;35-37,43; **37**:1-2,5-6,22-30; **39**:11-23; **40**:1,12-13,18-23; **41**:1-11,15-18,23-27,29-44;p **42**:15-22,38; **43**:1-2,5-14; **45**:14-22,26-28; **46**:7-11?; **47**:13-14; **48**:1-11,15-17,18-22; **49**:1-8; **50**:3,26?

See *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.2 p.615 and *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* for more info.

**Dead Sea scroll commentary** on Genesis in cave 4 (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.54 and *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.* p.xlv)

**The Septuagint** is a Greek translation of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.62-63 shows a picture of a fragment, Rahlfs 814 Genesis 14:12-15, from approximately the second half of the second century A.D. (150-200 A.D.)

You can see a photograph of a leaf of Genesis 42:7-19 of the Chester Beatty Papyrus V (Rahlfs 962), in *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.72-73. It is from the second half of the third century.

*The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* p.369 says that a Greek copy of Genesis, called inv. 319 is earlier than 100 A.D. It is unclear whether this is the same as a previously mentioned manuscript or not.

On p7.2 it mentions that Genesis 1:1-5 in the Septuagint was written on p12 (Papyrus Amherst 3b). This is dated as 264-282 A.D.

The Vienna manuscript was written in the fifth or sixth century A.D. and 24 pages of Genesis are preserved. You can see one page, Genesis 39:9-18, in *Greek Manuscripts of the Bible* p.92-93.

**Other Greek manuscripts** include

**Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 656** is a second century A.D. manuscript that contains Genesis in Greek. It is mentioned in *The Complete Text of the Earliest Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.73.

**Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1007** is a fragment from the third century A.D.. The scribe had an unusual doubling of the initial *yod* in the Tetragrammaton according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.34.

**Chester Beatty Papyrus 5** contains Genesis 42:7-19. It is dated 350-400 A.D. For more info and a photograph see *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.72-73.

**Vaticanus** (325-350 A.D.) for Genesis 46:29-50:26. Vaticanus has all the rest of the Old Testament.

**Alexandrinus** (c.450 A.D.) for all of Genesis except for Genesis 14:14-17; 15:1-5, 16-19; 16:6-9, which are mutilated.

**Sinaiticus** (340-350 A.D.) Genesis 21:26-22:!7; 22:21-23:16; 23:19-24:20; 24:23-24:46;

**Samaritans** made their own copy of the Torah in the second century B.C., though the earliest surviving Samaritan copies are from the Middle Ages. A picture of a Samaritan scroll is in *The Bible Almanac* p.390. See *General Introduction to the Bible* p.391-394 and *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.125-126 for more info.

**Early Christian Manuscripts:** According to *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* p.746, the Chester Beatty Papyrii (2nd-4th century A.D.) contains Genesis.

**The Syriac Peshitta** translation of Genesis was from the 5th century A.D. (*New Bible Dictionary* 1978 p.1262)

**A Syriac translation** of the Septuagint was made by Bishop Paul of Tella (616-617 A.D.), which we still have today, according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.35 (footnote).

**Q: Which early writers referred to Genesis?**

**A: Philo the Jew** (15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) refers to all or parts of 410 verses in Genesis. One of his works that quotes extensively from Genesis is *Allegorical Interpretation, I*.

29 pre-Nicene church writers referred to Genesis.

***1 Clement*** (96-98 A.D.) quotes or refers to content in 25 verses of Genesis. Gen 1:26-28; 2:23; 4:3-8 (Septuagint); 5:24; 9:6; 12:1-3; 13:14-16; 15:5,6; 18:27; 19:24; 21:22; 22:17; 27:41; 37:6.

**Justin Martyr** (wrote c.138-165 A.D.) quotes or refers to Gen **1**:26,28; **2**:3; **3**:15,22; **6**:16; **8**:10,12; **9**:24-27; **11**:5,6; **15**:6; 18:1,2,10,13,14,16,17,20-23,33; **19**:1,10,16-25,27,28; **21**:9-12; **26**:4; **28**:10-19; **31**:10-13; **32**:22-30; **35**:6-10; **49**:5,8-12,18.

**Meleto/Melito of Sardis** (170-177/180 A.D.) listed Genesis among the books of the Old Testament in his letter to Onesimus in *On Pascha* p.72. This is recorded in *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History* book 4 ch.26.

**Theophilus of Antioch** (168-182/8 A.D.) quotes verbatim from Genesis 2:8-3:19, in one block of 37 verses, in *Theophilus to Autolycus* book 2 ch.21 p.102-103. He also quotes from Genesis 2:4-5,7 in *To Autolycus* ch.19 p.102.

**Irenaeus of Lyons** (182-188 A.D.) “Moreover, we learn from the Scripture itself” and then soon after quotes Genesis 17:9-11. *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 4 ch.26.1 p.480. He quotes from many, many passages in Genesis.

**Theodotus the probable Montanist** (ca.240 A.D.) quotes from Gen 1:1 as from “Genesis” in *Excerpts of Theodotus* ch.1 p.43. He also quotes Genesis 1:2 in ch.7 p.44, Genesis 1:3 in ch.38 p.48, and part of Genesis 1:18 in ch.56 p.50

**Cyprian of Carthage (**c.246-258 A.D.). He quotes from the Book of Genesis, mentioning it as from Genesis in *Treatise 12* the third book 20,32 among other places.

Some other pre-Nicene church writers who quoted from Genesis include the *Epistle of Barnabas*, Meleto/Melito of Sardis, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Novatian, Archelaus, Alexander of Alexandria and Methodius.

**After Nicea**

**Jerome** (373-420 A.D.) discusses the books of the Old Testament. He specifically discusses Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, Job, Jesus son of Nave [Joshua], Judges, Ruth, Samuel Kings (2 books), twelve prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Letter 53 ch.7-8 p.99-101.

**Q: In Gen, how precise were Philo’s quotes?**

A: Here are quotes Philo uses sequentially in *On the Creation*:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” … “darkness was over the face of the abyss.” … “called ‘day’”. … “Let us make man after our image, and in our likeness.” … “they were created male and female” … “this is the book of the creation of the heaven and of the earth, when it took place, in the day on which God made the heaven and the earth, and every green herb before it appeared upon the earth, and all the grass of the field before it sprang up.” … “And a fountain went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth.” … “God made man, having taken clay from the earth, and he breathed into his face the breath of life.” … “God brought all the animals to man, wishing to see what names he would give to each.” …   
Here are quotes he uses non-sequentially in *Allegorical Interpretation, I* and a small part of *II*.

“And the heaven and the earth and all their world was completed.” … “And on the sixth day God finished his work which he had made.” … “God completed his works on the sixth day.” … “He caused to rest the things which he had begun.” … “Accordingly, on the seventh day, God caused to rest from all his works which he had made.” … “And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.” … This is the book of the generation of the heaven and earth, when they were created.” … “On which day God created the heaven and the earth, and every green herb of the field, before it appeared upon the earth, and all the grass of the field before it sprang up. For God did not rain upon the earth, and man did not exist to cultivate the earth.” … “But a fountain went up upon the earth and watered the all the face of the earth.” … “And God created man, taking a lump of clay from the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life: and man became a living soul.” … “And God planted a paradise in Eden, in the east: and there he placed the man whom he had formed.” … “And the man whom he had formed,” … “God placed in the Paradise.” … “And God caused to rise out of the earth every tree which is pleasant to the sight and good for food, and the tree of life he raised in the middle of the Paradise, and also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” … “And a river goes forth out of Eden to water the Paradise. From thence it is separated into four heads: the name of the one is Pheison. That is the one which encircles the whole land of Evilat. There is the country where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good. There also are the carbuncle and the sapphire stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon; this is that which encircles the whole land of Ethiopia. And the third river is the Tigris. This is the river which flows in front of the Assyrians. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.” … “And the Lord God took the man whom he had made and placed him in the Paradise, to cultivate and to guard it.” … “And the Lord God commanded Adam, saying, Of every tree that is in the Paradise thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ye shall not eat; but in the day on which ye eat of it ye shall die the death.” (II) “And the Lord God said, “It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help meet for him.” … “And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind, four-footed animals, and creeping things, and wild beasts.” (He goes on, through Abraham).

Comparing the two sections shows that Philo did not necessarily use the exact same words in quoting the same passage.

**Q: In Gen, what are some of the translation differences between the Hebrew and Greek Septuagint?**

A: Focusing primarily on chapter 1, here are a few of the translation differences in the 1,533 verses of Genesis. According to the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.934 The Samaritan Pentateuch agrees with the Pentateuch against the Masoretic text in 1,900 readings. Except where noted, the first phrase is from the Masoretic text (MT) and the second from the Septuagint (LXX).

**Gen 1:1** “heavens” (MT) vs. “heaven” (Septuagint)

**Gen 1:2** “without form and empty” vs. “unsightly and unfurnished” (Septuagint) vs. “empty and nothing” (Aquila) vs. “fallow and indistinct” (Symmachus) vs. “desolate without human beings or beast and void of all cultivation of plants and trees” (Neophyti I’s Targum [paraphrase]) vs. “void and empty” (Vulgate)

**Gen 1:2** “the face of the deep” vs. “the deep”

**Gen 1:2** “face of the waters” vs. “water”

**Gen 1:5** “day” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “daytime” (Dead Sea Scroll 4QGen(g))

**Gen 1:6** “waters” vs. “water” (3 times)

**Gen 1:7** “And it was so” vs. (absent) (2 Hebrew words, 3 Greek words)

**Gen 1:8** “heavens” vs. “heaven”

**Gen 1:9** “it was so.” vs. “it was so. And the water which was under the heaven was collected into its places, and dry land appeared.” (17 Greek words)

**Gen 1:11-12** “tender sprouts” vs. “herbs” (two times)

**Gen 1:14** “heavens, to divide” vs. “heavens, to give light upon the earth, to divide”

**Gen 1:16** “rule” vs. “regulate” (two times)

**Gen 1:16** “and starts to rule the night.” vs. “regulating the night, the stars also.”

**Gen 1:20** “swarmers” vs. “reptiles” (*reptilia* in Greek)

(Note that in Gen 1:20,21 Green’s Literal Translation mistakenly has birds, when it should be flying creatures since the same Hebrew word refers to bats and winged insects in Leviticus 11:19-22 and Deuteronomy 14:18-20.)

**Gen 1:21** “and all that creeps” vs. “and every living reptile”

**Gen 1:21-25** “it” vs. “they” (many times) (this is a picky grammatical issue)

**Gen 1:22** “multiply” vs. “be multiplied”

**Gen 1:24** “cattle and creepers” vs. “quadrupeds and reptiles”

**Gen 1:26** “in our image, according to our likeness” vs. “according to our image and likeness”

**Gen 1:26** “wild animals and over all the earth” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “wild animals of the earth” (Syriac)

**Gen 1:26** “creepers creeping” vs. “reptiles creeping”

**Gen 1:27** “in His own image; in the image of God” vs. “according to the image of God”

**Gen 1:28** “And God blessed them, and God said to them” vs. “And God blessed them saying”

**Gen 1:30** “every living thing” vs. “all wild beasts”

**Gen 2:1** “all their host” vs. “the whole world of them”

**Gen 4:8** “Abel” vs. “Abel, Let us go out to the field” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Neophyti I targum, Syriac, compare Vulgate)

**Gen 4:15** “Therefore” (MT, Targums) vs. “No so. Therefore” (Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate) (no change in meaning)

The genealogical tables in Genesis 5 and 11:10-26 are a little different in the Samaritan Pentateuch (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5)

**Gen 5:24** “walked with God” (MT) vs. “pleased God” (“LXX, Hebrews 11:5b)

**Gen 6:4** “sons of God” (MT, some Septuagint), vs. “angels of God” (some Septuagint) vs. “sons of gods” (translation of Aquila the Jew). See Augustine of Hippo’s *City of God* (413-426 A.D.) book 15 ch.23 p.304

**Gen 6:5** “LORD” (MT, Targums) vs. “LORD God” (Septuagint) vs. “God” (Vulgate)

**Gen 7:22** “breath of the spirit of life” vs. “breath of life” (Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Gen 9:25** Some Septuagint and Arabic O.T. manuscripts say the curse applied not to “Canaan” but to “Ham, father of Canaan”.

**Gen 10:4** “Dodanim” (most Masoretic manuscripts) vs. “Rodanim” (some Masoretic manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

**Gen 10:23** “Mash” (MT) vs. “Meshech” (Septuagint and 1 Chronicles 1:27 Masoretic text)

**Gen 11:12** has “Cainan” inserted between Arphaxad and Shelah in the Septuagint as well as in Luke 3:36.

**Gen 11:32** Terah died as “205 years” (MT) vs. “145 years” (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Gen 14:1,9** “Arioch of Ellesar” (Hebrew manuscripts) vs. “king Arioch, king Ellasar” paraphrase in *Theophilus to Autolycus* book 2 ch.31 p.107. Sumerian archaeology has found a “King Ariochu of Larsa”.

Gen 14:23 “thong/sandal” (MT) vs. an unknown word in the Samaritan Pentateuch, 1 letter difference, most likely a corruption)

Gen 18:22 “the men remained standing before the Lord” vs. “the Lord remained standing before Abraham” (ancient Hebrew scribal tradition)

**Gen 19:17** “he said” vs. “they said” (Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

Gen 20:13; 31:53; 35:7 “Elohim” vs. “El” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5). Also in Exodus 22:8.

**Gen 21:9** “with Isaac” vs. “with her son Isaac” (Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Gen 22:2** “your son, Isaac, your only one, whom you love” vs. “Take your son, the beloved one, whom you have loved, Isaac”

**Gen 22:19** “Ram behind [him]” (most Masoretic texts) vs. “Ram” (some Masoretic texts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac)

**Gen 23:1** “years, the years of Sarah’s life” vs. “years” (Septuagint, Vulgate)

Gen 24:62 “from coming to” vs. “from” (Syriac Targums)

Gen 30:36 absent vs. “that an angel appeared to Jacob in a dream revealing his portion in Laban’s herds” (Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Gen 30:11** “with/in fortune” (MT, Kethib, Septuagint, Vulgate) vs. “A troop” (Qere. Syriac, Targums) (Qere is certain Aramaic words read aloud, differing from the written words in the Masoretic text. Kethib (written in Aramaic) are written words of the Hebrew Old Testament (NKJV note p.xiv))

Gen 31:40 “scorching heat” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “harvest-time (Samaritan Pentateuch, obviously a corruption)

**Gen 31:49** “Mizpah” vs. “pillar witnesses” (Septuagint) vs. “the pillar of Mizpah” (Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Gen 33:4** “and [he] kissed him” (present but marked with dots in the Masoretic text) vs. absent (Septuagint)

**Gen 36:2,14** “daughter of “ vs. “son of “ [Zibeon/Sebegon] (Pentateuch, Syriac)

**Gen 36:3** “Basemath” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “Mahalath” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary p.195*)

**Gen 36:16** “Korah/Core” (MT and Septuagint) vs. (absent) (Samaritan Pentateuch, 1 Chronicles 1:36)

**Gen 36:24** “water” (MT, Vulgate) vs. “hot springs” (Septuagint)

**Gen 36:39** “Hadar” (most Masoretic texts) vs. “Barad” (Septuagint) vs. “Hadad” (some Masoretic texts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac)

**Gen 37:36** “Medanites” vs. “Midianites” (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate, Syriac)

**Gen 41:22** “and I saw” vs. “I fell asleep a second time and I saw” (Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

**Gen 41:48** “food of the seven years which were in the land” vs. “food of the seven years, in which was the plenty in the land “ (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Gen 41:56** “opened all that was in/among them” vs. “all the storehouses (Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac)

**Gen 44:4** “good?” vs. “good? Why have you stolen my silver cup?” (Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Gen 46:13** “Puah” vs. “Phua” (Septuagint) vs. “Puvah” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac, 1 Chronicles 7:1)

**Gen 46:13** “Iob” vs. “Jashub” (some Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Gen 46:16** “Ziphion” vs. “Zephon” (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Numbers 26:15)

Gen 46:20 “him” vs. “him, [even] Manasses and Ephraim. And there were sons born to Manasses, which the Syrian concubine bore to him, [even] Machir. And Machir begot Galaad. And the sons of Ephraim, the brother of Manasses; Sutalaam, and Taam. And the sons of Sutalaam: Edom.” (Septuagint, compare Dead Sea Scroll 4QExod(a)) (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.262.)

**Gen 46:23** “Hushim” vs. “Hashum”

**Gen 46:27** “in Egypt, two souls. All the souls belonging to the house of Jacob coming into Egypt were seventy.” (MT) vs. “in the land of Egypt, were nine souls; all the souls of the house of Jacob who came with Joseph into Egypt, were seventy-five souls.” (Septuagint)

**Gen 47:21** “he removed them to the cities” vs. “he made slaves of them” (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Gen 49:4** “defiled it - he” vs. “defiled it - you” (Septuagint, Syriac, Targums)

**Gen 49:5** “Joseph” vs. “them”

Gen 49:7 “their anger is cursed” vs. “their anger is beautiful” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938)

**Gen 49:20** “from Asher” vs. “Asher” (Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac)

**Gen 50:16** “they commanded Joseph” vs. “they approached Joseph” (Septuagint, Syriac)

Gen 50:23 “upon the knees of Joseph” vs. “in the days of Joseph” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937 and *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.94)

The use of **Elohim and Jehovah** is scattered differently in the Septuagint vs. the Masoretic text. Julius Wellhausen saw these as the weakest point of his documentary hypothesis theory.

Bibliography for this question: the Hebrew translation is from Jay P. Green’s *Literal Translation* and the Septuagint rendering is from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton’s translation of *The Septuagint : Greek and English*. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5, and the footnotes in the NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV Bibles also were used.

**Bible Query from Genesis 1-8 and Science**

This section is intended to serve three purposes.

**1.** Give a broad survey of Genesis and science issues in general.

**2.** Give an evenhanded listing of the Biblical and scientific reasons many genuine Christians have for believing the earth is less than 10,000 years old.

**3.** Give an evenhanded listing of the Biblical and scientific reasons many genuine Christians have for believing the earth is over three billion years old.

Issues on the miracles, and verses outside of Genesis 1-8 discussed within the scope of the respective Bible passages.

The first section is an introduction that does not require to much scientific knowledge. The question and answer section presupposes the reader has some previous background in knowledge of chemistry, physics, transport phenomena, astronomy, biology, genetics, geology, geophysics, archaeology, paleontology, and a little mathematics. In the future, we hope to add more explanatory material.

**The Bible and Science in a Nutshell for Non-scientists - part 1**

When many seekers view the Bible through “scientific spectacles”, they usually see five issues: miracles, God or chance, how old, evolution, and Noah’s flood. Here is a thumbnail sketch of each. Part 2 shows how Genesis and science compare.

**More to the World than Meets the Eye**

If God was capable of making the laws of nature we know about, He is capable overruling them, breaking them, and making laws of nature we do not yet know about. God changes water to wine on every vineyard on earth; at the wedding in Cana Jesus just sped up the process. People who cannot accept that God is capable of miracles are sort of like the people who categorically told the Wright brothers “man cannot fly”. If man can supersede the law of gravity with wings, then cannot God at the very least do the same?

Historically, mankind has been certain of many things: the sun must orbit the earth, time must always pass as the same rate for everything. Everything is either a particle of matter or a wave of energy. But how can science say anything about a Being that is beyond time, who can view the future easier than we can watch past films on TV, who can change the past as easier than we can edit videotapes, for whom all times are the present. God promised us eternal life “before time began” (Titus 1:2) so how are you going to tell Him what is impossible for Him to do?

In college I had an atheist physics professor who said that if it cannot be measured, and verified, then it does not really exist. For homework we were asked to comment on that statement. I wrote that a person who thought this would not make a good husband or wife. (At the time I was unaware that he was single). For love cannot be measured in a test tube, verified in an experiment. It cannot be scientifically demonstrated that love is more than chemical reactions, people can do anything that is not ultimately pointless, or that there is anything even slightly wrong with blowing up the world in a nuclear fireball.

No there is more to this world than just matter and energy. There is more than just the science we know, and a designer is responsible for the science we have.

**Can Something Come from Nothing?**

Every single person believes in a god. If “god” is defined as eternal, so powerful as to create everything, without beginning yet the cause of everything, then everyone believes in god. It is just that atheists call their god “random chance”. In the Middle Ages, many people believed in “spontaneous generation”, that living things such as bugs could arise spontaneously from non-living things, such as decaying meat. Today we have people who believe that the entire universe could come from nothing.

The genius Isaac Newton once made a working, mechanical model of the solar system. An atheist friend of his came over, admired the work, and asked Newton who made it. Deadpan, Newton responded that no one did, it just made itself. The atheist began to get angry, because after continued asking Newton just repeated the same thing. Finally, Newton said that if the atheist could not believe that a simple mechanical model could not make itself, how could he think the real thing could make itself?

**Just How Long is a Day?**

While Christians who believe the earth is only a few thousand years old seem to get all the press, many Bible-believing Christians believe the earth is 4.3 to 4.5 billion years old, just as most scientists say.

**“Young-earth”** Christians point to the fact that Mt. Saint Helens has left strata and fossils, that would look like they took millions of years to gradually form. Many radioactive dating methods (Rubidium-Strontium, Lead-lead, etc.) are notoriously unreliable, as even the theory of them predicts. Even the second most reliable one, Potassium-Argon dating, is thrown off by rocks having periods of high temperatures, or rapid cooling such as lava being cooled by water. Thus, a 200-year-old lava flow in Hawaii erroneously gives Potassium-Argon dates of millions of years. Pleochroic halos, from Polonium-218 with a half-life of five minutes, have been found in massive granite formations allegedly taking years to solidify.

**Overall**, there are at least 76 arguments for a young earth. I have read effective answers to 39 of them, but that leaves 37 arguments an old earth theory cannot yet answer effectively.

**“Old-earth”** Christians point out that when 2 Peter 3:8 says a day with the Lord is like a thousand years, the context is creation and judgment. Scientifically, radiocarbon dating calibrated with yearly layers of leaves deposited on the bottom of a lake (called lake varves), and glacial ice go back to about 11,000 years ago. Even if every radioactive date giving millions of years were wrong, except one, the earth would still be old. You have small microfossils that are index fossils of their time period, for many geologic periods. Huge fossil graveyards of animals are hard to explain with an age of only a few thousand years. If our petroleum, natural gas, and coal all came from plants and animals, the immense amounts would indicate an old earth. The fossil record and an old earth interpretation of Genesis harmonize well, as Part 2 shows.

**Overall**, there are at least 62 arguments for an old earth, and a young earth view cannot answer 51 of them.

**Conclusion:** Young-earth and Old-earth Christians differ, with many scientific arguments on both sides. However, they agree on the fact that God created everything, and a day of creation is however long a timeless God wanted it to be.

**Micro- & macro- Evolution**

All agree on the fact of micro-evolution. Different bugs evolved from others, and llamas, alpacas, and vicunas, and camels descended from the same “kind”, and even the Bible says all races of people came from one couple. But micro-evolution of species within a genus does not prove macro-evolution beyond genetic limits of biological change. An atheist today must believe in macro-evolution, because there is no alternative that does not involve God.

Bible-believing Christians disagree on this issue too. A few are theistic evolutionists, believing that macro-evolution could not occur by chance, but God did it. Most Christians do not believe in macro-evolution because the scientific evidence for it is wanting.

In the graduate-level books on fossils, it is interesting to see the honest uncertainties and doubts as opposed to the dogmatic assertions of undergraduate books. For example, did you know that of the 2.4 million animal, 18,800 birds and land animal, 400,000 plant, and 4,000 prokaryote species, there are only 1/10th as many known fossil ones as living ones.

As for life starting by chance, sunlight would ensure that any “organic soup” that existed had only about as many organics as ocean water today, minus the plants and animals (which is 10-7 Molar). As Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine said, “The idea of spontaneous genesis of life in its present form is therefore highly improbable even on the scale of the billions of years during which prebiotic evolution occurred.” (*Physics Today* 11/1972 p.23-31.)

Nobel laureate Sir Francis Crick said, “An honest man armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which should have had to have been satisfied to get it going.” (*Life Itself* 1981 Simon & Schuster p.88).

While many are familiar with the famous “horse evolution chart”, few know that even evolutionists themselves believe that model is obsolete. Evolution does not even have workable models of the origin of armadillos/glyptodonts, bats, bears, echinoderms, flowering plants, frogs, hippos, platypuses, sea cows, seals, sponges, tortoises, walruses, and many more.

As for human ancestry, Cro-Magnon man is often mentioned. Cro-Magnon man is the same as modern man, except for two things: they had slightly larger (not smaller) brains, and there were more types of Cro-Magnon man than today. After (not before) this was Neanderthal man, another type of human. Remember the interbreedable race called “sons of God” in Genesis 6:4 that died out in the flood? Just as wolves are the most probably ancestor of dogs, among apes Australopithecus afariensis is a better candidate for an ancestor to an Ethiopian baboon, called Therapithecus gelada, than to people.

**Noah’s Flood**

Imagine a strange world where ice sheets stretched from the North Pole to Nebraska, and glaciers in New Guinea. That is how scientists say the world was, until an abrupt warming about 14,000 years ago. Imagine all that ice being rapidly melted, even from the mountaintops. Remember that debris from floods and ice flows (called tillites) is indistinguishable except under a microscope. If you can imagine this, then imagining a supernaturally-caused flood, from whatever source, is not so unimaginable.

**The Bible and Science in a Nutshell for Non-scientists - part 2**

While part 1 discussed miracles, creation, how long was a day in Genesis, evolution, and Noah’s flood, this part shows how Genesis relates to science, including archaeology.

First you must remember that Genesis was communicated to a pre-scientific people in a way they could understand. Thus, while it is true, it is written from an observational viewpoint, and much more simplified than a scientist today might desire. Turn in your Bible to Genesis, and compare that to the description here of the fossil evidence and theories that scientists currently have

**The Six Days of Creation**

**On the First Day**, the solar system was a dark cloud of gas. Roughly 10 billion years ago, the sun first ignited, and there was light. The earth was present, but it was formless and empty, as condensing gas with lots of water vapor.

**On the Second Day**, about 4.3 to 4.5 billion years ago, the earth condensed from a molten state. It had a vapor cloud, somewhat like Venus, with lots of water, carbon dioxide, and 0.2 to 0.4 % oxygen. About 3.98 billion years ago, the earth cooled enough that some of the water condensed, and the earth was completely covered by one ocean.

**On the Third Day**, some of the land pushed up to from islands that made the core of the continents. Some of the initial islands were in Canada south of the Hudson Bay, central Australia, and the Karroo region of South Africa. About 3.5 billion years ago, algae, plankton, and other photosynthetic plants appeared.

**On the Fourth Day**, about 3-3.5 billion years ago, most of the carbon dioxide in the air disappeared and oxygen took its place due to photosynthesis. This made the air clear as it is today, and the sun, moon, and stars could be seen from the earth for the first time. The stars were already there when the earth was created, as Job 38:4-7 shows.

**On the Fifth Day**, about 5.9/5.2 billion years ago in the Archaeozoic Era, multi-cellular sea life appeared, including jellyfish, worms, corals, and what is called Ediacaran life. About 590/520 million years ago there was an explosion of Cambrian sea life with hard-shelled animals. Sixty percent of the fossils found were trilobites. Apparently, the shells warded off predators.

What Genesis 1:21 calls “great sea creatures” (*reptilia* in Greek), included large amphibians, and early reptiles, including cotylosaurs. “Birds” in Genesis 1:21 is actually a mistranslation. The correct word is “flying creature” since the same Hebrew word refers to flying insects in Leviticus 11:19-20 and Deuteronomy 14:18-23. The fossil record shows that prior to reptiles there were giant dragonflies, with a 2 foot 5 inch wingspan in the Carboniferous Period, starting 370/345 million years ago.

The Karroo fossil graveyard, with about 800 billion fossils, is from the Permian Period. At the close of the Permian Period was a worldwide catastrophe, including great ocean level changes, that caused the extinction of half of all marine invertebrate families of animals.

**On the Sixth Day**, starting roughly 250/230 million years ago, the first frogs, turtles, and mammals appeared. The first flowering plants mysteriously appeared around 120 million years ago. The dinosaurs were the dominant life until a meteorite or comet hit the earth hitting in two places in the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico about 66.4/63 million years ago. 15% of the marine invertebrates as well as all the dinosaurs died out. Then mammals dominated the world.

There are about 1000 specimens of fossil apes, most of which come from about 1 dozen sites in Kenya and Uganda. The first primate, called Altiatlasius lived about 60 million years ago. Ramapithecus, a good candidate for the ancestor of the orangutan, lived 15/14-9 million years ago. Australopithecus afarensis (also called Lucy) lived 3.8-2.8 million years ago, and is closest to an Ethiopian baboon. The first humans, called Cro-Magnon man, lived from about 400,000 years ago to today. A sub-species, Neanderthal man, lived from 130/100,000 years ago to 35/30,000 years ago. They lived in Europe and Russia (but not Siberia).

Now lets look at the rest of Genesis.

**Genesis 2-5**

**Genesis 2**, gives the creation of the Garden of Eden, as opposed to the creation of the Heavens and the earth in Genesis 1. As Genesis 2:5-7 shows, people existed before the “plants of the field” (i.e. crops) existed. Barley was grown around 8000 B.C., The spelt and first known emmer, the ancestor of wheat was found about 7000 B.C.. Potatoes in Peru around 6000 B.C.. Maize (corn) came from a grain called teosinte around 5000 B.C. Rice was domesticated around 3500 B.C.

**Genesis 3** relates the fall of man. While Romans 5:12 says that death came through sin, the context is the death of people. Just as plants probably died before the fall, fossil evidence of one fish inside another shows that animals probably died before the fall too.

**Genesis 4-5** partially lists the descendants of Adam and Eve. The Hebrew word for “son” also means descendant, so there can be gaps between the names. Perhaps as a modern history book only lists major historical figures, Genesis 4-5 only listed the major people of the time.

**Noah’s Flood**

**Genesis 6-9** tells of Noah’s flood. The Nephilim might be demon-possessed men, but they were likely a now-extinct race of people. Homo erectus is also a remote possibility. While the flood covered the tops of mountains, it does not necessarily mean standing water was that high. If the earth was in an ice age, and the ice melted suddenly, then the water would be melting from the tops of mountains.

While Noah’s flood might have rested on Mount Ararat, the highest mountain in the Mideast, the Hebrew actually says the mountains (plural) or Ararat. This was a very high valley just east of Mount Ararat.

Many peoples have flood legends. Almost all the Mideastern people did, with the exception of the Egyptians.

The **Santal people** of India have one of the most interesting flood legends. According to *Eternity in Their Hearts* p.41-44, they believed “*Thakur Jiu*” (*Thakur* = genuine, *Jiu* = God), created the first couple, a man named *Haram* (=Adam?) and a woman named *Ayo* and put them in *Hihiri Pipiri*, which was west of India. The evil Lita tempted them to make rice beer and pour part of it on the ground as an offering to Satan. They did so, and became drunk on the rest of the beer. When they woke up, they knew they were naked and felt ashamed. They later had seven sons and seven daughters. Their descendants became corrupted, so Thakur Jiu hid a “holy pair” on Mount *Harata* (=Ararat?) and destroyed the rest in a flood. Eventually their ancestors traveled (east) from forest to forest, until they came to high mountains, which blocked their path. Finally, they got through (perhaps at the Khyber Pass) and they came to their homeland near Calcutta.

Another curious similarity is that the Aryan *Institutes of Manu* say Satyaurata survived the flood with three sons: Jyapeta (Japheth?), Sharma (Shem?), and C’harma (Ham?). The Greek writer Aristophanes records the Greek tradition that Japetos (Iepetus the Titan, Japheth?) was the ancestor of the Greeks. All of this may be corroborating evidence of a common event.

**The Peoples in Genesis 10-14**

In Genesis 10, of the 68 peoples and 16 cities mentioned, 10, scholars believe they can identify 51 peoples and archaeologists have found 11 of the 16 cities. Sodom and Gomorrah were so thoroughly destroyed they have never been found. However, the Ebla tablets, written 2400-2250 B.C. mentions towns of Si-da-mu (Sodom) and I-ma-ar (Gomorrah). See *The NIV Study Bible* and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.42-44 for more info.

In **Genesis 11**, linguists can trace almost all western languages, from Celtic to Sanskrit, to one common language spoken around 4000 B.C. They can trace Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese back to a common origin also.

In **Genesis 12**, Abraham lived around 2100 B.C. in Ur, which was the largest city in the world, with a population between 100,000 to 180,000. It is a good thing Abram left when he did, because the Elamites destroyed Ur in 2004 B.C. Between 2004 and 1700 B.C. was the only time one would have confederacies of kings fighting, as in Genesis 14. According to *Evidence for Faith* p.157-164, a letter found at Mari mentions coalitions of 10, 15, and 20 kings.

**Detailed Questions and Answers on Genesis 1-8 and the Bible**

**Q: In Gen 1, do Christians believe God chose to create the earth 6,000-12,000 years ago or billions of years ago?**

A: Genuine Christians disagree on this. Here are four views.

**1.** 4004 B.C to 6000 B.C. Archbishop Usher of Ireland believed it was 9:00 in the morning (exactly!) of the year 4004 B.C. Theophilus of Antioch (168-181/188 A.D.) computes it to 5529 B.C. (book 3 ch. 29 p.120). Hales says 5411 B.C.

**2. 10,000 to 12,000 years ago:** Many Christians from organizations such as the Institute for Creation Research believe the earth is “young” and accept that one of God’s days is exactly 1,000 years. The *Epistle of Barnabas* (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.15 p.146 holds to each day of Genesis being 1,000 years.

**3. 4-4.8 billion years ago:** Other Christians believe the earth is old. Some of the more notable ones are Norman Geisler and Philip Johnson.

**4. Does not say:** R.C. Sproul in *Now That’s A Good Question* p.99-100, mentioned that he saw that number 4004 B.C, in black boldfaced letters in the Bible he was preaching from in a church. He thought that was funny at the time, but it disturbed him that somebody would put that speculation in print right next to Holy Scripture. Sproul’s view is “the fact of the matter is, the Bible doesn’t give the slightest indication of when Creation occurred.” *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.175-180 for more on the reasonableness of different views.

See also the previous two questions, and the next four questions for a catalog of the theological and scientific evidence, pro and con.

**Q: In Gen 1, assuming the earth is young, what would be a timetable for the history of the earth?**

A: Here are the years before the present.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date (years before present)** | **Event** |
| c.4,500/7,000 | Dinosaurs died out in the flood |
| c.6,000/9,000 | Adam and Eve created - Day 6 |
| c.6,000/15,000 | Universe and earth created - Day 1 |

**Q: In Gen 1, assuming the earth is old, what would be a timetable for the history of the earth?**

A: Here are the years before the present.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date (years before present)** | **Event** |
| 0 | Zero before present defined as 1950 A.D.. |
| 1,820 | First New Testament manuscript |
| 2,250-1,900 | Dead Sea Scrolls |
| 2,000 | Jesus Christ born |
| 4,000 | Abraham lived |
| 5,000 | Beginning of Egyptian and Chinese culture |
| 5,050 | Oldest C14 Tree Ring Calibrations |
| 5,500 | Start of Sumerian city-states |
| 30,000 | Neanderthals mostly gone from Europe |
| 35,000 | Modern men enter Europe |
| 35,000 | Explosion of modern man and first art |
| 75,000-12,000 | Würm Ice-Age (latest ice-age) |
| 90,000 | First modern men |
| 200-125K | Riss Ice-Age (most severe ice-age) |
| 3.5 M (M = million) | Australopithecus afariensis (Lucy) |
| 66.4/64M -now | Cenozoic Period |
| 144/129 – 66.4/64 M | Cretaceous Period |
| 213/200 - 144/129 M | Jurassic Period |
| 250/235 - 213/200 M | Triassic Period |
| 300/270 - 250/235 M | Permian Period |
| 367/350 - 300/270 M | Carboniferous |
| 414 M | First known land animals - Day 6 |
| 416/395 - 367/350 M | Devonian Period (Age of Fishes) |
| 446/418 - 416/395 M | Silurian Period |
| 470 M | First known land plants |
| 515/495 - 446/418 M | Ordovician Period |
| 586/530-515/495 M | Much sea life/predators-Day 5 |
| 2 B (B = billion) | Porphyrin-Vanadium complexes likely photosynthesis |
| 3-3.5 B | Carbon dioxide in air changed to oxygen - Day 4 |
| 3.5 B | Multicellular photosynthetic stromatolites -Day 3 |
| 3.98 B | Earth cool enough for oceans -Day 2 |
| 4.2 B | Oldest dated rocks on the earth |
| 4 - 4.8 B | Moon formed, mysteriously |
| 4.6 - 4.8 B | Earth, sun, and our solar system formed -Day 1 |
| 10.3 B +/- 2.2 B | Galaxy formed, based on estimate from white dwarf stars |
| 11-20 billion give or take a few billion. | Universe formed |
| 700,000 years from second zero. | Atoms Temperature 4000 K |
| 34 min 40 seconds from second zero | 69% protons/electrons, 31% neutrinos, temperature=3x108K |
| 3 minutes and 2 seconds from second zero | First Helium nuclei Temp=6x109K |
| 0.01 seconds | First protons and neutrons, temperature =1011K |

**Q: In Gen 1 and elsewhere, what are the Biblical arguments for a young (6,000-12,000 year old) earth?**

A: In the Old Testament, all agree that the word “day” with a number by it elsewhere always means 24 hours.

There are arguments from observing scripture, interpreting scripture, and applying scripture.

**1.** Scripture says the earth is young; so an old earth is contrary to God’s Word.

**1a.** Everywhere else in scripture day means either 24 hours or else a brief period of time (Day of the Lord). Making day an “age” here is not its plain meaning.

**1b.** 2 Peter 3:8, though it may mean a day is as 1,000 years, only pushes back creation 6,000 years more.

**1c.** Speaking of 2 Peter, 2 Peter 3:3-7 seems to be a clear statement of scoffers’ belief in uniformitarianism. Most who hold to an old age of the earth are uniformitarians.

**1d.** Psalm 90:4 does not necessarily refer to creation.

**1e.** The years in the genealogies from Adam to Abraham, added up, give Adam’s time as ~4000 B.C. Even allowing that the Bible has occasional gaps in genealogy, it is unreasonable to say there are 10,000’s of years between each name. This would be against the words’ plain meaning.

**1f.** 1 Timothy 1:4 does not explicitly refer to creation, and while we are commanded not *devote* ourselves to genealogies, certainly none of the Bible can be ignored.

**2.** Interpreting scripture says that the earth is young.

**2a.** If plants were created on the third day, and the sun was created on the fourth day, the plants would have all died if the days were ages.

**2b.** By parallelism, Job 38:4-7 refers to “Sons of God.” Morning stars may not necessarily refer to inanimate stars.

**2c.** If the sun, moon, and stars were not made on the fourth day, that contradicts the plain sense of Genesis 1:14-18.

**2d.** Adam could have named all the animals in less than 24 hours if he had good intelligence and memory. He did not necessarily name every species, but perhaps every genus.

**2e.** If the winged creatures including insects were created on the fifth day, and insects are essential for pollination of many species of plants, those plants could not reproduce if days were ages.

**2f.** When Adam first saw Eve, perhaps he said “at last” because he was through trying to find a helper among the animals.

**2g.** Romans 5:12-14 and 8:19-22 say that death came through sin and creation was corrupted too. Thus, all carnivores ate meat only after the fall.

**2h.** Genesis certainly refers to the founding of the generations of all life, so the use of the Hebrew word *Toledah* is appropriate.

**2i.** In Lk 1:70 and Acts 3:21 say the prophets were from the beginning.

**3.** Applying Scripture Indicates the Earth is Young.

**3a.** If man was not on the earth for 99.98% of its history, God must not think very much of man.

**3b.** If God had to take a long time to make everything, what does that say about God’s power?

**3c.** If many have read the Bible and always thought God took a short time, what does that say about God’s guidance and possibly God’s integrity?

**Q: In Gen 1 and elsewhere, what are the Biblical arguments for an old (3-3.5 billion year old) earth?**

A: In the Old Testament, the word “day” with a number by it only occurs in Leviticus, and the context has nothing to do with creation. A “day” in Hebrew does not always mean 24 hours.

Genesis 2:4 says, “in the day (singular) that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens” (NKJV). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.30 says the Hebrew here is “(*beyom*, lit., ‘in the day,’ and idiom for ‘when’)”.

The “day” 2.5 million Israelites crossed the Jordan River could be more than 24 hours in Dt 9:1.

The Day of the Lord (Isaiah 2:12-21; 13:6,9; Obadiah 15; Amos 5:18-20, etc.) must be more than 24 hours because it includes the Second Coming and final judgment according to *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.258. The Day [singular] of the Lord here included the period of the Tribulation and the millennial kingdom according to the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.430.

The Day of salvation in Isaiah 49:8.

A Day of judgment for the proud and lofty in Isaiah 2:12.   
In possibly other places the Hebrew word for day can mean more than 24 hours in other places too Examples are Genesis 35:3, 1 Samuel 8:8, 1 Chronicles 17:5, 2 Chronicles 6:5; Psalm 8:18; Jeremiah 17:18; Amos 3:14; Obadiah 11-14; Micah 2:5; 7:12; Zephaniah 1, etc..

If someone today says the Hebrew word for day is always 1,000 that is news to Jews who lived during Jesus’ time. In the Dead Sea Scroll interpretation of Genesis 3, it says that God telling Adam “in the day you eat of it you will die” means that Adam would die within 1,000 years of eating the fruit. *Book of Jubilees* 4:29-30 11Q12 (=11QJubilees) fragment 4 p.241

Philo the Jew (15/20 B.C.-50 A.D.) says, “When, therefore, Moses says, ‘God completed his works on the sixth day,’ we must understand that he is speaking of a number of days, but that he takes six as a perfect number.” *Allegorical Interpretation, I* p.25.

Philo also says, “Moses adds the words, ‘when they were created,’ not defining the time when by any exact limitation, for what has been made by the Author of all things has no limitation. And in this way the idea is excluded, that the universe was created in six days.” *Allegorical Interpretation, I* 8:19 p.27.

While it is not suggested that Philo’s interpretations are always correct, this is brought up to simply show that to a learned Jew a day in Genesis was not necessarily considered as 24 ours.

There are arguments from observing scripture, interpreting scripture, and applying scripture.

**1.** Scripture says the earth is greater than 10,000 years old and allows a great age.

**1a.** Can God’s day be a long time? If not, then we have to cut 2 Peter 3:8 out of our Bibles. Also, Day clearly does not mean 24 hours in Genesis 2:4, “in the day (singular) that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens”

1a. In Isaiah's and Hosea's, "day" could mean period of time

as well as 24 hours.

Hugh Ross The Fingerprint of God Promise Publishing Orange Ca. 92667 1989 p.146-154.

**1b.** Since God obviously had 2 Peter 3:8 written for us to read and believe, and the 2 Peter 3:4-6 is referring to Creation and the flood, then saying one creation day is 24 hours contradicts 2 Peter 3:8. Should we disbelieve God? Since a day is *like* (not equal to) 1,000 years, then that means a day of God can be an age. Irenaeus in *Against Heresies* book 5 ch.23 (182-188 A.D.) p.551-552 interprets one of the Lord’s days in Genesis as 1,000 years.

**1c.** While 2 Peter 3:3-7 does probably refer to modern uniformitarians, Christians should base their beliefs on truth and not just react to unbelievers. When believers deny truthful things, Satan can use that to harden the unbelief of non-Christians.

**1d.** Psalm 90:4 is a second warning that a Day of God in scripture is not to be taken as 24 hours. Since this refers to God’s days in general, it certainly also applies to creation. Since 1,000 years is compared to both a day and a watch in the night for God, that also emphasizes like, not equal.

**1e.** While all scripture is accurate and true, scripture many times has imprecision. See Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1, Luke 24:1, and John 20:1 for an example. 1 Timothy 1:4 may be telling us that more precision should not be assumed for the genealogies than is really there. The names may be thought of as founders of dynasties and cultures rather than just sons.

**1f.** 1 Tim 1:4 indicates that less attention should be paid to genealogies than other parts of scripture. Other genealogies have gaps

Cainan/Kenan in Luke 3:37 is mentioned in Genesis in Septuagint but not in Hebrew, and Matthew 1:2-13 omits Ahaziah, good king Joash, Amaziah, and Pedaiah. Since son can mean descendant in Hebrew, there is not a problem.

**2.** Interpreting Scripture Indicates the Earth May be Old

**2a.** If one of God’s days must be only 24 hours, then 2 Peter 3:8 is either wrong or meaningless. If a day was 1,000 years, then recent creationists have the same difficulty.

**2b.** Job 38:7 says the “morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Green’s Literal translation, NKJV, NIV), and thus were already created when the earth was being formed. Therefore the fourth day is not when they were first created. More likely, it is the day they first appeared in the expanse from the earth’s viewpoint. Since this is so for the stars, it is probably the same for the moon and sun too.

**2c.** Admittedly this is not the plain sense of Genesis 1:14-18, but Genesis 1:14-18 allows this, and the plain sense goes against the plain sense of Job 38:4-7.

**2d.** Adam could not have easily named all the 18,800 current species of birds and higher land animals in 24 hours.

**2e.** The first plants probably did not need insects, and plants that did need insects came about later by speciation.

**2f.** When Adam first saw Eve, he said “at last” or “finally” (Hebrew *happa’am*).

A long time must have passed since Adam started naming and evaluating so many animals.

**2g.** Romans 5:12-14 and 8:19-22 refer to man’s spiritual death and expulsion from Eden. Fossils of many meat-eating animals lived long before man. [Note, strictly speaking young-earthers are not against all meat-eating activity before the Fall, but they do not believe that self-conscious animals were eaten, according to *Creation ex Nihilo* June-August 1998 p.55.]

**2h.** Gen 2:4 uses the Hebrew word *Toledah* which means “generations” to describe the creation. *Toledah* never means a short period.

**2i.** “from the beginning” is an expression for from the first times. They spoke from the beginning of mankind, not from the beginning, six days before. Thus, Luke 1:70 does not establish how long a day was. For examples of the use of “beginning” that does not refer to the beginning of creation, see Luke 1:2; John 8:25; 15:27; 16:4; Acts 26:5.

**3.** Applying Scripture Allows the Earth to be Old

**3a.** If God took so long to prepare the earth for man before He was made, God must really value man.

**3b.** If instead of acting quickly God took his time (4.6 billion years) to create the earth, then surely time means nothing to God.

**3c.** If God (or Satan) gave so many false clues showing the earth is old, what does that say about God’s integrity?

**Q: What did early church writers say about one of God’s days being more than 24 hours?**

A: Here are a number of things that show the word “day” did not just mean 24 hours to them.

***Epistle of Barnabas*** (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.15 p.146 “Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, 'He finished in six days.' This implies that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifies, saying, ‘Behold, today will be as a thousand years.’ Therefore, my children, in six days, this is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. And He rested on the seventh day.”

**Justin Martyr** (c.138-165 A.D.) interprets Genesis in his *Dialogue with Trypho* “...obscurely predicts a thousand years. For as Adam was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not complete a thousand years. We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, 'The day of the Lord is a thousand years,' is connect with this subject.”

**Lactantius** (260-330 A.D.) a little later in *The Divine Institutes* book 7 ch.14 p.211 says, “Therefore, since all the works of God were completed in six days, the world must continue in its present state through six ages, that is, six thousand years. The great day of God is limited by a circle of a thousand years, as the prophet shows, who says, ‘In Thy sight, O Lord, a thousand years are as one day.’ And a God laboured during those six days in creating such great works, so His religion and truth must labour during these six thousand years,...” Lactantius might or might not be saying a creation day is 1,000 years, but rather that 6 days or creation correspond to 6,000 years of creation.

**Irenaeus** makes this connection in *Against Heresies* book 5 ch.28 p.557. “For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reasoneth Scripture says: 'Thus, the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made; ... For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year.”

**Irenaeus** still calls a thousand years a day in Adam's time though. In *Against Heresies* book 5 ch.23 p.551 he writes, “This, then, in the day that they did eat, in the same did they die, and became death's debtors, since it was one day of creation. For it is said, 'There was made in the evening, and there was made in the morning, one day.' Now in this same day that they did eat, in that also did they die. But according tot he cycle and progress of the days, after which one is termed first, another second, and another third, if anybody seeks diligently to learn upon what day out of the seven it was that Adam died, he will find it by examining the dispensation of the Lord.... Now he [Adam] died on the same day in which he did eat. For God said, 'In that day on which ye shall eat of it, ye shall die by death.... And there are some, again, who relegate the death of Adam to the thousandth year; for since 'a day of the Lord is as a thousand years,' he [Adam] did not overstep the thousand years, but died within them, thus bearing out the sentence of his sin.” (Part of this is also recapitulated on p.552.)

The **Jewish writer Philo** (died c.50 A.D.) had a different view, but in his view a day is not = 24 hours either. “It would be a sign of great simplicity to think that the world was created in six days, or indeed at all in time, because all time is only the space of days and nights, and these things the motion of the sun as he passes over the earth and under the earth does necessarily make. But the sun is a portion of heaven, so that one must confess that time is a thing posterior to the world. Therefore it would be correctly said that the world was not created in time, but that time had its existence in consequence of the world. For it is the motion of the heaven that has displayed the nature of time. When, therefore, Moses says, ‘God completed his works on the sixth day,’ we must understand that he is speaking not of a number of days, but that he takes six as a perfect number.”

**Q: Where in the Old Testament does the Hebrew word for day not mean 24 hours?**

A: Some Christians have incorrectly said the word for day always means 24 hours. However, the following usages show otherwise.

**Genesis 2:4** says, “in the day (singular) that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens” (NKJV). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.30 says the Hebrew here is “(*beyom*, lit., ‘in the day,’ and idiom for ‘when’)”.

**The Day of the Lord** (Isaiah 2:12-21; 13:6,9; Obadiah 15; Amos 5:18-20, etc.) has to be more than 24 hours because it includes the Second Coming and final judgment according to *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.258. The Day [singular] of the Lord here included the period of the Tribulation and the millennial kingdom according to the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.430.

**The Day of salvation** in Isaiah 49:8.

**A Day of judgment** for the proud and lofty in Isaiah 2:12.

**In possibly other places** the Hebrew word for day can mean more than 24 hours in other places too Examples are Genesis 35:3, 1 Samuel 8:8, 1 Chronicles 17:5, 2 Chronicles 6:5; Psalm 8:18; Jeremiah 17:18; Amos 3:14; Obadiah 11-14; Micah 2:5; 7:12; Zephaniah 1, etc..

**Q: A Hawaiian Astronomer has claimed to find a new planet being born. But this doesn't make any sense to me, why would a planet form now, after the seventh day of Creation when God rested from creating anything. How is this planet forming?**

A: It is hard for astronomers to know for certain things that are so far away, but let's assume, for the time being, that they are correct, they do see a new planet being formed.

Even though God made the land and the sea back in Genesis, he can still make things today. For example, a new Island, called Surtsey was formed just off of Iceland from 1963 to 1967. It was formed from a volcanic eruption. Surtsey was originally 1 square mile, but now it is about 0.5 square miles. It is possible that due to wind and sea erosion, it might be gone (i.e. not above the ocean anymore) in 50 years or so.

Of course, Surtsey, to us, is far larger in our perspective than a planet is in God's perspective.

**Q: In Gen 1, what is the scientific evidence for a young (6,000-12,000 year old) earth?**

A: First is what in my opinion are the top three arguments, followed by all the arguments. These are followed by a catalog of all the arguments for a young earth.

Since this and the next answer are rather lengthy, if the scientific arguments are not of interest to you, you might wish to skip over these two questions.

If you are still reading this, here are some major arguments for a young earth, along with old earth rebuttals.

Major arguments:

**Young Earth Decay of the earth’s Magnetic Field Argument:** Since the earth’s core is too hot to be magnetized, all agree the earth’s core functions similar to a giant electromagnet. Frictional losses would cause the strength of the earth’s magnetic field to gradually decay. Since 1835, the estimated total dipole magnetic field strength has decreased by 7% in just 130 years. There is no known mechanism for replenishing and sustaining the electromagnetism. The earth’s rotation would not seem a cause, as it would act against the magnetic field during the times when the magnetic field is allegedly reversed. Actually, young-earthers believe the measurement of magnetic poles in rocks are ill-defined. Also, scientists have documented self-reversal of magnetism in rocks.

**Rebuttal to magnetic arguments:** While there are mysterious aspects to the earth’s magnetic field, the data favors an old earth, not a young one. At the same time the earth’s magnetic dipole moment has been decreasing, the earth’s magnetic quadrapole moment has been increasing by roughly the same amount. Furthermore, in 1969, there was a “magnetic hiccup” in intensity of the earth’s magnetic field, that cannot be explained by a young earth. Remnant magnetism in rocks allow a systematic tracking of the movement of the magnetic poles, and the young earth theory has to deny this pattern because they cannot account for it. The primary source of new charged particles to sustain the earth’s magnetic field is radioactive decay, and the earth’s rotation also plays a role during the periods of normal magnetic polarity.

Thus, the source of radioactivity in the earth, the evidence of an increasing quadrapole moment, and the pattern of the movement of the magnetic poles show an old earth, not a young one.

**Young Earth Inter-Planetary Dust Argument:** Our solar system is very “dusty”, yet the gravitational fields of planets should have “vacuumed up” most of this dust if the solar system is older than tens of thousands of years. By a few billion years, even the smallest particles of dust would have found a permanent home on some planet, moon, or the sun by now. When astronauts were first going to land on the moon, some scientists as NASA were concerned that the lunar lander would just disappear in the dust of billions of years. Actually, only 1/8 to 3 inches of loose dust were found.

**Rebuttal to Inter-Planetary Dust:** Three points to consider in the answer.

**R1.** Estimates of the rate at which planets and moons collect dust are extremely imprecise. The first estimates were too high, and those are the estimates many Creationists still use.

**R2.** The dust is not vacuumed up, because new dust is being made about as fast as old dust is settling. Even today, Jupiter is ejecting dust towards Mars. The asteroids in the asteroid belt create dust as they smash together.

**R3.** Actually, 20-120 feet of compacted dust was found on the moon. This is too much dust to accumulate in just 10,000 years. Thus, inter-planetary dust actually supports an old universe, not a young one.

**Catalog:** Here is a listing of 72 young earth arguments. Old earth people have an answer for the arguments that are italicized. That leaves 37 arguments for which I have not found a very good “old earth” answer.

|  |
| --- |
| **A. Young Earth Galactic and Stellar Arguments (13)** |
| **A1.** Breakup of Galactic Clusters - (Local group has 24 galaxies) |
| **A1a.** Galaxies never appear to occur singly |
| Galaxies appear as edges of giant "soap bubbles" |
| **A2.** *Breakup of Galaxies (100 billion stars per galaxy)* |
| **A2a.** *Spiral Arms* |
| **A2b.** *Whole galaxy should be flying apart if old* |
| **A2c.** *Decay lines of galaxies* |
| **A2d.** *Lack of proof of existence of field galaxies* |
| "Full Frontals" in Upfront in Discover Nov. 1990 p.10. |
| Flamstead, Sam "When Galaxies Collide" Discover Feb 1990 pp.50-57. |
| **A3.** *Breakup of star clusters* |
| **A4.** The ultra-smoothness of background radiation is a major problem in the Big Bang Theory. |
| **A5.** *New stars from grain formation would take longer than billions of years* |
| **A5a.** *Many stars have been observed to die, but no new ones seen* |
| **A6.** *If hydrogen has been converted to helium in stars for 11 billion years, why is there still so much hydrogen?* |
| **A7.** *White dwarfs, half the sun’s mass, would take too long to form, yet they exist.* Mathematical models of white dwarf formation plus stars that are in various stages of white dwarf formation. |
| **A8.** *Stars need not have long lifetimes; Sirius B is white, but used to be red according to ancient astronomers* |
| **A9.** *Existence and stability of very large stars* |
| Massive energy losses would deplete large stars rapidly. |
| **A10.** *Since the temperature of the universe is not uniform, the universe is not infinitely old* |
| **A11.** Stellar evolution assumes the age of the stars. The age of the stars justifies stellar evolution. This is circular reasoning. |
| **A12.** Since O stars burn 100,000’s of times more rapidly than the sun, they must be young. Yet, they do not have the rotation and magnetic fields expected. |
| **A13.** Some fast binary stars have centers only 80,000 miles (130,000 km) apart. This calls into question whether stars can evolve at all. |
| B. Young Earth Solar System Body Arguments (17) |
| **B1.** The sun’s tidal forces are too strong for planets to form. |
| **B2.** *All planets and satellites should rotate the same direction. Venus, Uranus, Pluto, and 11 of 60 moons are backwards*. |
| **B3.** The sun should have 700 times more angular momentum than the planets. |
| **B4.** The earth Mars Venus, and Mercury should be roughly 98% hydrogen and helium. |
| **B5.** *Planetary capture of our moon, Triton, and 4 moons of Jupiter*. |
| **B6.** The moon is receding from the earth too rapidly. |
| **B7.** *Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune have not cooled off; they radiate more heat than they receive. (So does the earth).* |
| **B8.** *Sun should be depleted in 10 million years. It is shrinking 0.1% per century.* |
| **B9.** *Evidence the sun might not be powered by thermonuclear fusion.* |
| **B9a.** *1/3 of expected neutrinos unless they had a small mass.* |
| **B9b.** *Temperature (currently 5760 K)* |
| **B10.** A “Young Moon” is indicated by: |
| **B10a.** Argon 36, Krypton 84, Thorium 230, Uranium 236. |
| **B10b.** Viscosity of moon rock and height of moon’s craters.  *See space dust for dust accumulation on the moon*. |
| **B11.** *Io, a moon of Jupiter* |
| **B11a.** *Existence of a volcano on Io. Any volcanic activity on this tiny moon should have died out rapidly.* |
| **B11b.** *Absence of any obvious meteoritic activity on Io.* |
| **B12.** How could methane gas escape from Titan, Saturn’s moon, for billions of years? |
| **B13.** All moons should spin in the plane of their planet but many do not. |
| **B14.** The moon has a hot interior. It would have cooled off by now if it was old. |
| **B15.** The present rate of icy comets hitting the earth would mean much more water than in the oceans if an old solar system. If early times, probably more icy comets than now. |
| **B16.** Moon’s craters would have leveled out in 10,000’s of years by gravity. |
| **B17.** *The solar wind would blow all small particles out of the solar system, yet they are still here.* |
| C. Young Earth Space Dust Arguments (9) |
| **C1.** *Cosmic dust hitting the planets and the Moon*  *Dust on the Moon not deep enough*  *Nickel content of the earth and oceans too low* |
| 14 million tons of meteor dust hit the earth per year. 2.5% Ni Earth's crust 0.008% Ni. |
| **C2.** *Comet lifetimes should be < 10,000 years.* |
| **C2a.** *Short period comets* |
| **C2b.** *Long period comets* |
| 2 Oort clouds with many comets probably true. |
| **C3.** Extinction of Inter-planetary dust |
| **C4.** *Meteors not sufficiently sorted by Poynting-Robertson Effect* |
| Chaotic motion might keep them unsorted |
| **C5.** Maximum life of meteor showers |
| **C6.** Experts surprised that meteorites and cosmic dust mainly just in top layers. |
| **C7.** Expanding interstellar gas |
| **C8.** Cosmic dust speed too low if universe billions of years old |
| **C9.** *Lifetime and instability of the rings of Saturn and Neptune* |
| D. Young Earth Arguments from the Earth’s Material Heat, Pressure, and Magnetism (11) |
| **D1.** The atmosphere has only 40,000 years of Helium 4 from Uranium and Thorium decay. It should have more compared to Helium 3. |
| **D2.** *The atmosphere has too much Helium (3 and 4). It would all have diffused out in millions of years.* |
| **D3.** *Crust and continents should be more because eroding too slow.* |
| **D3a.** *In 3.5 billion years, should be 20-80 times more crust.* |
| **D3b.** *Based on mountain uplift rates, if earth were a mere 55 million years old, mountains should be 5 times taller than Everest.* |
| **D3c.** *Average depth of earth’s topsoil too low.* |
| **D3d.** *Rate of loose sediment formation indicates the earth could not be more than 20,000 years old.* |
| **D3e.** *Rate of sediments turning into sedimentary rock indicates the earth could not be more than 20,000 years old.* |
| **D4.** *Continents should be gone because they are eroding too fast* |
| **D4a.** *Overall the continents are eroding at a rate that would level them in 25 million years.* |
| **D4b.** *Rate of leaching of the earth’s continents too high of: Calcium, Carbonate, Sodium* |
| **D5.** *Ocean sediment and sea-water concentration unsaturated.* |
| **D5a.** *Overall ocean sediment does not match the erosion rate.*  *Calcareous ooze* |
| **D5b.** *Rates of influx from rivers into the oceans does not saturate or match the amounts in the oceans.* |
| *Aluminum, Antimony, Barium, Bicarbonate, Bismuth, Calcium, Carbonate, Chlorine, Chromium, Cobalt, Copper, Gold, Iron, Lead, Lithium, Manganese, Magnesium, Mercury, Molybdenum, Nickel, Potassium, Rubidium, Silicon, Silver, Sodium, Strontium, Sulfate, Thorium, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, Uranium, Juvenile water, Zinc.* |
| *U to oceans is 10K to 5M tons /year.* |
| **D5c.** *Rate of submarine oil seepage into the oceans.* |
| **D6.** *Meandering rivers have cut through many layers of sediment.* |
| **D7.** *The high pressure in oil and gas reservoirs would cause the fuels to diffuse out in less than 10,000 years.* |
| **D8.** Due to the temperature >= 313 C, the lead in zircon crystals in deep granite cores should have diffused out at a rate of 1% per 300,000 years, yet no losses are detected. Likewise for helium in zircon crystals. |
| **D9.** *Growth rate of river deltas such as the Mississippi.* |
| **D10.** The rate of cooling in the earth is too high. |
| **D11.** The mechanism for sustaining and increasing the earth’s magnetic field is a mystery. Electric fields would decrease and die out within 10,000 years. |
| Dipole monent gauss\*cm3\*1025 1835 8.558, 1845 8.488, 1880 |
| 8.363, 1885 8.347, 1905 8.291, 1915 8.225, 1925 8.149, 1935 |
| 8.088, 1945 8.066, 1955 8.035, 1960 8.053, 1965 8.013 |
| Archaeological dipole moment measurements 2000 BP. (maxima) |
| 12, 5500 BP. (Minima) 4, 10,000 BP. 12, 50MyBP 5, 100MyBP 3, |
| 200MyBP 4, 275MyBP 14, 300MyBP 1, 375MyBP 1.2, 400MyBP. 4 |
| During the time the dipole moment has been decreasing, the quadrapole moment has been increasing by the same amount. |
| Must be powered by rotation, even if the field reverses. |
| **D12.** The remnant magnetism in earth rocks would have decayed away in millions of years. |
| **D13.** *From present rates, volcanic debris should be 10 times the volume of the earth, yet only 25% is volcanic.* |
| **D14.** *The vast majority of the earth’s “geologic column” is missing.* |
| **D15.** *Parallel layers without erosion in between imply little time between depositions.* |
| E. Young Earth Radioactive Dating Arguments (11) |
| **E1.** Variation in decay rates with pressure, temperature, and electric field strength. |
| **E2.** Pleochroic halos of Polonium-218 indicate huge granite masses cooled within minutes or else there are unresolved problems with radiodating. These are found in Scandinavia, U.S.A. India, and Canada. |
| **E3.** Inter-bedding in the Grand-Canyon and other places. |
| **E4.** Massive formations with the sequence upside down. |
| **E5.** In one study over 400 out of 800 samples had inaccurate ages - K/Ar, Rb/Sr |
| **E5a.** New formations, such as a 197 year old Hawaiian lava flow the whole Island of Surtsey (10 years ago), and Mt. St. Helens can be tested for the “age” of the brand new rocks. |
| **E5b.** Lunar rocks have drastically increased Argon content |
| **E6.** Ages of adjacent rocks and soil differ by a billion years. |
| **E7.** *Carbon 14 production rate is not equal to disintegration rate* |
| **E8.** Still some Carbon 14 decay in Precambrian wood |
| **E9.** Formation of Carbon 14 in meteorites |
| **E10.** Formation of radiogenic |
| **E10a.** Lead and strontium by neutron capture |
| **E10b.** Decay of plutonium |
| **E10c.** Decay of potassium with entrapped argon |
| **E10d.** Uranium decay with initial radiogenic lead |
| **E11.** Wide variation in times of geologic ages. This table shows the range in various books for the start of each Period, and the range for the end of each period. The numbers are in MYBP, which is an abbreviation for millions of years before present.  66.4/64M -now Cenozoic Period  146/129 - 66.4/64 MYBP Cretaceous Period  213/200 - 146/129 MYBP Jurassic Period  250/235 - 213/200 MYBP Triassic Period  300/270 - 250/235 MYBP Permian Period  367/350 - 300/270 MYBP Carboniferous Period  416/395 - 367/350 MYBP Devonian Period  446/418 - 416/395 MYBP Silurian Period  515/495 - 446/418 MYBP Ordovician Period  590/530 - 515/495 MYBP Cambrian Period |
| F. Young Earth Life Arguments (11) |
| **F1.** *Unconsolidated state of some rocks, even very “ancient” ones.* |
| **F2.** *Growth of the oldest living part of the earth’s biosphere.* |
| **F3.** *Present oxygen in air could be made by plants in 5,000 years.*  *If the present equilibrium could be reached in 5,000 years, that would say nothing for long we have been at equilibrium.* |
| **F4.** *An estimated 90% of all known animal species are living today.*  *However, invertebrates (with no bones) and bird (with small, hollow bones) make poor fossils.* |
| **F5.** *No evidence of a very large number of mutations in fossils.* |
| **F6.** Human footprints and artifacts found in Utah, Kentucky, Missouri, and possibly Pennsylvania in “150-600 million years old” rock. |
| **F7.** “Modern” pollen found in Cambrian Grand Canyon rocks. |
| **F8.** Polystrate fossils suggest rapid deposition, as happened with Mt. St. Helens, not many ages. |
| **F9.** *Origin of human civilizations.* |
| **F10.** *Human population would be astronomical if an old earth.*  *However, one could use the same logic and rabbit reproduction rates to “prove” the earth was not more than a few hundred years old. The truth is the birth and death rates fluctuate, and the equilibrium can change.* |
| **F11.** *Growth rate of active coral reefs. Some areas have conditions for rather rapid growth of coral reefs. However, other areas have conditions for destruction of coral reefs, so they probably have been at equilibrium, and the equilibrium point can change.* |

**Q: In Gen 1, what is the scientific evidence for an old (3-3.5 billion year old) earth?**

A: While the previous question gives evidence for a young earth, here are what in my opinion are the top three arguments for an old earth. These are followed by a catalog of all the arguments for a old earth.

Here are some major arguments for an old earth, along with young earth rebuttals.

Major arguments:

Old Earth Radioactive Dating Arguments:

The two most reliable methods are potassium-argon and calibrated radiocarbon dating. Even if every single radioactive dating method did not exist, even if calibrated radiocarbon dating alone were true the earth would be at least 15,000 years old. Even if everything was false except for one potassium-argon date, then the earth would be millions to billions of years old.

Over 15,000 tree-ring calibrated radiocarbon dates correlate very well with each other, and with lake varve deposits of leaves; they should not correlate if the earth was young. In addition, ice core samples also correlate well with these.

While we now recognize that the radiocarbon (carbon-14) in the atmosphere cycles over time, and that is why radiocarbon dating must be calibrated to avoid errors of as much as 20%.

Potassium-argon and other dating methods, in general correlate well with the index fossils people expect to find at that time in the earth’s history. The young-earth rationalization that the fossils simply “stratified” based on their size and density does not stand to reason, as there are correlated microfossils at all different levels, and larger fossils from before the dinosaurs to today.

It is known though, that a potassium-argon date will be unreliable if the molten lava did not cool slow enough to equilibrate with the air (such as with underwater lava flows), or if the rock was subsequently heated up hotter than 125 degrees C (251 degrees F), which allows the argon to diffuse in and out of the rock.

Rebuttal to radioactive dating arguments: four points to consider in the answer.

**R1.** In one literature search, around 50%, or over 400 radioactive were found to be in the wrong time period; so much for radioactive dating and index fossils all agreeing.

**R2.** A 200 year old Hawaiian lava flow as given dates of millions of years. If wrong values are cross-checked against values wrong for the same reasons, then they might agree with each other, but both would still be wrong.

**R3.** The trouble with potassium-argon is that it is never known for certain when one sample was formed too rapidly, or whether the rock was subsequently reheated. Rocks inside the earth can get very hot.

**R4.** Artifacts of short-lived radioactive elements such as polonium are called pleochroic halos. There are present in some huge granite formations. Either these formations must have cooled in less than five minutes (impossible), or else there are some fundamental problems with radioactive dating.

**Old Earth Fossil arguments:** Rock formations in Nebraska, Wyoming, Colorado, Germany, Scotland, and Sicily show massive numbers of (usually marine) fossils. The Karroo formation in South Africa has an estimated 800 billion fossils alone! If all these organisms lived within a few thousand years, then the early earth must have had more animals per square yard than there was space.

If natural gas, oil, and coal all came from the decay of plants and animals, then there is just too much for everything to have lived within a few thousand years. In coal, scientists can look at the amounts of vanadium and others metals and determine which coal came primarily from plants, and which came primarily from marine animals.

Finally, one flood alone cannot explain how so many index fossils, large and small, are generally found at “just the right times” in rocks in almost all time periods.

**Rebuttal to fossil arguments:** Graveyards are where the bones collected, not necessarily where the animals died. There are huge rock formations, such as the Lewis Overthrust, where the index fossils would be in exactly the reverse order.

**Catalog:** Here is a catalog of 65 old earth arguments. Young earth people have an answer for the arguments that are italicized. That leaves 50 arguments for which I have not found a “young earth” answer.

|  |
| --- |
| A. Old Earth Galactic and Solar Arguments (8) |
| **A1.** Big Bang theories can explain |
| **A1a.** Red Shift (Doppler Effect) The widening of the spectral bands is well explained by intervening dust material encountered traveling long distances through space. |
| **A1b.** The ratio of matter to energy |
| **A1c.** The ratio of protons to neutrons |
| **A1d.** The approximate present amount of the elements |
| **A2.** *Background Radio Frequency Radiation at 7.35 cm (temperature of 3 Kelvin) supports Big Bang* |
| **A3.** If universe not old, then the light from galaxies millions of light years away could not be from them unless the light did not come from them or space is a Riemann space. |
| **A4.** Spiral Arms of Galaxies - Computer simulations are successful, when they assume non-radiant dark matter like our galaxy is known to have. |
| **A5.** Star Formation - about 3 stars formed per year are observed. |
| **A6.** Starlight from stars in the other galaxies takes millions of years to reach the earth. The distance is gauged by assuming the brightness is similar to our own galaxy. This alone proves an old age unless God created it recently with the appearance of age. |
| **A7.** Main Sequence (Red Giants, White Dwarfs, Black Holes) |
| **A7a.** The number and distance of white dwarfs give an estimated age of 11 billion years. |
| **A8.** Prediction and Observation of Black Holes |
| B. Old Earth Solar System Body Arguments (6) |
| **B1.** Age of Meteorites and the Solar System by radioactive dating. |
| **B2.** Age of the Moon by radioactive dating |
| **B3.** Composition of the sun and planets |
| Sun's size varies with a period of 79 years. |
| **B4.** However the solar system formed, simulations can go forward or backward for millions of years and show that it is stable. |
| **B5.** Saturn’s rings have chaotic stability (with strange attractors). |
| **B6.** Large number of craters on the moon, Mars, and other moons. |
| C. Old Earth Meteorite and Space Dust Arguments (7) |
| **C1.** The amount of meteoritic material on moon is too great for only a 10,000 year history. |
| **C2.** The number of visible comets in ancient times is not larger than today. |
| **C3.** number of meteorites that hit the moon and earth. |
| **C4.** A compacted layer of space dust takes a very long time to form. |
| **C5.** ~90 sites of excess Iridium at the end of the Cretaceous Period indicate one 10 kilometer diameter or many meteors or comets hit then. |
| (Sci Amer. Oct 1990 p.80) |
| **C5a.** A giant post-Cretaceous meteorite has been found at the bottom of the Caribbean Sea or the Yucatan. |
| Yucatan 170 km diameter. |
| **C5b.** Shocked mineral spherules, shocked quartz grains, and micro-diamonds have also been found. |
| Expected to hit at 10 km/sec, force 1x109 Megatons significant gas leaves the atmosphere, 150 D km crater. Months unable to see due to the blockage of the sun. Nitric acid rains. |
| **C6.** A giant post-Triassic meteorite has been found in Italy. |
| **C7.** Massive subterranean meteor craters indicate that the rock was once on the surface. Ten’s of thousands of feet of rock could not be produced in 10,000 years by a big flood, but needed millions of years to form and turn to rock. |
| D. Old Earth Arguments from the Earth’s Material Heat, Pressure, and Magnetism (11) |
| **D1.** Evidence of continental drift (even after life formed) implies time necessary for it to move slowly or miraculous suspension of acceleration forces. |
| **D1a.** Has been measured by laser beams bouncing off satellites. |
| **D1b.** From the magma temperature, one can accurately predict the ocean crust thickness (1320-1360 C, 6-7 km). |
| **D1c.** *Continental drift explains well the shape of the continents (South America jutting into Africa etc.).* |
| **D1d.** No other theory links the many fossil marsupials of Australia and South America. |
| **D2.** *Evidence of a 350 day year in Cambrian times. Would take a long time for the earth’s rotation to change like that.* |
| **D3.** Evidence of ancient mountains and seas. |
| **D3a.** Deposits show Mediterranean Sea was desert 6 million years ago. |
| **D4.** There is too much sedimentary rock for “flood geology”. |
| **D4a.** Depth of sedimentary rock (max 7 miles (4.4 km) deep) Grand Canyon - 4,000 to 5,000 feet sedimentary. Large areas of Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois 1 mile (1.6 km) deep. |
| **D4b.** Maximum thicknesses of one period in one place After each depth is the variation in dates geologists have assigned for the opening and closing of the Period, and the MYBP (Millions of Years Before Present).  Cambrian 40,000 ft. in British Columbia 586/530-515/495 MYBP  Ordovician 40,000 ft. in Australia 515/495-446/418 MYBP  Silurian 15,000 ft. in Britain 446/418-416/395 MYBP  Devonian huge thicknesses 416/395-367/350 MYBP  Carboniferous 367/350-300/270 MYBP  Permian huge thicknesses in Texas 300/270-250/235 MYBP  Triassic 25,000 ft. in the Alps 250/235-213/200 MYBP  Cretaceous 2,500 ft. near Tucson, Arizona 144/129-66.4/64 MYBP  Note that 40,000 ft is 7.5 miles (12 kilometers) |
| **D5.** Evaporites (massive salt deposits - Permian and other periods) |
| **D6.** Movement of the earth’s magnetic poles |
| **D6a.** Past movement of the earth’s magnetic poles |
| **D6b.** Current westward drift of the earth’s magnetic poles |
| **D6c.** Magnetic “hiccup” in 1969. |
| **D7.** Magnetic Reversals (300 in the past 170 million years) |
| **D7a.** Kaiman magnetic interlude during Permian period. |
| **D8.** Desert Sand Dunes - Take a 1,000’s of years w/o water to form. |
| **D8a.** Sahara a green grassland 7,000 years ago. |
| **D9.** *The change in pressure with depth of oil reservoirs with freshwater fossils matches the change in pressure of fresh water with depth, and likewise the change in pressure of oil reservoirs with marine fossils matches the change in pressure of salt water unless the reservoirs are beside faults.* |
| **D10.** Multiple ice ages had to have a long period of time |
| **D10a.** Carbon/nitrogen ratios match hot and glacial periods |
| **D10b.** Tillites match glacial periods |
| **D10c.** Glacial lakes and deposits |
| **D10d.** Mass extinctions |
| **D10e.** Correlation with Milankovic forcing for earth’s orbit |
| **D11.** Mountain uplift takes millions of years. Mountain formation is explained very adequately by an old earth. |
| Note: Mercury has a magnetic field 1/100th of earth’s. It rotates slowly, and may not have a liquid core, so no theory, be it young or old earth, can explain this. |
| E. Old Earth Life and Fossil Arguments (13) |
| **E1.** *Vast Extent and Thickness of Coral Reefs.* |
| **E2.** If fossil fuels came from organic matter, then earth must be old. |
| **E2a.** C12 enrichment in fossil fuels and modern plants |
| **E2b.** Fossils in coal and fossil wood in Athabasca tar sands |
| **E2c.** Both coal and wood have a del 13C value of -25%. |
| **E2d.** Vanadium in Petroleum could only be from plant material. |
| **E2e.** Explanation of why Mideast and Caribbean have oil |
| **E2f.** *The Siljan Ring Deep Test in Sweden found no petroleum.* |
| **E3.** Too many fossils in fossil graveyards if earth is young. |
| **E3a.** If all Karroo South African fossils lived in the world within a few thousand years, the area would be covered with large animals 3 ft thick. |
| **E3b.** Graveyards also in Lincoln County, Wyoming, Florissant, Colorado. |
| "Mass Mortality in the Sea" Treatise on Marine Ecology and |
| Paleoecology I (New York: Geol. Soc. of America, 1957) |
| pp.941-1010) by Margaretha Brongersma-Sanders |
| **E4.** The great number of index fossils that agree with each other and with radiometric dating. Flood stratification cannot explain, and even the most optimistic estimates for the rate of micro-evolution cannot be reconciled in a few 1,000 years. |
| **E4a.** Why are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ such good index fossils if \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not a geologic age?  Graptolites - Ordovician, Silurian  Corals - Cambrian, Ordovician to present  Foraminifera - upper Cambrian to present  Trilobites - Cambrian  Fusilinids - Carboniferous to Permian  Glossoptera -  Conodonts - Cambrian to Permian  Pigs and Swine - Miocene  Ostracods - Permian  Siliceous Plankton - upper Cambrian to present |
| **E4b.** Ancestral crocodilia (over 80 genera) are found in just the right periods. |
| **E4c.** If a young earth, why are the 700 species and 89 families of archaeocyathids never after the Cambrian period? |
| **E4d.** If a young earth, why are the “weird” forms of Pre-Cambrian life never found later? |
| **E4e.** If a young earth, why are the 84 genera of reef-making stromatoporoids never found except in Ordovician - Devonian rocks? |
| **E4f.** If a young earth, why are the 10,000 species (1,500 genera) of trilobites found in the Paleozoic if modern bottom dwelling crustaceans are not? |
| **E4g.** If the earth was young, why are 780 species of conodonts never found above Paleozoic rocks? |
| **E5.** “Flood deposits” is a poor explanation for the high degree of stratification of fossils, even besides the index fossils. There had to be long periods of time. |
| **E6.** The explosion of Life in the Cambrian Period. This occasion, and the fact that all but the jellyfish died out is hard to explain in just a few thousand years. |
| **E7.** Catastrophism of the Permian Period. Extinction of half of all families of animals, and the rise of so many new families at the close of the Permian Period is hard to reconcile with a few thousand years before the great sea creatures, much less man, were created. |
| **E8.** *If macroevolution occurred, by necessity the earth would have to be billions of years old.* |
| **E9.** If even microevolution occurred, the earth would have to be at least a million years old due to too many extinctions: i.e. Ammonites, Birds, Conodonts, Dinosaurs, Fish, Sponges. |
| **E10.** Early Human Civilizations and Habitation |
| **E10a.** Egyptian and Sumerian history both go back to 5,500 years ago. |
| **E10b.** Even assuming that C14 is only a relative measure, there is too much pre-history in Europe, Africa, and Asia prior to 3,000 B.C.. |
| **E11.** The number of large animals that existed is very great. If recent creation, then species became extinct very rapidly before the flood, or else they became extinct after the flood. If they became extinct after the flood, then Noah’s ark did not have room for at least 64 species of elephant and rhino like creatures, and many large dinosaurs, even if only infant animals boarded the ark. Today there are 4,500 species of mammals and 10,00 species of birds. Even if some speciation occurred after the flood, it is hard to conceive that >50% of the species were first created after the flood. Many must have died out long before the flood. |
| **E12.** Carbon/Oxygen ratios correlate well with glacial deposits. Repeated layers of glacial deposits require a long time to lay down. |
| **E13.** Protein amino acid racemization clock indicates some bones are 10,000’s of years old. |
| F. Old Earth Radioactive Dating (20) |
| **F1.** C14 - tree ring sequences in Ireland, Germany, and Arizona. They correlate with each other and lake varves as well as with themselves. |
| (See Klein et al. 1982 and Pearson et al. 1986) |
| **F1a.** Sequoia gigantea tree rings, back to 1500 B.C. |
| **F1b.** 80 Bristlecone pine samples 4100 B.C.-1500 B.C. 6-9% error |
| **F1c.** Oak tree ring sequences in South Germany, North Germany, Ireland, East Anglia and Lancashire, England. |
| Note: Over 15,000 Radiocarbon Samples have been taken |
| **F2.** Correlation of Lake Varves with Carbon 14 dating. |
| **F3.** Pb207/Pb206 - usually gives values within 15% of K40 /Ar40 |
| F**3a.** Most Meteorites give Pb207/Pb206 ages 4.55 billion years. |
| **F4.** *Th232 /Pb 208 Dating* |
| **F5.** *U235 /Pb 207 + He4 (uranite, zircon)* |
| **F6.** *U237 /Pb 205 (monazite, U bearing rock)* |
| **F7.** *U238 /Pb 206 + He4 Dating* |
| **F8.** K40 /Ar40 - most arguments (atmosphere contamination, etc.) answered by looking at moon K40 /Ar40 dating |
| (muscovite, micas, phlogapite, lepidolite, orthoulase |
| saridine, biotite, glauconite, potash, some feldspars) |
| glauconite prone to weathering, not basalt. Micas lose Argon if temp >=200 C even for brief periods |
| **F9.** K40 /Ca40 (sylvite) |
| **F11.** *Rb87 / Sr87 - Sr can redistribute within the granite, but stays within the granite. At best accurate to 10-15%.* |
| **F12.** Sm147 / Nd143 Dating |
| **F13.** Isochron Dating with the above methods. |
| **F14.** Fission Track Dating -for samples that have not been reheated |
| **F15.** Thermoluminescence Dating |
| **F16.** General - Extremely high correlation between radioactive dating and index fossils. |
| **F17.** *Iridium up to 160 times normal levels at the Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary. If this was not a deposited layer, how come there is a strong correlation between the radioactive dating, dinosaur extinctions, iridium enrichment, and finding many apparently extra-terrestrial amino acids?* |
| Tom Waters, Extinction Watch "The Dinosaur Acid Test" Discover Feb, 1990. Over 100 times as much non-biological racemic amino acids as iridium. Not expected for a meteorite, but likely for a comet. |
| **F18.** Only 7 radioactive nuclides occur in nature. Should find 47 if the earth is young. |
| **F19.** *Heavy isotopes (Th232 U238, U235) can only be formed by super-nova. Based on isotopes, many formed over 100 million years ago.* |
| Hugh Ross The Fingerprint of God Promise Publishing Co. Orange Ca 921667 1989 p.89. |
| **F20.** *Helium accumulated in rocks means an old earth unless helium was there from the beginning.* |

**Q: In Gen 1, what settlements were there from before 2000 B.C.?**

A: Here are the sites by their ages.

Older sites up to 6500 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Location** | **Date** |
| North Vietnam | Hoabin Hian | 8000 - 6000 B.C. |
| Indonesia | Bui Ceri Uato | 8000 - 2000 B.C. |
| Palestine | 15 Natufian sites | 12,500 – 10,200 B.C. |
| Palestine | 10 Harifian sites | 10,300 – 9000 B.C. |
| Palestine | Jericho, 1st known town | 7200 - 4000 B.C. |
| Mideast | 23 other towns | 7000 - 4000 B.C. |
| Syria | 58 sites | 7500 B.C. |
| Turkey | Cayonu Tepesi (metal users) | 6620 B.C. |
| Turkey | Catal Huyuk (metal users) | 6142 B.C. |
| Europe | Mesolithic I Period | 8300 - 6800 B.C. |
| N. Europe | Baltic Sea was freshwater | 7800 - 6800 B.C. |
| Texas, USA | 1 site near Lubbock | 9020 B.C. |
| California, USA | Santa Rosa | 6700 B.C. |

6500-6000 B.C. - I have found none.

6000-5000 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| China | 26 sites |  |
| Mideast | 12 Hassuna and Samarra culture sites |  |
| Mideast | 31 Ubaidian/’Ubeid and Halafian sites. (The Ubaidians were a mysterious people who lived in Sumeria and died out in 4,000 B.C., before the Sumerians arrived) |  |
| Cyprus | 2 Agricultural sites |  |
| Greece | 4 Agricultural sites |  |
| South Germany | Herxheim | 5,000 B.C. |
| Sweden | 4 sites |  |
| Texas, USA | Wilson-Leonard site, Williamson County |  |
| North / Mid. America | 44 Paleo-Indian sites |  |
| S. America | 29 Paleo-Indian sites |  |

5000-4500 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| China | Hemudi site |  |
| Thailand | Ben Chiang bronze age site |  |
| Russia | East Tripolye culture |  |
| Iran | 50 houses in Tepe Sialk |  |
| Turkey | Hacilar and Catal Huyuk (6,000 pop.) |  |
| Egypt | 26 sites |  |
| Sudan | Khasirel Girba site |  |
| Germany | Many Mesolithic sites |  |
| Malta | Many sites, including temple complexes |  |
| Cost Rica | Sites where people lived |  |
| Mexico | Cotton in Tehuacan |  |

4500-4000 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| Iran | Tell-i iblis site (metal users) |  |
| Syria | Abu Hureya village |  |
| Palestine | Town of Jaffa |  |
| Egypt | Badarian culture. |  |
| Egypt | First calendar date |  |
| Poland, Czech. | 17 Danubian Culture sites |  |
| Balkans, Russia | 55 Mesolithic sites |  |
| France | Early Breton passage graves |  |
| Ecuador | Chili pepper found in residue on cooking tools (*National Geographic* May 2007 p.24 | 4100 B.C. |

4000-3500 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| New Guinea | 4 sites, including Wanlek, Kafiavana |  |
| Vietnam | Van Tang Culture |  |
| Thailand | Nok Tha |  |
| Indonesia | Uai Bobo & Ulu Leng |  |
| China | Yang Shao Rice farming culture |  |
| Russia | West Tripolye and Khurgan cultures |  |
| Central Asia | Samarkand |  |
| Iran | Susa, Persepolis, Tell-i bakun, Tell-i Iblis |  |
| Mesopotamia | 52 cities & towns |  |
| Lebanon | Sidon and Byblos |  |
| Palestine | Megiddo, Ghassul |  |
| Palestine | Esdraelon, Beth Shemesh (east) |  |
| Egypt | 26 towns, 200K pop. White pottery culture. Iron daggers found |  |
| Turkey | 52 villages |  |
| Cyprus | Village of Erimi |  |
| Spain | Basques |  |
| Great Britain | Fortress at Hambledon Hill, SW England. *Scientific American : Ancient Cities* p.100 | 3600-3300 B.C. |
| Middle America | 31 sites |  |
| South America | 34 sites |  |
| USA | Old copper culture in the Great Lakes area |  |

3500-3000 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| Iran | Persian Royal road used |  |
| Palestine | Town of Beth Yerah |  |
| Palestine | Jericho rebuilt |  |
| Egypt | First recorded famine, 1st Dynasty 7/8 pharaohs, 2 million pop., Royal tombs built at Abydos & Memphis |  |
| Sudan | Khartoum settled |  |
| Libya | Metalaoui |  |
| Italy / Sicily | 121 Copper / Bronze Age sites |  |
| Sardinia | 31 Mesolithic sites |  |
| Corsica | 18 Mesolithic sites |  |
| Germany | Corded ware culture |  |
| 3300-2000 B.C. |  |  |
| Mexico | First date in the Mayan calendar |  |
| Ecuador | Valdivia culture |  |
| 3500-1500 B.C. |  |  |

3000-2500 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| China | 17 Sites, Emperor Huang-ti |  |
| Thailand | Chao Praya River site |  |
| Myanmar | Mon people arrive |  |
| Indonesia | Bui Ceri Uato village |  |
| Russia | Afansievo culture |  |
| India / Pak. | 72 Harappan towns |  |
| Afghanistan | Mundigak village |  |
| Iran | Elamite Kings 2700- |  |
| Mesopotamia | 45 cities & towns |  |
| Ur | 1st dynasty. 5 kings |  |
| Palestine | 24 towns |  |
| Egypt | 13 cemeteries |  |

3000-2500 B.C.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| Egypt | Pharoah Zoser, 2nd – 4th Dynasties, Pyramids, the Sphinx |  |
| Turkey | 52 towns |  |
| Libya | Hav a Fleah site |  |
| N. Africa | Records of the Berber people |  |
| Crete | Minoan Civilization |  |
| Greece | 81 sites |  |
| Balkans | 55 Danubian sites |  |
| Spain/Port. | 36 Almerian sites |  |
| France | 46 sites |  |
| Scandinavia | 25 sites |  |
| England | 79 Windmill Hill sites |  |

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| **Modern country** | **Site** | **Date** |
| China | Longhan, the first walled city | 2500 B.C. |
| China | Era of Five Emperors | 2674-2183 B.C. |
| Russia | Maikop village | 2300-1200 B.C. |
| Turkestan | 1 farm site | 2500 B.C. |
| Iran/Afgh. | 26 sites | 2500-1500 B.C. |
| Mesopotamia | Historical records go back to 2500 B.C., 2 M pop., King Mesilim, Ebla | 2500 B.C. |
| Iraq | Sargon I of Akkad fought 34 battles | 2355-2279 B.C. |
| Egypt | Fifth Dynasty of 9 pharaohs | >2500 - < 2323 |
| Turkey | 2nd layer of the city of Troy | 2400 B.C. |
| France | Seine-Oise-Marne culture | 2600-2000 B.C. |
| England | 58 Bronze Beaker culture sites | 2500 B.C. |
| Mexico | First modern corn (maize) | 2500 B.C. |
| Ecuador | Wairajirca pottery culture | 2300-1300 B.C. |

**Q: In Gen 1:2, what is the “Gap Theory”, and could it be true?**

A: The Gap Theory is based on the linguistic fact that the Hebrew word “was” in “the earth was without form” could also be translated “became”. The Gap Theory says that the earth was created prior to Genesis 1. God destroyed the earth because of Satanic activity, and Genesis 1 records the recreation of the earth. However, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.173-175 says that since this word is used hundreds of times in the Old Testament, and only means “became” in 2 Samuel 7:24 and Deuteronomy 27:9, we would need a powerful reason for translating it as “became” in Genesis 1:2.

There is no evidence that any pre-modern Christian or Old Testament Jew understood Genesis 1:2 in this way. See *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.43-44 for more info. *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.55-56 advocates the gap theory, and says this theory was advanced by Scofield, Pember, and others.

**Q: In Gen 1:3, how was there light prior to the sun and moon in Gen 1:14?**

A: First, God is not limited to providing light through the moon and stars; He could have provided any kind of light at the beginning that He chose. Second, if Genesis 1 was not mechanically dictated, but given as a vision, then the sun and moon could exist prior to day four, but they did not appear until day four because of the clouds. As an example, someone on Venus could not see the sun or stars because of the heavy cloud cover of carbon dioxide. See *When Critics Ask* p.30 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:6-10 how could there be water before land?**

A: Why not? Geologists believe that after earth cooled, it was 100% covered with water, and the continents grew from islands, which came later.

**Q: Does Gen 1:11-13 agree with the fossil record that the plant life preceded the sea life?**

A: Yes. The plants were first to increase the atmospheric oxygen from 0.2-0.4% to today’s 21%. Without plants, sea animals would have nothing to eat.

By the way, oxygen is critical to the discussion of how life began. Observations of oxygen in our atmosphere by Apollo 16 astronauts show that even without plants, oxygen levels would still be 0.2-0.4%. This amount of oxygen is high enough to be lethal to secular theories of the origin of life on the *surface* of the earth or the ocean.

**Q: In Gen 1:11, couldn’t life have started by chance?**

A: The concentration of an “organic soup” of free amino acids in water with ultraviolet light, could not be any more than 10-7 Molar, which is about what it is in ocean water today. As Nobel Laureate Ilya Prigogine said, “The idea of spontaneous genesis of life in its present form is therefore highly improbable even on the scale of the billions of years during which prebiotic evolution occurred.” (*Physics Today* 11/1972 p.23-31.) As Nobel laureate Sir Francis Crick said, “An honest man armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which should have had to have been satisfied to get it going.” (*Life Itself* 1981 Simon & Schuster p.88). For the chemical details, consult C.B. Thaxton et al. *The Mystery of Life’s Origin* 1984.

**Q: In Gen 1:11, were there plants prior to their being the sun and moon in Gen 1:16-17?**

A: If each day was a short time, plants can survive a day in the dark. If each day was a long time, photosynthetic plants do not need to see the sun, they just need the light. See the previous question on Genesis 1:3.

**Q: In Gen 1:20, were there flying birds prior to land creatures in Gen 1:24-25?**

A: The Hebrew word is not “bird” but “flying creature” which include bats, locusts and some other winged insects, as Leviticus 11:19-20, and Deuteronomy 14:18-23 show. The fossil record implies that after amphibians and prior to reptiles and mammals there were giant dragonflies, with a 2 foot 5 inch wingspan, in the Carboniferous Period.

**Q: In Gen 1:21,24,25 what is a “kind” here?**

A: It means a general category and does not correspond to a precise modern classification. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.19 for more info.

**Q: In Gen 1:21, how do dinosaurs fit in?**

A: The “great sea creatures” and the crawling animals probably both included dinosaurs. It might be significant that in the Greek translation of Genesis, “great sea creatures” was translated as *reptilia*.

**Q: In Gen 1:26, if everyone came from Adam and Eve, is this an example of evolution?**

A: This is micro-evolution, which includes different species coming from common genera. Other examples are observed in moths, 50 species of cats, the 76 species of canines (wolves, coyotes, dogs, etc.), 2,113 genera of ammonites and ammonoids, insects, bacteria, and plants. Macro-evolution has never been observed. Continuous, “uniformitarian” macro-evolution, the dominant secular view a generation ago, has been largely superseded by “punctuated equilibrium.” The types of fossil evidence that would support punctuated equilibrium evolution are similar to the types of fossil evidence that would support Old-earth Creationism.

For another example of micro-evolution, the Young-earth Creationist magazine *Creation ex Nihilo* vol.2 no.3 June-August 1998 p.7 accepts that the guanaco, llama, and dromedary and Bactrian camels all descended from the same kind.

**Q: In Gen 1:26, could God have created everything by macro-evolution?**

A: No. This view is called “theistic evolution”, and many genuine Christians, such as C.S. Lewis, and Cliffe Knechtle of IVCF believe this. All Christians should agree that God had the freedom to create everything any way He wanted.

However, while God could have used macro-evolution, evidence from both the Bible and nature indicates that He did not. Genesis 2:7 says God created man from the dust of the ground, not from an animal.

Not even a hypothesis:

From nature, the following is a partial list of life where evolutionists do not even have a working hypothesis of how these evolved.

#### Flowering plants

**Some Invertebrates:** conodonts, chitinozoans, echinoderms, graptolites

**Some amphibians:** Frogs (Triadobatrachus might have been the first), and newts and salamanders (Karaurus might have been the first)

**Some reptiles:** Tortoises (Proganochelyidae might have been the first), icthyosaurs, placodonts, rhyncosaurs

**Some mammals:** Bats, bears, canids (dogs, etc.) raccoons, hippos, hyraxes, monotremes (duck-billed platypus, etc.), the order Diocerata, Sirenians (sea cows), Desmostylians, and the Edentata Cohort (on the lighter side, it is appealing to Texans to think that armadillos were especially created by God).

Here is a specific example from the reptiles. “Abundant and widely distributed during the Triassic, they [icthyosaurs] are nonetheless a puzzling group; their relationship to other reptiles for example is still highly conjectural.” Burgin Toni, Alivier Rieppel, P. Martin Sander and Karl Tschanz “The Fossils of Monte San Giorgio” *Scientific American* June 1989 p.80.

Nothing but a hypothesis:

For other animals, evolutionists have no evidence whatsoever, only hypotheses. Here are some examples.

**Sea life:** sponges, spongiiformes, crossopterygians, dipnoians, ancyclopoda, anoplotheriidae, eosuchians to snakes, pachyrhachis to snakes

**Mammals:** seals, sealions and walruses, the order Arctocyonia, the family Arsinoitheriidae

**Q: In Gen 1:30 and 9:3, when did carnivorous (meat-eating) animals first appear on the earth?**

A: Genuine Christians disagree. The commands in Genesis 1:30 and 9:3 referred to people, not animals. People were supposed to be vegetarians until Genesis 9:3. Romans 8:21 indicates that Creation was subjected to decay and bondage when Adam and Eve fell. God would not let sinful people live in a perfect world. Romans 8:21 does not specifically mention death, though. Romans 5:12 shows that death came into the world through sin. Christians who believe in a young earth believe this refers to death for all animals, but of course plants still died prior to the fall. Christians who believe in an old earth believe Romans 5:12 refers just to people.

**Q: In Gen 2:7, why do apes appear similar to humans?**

A: In Genesis 2:7, the word “formed” is used of a potter forming clay. Some Christians believe God made man by “forming” him from apes. But most Christians who do not believe in evolution simply can say a common creation, using similar “recipes” would result in similar creatures.

**Q: In Gen 2:7, on a cell level, why are chimps similar to humans? In particular,**

**1. Similarities in 20 out of 23 human chromosomes**

**2. Cytochrome C - no difference**

**3. Alpha hemoglobin - no difference in 141 amino acids, while 17 differences between man and cattle**

**4. Both have fetal and adult hemoglobin.**

**5. Both have ABO blood types, including A1 and A2.**

A: See the previous answer. Also,

**1.** Humans have similarities to mice in 20 and cats in 19 out of 24 human chromosomes

**2.** Cytochrome C - no difference between California gray whales and dromedary camels. Also, there is no difference between pigs, sheep, and cattle.

**3.** Admittedly, alpha hemoglobin is a similarity.

**4.** Frogs and chickens have fetal and adult hemoglobin

**5.** ABO is caused by antigens in the blood. Nearly all simians have ABO in at least their body secretions. We also have MNS blood types, which apes do not.

For the references on 2. see A. Goldstone and E.L. Smith “Amino Acid Sequence of Whale Cytochrome C” *Journal of Biological Chemistry* 10/10/1966 p.4485 and M. Sokolovsky and M. Moldovan “Primary Structure of Cytochrome C from the Camel Camelus dromedarius” *Biochemistry* vol.11 no.2 1972 p.148.

**Q: In Gen 2:19-20, speaking of naming animals, how many species are we aware of today?**

A: The following chart shows the living and fossil species. Species are grouped into genera, which are grouped into families, which are grouped into orders, which are grouped into phyla, which are grouped into kingdoms.

It is interesting to note just how few fossil species have been found of higher animals, compared to the living species.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organism** | **Living** | | | | **Extinct** | | | |
| **Number of Organism** | **Ord-**  **Ers** | **Fam-**  **ilies** | **Gen-**  **era** | **Spe-**  **Cies** | **Ord-**  **Ers** | **Fam-**  **ilies** | **Gen-**  **Era** | **Spe-**  **cies** |
| **PROKARYOTE KINGDOM** | **>=21** |  | **>=205** | **10K** |  |  |  |  |
| CYANOPHYTES | 5 | >26 | >107 | 3750 |  |  | >12 |  |
| ARCHAEOBACTERIA | >=2 |  | >=11 |  |  |  |  |  |
| **PLANT KINGDOM** |  |  |  | **510K** |  |  |  | **>10K** |
| CHLOROPHYTES, ETC. |  |  | 418+ | 23000 |  |  | 170+ |  |
| …FORAMINIFERA |  |  | 30+ | 876+ |  |  | 1095 |  |
| FUNGI & OOMYCETES | 21+ | 35+ | 292 | 100K |  |  | 250 | 500 |
| MOSSES & LIVERWORTS |  | 200+ |  | 25000 |  |  |  | 100+ |
| FERNS |  |  | >400 | 12000 |  | 15+ | 58+ | 63+ |
| THALLOPHYTES |  |  |  | 90000 |  |  |  |  |
| TRACHEOPHYTES |  |  |  | 1128 |  |  |  |  |
| GYMNOSPERMS | 12 |  | 70 | 730 |  | 1+ | 20+ |  |
| ANGIOSPERMS | 102 | 409 |  | 255K |  |  | 21+ |  |
| …MONOCOT ANGIOSPERMS | 26 | 69 |  | 55000 |  |  | 1+ | 8+ |
| …DICOT ANGIOSPERMS | 76 | 340 |  | 200K |  | 26+ | 45+ | 97+ |
| **ANIMAL KINGDOM** |  |  |  | **2.4M** |  |  |  | **>265K** |
| **INVERTEBRATES** |  |  |  | **2.4M** | **36** |  | **17K** | **220K** |
| …EDIACARAN LIFE | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20+ | 20+ |
| …PROTOZOANS |  |  |  | 25000 | No fossil evidence of these is understandable | | | |
| …WORMS |  |  | 180 | 107K |
| …CAMBRIAN PHYLA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  | >7 | >47 |  |
| …SPONGIIFORMS | 1+ | 1 | >800 | 10000 | 1+ | >99 | >1K | 1.7K |
| …RADIATES (STARFISH) |  |  |  | 10000 |  |  |  |  |
| …BRACHIOPODS |  |  | 11 | 335 | 4+ |  | 2569 | 30K |
| …AMMONOIDEA | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | ~280 | 2113 |  |
| …MOLLUSCS |  |  | 26+ | 220K |  |  | 1851 | 80K |
| Octopuses | 1 | 11 |  | 200-300 | 0 |  | 5 | 6 |
| …ECHINODERMS | >4 |  | 10+ | 6000 | >16 |  | 1548 | 15K |
| Cystoid Echinoderms | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |  |  |  |
| Crinoid Echinoderms |  |  |  | >200 |  |  | 681 | >2K |
| CRUSTACEANS | 39 | 154 | 5352 | 39K | 14 |  |  | >27K |
| …TRILOBITES | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 146 | 1968 | >10K |
| …INSECTS |  |  |  | 900K |  |  |  | 12K |
| …OTHER BUGS |  |  |  | 600K |  |  | >3K |  |
| **VERTEBRATES** | **96** | **791** | **~8.6K** | **47K** | **~91** | **~750** | **~9K** | **>12K** |
| …PISCES (FISH) | 41 | 409 | 3.0K | 21K | 55 | 160 | 2500 |  |
| Jawless Fish | 2 | 3-5 | 11-13 | 20 | 6 | 39 | 192 |  |
| Placoderms | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7-8 | 37 | 203 |  |
| Lobe-finned fish | 2 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 0-1 | 22 | 118 |  |
| Atherinomorpha | 1 | 20 | 1K |  | 0 | 1 | 12 |  |
| Perch | 1 | 150 | 1367 | 8000 | 0 | ~2 | ~83 |  |
| Sharks, etc. | 3 | 28 | 84 | 370 | 14 | 59 | 284 |  |
| …AMPHIBIANS | 3 | 37 | 501 | 4014 | 8 | >85 | 400 |  |
| Labyrinthodonts | 3 | 37 | 501 | 4014 | 4 | 50 | ~150 |  |
| Lepospondyls | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 20 | ~100 |  |
| …REPTILES | 4 | 43 | 179 | ~8000 | 16 | 104 | 1500 | 4600 |
| Anapsids and Turtles | 1 | 12 | 86 | 257 | 2 | 29 | 208 |  |
| Therapsids | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 49 | 246 |  |
| Dinosaurs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | ~60 | 285 | ~900 |
| Crocodiles and Alligators | 1 | 1 | 5-8 | 22-29 | 0 | 28 | 143 |  |
| Snakes and Lizards | 1 | 29 | 84 | 6000 | 0 | 24 | 222 | 670 |
| …BIRDS | 31 | 166 | 1865 | 10000 | 5 | ~38 |  | 1000 |
| Toothed Birds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | ~9 | ~17 | >100 |
| …MAMMALS | 17 | 133 | 1083 | 4433 | 21 | 200 | 3200 |  |
| Monotremes (platypus, echidna) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 8+ |
| Doconodonts and Triconodonts | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 20 |  |
| Trituberculates | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 37 |  |
| Multituberculates | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 13 | 56 |  |
| Marsupials (possums, etc.) | 1-4 | 9 | 80 | 250 | 0 | 10 | 171 |  |
| Rodents (rats, mice, etc.) | 1 | 35 | 351 | 2000 | 0 | 12 | 660 |  |
| Lagomorphs (rabbits) | 1 | 2-9 | 17 | 101 | 0 | 1 | 52 |  |
| Armadillos, Glyptodonts, etc. | 1 | 3 | 14 | 30 | 0 | 8 | 164 |  |
| Chiroptera (bats) | 1-2 | 18 | 180 | 950 | 0 | 4 | 38 |  |
| Condylarths | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1/2-1 | 10 | 122 |  |
| Hooved mammals | 3 | 13 | 91 | 223 | 3 | ~80 | 885 |  |
| Insectivores | 2 | 8 | 63 | >300 | 0 | >7 | 229 |  |
| Aquatic mammals | 2.1 | 13 | 43 | 114 | 1 | 18 | 211 |  |
| Carnivora and Creodonts | 0.9 | 7 | 101 | 250 | 1 | 11 | 335 |  |
| Elephants, mammoths, etc. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 41 | 70 |
| Primates (monkeys, apes, etc.) | 1 | 14 | 51 | 185 | 0 | 6 | 128 | >161 |

## **Q: In Gen 3-6, what about cavemen?**

A: There are four kinds of what is termed “cavemen” homo erectus, Neanderthals, Denisovans, and Cro-Magnon man. In summary, homo-erectus was rather different from people. Neanderthals had some differences, but they could interbreed. Perhaps they were descendants of Cain, or else related to the Nephilim. Cro-Magnon was basically the same as us. See the next three questions for info on each.

**Q: What about Nebraska man?**

A: Nebraska man was an alleged early type of man or ape conjectured from a misidentified tooth found in Nebraska in 1922. A complete drawing of Nebraska man appeared in a London magazine. In 1927 it was showed that it actually was the tooth of an extinct pig. For more info see the site http://www.execpc.com/~jwolf/hesper2.txt.

**Q: In Gen 3-6, what do we know about homo erectus?**

A: Here is the information on Homo erectus. See the following two questions for information on the others. The dates mentioned are based on radioactive dating. The slashes indicate where conflicting dates are given in literature.

Home erectus lived 3.25M?/1.6M/1.3M to 400K/300K/200K years ago (different books give different ages). Over 100 fossils have been found at 13 sites; the best preserved is a 13 year old 5 foot 4 inch (162.5 cm) boy. No remains have been found in the Americas, northern Europe or Russia. The brain size of homo erectus was 750/950 to 1200/1400 cubic centimeters. By comparison, a modern gorilla has 465/500 cubic centimeter brain size. The bones of Homo erectus were heavier and thicker than ours, but below the neck an average person could not tell much difference. It is now thought that homo erectus, as well as all later fossils, had relatively little hair and a lot of sweat glands like modern people, instead of like apes. Also like modern people, they had a large brain compared to the body, so a Homo erectus baby had to be born less mature than animal babies in order to pass through the mother’s hips during birth. They could use fire, but probably could not make fire. They hardened their simple hand axes and other tools with flame in simple shelters. They apparently killed each other and were cannibals. They had no artwork, apparently no religion, and did not bury their dead.

**Q: In Gen 3-6, how do Neanderthals fit in?**

A: Young-earth, old-earth, and even most non-Christian scientists agree that Neanderthal man was a race of human beings who descended from humans very similar to us. Neanderthal man lived 130K/100K to 35K/30K years ago, according to radioactive dating. Neanderthals were humans that resembled some northern Europeans, except that on average they were shorter (5’1” to 5’6”), had slightly larger brains, thicker bones, and larger muscles (women as well as men). They had eyebrow ridges, like some Pacific Islanders do. Some of their tendons were different: on their arms, their tendon placement was better than ours for lifting heavy things, but this made them unable to throw things like we can. The size of their brain was 1270-1400/1550-1700 cc, while the size of the brain of a modern man is 1000-1360/1450-2000 cc.

Over 280 individuals have been found in about 110 sites. They lived everywhere except the Americas, Siberia, and central African rain forests. Neanderthals killed each other and apparently ate each other at times. They cared for their elderly. They very likely buried their dead, often tucking the body up, oriented east to west, and even had flowers. Bears, deer, and wolf’s heads seemed to have special significance to them. There were more male Neanderthals than female. It is speculated that many girl babies were killed, probably as population control.

As William Strauss and A.J.E. Cave wrote, “If he [Neanderthal] could be reincarnated and placed in a New York subway — provided that he were bathed, shaved and dressed in modern clothing — it is doubtful whether he would attract any more attention than some of its other denizens.”

In the Bible, Neanderthals might relate to the mark of Cain in Genesis 4:15, the Nephilim in Genesis 6:1,4, or they might be unmentioned.

## **Q: In Gen 3-6, who were Cro-Magnon man?**

A: Cro-Magnon people were essentially identical with modern man, except for two slight differences:

**1.** There were apparently more types of Cro-Magnon man than there are of modern man

**2.** Their brains and bodies were slightly larger (not smaller) than modern men.

Cro-Magnon people lived everywhere, including coldest Siberia. The bone structure of European Cro-Magnon men was very similar to a modern Scandinavian or Ukrainian. Cro-Magnon men in South Africa drew pictures of themselves with afro hairstyles. The cave paintings in France were also by Cro-Magnon men. According to radioactive dating, Cro-Magnon lived 300K/100K/90K years ago.

One human (presumably Cro-Magnon) female fossil from 260K years ago was found on the border of China and North Korea. *National Geographic* May 2007 p.22. She was short limbed, 5.5 feet tall, 173 pounds, short-limbed, and probably well-adapted to the cold, like Inuit, Aleuts, and Siberians today. Reported by Karen Rosenberg in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

## **Q: In Gen 3-6, what about homo floresiensis (nicknamed hobbits)?**

A: The verdict is still out on what they were. They are similar to modern men except that as adults they were only 3 feet tall. They are nicknamed “hobbits” because their feet were half as long as their shin bones. Their arm and leg bones were different than modern people too. Homo floresiensis were discovered in Liang Bua cave on the island of Flores in Indonesia in 2003. Only one group was discovered, and archaeologists say they lived 38,000 to 13,000 years ago.

The discoverers named them a new species, but others think they are modern humans suffering from a known genetic disease, Laron’s disease, or iodine deficiency. However, the skulls of Homo floresienses different from people today with Laron’s disease. See Wikipedia for more on Homo floresiensis.

**Q: In Gen 5 and Gen 11:10-26, how could people live so long?**

A: God can make us live as long as He wants. Only recently have we learned some reasons why we do age. Every time cells of vertebrate animals divide, the ends of the cell’s DNA are clipped off at the ends. Human cells today die after about 50 cell divisions. This does not occur in microbes, some cancers, sex cells and “stem” cells of vertebrate animals, because they have an enzyme (called telomerase) to restore the ends of the DNA. If God changed the rest of our cells to have this enzyme, and fixed a few other things such as DNA demethylation, then perhaps eternal youth would be as natural for us as it is for bacteria. See *When Critics Ask* p.39-40, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.77, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.101-104, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.204-205, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.27 for other answers.

**Q: In Gen 6:14, could Noah’s ark hold all the animals?**

A: The ark was about 45 x 75 x 450 feet, three stories, tall, and had 1.5 million cubic feet of volume. Noah did not have to take sea life, nor every single land species. Noah might have taken genera, and species differentiated later. For the larger animals like elephants, Noah could have taken babies. By the way, the number of living genera are approximately: reptiles:179, birds:1,083, rodents and rabbits:368, bats:180, all other land mammals:435. There are only 290 genera of land animals larger than a sheep. See also *When Critics Ask* p.41-42 for more info. One early scientist (and clergyman) who answered this question was John Wilkins, who lived from 1614 to 1672 (from *Men of Science Men of God* p.19-20).

For comparison, the *National Geographic Magazine* July 2005 p.35 says the Chinese Muslim Zheng had as many as 62 trading ships, called bao chuan, that “some nautical experts believe may have measured up to 400 feet in length and 170 feet across the beam – with nine masts, 50,000-square-foot main decks, and a displacement of at least 3,000 tons, ten times the size of Vasco de Gama’s flagship. Scholars disagree on the bao chuans’ actual size, but even at far more modest estimates they were surely the largest wooden ships ever launched. The baochuan were escorted by 370-foot-long, eight-masted “galloping-horse ships”.

On a historic note, the first writer we know of to address this question was Origen (225-254 A.D.) in *Origen Against Celsus* book 4 ch.41 p.516

**Q: In Gen 7, was Noah’s flood local or global?**

A: Most Christians understand it to be a global flood. First are a few arguments supporting the local view, followed by arguments for two different global views.

**Local Flood:** The Hebrew word for earth can also mean ground or land. So instead of the flood covering the whole earth, it covered the whole land.

Archaeologically, some serious floods devastated the land of Mesopotamia from 3000 to 3500 B.C. Prior to 4,000 B.C. the mysterious Ubaidian (= ‘Ubeid) people lived in Sumer. The Sumerians came into the land after the Ubaidians.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.29-30 for reasons that favor a global flood.

**Young earth Global Flood:** The waters covered even the mountains, but the mountains before the flood were not so high as today. The water came from both the fountains of the deep and the water canopy above the earth permanently collapsing. During what secular science calls the Ice Age is much evidence for the flood. Rock rubble called tillites is caused either by glaciers or floods, and they cannot be distinguished except under a microscope.

**Old earth Local Flood:** About 16,000 years before present waters covered even the tops of the mountains as ice. As the ice rapidly melted, even life at the tops of mountains would be destroyed in the flood. Also, any heating in the upper atmosphere would explain why we have relatively little helium built up in the atmosphere from radioactive decay.

Some people who have legends of creation going wrong and needing to be cleansed by a flood are as follows:

Arandan of northern Australia, though many of the details are different. p.14-15

The Arikara Native Americans of the U.S. Great Plains p.16

Aymaran Native Americans of Bolivia “flood” of snow and ice. p.18-19

Cheyenne Native Americans of the U.S. Great Plains p.47

Inuit p.86

Sumerians (Noah = Ziusudra) p.95

Babylonian (Noah = Ut-napishtim) p.95

Indian (Noah = Manu) p.95

Greek & Roman(Noah = Deucalion, Pyrra = wife) p.95,236

Ipurina Native Americans of Brazil p.145

Kato Native Americans of northern California p.156

Icelandic creation. All the frost ogres were killed in a flood of the blood when Ymir was killed. p.135 The Prose Edda is the source for Icelandic creation p.226

Musca Native Americans of Peru and Colombia p.200

Netsilik of Greenland p.209-210

Navajo Native Americans of New Mexico and Arizona p.204

Pima Native Americans of southern Arizona p.225

Wapangwa tribe of Tanzania p.284-285

Yana Native Americans of California p.291

**The following did not have a flood legend, but said everything in creation initially was water.**

Arapaho Native Americans of the U.S. Great Plains p.15

Assiniboine Native Americans p.16

Blood Native Americans of Canada (earth-diver creation) p.34

Buriat people of Siberia (earth-diver creation) p.38

Huron Creation of Canada p.42,130

Cherokee (earth-diver Creation) p.44

Iroquois of U.S. and Canada p.80,145

Onondaga Iroquois (Creation-diver) p.216-217

Seneca Iroquois (Creation-diver) p.241

Sioux Native Americans of the U.S. Great Plains p.245-253

Maidu Creation p.80,171-172

Osage Native Americans of the Great Plains p.219-220

Mandan Native Americans of North Dakota in the U.S. p.175-177

Mande people of Mali p.180-181

Pohonichi Miwok Native Americans of California p.80,226

Salinan Native Americans of California p.239

Siberian-Tartar p.80

Yaruro Native Americans of Venezuela (earth-diver creation) p.292

Yokut Native Americans of California p.80,296-298

Yuchi-Creek Native Americans from the south. (earth-diver creation) p.299

Yuma Native Americans of Arizona (earth-diver creation) p.300-302

Fiji Islands p.93

Eskimos of Kukulik Island in the Bering sea (earth-diver creation) p.165

Finns and Magyars p.94, p.130 (Finnish creation in the Finnish national epic, called the *Kalevala* p.156)

Haida Native Americans of British Columbia in Canada p.111

Joshua Native Americans of Oregon p.152

Mixtec Native Americans of Mexico p.193-194

Modoc Native Americans of Oregon (earth-diver creation) p.195-196

Wyandot Native Americans of Kansas and Oklahoma (earth-diver creation) p.287

Skagit Indian from the Pacific Northwest. P.253-254

Tsimshian Native Americans at the southern end of Queen Charlotte Island in British Columbia. (earth-diver creation) p.273-277

Tuamotuan tribe of the South Pacific p.277

Thompson Native Americans of British Columbia p.270-271

There were actually many Egyptian creation stories, but in most of them there were primeval waters p.81-82

Yakima Native Americans of eastern Washington p.289-290

**Not native views**

Note that the Efe people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have a creation story of people being made from clay. However, p.80 says it might have been influenced by Christian missionaries.

The Wyot Native Americans of California have a flood and a basket/ark. However, they were probably influenced by Christian missionaries according to p.287-288

**Q: In Gen 7, how could sea life stand the changes in water pressure during Noah’s flood?**

A: Pressure itself does not kill, as people can be submerged to great depths in diving suits. Rather, pressure differential kills, such as a torrent of water coming from a burst dam. Rapid pressurization or depressurization can kill many forms of life, such as when a deep-sea diver comes up too fast and gets the bends. The bends are caused by nitrogen, which stays in the blood under great pressure, forming bubbles in the blood as the pressure decreases. A flood over 40 days would cause tidal waves that would kill some fish, but probably not most of them. The change in ocean pressure would not be rapid enough to cause death from too rapid pressurization.

As a side note, most plankton cannot live very far below the surface. The reason for this has nothing to do with pressure, but like most plants, plankton needs sunlight to grow.

**Q: In Gen 7, during Noah’s flood, how could freshwater fish stand the changes in salt content (salinity) of the water?**

A: Of course, God simply could have preserved everything in the oceans miraculously. However, there are four different answers on how God could have used natural means to preserve the ocean life. First some background on salt, and then the four answers.

**Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink**: Ocean water has about 29.5 grams per liter of sodium chloride, and about 3 grams per liter of other minerals. Soft drinks, such as root beer, have only 0.1 grams of salt per liter. Saltwater animals differ from freshwater fish and land animals in that they have efficient ways to remove salt from their body. If you or I drank straight ocean water, it would actually take more water for us to get rid of the excess salt than the amount of water we drank. That is why, in the poem *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*, sailors could die of thirst, while floating on an ocean of water.

**Local flood:** A few Christians believe the flood was only over regions of Mesopotamia. They base this on the fact that the Hebrew word for “earth” can also mean “land”, and so the waters covered the land” Archaeological evidence has uncovered massive flooding in Sumeria around 3500 B.C. (by radiocarbon dating), that seemed to have ended the earlier Ubaidian / ‘Ubeid civilization prior to the rise of the Sumerian civilization. However, why would God have Noah make an ark, when Noah could just have journeyed for a few weeks to get out of danger? Why would animals in the danger zone board the ark, when there were plenty of each species outside the danger zone. A third problem with the local flood theory is that Isaiah 54:9 says the God will never covers the earth again as He did in Noah’s time. If Noah’s flood were local, then there have been a number of other terrible local floods. Thus, the rest of these answers assume a worldwide flood.

**Inhomogeneities:** Today the salinity of the Atlantic Ocean differs slightly from the Pacific Ocean (34.5-37 parts per thousand vs. (34-35 parts per thousand). Certainly, with a worldwide flood, there would be large differences in salinity, and areas with different concentrations of salt could support different life.

**Much sea life might have become extinct:** Scientists who believe in an old earth say the mysterious Permian catastrophe, around 235 million years ago, wiped out half of all the families of animals. The ones that survived were conjectured to have been able to withstand wider fluctuations in salinity of ocean water. During Noah’s flood many kinds of sea life might have died out too, and the sea life we see today is descended from creatures that withstood the salt changes or were in fortunate locales.

**Melting glaciers:** To people who hold to the old earth theory, the geological record indicates that most of the earth was in a great cooling period, called the Würm Ice Age, until about 14,000 years ago. While there were still tropical areas, the ice sheet went as far south as Kansas, and there was even a small glacier in the mountains of New Guinea, north of Australia. Then oxygen isotopes in ice cores, atmospheric helium isotope ratios, and other evidence suggest there was a dramatic global warming 14,000 years ago. If the glaciers melted rapidly, say within 40 days, there would be water running everywhere, worldwide, but there would not be standing water up to the top of today’s mountains. There would still be fluctuations in ocean salinity, but they would not be so great.

**As a side note for young-earthers**, one way geologists know of the extent of the ice sheets is through rubble called tillites. Tillites are caused both by glaciers and mudslides, including from floods. The only way to tell tillites caused by glaciers from tillites caused by mudslides is under a microscope, and most tillite deposits have not been analyzed microscopically.

**Q: In Gen 7:20, how did the flood even “cover the mountains”?**

A: All water does not have to be liquid. Imagine the world at the end of the Würm Ice Age, which geologists say was about 13,000-14,000 years ago, and there was a rapid warming. If it were a little more rapid than geologists speculate, the results would be cataclysmic.

## **Q: In Gen 7:20, was Noah’s flood a local flood or a universal flood?**

A: Most Christians believe the flood was worldwide, though some used to believe it was local, because the Hebrew word for “earth”, “ground”, and “land” is the same word. Here are arguments for both views.

**Universal:** Genesis 7:17-20 says even the tops of the mountains were covered by more than 20 feet. There are no mountains in Sumer. Genesis 8:4 says the ark settled on the mountains of Ararat. Mount Ararat is 16,804 ft high, and it is the second highest mountain in the Mideast. Genesis 7:22 says everything on the dry land died. See *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.47-48 for more info on the view of the universal flood.

**Local:** The Hebrew word can simply mean the land. While it might have been easier for Noah to move away from the people quietly, the ark was a witness to them. Sumerian archaeology shows a series of disastrous, local floods about 3500-3000 B.C. This evidence is not present at other places at the same time by radiocarbon dating. *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* says that of the approximately 2,500 times the Hebrew word for “earth/land” in the Old Testament, 80% of the time it means “land”.

See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.362 for more on the universal flood, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.112-114 for support for both views.

**Q: In Gen 8, Counting the years in the genealogies, the flood would have ended 292 years before Abram, around 2440 B.C. How can this be if the primitive Chinese, Egyptian, Canaanite, and Sumerian civilizations started roughly 2500, 3000, 3000, and 3500 B.C. respectively? Genesis also mentions 31 Mideast cities and towns and six other nations by Abraham and Isaac’s time. It is estimated that Ur, in Abram’s time, had 100K-180K people. Archaeologists can date Mesopotamian sites back to 2500 B.C., even without using radiocarbon dating.**

A: There are two different views.

**Recent Creationists** believe there were small gaps in the genealogies that make the date slightly older. Also, people had many children.

**Old-earth Creationists and other Christians** believe there are large gaps in the genealogies, since son can mean descendant and father can mean ancestor.

**Q: In Gen 8:4, can we find Noah’s ark today?**

A: The ark rested on the mountains of Ararat. Mt. Ararat is the highest mountain in all the Mideast: 7,000 feet above sea level. It is extremely difficult to get to the top, due to the harsh weather conditions and rugged terrain. It might be thought that the ark would have all decayed away by now, but if it were preserved, such as in part of a glacier, it could still be around today. Various expeditions to Mount Ararat have found what appears to be the remains of Noah’s ark.

**Bible Query from Exodus**

**Q: In Ex, how do we know that the Book Exodus should be in the Bible?**

A: Among other reasons, because Jesus and so many others in the Bible authenticated the Old Testament and referred to this book of the Torah as scripture. For further study refer to the questions at the end of this section for Jewish and early Christian writers who referred to Exodus. See also the questions on Matthew 22:32 and Luke 2:23.

**Q: What is some of value of the Book of Exodus?**

A: Exodus is a book to be read and experienced, not used only for learning its facts. While Exodus and Deuteronomy both give the Ten Commandments, Exodus is unique in what it tells us about the plagues and deliverance from Egypt. These are more than just interesting histories; they show the character of God and God’s dealing with His people. God does not deliver His people from tough times, but rather delivers them through tough times. God used natural means (midwives), natural means in a supernatural intensity (some of the plagues), as well as supernatural means (parting the red sea at just the right time) to deliver His people.

Exodus shows how God relates individually to Moses and Aaron, and even Pharaoh. God was very patience with Moses’ uncertainty about leadership, yet God also appeared “strict” with Moses’ losing his temper in front of all the Israelites.

The experiences of Exodus were pivotal in defining Israel’s identity as God’s chosen people. They stayed together in hard times, experienced great deliverance and blessing, but most importantly saw God’s working in their lives through it all.

Without Exodus we would have no clue about the Passover, and miss much of the typology of the Lord’s Last Supper. As the Israelites were passed over for destruction by blood of the lamb, so too we are passed over from destruction by the blood of the Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world.

**Q: In Ex, what are various ways to understand the book?**

A: The Book of Exodus is deep and can be understood and studied on many different levels.

1) Besides generally strengthening our faith, Exodus solves a few small mysteries, such as why there were so many Semitic indicators in Egypt and then they were gone, after this why Thutmose IV became Pharaoh though he indicated he was not first in line, and who were the later “*Habiru* running amok” that destroyed some Canaanite cities afterwards.

2) It is an accurate history of the Israelites, and how they became a nation from a clan.

3) It is a book about God, revealing His character concerning how He deals with humanity. It shows how He combined both natural and supernatural means to work in history and deal with His people and their oppressors.

4) It is a book of the law, what God commanded for His people to obey.

5) Like Nehemiah, it is a book on godly leadership, how one man, plus God, could overthrow an army and successfully lead so many people for 47 years.

6) It is a book for all of God’s people, that we too can be encouraged that God will deliver us, and we too can experience an encounter with him, and that God can making His home in the tabernacle of our hearts.

7) It is a book of patterns (Exodus 25:40), of deliverance, encounter, and a life of worship, and of what is pleasing and displeasing to God.

**Q: In Ex, what is an outline of the book?**

A: Since there are different ways to look at Genesis, different commentaries have rather different outlines. Here is a general outline.

**I. Bondage in Egypt (Ex 1-14)**

**A. The Path to Pharaoh (Ex 1-4)**

1. Israel’s Enslavement (Ex 1)

2. Moses’ Danger (Ex 2)

3. God’s Call (Ex 3,4)

**B. Deliverance – Let My People Go (Ex 5-14)**

1. Two Confrontations (Ex 5-7:13)

2. 1st Plague – Blood (Ex 7:14-25)

3. 2nd Plague – Frogs (Ex 8:1-15)

4. 3rd Plague – Lice (Ex 8:16-19)

5. 4th Plague – Flies (Ex 8:20-32)

6. 5th Plague – Livestock Died (Ex 9:1-7)

7. 6th Plague – Boils (Ex 9:8-12)

8. 7th Plague – Hail and Fire (Ex 9:13-35)

9. 8th Plague – Locusts (Ex 10:1-20)

10. 9th Plague – Darkness 3 Days (Ex 10:21-29)

11. 10th Plague – Firstborn and Passover (Ex 11:1-12:30)

12. Crossing the Red Sea (Ex 12:31-14:31)

**II. Life in the Wilderness (Ex 15-40)**

**A. To Sinai: A Journey of Relying on God (Ex 15:1-18:27)**

1. Song of Miriam - remembering God’s deliverance (Ex 15:1-21)

2. Marah and Elim – will God provide in the dry land? (Ex 15:22-27)

3. Manna and Quail – will God feed in the barren place? (Ex 16)

4. Massah – failing a test of faith (Ex 17:1-7)

5. Amalekites – will God protect? (Ex 17:8-15)

6. I can do it all myself – more attitudes to change Ex 18)

**B. Encounter with God at Sinai (Ex 19-24)**

1. Experience God (Ex 19)

2. 10 Commandments, altars, no idols (Ex 20)

3. civil laws (Ex 21-23:10)

4. Sabbaths and festivals (Ex 23:11-19)

5. God’s promise for obedience (Ex 23:20-33)

6. Dinner with God (Ex 24)

**C. Tabernacle Worship - Preparing for God Among You**

**1. Building our understanding**

a. The materials - giving to God (Ex 25:1-9)

b. The ark – where to meet with God (Ex 25:10-22)

c. God’s presence at the table (Ex 25:23-30)

d. Lampstand – God’s light in our lives (Ex 25:31-40)

e. The Tabernacle – private intimacy with God (Ex 26)

f. Altar of Burnt Offering – give things up for God (Ex 27:1-8)

g. Tabernacle Courtyard – assembling together for God (Ex 27:9-19)

h. Never let your worship be out of oil – (Ex 27:20-21)

**2. Setting yourself apart**

a. The clothes of the priests of God (Ex 28)

b. Dedication of the priests of God (Ex 29)

**3. What priests do**

a. The altar of incense – are your prayers fragrant? (Ex 30:1-10)

b. Never forget we were bought with a price (Ex 30:11-16)

c. Washbasins – our need for daily washing (Ex 30:17-21)

d. Anointing oil (Ex 30:22-33)

e. Incense (Ex 30:34-38)

f. Artists (Ex 31:1-11)

g. The sign of keeping the Sabbath (Ex 31:12-18)

**D. Rebellion, Repentance, and Restoration (Ex 32-33)**

1. The Golden Calf – how could they? Could we? (Ex 32)

2. Restoration – can we? (Ex 33)

3. Obedience and encounter again (Ex 34)

**E. Picking up Again the Tabernacle Worship After Repentance (Ex 35:1-39:43)**

**F. God Among You - How is Your Tabernacle Set Up? (Ex 40)**

1. Preparing for God (Ex 40:1-33)

2. God coming in glory (Ex 40:34-38)

**Q: In Ex, who first answered questions on Exodus?**

A: As far as I am aware, the first person to write answers to questions on Genesis was Philo, a Hellenistic Jew from Alexandria, who lived from about 20 B.C. to 50 A.D. Unfortunately, only some fragments of his work on Exodus survive today.

**Q: In Ex 1, how could there be so many people in 430 years?**

A: For the answer, see the discussion on Numbers 1.

**Q: In Ex 1, why would a loving God permit the Hebrews to be slaves for 400 years?**

A: The lifetime of a person, or even 400 years, is just a short blip compared to a life in eternity in Heaven. God allows His people to suffer on earth, even unjust suffering, because this is just a temporary phase, and God will reward us in Heaven.

However, not only did God permit this, but this might have in fact been a great blessing for the Israelites. There were many battles in Canaan during this time: here are some of them:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1500 B.C. | Egypt destroys Debir, Hazor, Jericho, others in Palestine |
| 1485 B.C. | Thutmose III of Egypt captures Arvad in Phoenicia |
| 1483-1437 BC. | Thutmose III of Egypt 17 campaigns - Napoleon of Egypt |
| 1483/1468 BC. | At Megiddo Thutmose III defeats Canaanites |
| c.1454 B.C. | Qadesh revolts from Egypt |

By being slaves in Egypt, and shepherds which the Egyptians detested, the Israelites would not be assimilated by the Egyptians. *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.49 puts it well: “Often the things that appear most painful in our lives are God’s blessings in disguise, recognized as such only when the passage of time unveils the purpose God has had in mind.”

**Q: In Ex 1:7-8, how old was Miriam?**

A: We do not know, but she was apparently old enough to watch the baby, yet too young to have to work. Maybe she was 8-12 years older than Moses.

**Q: In Ex 1:8, archaeologically how did the Hyksos rulers fit in?**

A: The Hyksos were a Middle Eastern people that conquered Egypt due to their superior chariots from 1760 to 1640 B.C. They ruled Egypt for a while, and were gradually driven out from 1573/55 to 1540 B.C. When Jacob and his family migrated to Egypt, the Egyptians in power were pre-Hyksos based on Genesis 46:34 and 32:32.

**Genesis 46:34** says Egyptians would not be with shepherds, and the Hyksos were called “shepherd kings”.

**Genesis 32:32** says that these Egyptians would not eat with [Asiatic] Hebrews.

Thus, if the Hyksos could not be the Egyptian rulers when Jacob’s family came to Egypt, the “new Pharaoh” would be suspicious of those in high positions under the previous Pharaoh. Furthermore, when the Hyksos were expelled, the native Egyptians might still be suspicious of non-Egyptian Asiatics, such as the Hebrews.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.54-56 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 1:8-10, briefly, is it true that there is no archaeological evidence to support the Israelites having been in Egypt, as an atheist (Capella) asserted”?**

A: No, there is ample evidence. Not only are there references to “Habiru”, but the Papyrus Brooklyn 35.1446 shows many examples of Asiatics given Egyptian names. Some of the Asiatics are from the tribes of Issachar and Asher. See also the next question and for a more extensive answer and the discussion on Exodus 11:5-12:30 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 1:8-10, did any pre-Christian pagan writers mention Moses?**

A: On one hand, Origen (225-254 A.D.) says none did in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* first homily p.273, and the translator’s footnote 37 echoes this. (*Ancient Christian Writers* vol.26.) However, Julius Africanus (235-245 A.D.) says otherwise. He writes, “Polemo, for instance, in the first book of his *Greek History*, says: ‘In the time of Apius, son of Phoroneus, a division of the army of the Egyptians left Egypt, and settled in the Palestine called Syrian, not far from Arabia: these are evidently those who were with Moses. And Apion the son of Poseidonius, the most laborious of grammarians, in his book *Against the Jews*, and in the fourth book of his *History*, says that in the time of Inachus king of Argos, when Amosis reigned over Egypt, the Jews revolted under the leadership of Moses. And Herodotus also makes mention of this revolt, and of Amosis, in his second book, and in a certain way also of the Jews themselves, reckoning them among the circumcised, and called them the Assyrians of Palestine, perhaps through Abraham. And Ptolemy the Mendesian, who narrates the history of the Egyptians from the earliest times, gives the same account of all these things; so that among them in general there is no difference worth notice in the chronology.” The *Ante-Nicene Fathers* volume 6 Julius Africanus fragment 13 p.124.

**Q: In Ex 1:8-10, apart from the Bible, is there any evidence of the Israelites being enslaved in Egypt or coming out of Egypt?**

A: Some critical “scholars” still believe the outdated theory that there was no evidence of the Israelites either being in or coming out of Egypt. Perhaps they should read “the writing on the wall”. A painting on the wall of the tomb of Khnumhotep (1892 B.C.) at Beni Hasan in Egypt shows 37 “Asiatics”, or non-Egyptian people from the Mideast. They had black hair, pointed beards, long many-colored cloaks, bows, and throw sticks.

Christian scholars writing in the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, and other books have gathered a great deal of evidence that the Israelites were in Egypt. Not only do Christian scholars teach that the Israelites were in Egypt from about 1875-1445 B.C., but a secular archaeologist, David M. Rohl in his book *Pharaohs and Kings : A Biblical Quest* (Crown Publishers 1995) also documents evidence that is consistent with the Israelites coming out of Egypt. Here is a “Top Ten” list of facts that support the Israelites coming out of Egypt.

**10.** Skeletons of long-haired Asiatic sheep showed they first appeared in the Delta region of Egypt around the time of Joseph. (1900-1800 B.C..) Joseph’s Egyptian name “Zaphenath-Paneah” was probably “Zat-en-aph” (he who is called) and “Ipiankhu” (Ipu is alive). The name Ipiankhu and variations were common in the time of Joseph but not very common earlier or later. Many other Hebrew names are found in an Egyptian papyrus in the Brooklyn Museum (35.1446). Under Pharoah Sobekhotep III (approximately 1540 B.C.), a large number of slaves were transferred to the area of Thebes. Of the 95 names, over 50% of the names were Asiatics, and their Egyptian names were given next to them. Many of the Egyptian names have “he/she who is called” as the first part of the name. Some of these people were recorded as being specifically from the tribes of Issachar and Asher.

In addition, some Hebrew names are Menahem and Shiphrah. This was 100 years before the Shiphrah in Exodus 1 though. Walter Kaiser in *A History of Israel* p.84 and *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.307 mentions that for two Semitic names, Shiphrah probably comes from Sp-ra (fair one), and the name Puah is probably is derived from the Ugaritic word “Pgt” meaning “girl” or “splendid one”.

Also, the Leiden Papyrus 348 gives order to “distribute grain rations to the soldiers and to the ‘Apiru who transport stones to the great pylon of Rames[s]es.” The ‘Apiru were likely the Hebrews. See *Christianity Today* 9/7/1998 p.48 for more info on this.

**9.** A non-Egyptian second-in-command made good sense. If Joseph had tried to rebel, Egyptians would not follow him. It is recorded that Canaanites, such as Meri-Ra and Ben-Mat-Ana, had high positions in the Egyptian Court. A Semite named Yanhamu was a deputy of Amenhotep III based at Gaza.

**8.** Bricks were used to build some Egyptian cities such as Pithom. At Pithom, bricks were found made with straw at the lowest level. At the intermediate level the bricks had only stubble. At the top level, archaeologists found that the bricks were made with no binding at all. The tomb of an Egyptian noble named Rekhmere / Rek-mi-Re at Thebes in the 15th century B.C. has a painting of slaves making bricks.

**7.** There was evidence of a great disaster with a great number of hurriedly buried bodies. However, the large numbers of deaths does not prove or disprove that this was due to a sudden event overnight.

Also, Tacitus in *Histories* book 5 lists differing speculations on the Jews being from Crete, or Egypt, or Ethiopia, or Assyrians, and then relates an interesting story. “Most writers, however, agree in stating that once a disease, which horribly disfigured the body, broke out in Egypt, that king Bocchoris, seeking a remedy, consulted the oracle of Hammon, and was bidden to cleanse his realm, and to convey into some foreign land this race detested by the gods. The people, who had been collected after diligent search, finding themselves left in a desert, sat for the most part in a stupor of grief, till one of the exiles, Moyses by name, warned them not to look for any relief from God or man, forsaken as they were of both, but to trust to themselves, taking for their heaven-sent leader that man who should first help them to be quit of the present misery…. Moyses, wishing to secure for the future his authority over the nation, gave them a novel form of worship, opposed to all that is practised by other men. … They slay the ram, seemingly in derision of Hammon, and they sacrifice the ox, because the Egyptians worship it as Apis.” (quoted from *The Annals and The Histories* by P. Cornelius Tacitus, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. 1952.)

**6.** An Egyptian text dated around 1350 B.C. described a strange earlier event: “The sun is covered and does not shine to the sight of men. Life is no longer possible when the sun is concealed behind the clouds. Ra [the god] has turned his face from mankind. If only it would shine even for one hour! No one knows when it is midday. One’s shadow is not discernible. The sun in the heavens resembles the moon….” This could refer to the darkness over the land. It probably does not refer to the eruption of the volcano on the Island of Thera because that happened about 200 years earlier. (This is from the Ipuwar Papyrus).

**5.** Pharaoh Thutmose IV apparently was not the first-born son. In the Dream Stela of Thutmose IV (1421-1410 B.C.) found between the forepaws of the Sphinx of Giza, the god Harmakhis promised Thutmose special help to become the next Pharaoh in return for removing the sand that had built up against the Sphinx. He likely would not have needed special help if he were the first in the succession of his father Amenhotep II (1450/1447-1401/1385). Walter Kaiser in *A History of Israel* p.90 says that the eldest brother of Thutmose IV was named Webensenu. Webensu was given a burial in the royal tomb, and he probably was the one who died during the tenth plague. The second son of Amenhotep II was Khaemwaset, who married before he died. As Kaiser says, “Thus, while the Sphinx Stele cannot be taken as direct proof of the death of the firstborn, enough evidence has been brought to light by Egyptologists to support the early date of the Exodus and the fact that indeed Thutmose IV had not expected to succeed his father to the throne.”

**4.** Mixed Egyptian/Hebrew writing in caves near Mt. Sinai describes the parting of the sea, Moses, and catching the quail. But the most interesting thing is that the language was a mixture of Egyptian and Hebrew. The historian Diodorus Siculus (10 B.C.) also knew of this too. Also, at the entrance to the copper mines in Sinai are hundreds of inscriptions. Most of them are in hieroglyphic Egyptian characters, but about 40 inscriptions are in sort of proto-Sinaitic alphabetic script from the 15th century B.C. However, this evidence is “disputable”, because there is no way to date when these writings were made.

**3.** The Egyptian military, which prior to this time had controlled Canaan, was strangely absent. We do not hear much of the Egyptian military again until the time of Pharaoh Seti I, who destroyed Hazor in 1300 B.C.

**2.** In Jericho, Bryant G. Wood found strong walls, large quantities of grain (meaning a short siege), and no plundering (since the grain was still there). John Garstang was the one who first found abundant carbonized grain. *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.182-183 mentions some evidence for an earthquake of magnitude 8 on the Richter scale, which could have left cracks in the walls. The inner mud-brick walls collapsed over the outer stone wall, forming a convenient ramp. When did this capture take place? Ceramic pottery from Cyprus indicates a date between 1450 to 1400 B.C. Egyptian amulets, are inscribed with the name of the current Pharaoh, up to Joshua’s time. Earlier in this century John Garstang had misdated the walls of Jericho in Joshua’s time, but Kathleen Kenyon has proved Garstang wrong according to the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.575. Carbon-14 dating sets the destruction at 1410 B.C. +/- 40 years.

1. As to the destruction of cities in Canaan, Joshua only says the following cities were destroyed: Debir, Eglon, Hazor, Hebron, Jericho, Lachish, Libnah, Makkadeh, and Ai. Archaeologists have found at that time the following cities were destroyed: Arad, Debir, Hazor, the site at el-Khalil (Hebron?), Jericho, Lachish. The site at Beitin (Bethel?), the city of Gibeon and the site at Khirbet Nisya were abandoned. Perhaps the small town of Ai was destroyed so completely that the site will never be found. Who destroyed these cities? The Tell el-Amarna tablets tell us clearly. The Tell el-Amarna letters were written from Canaan to the Egyptian Pharaoh around 1500-1370 B.C. The mention the feared “Habiru running amok”. Interestingly, they also mention a king Lab’ayu of Shechem [a Gibeonite city], who was a traitor because he was in confederation with the Habiru invaders. Later, the Stela of Pharaoh Merenpta/Merneptah (1229/1225 B.C.) also mentions a people called Israel in northern Canaan.

In addition, the *Biblical Archaeologist Review* vol.7 (Sept-Oct 1981) says there is evidence of Syro-Palestiniate remains near Qantir, Egypt from 1700-1500 B.C.

Apart from this, Julius Africanus (writing 235-245 A.D.) mentions ancient Greek historians who wrote about the Exodus. “Polemo, for instance, in the first book of his *Greek History*, says: ‘In the time of Apius, son of Phoroneus, a division of the army of the Egyptians left Egypt, and settled in the Palestine called Syrian, not far from Arabia: these are evidently those who were with Moses. And Apion the son of Poseidonius, the most laborious of grammarians, in his book *Against the Jews*, and in the fourth book of his *History*, says that in the time of Inachus king of Argos, when Amosis reigned over Egypt, the Jews revolted under the leadership of Moses. And Herodotus also makes mention of this revolt, and of Amosis, in his second book, and in a certain way also of the Jews themselves, reckoning them among the circumcised, and called them the Assyrians of Palestine, perhaps through Abraham. And Ptolemy the Mendesian, who narrates the history of the Egyptians from the earliest times, gives the same account of all these things; so that among them in general there is no difference worth notice in the chronology.” The *Ante-Nicene Fathers* volume 6 Julius Africanus fragment 13 p.124.

This is not the first time critical “scholars” were unaware of the archaeology. For example, archaeologists found out about the Hittites in 1892. However, some scholars still doubted their existence ten years later (1902, E.A.W. Budge.) See *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* volume 2 p.339-341 for more information on this.

**Conclusion:** It is hard to swim against the tide, when this skeptical theory drowns in a sea of facts. Thus, archaeology today indicates that the Biblical record shows the trustworthiness of the Bible. Since the Bible is accurate on representing so many little details, maybe we should consider it accurate on what it represents itself to be: God’s communication to us.

Other sources of interesting archaeological information on the Israelites in Egypt are: *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* by Ralph O. Muncaster, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* by Gleason Archer (Zondervan), *Evidence for Faith* by John Warwick Montgomery, *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* by Douglas, J.D. and Merrill C. Tenney, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.53, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* by Josh McDowell, and The *Biblical Archaeology Review*.

See also an interesting video on the dating of the Exodus: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JusQxiTXnE>.

**Q: In Ex 1:8-10, is it true that “it is well established that the Egyptians built all their own cities and monuments”, as an atheist (Capella) asserted?**

A: Not at all. See the previous question for the answer.

**Q: In Ex 1:8-10, why did God let His people be oppressed?**

A: God sometimes let’s His people be oppressed for a variety of reasons: discipline (Judges), winnowing out those who did not want to follow, such as the exile, etc. But in this case, while the Bible does not explicitly say, we can speculate.

Imagine that the people were well-paid masons who were treated well, when Moses came on the scene saying God would deliver them. Why would they want to follow Moses, if Pharaoh had been so friendly to them? Even though freedom in the promised land would be better, many of them would not want to leave comfort. Imagine as some of them, as they packed up to leave, wondering how they could survive a rough life in the desert, when they had only know a life of comfort. Imagine them having to trust God for their very water and food, when there was none in the desert, when they had been so comfortable they did not have to trust God for anything. Thus, we can see at least some reasons why God allowed them to have these hardships.

Even so, some people still complained in the wilderness, some wanted to go back to Egypt, and some challenged Moses’ authority.

We may not like to hear this, but sometimes God has to make us uncomfortable before we will get up, move, and do what God wants us to do.

**Q: In Ex 1:11 what do we know outside of the Bible about Egyptian slavemasters?**

A: The Egyptian term *ser* is on a wall painting on the Theban tomb of Rekhmire, who was the overseer of brickmaking for Thutmose III. The mural shows slavemasters with heavy whips. The Egyptian hieroglyph is interesting: the head and neck of a giraffe. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.304 for more info.

A wall painting at Abd-el-Gurnah shows the building of Amon’s temple at Karnak with slaves who look Semitic. A slave-driver is over them with this inscription: “The task-master says to his laborers, the rod is in my hand; be not idle.” Curiously, in Exodus 5:17 the Israelites are specifically accused of “being idle.” See *The Christian News* December 21, 1998 p.7 for more info on this.

**Q: In Ex 1:11 (KJV), did the Israelites build “treasure cities”?**

A: This King James expression is better translated “supply cities” (NKJV), or “store cities” (NIV). The “treasure” was grain and other food, not gold and silver. The supply cities were in the east of Egypt to better supply Egyptian troops going on expeditions in Palestine and Syria.

**Q: In Ex 1:11, where were the two cities of Pithom and Rameses located?**

A: Pithom (house of [the god] Atum), is on the wadi Tumilat just east of the Nile Delta. It is either the ruin at Tell er-Rababeh or else Tell el-Maskhuta 8-9 miles east. At Tell el-Maskhuta bricks have been found made without straw. The Septuagint adds that this is the same as the city of “On” or Heliopolis.

It used to be thought that the city of Rameses was located at Tanis/Zoan. However, now it is thought to be near Qantir according to Hans Goedicke in the *Biblical Archaeologist Review* vol.7 (Sept-Oct 1981). There are evidence of Syro-Palestiniate remains from 1700-1500 B.C.

See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.289,304, *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.793, and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1348 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 1:11, where did the term “Pharaoh” originate?**

A: The meaning of words sometimes changes over time. From 2,500 to 2,000 B.C. “Pharaoh” originally mean “great house” (palace) but it gradually came to mean the king of Egypt who lived in there. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.288-289 and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1323-1325 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 1:15, how could two Hebrew midwives take care of so many Hebrew births?**

A: They obviously did not attend to every birth, but supervised others. Overseers for different crafts regulated Egyptian society. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.306, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.109-110, and *When Critics Ask* p.63 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 1:15-19, is there any evidence apart from the Bible of the names Shiphrah and Puah?**

A: I am not aware of any evidence of the name Puah. But an Egyptian Papyrus in the Brooklyn Museum (35.1446), written approximately 1540 B.C., mentions a Shiphrah. This Shiphrah lived over a century before the Shiphrah mentioned in Exodus.

**Q: In Ex 1:16-19, how could God bless the Hebrew midwives Shiphrah and Puah for lying to Pharaoh?**

A: Christians differ on the answer.

**1.** Many say that God blessed their faith in standing for right, and forgave their lying to do so. Also, the Ten Commandments were not given yet.

**2.** Others say believers should not tell the truth in life and death situations to evil people who do not deserve it.

**3.** Shiphrah and Puah could not personally deliver all those babies: they more likely oversaw an “army” of midwives that did the work. The midwives under them might have lied or deliberately come late. *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.49-50 gives this answer.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.137, *When Critics Ask* p.63-64, and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.109-110 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 1:16, was it not unreasonable for Pharaoh to want to kill Israelites, since they made good slaves?**

A: There were probably about 4.1 million Egyptians (+/- a million). Given that the Israelite birthrate was higher than the Egyptians, their population might have been around 2 million, Pharaoh became alarmed.

As a side note, while Pharaoh said to kill all the Hebrew baby boys, God ironically had one grow up in his own home.

**Q: In Ex 1:16, why did Pharaoh want to kill the Hebrew boys instead of girls during the time when Moses was born? You would think it would be the other way around since men/boys born previously could get several women pregnant during the same period causing greater increase in the population. Or why did he not kill both sexes?**

A: Scripture does not say why Pharaoh made this choice. However, we can see a number of possible reasons.  
1) The Egyptians might be afraid that the boys could grow up to be soldiers and rebel. The Egyptians would not fear women so much.

2) Girls would still be quite useful workers, as Egypt was a major exporter of cloth, and they could be weavers.

3) Girls could be wives or concubines for Egyptian men and have babies that were raised Egyptian.

**Q: In Ex 1:16, why was Moses in danger of being killed by Pharaoh, since his older brother Aaron apparently was in no such danger?**

A: According to Walter Kaiser in *A History of Israel* p.89, if Moses was born in 1526 (80 years prior to the Exodus), he would have been born in the first year of the reign of Thutmose I (1526-1512 B.C.), and he was apparently the Pharaoh who made that decree.

As a side note, the Pharaoh who wanted to kill Moses after killing the Egyptian was probably Thutmose III (1504-1450 B.C.). No other Pharaoh lived long enough, and either the account in Exodus is accurate, or one would have to say it was a “great coincidence” that the only Pharaoh who lived long enough just happened to reign at the right time to fit.

**Q: In Ex 1:17, are believers supposed to fear God?**

A: Yes. See the second part of the answer for Exodus 9:30.

**Q: In Ex 2:1, how similar is the story of Moses in the basket similar to Sargon’s story?**

A: Sargon of Akkad (c.2355-2279 B.C.) according to legend was placed in a basket of rushes coated with pitch and set on a river. Akki the gardener rescued him and raised him as a son. However, Moses’ mother did so because of a law of the king, and she did not abandon him, but sent Miriam to watch after him. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.308-309 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 2:2,3 what is unusual about the Hebrew words here?**

A: In Exodus 2:2 the adjective in a “fine/healthy child” is the same Hebrew word for “good” found in Genesis 1. In Exodus 2:3 the Hebrew word for “basket” is the same word used for Noah’s ark. The Hebrew word for “reeds” (without vowels) is the same word as the Red/Reed Sea Moses and the Israelites crossed.

**Q: In Ex 2:3, if God loved Moses, why did He allow Moses to be in such great danger from drowning, exposure, and crocodiles?**

A: God sees all, and it is certain that He does not see some things the way we do. God Almighty was powerful enough to ensure that Moses was safe. Even if we are in the midst of the most horrendous flood, the safest place to be is in the center of God’s will.

I am sure that experience reinforced to Moses that he was saved for a special mission. Others could see that as God could preserve Moses, God could preserve them also.

**Q: In Ex 2:5, why would Pharaoh’s daughter want to bathe in the Nile, and what about the crocodiles?**

A: Today crocodiles are not found north of Aswan, but in ancient times they were as far north as Memphis. The princess would want to bathe in the Delta region in the north (where the Hebrews lived), to be free of crocodiles. It is likely Pharaoh’s daughter would bathe in a small tributary, not necessary the main stream of the Nile. Also, this bathing was more likely for ritual purification than just to get clean. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.309 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 2:7-10, do we know anything outside of the Bible about Pharaoh’s daughter?**

A: Possibly, because this might have been Queen Hatshepsut. might. Moses was 80 when the Exodus began, and it began around 1447 B.C., plus or minus 4 to 5 years. That would make Pharaoh Thutmose III (1490-1145 B.C. the one who oppressed the Israelites. The wanderings of the Exodus occurred mainly under his son, Amenhotep II (c.1445-1425 B.C.). By the way, in the Dream Stela of Amenhotep II the Sphinx appears to him in a dream, saying that he would be the next Pharaoh, despite him not being the first born. Anyway, 80 years before 1447 B.C. is 1527 B.C. Queen Hatshepsut, daughter of Pharaoh Thutmose I, ruled as regent while Thutmose III was still a child from (1504-1482 B.C.) So, it is not certain that Pharaoh’s daughter here was queen Hatshepsut, since the Pharaoh undoubtedly had other daughters too, but it could be. But if it was here, she was briefly the second most powerful person in Egypt for a time.

See *The Christian News* December 21, 1998 p.7 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 2:10, is the name Moses Egyptian or Hebrew?**

A: The name Moses is unusual because it is both. In Hebrew the name *Moseheh* comes from *masah*, meaning “to draw out.” In Egyptian the verb *ms/mes*, meaning “drawn out, born”, or “(such and such a god) is born”. Grammatically it is the Egyptian old perfective form according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* p.310. *ms* is a common ending in Ptahmose, Thutmose, Ahmose, and Ramose. *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* says the Egyptian name *ms’* can mean “a child or son”. See *The New International Bible Commentary* p.672 and *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.309 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 2:14,15 how did Moses leave Egypt fearing the king’s anger, since in Heb 11:27 Moses left Egypt not fearing the King’s anger?**

A: In Exodus 2:14,15, when he was 40, Moses left Egypt the first time fearing the king’s anger. In Exodus 13-14, when he was 80, Moses left Egypt the second time not fearing the king’s anger, and Hebrews 11:27 describes the second time. Moses went back a second time to face his fear, but this time He knew he had a mission to fulfill, and that God would protect him.

For us, if we run away in fear from a trial of our faith, sometimes God has us go back later and face the same kind of trial.

**Q: In Ex 2:18, how come Moses’ father-in-law was named Reul, since he was Jethro in Ex 3:1 and 4:18?**

A: My own father-in-law had two unrelated names (in Chinese and English), so I do not think this is unusual. This was probably not thought unusual by Abram/Abraham, Sarai/Sara, Jacob/Israel, Ben-Oni/Benjamin, Zaphenath-Paneah/Joseph, Hoshea/Joshua, Gideon/Jerubbaal, Ammiel/Eliam, Bathsheba/Bath-shua, Azariah/Uzziah, Abijam/Abijah, Jehoahaz son of Josiah/Shallum, Eliakim/Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin/Jeconiah/Coniah, Zedekiah/Mattaniah, Hananiah/Shadrach, Mishael/Meshach, Azariah/Abednego, Daniel/Belteshazzar, Simon/Peter, Joseph/Barnabas, Silas/Silvanus, and Saul/Paul.

People often had different names in different languages, and apparently later acquiring another name in the same language was rather common, too as Gideon/Jerubbaal and Hoshea/Joshua could tell you. One speculation is that this is more common in cultures that do not have surnames. In this case, Walter Kaiser in *A History of Israel* p.92, referring to the *Ugaritic Textbook* by Cyrus H. Gordon (1965), says the name Jethro (as well as Hobab) are found in the Ugaritic language. Re’u’el means “friend or shepherd of God”.

In other cultures, multiple names were also common. In Egypt, Osiris, Wennofer, and Khent-amentiu were all the names of the same idol. Sebek-khu and Djaa were the same person. In Mesopotamia, Ahiqar is the same person as Aba’enlil-dari, and Tiglath-Pileser is Pul. The Lipit-Ishtar laws call the same god Enlil and Nunamnir, and Hammurapi’s Law have Inana/Ishtar/Telitum and Nintu/Mama. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.313 says that dual names for the same person are well known from South Arabic sources too. In addition to providing these examples, Kenneth Kitchen in *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (IVP 1966) p.121-124, mentions that double names were common in Canaan, Old South Arabia, the Hurrians, and the Hittites.

Josephus had an alternate explanation. He speculated that Reuel was his name, and Jethro was his title.

See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.313 for more info, and *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.339-340,323 for a different treatment of this question.

**Q: In Ex 2:20, how do you pronounce the name “Zipporah”, Moses’ wife?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* pronounces it as ZIP-or-a with the “o” as the only long vowel and the accent on the second syllable. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* has the accent on the first syllable and no long vowels.

**Q: In Ex 2:21-22, why should we look up to Moses, who [allegedly] had an illegitimate child?**

A: Scripture never said Moses had an illegitimate child. When Exodus 2:21 says that Reul gave Moses Zipporah his daughter, he gave her to Moses as his wife. As proof of this, Exodus 4:20 calls Zipporah his wife, and Exodus 4:25, Zipporah his wife mentions Moses as her “bridegroom of blood”.

It is interesting study in psychology though, to see the extent some people will read things into scripture (such as Exodus 2:21-22), while ignoring related scriptures (Exodus 4:20,25) in order to try to find some accusation against God and His Bible.

**Q: In Ex 2:23-25, why did God wait until Moses was 80 years old before delivering the Israelites?**

A: Scripture does not say, but we can find in scripture hints of some possible reasons.

Moses was apparently strong physically to kill an Egyptian (Exodus 2:12) and drive away multiple shepherds (Exodus 2:17). Perhaps he was impulsive to suddenly take matters into his own hands and kill the Egyptian in Exodus 2:11-12. Perhaps Moses had some things to learn first about waiting on God’s leading and doing God’s will God’s way instead of his own way.

Moses was 80 years old when God called to him out of the burning bush. Perhaps after 40 years of living in the remote desert, he was better at relying on God’s power.

Exodus 2:23 says that the king of Egypt (same as the Pharaoh) died. Since the Pharaoh died who tried to kill Moses in Exodus 2:15, Moses could go before the court again.

Throughout their captivity, the Bible never says the Hebrews cried out for help to God, until Exodus 2:23-24. Then and only then was when God brought Moses on stage again. This may sound elementary, but if you have a problem, know you have a problem and need God’s help, why would you be reluctant to cry out to God?

**Q: In Ex 3:2, why did the angel of the LORD appear in a burning bush?**

A: While Scripture does not say, the burning bush gives us some things to ponder.

God’s miracle of a bush on fire that did not burn up would have attracted Moses from a distance. In future times, God miraculous working in the Exodus would be like a light shining through the centuries attracting people to God too. When we share the message of God to others, make sure we let them see the light of God’s character and works, and not just our own, puny, man-made fires.

Fire in the desert can be a dangerous thing, if you have to travel many miles to get water to put it out. Sand does not work as well. Nevertheless that bush was safe and not burned up. The people of Israel were in perilous situations with the Egyptians wanting to kill the baby boys, and later in the wilderness. Yet in obedience to God they could be kept safe.

On the other hand, they were not all safe in the wilderness. When some disobeyed, some were struck with plague, killed by fire, or swallowed up by the earth. Do not fall for the lie that “God is safe”. God is not safe, but God is good. Let us turn to God in faith and obedience, that by His grace we see the kind, merciful side of God, not the stern, wrathful side.

**Q: In Ex 3:2, who exactly was the angel of the LORD in the burning bush?**

A: The word “angel” can mean messenger. There are three possibilities, and let’s examine them all.

**A good angelic being created by God:** Exodus 3:2 says the “angel of the LORD”. However, if it was simply an angel, why would Moses have to take off his shoes, because that was holy ground in Exodus 3:6?

**God (Either the Trinity or the Father):** The Being said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” By the way, an appearance of God in the Old Testament is called a theophany.

**Jesus Christ:** The early church understood this as an appearance of Jesus, the Word of God, prior to His incarnation on earth. Jesus could say, “I am the God…” and Jesus could also be the messenger, or Word of God the Father. By the way, an appearance specifically of God the Son in the Old Testament is called a Christophany.

Early church writers who said it was Jesus include *First Apology of* ***Justin Martyr*** ch.63 p.184 (c.150 A.D.), **Irenaeus** (182-188 A.D.) ***Irenaeus*** *Against Heresies* book 4 ch.29.2 p.502 (182-188 A.D.), **Clement Of Alexandria** *Exhortation to the Heathen* ch.1 p.173 **(**193-217/220 A.D.), and **Tertullian** *An Answer to the Jews* ch.8 p.163 (198-220 A.D.).

**Q: In Ex 3:8 and Gen 23, how could Hittites be in Palestine in the time of Moses and Joshua?**

A: The Hittites were a wide-ranging people, and a colony settled in the mountains of Palestine. The Indo-European Hittites sacked Babylon in 1590 B.C. Others believe this refers to the Hatti, a non-Indo-European people who were conquered before 2000 B.C. Hatti and Hitti are written the same in Hebrew. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.96-98 and *When Critics Ask* p.52-53 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 3:8,17 and Josh 25:6, why is Canaan called the land of milk and honey?**

A: To the pastoral Israelites, it was a land of lush hills and valleys for raising well-fed livestock and flowers for bees.

**Q: In Ex 3:10 and Ex 6:10-13, was Moses called by God in Midian, or Egypt?**

A: Moses was first called by God in Midian. Moses began to have doubts after he returned to Egypt though, and God reconfirmed Moses’ call in Egypt. Sometimes today, people need reconfirmation of what they know is true, too. See *When Critics Ask* p.69 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.377 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 3:10-4:17 why did Moses need a call, and why do we?**

A: Before Moses put his life on the line, God confirmed to Moses that He would be doing His will. When other Israelites questioned who Moses was, that he would tell them what was right, the signs of Moses would persuade them that he was genuinely called. When Moses felt the heat of Pharaoh’s anger and the demonic miracles of Pharaoh’s magicians, Moses need to know for sure that He was right where He was supposed to be.

Sometimes Christians are asked, “why do you think you have a corner on the truth”, or who called you to tell others they would be going to Hell if they rejected Christ the Son of God? If we had no call, and no message from God, they might have a point. But all Christians have a general call, given by Jesus Himself in Matthew 28:18-20. Paul echoes that call in 2 Timothy 4:1-2. We all are to shine like stars in the universe as we hold out the word of life in Philippians 2:15-16 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20. When people question your credentials, it is not that they have a problem with your authority, though they might make it sound like it. Rather, their disagreement is with the words and exclusive claims of Christ. Sometimes our job is not just to persuade people, but to show that there is a difference between what they comfortably believe and what Jesus said. Once they see that difference, then they have a choice to make on whom they will follow.

Some Christians have been given a specific call, to go to a particular ministry, church, or people group. Not every Christian feels a specific call, and not every Christian has the same specific call. It is easy to imagine that your call is to the most important aspect of ministry, and different calls are not as important, but 1 Corinthians 12 shows that to be wrong. Regardless of whether or not you believe you have a specific call though, all of us are responsible to obey the general calls to all believers in the Bible, to share the word, love others, and live lives glorifying God.

**Q: In Ex 3:18, was Moses deceptive when He asked Pharaoh to let them take a three-day journey to offer sacrifices?**

A: No. Six points to consider, and then a probable reason why.

**1.** God said He would eventually take the Israelites out permanently (Exodus 3:17), and in due course, God did.

**2.** It was God’s command, not Moses’ own initiative, that at this time Moses only ask Pharaoh for the three-day journey, instead of permission to leave Egypt. (Exodus 3:18)

**3.** God knew for certain, and told Moses, that Pharaoh would not even grant this lesser request. (Exodus 3:19)

**4.** Hypothetically speaking, if Pharaoh had granted this request, there is no indication that Moses would have deceived Pharaoh and not returned.

**5.** Of course, if they had gone and returned to Egypt, that does not prevent them from later asking to leave permanently.

**6.** Being silent on a matter is not lying. Specifically, asking for a lesser request, and being silent about a larger request you will ask later is not lying.

Why would God have Moses initially only ask this lesser request? It was likely not deception but graciousness. God gave Pharaoh and the Egyptians the chance to first agree to a lesser request and gradually get used to the idea of letting the Israelites go. However, at the same time God gave the opportunity, God already knew, with certainty, the result of Pharaoh’s free agency. Today, God offers the wonderful opportunity of salvation to all, but God already knows the results of everyone’s free agency. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.138-139 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.51 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 3:22 and Ex 12:33-36, how could God tell the Israelites to ask things from the Egyptians?**

A: The Hebrew word *sa’al* is “ask” not “borrow”. Three points to consider in the answer.

**1. No deception:** The Egyptians knew the Israelites were leaving and keeping the items: Exodus 12:31-6. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.324 says the Hebrew word for plunder, *nissaltem,* specifically does not suggest stealing, fraud, or deception. It also says that “loaned/borrowed” is frequently thought due to the influence of bad translations in a day when Hebrew was unknown or, as it is now, due to rationalistic prejudice.”

**2. No coercion:** The Egyptians were favorably disposed toward them and were urging them to leave in Exodus 12:33-36.

**3. No injustice:** The items were small compensation for infanticide and 400 years of slavery. This third concept, as well as the first two indirectly), were expressed by Tertullian in *Five Books Against Marcion* book 2 chapter 21 p.313-314 (207/208 A.D.). This answer is also in Irenaeus (182-188 A.D.) in *Against Heresies* book 5 chapter 30 verse 2.

**Summary:** The Israelites made an open request, and the Egyptians, by now sympathized with them, and granted their request.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.143-144, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.110-111, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.208-209, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.50, and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.300-302 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 3:22 and Ex 12:33-36, how could God [allegedly] teach the Israelites to be dishonest and steal? (an atheist asked this)**

A: Have you ever asked to have something? If so, does that make you a thief? - Of course not, that is silly. Likewise:

**1.** The Egyptians knew the Israelites were leaving. In fact, the Egyptians were asking the Israelites to hurry and leave in Exodus 12:33.

**2.** The Israelites asked the Egyptians for those things (Exodus 12:35-36)

**3.** The Egyptians were favorably disposed toward the Israelites and gave (not loaned) them those things. (Exodus 3:22; 21:36).

As mentioned in the previous answer, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.324 says the Hebrew word for plunder, *nissaltem,* specifically does not suggest stealing, fraud, or deception.

**Q: In Ex 4, what can we learn from Moses’ response to God’s call?**

A: God first showed Moses His wondrous power (Ex 3:2), then patience to work through Moses’ faithless excuses (Ex 4:1-13), and finally His anger burned against Moses. We have a responsibility to obey God’s call, and not disobey through fear, rebelliousness, or belief in our own inadequacy. Hopefully you do not get to the point of getting God angry before you listen to His call.

When Moses said he was inadequate, we can see two truths and a faithless lie.

1. Moses told the factual truths that people would be unlikely to want to believe an unknown outsider, and that he was slow of speech.

2. Moses truthfully knew that in his natural self he was not up to successfully achieving the task.

3. Moses believed a faithless lie, that God was not great enough to work His will through Moses’ inadequacy. I pray that if you have this lie in your heart that you would uncover it, confess this sin to God, and decide to believe the greatness of God is greater than even your worst weaknesses.

**Q: In Ex 4:3-5, how can a lifeless rod become a snake?**

A: This is no mere optical illusion, for in Exodus 7:12 the snake could swallow. God is greater than natural physical and biological laws, not the other way around. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.113 and *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.113 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 4:11, does God not only allow, but also make people mute, deaf, and blind?**

A: Like it or not, God consciously permits every evil and handicap that occurs. In addition, many times God has a special purpose for making people a certain way. So many mighty miracles were done through Moses, yet God choose both to make him with a speech impediment (Exodus 4:10-13, 6:12,30) and not to remove it. Likewise, so many miracles were done through Paul, yet in 2 Corinthians 12:7-9, God chose not to remove Paul’s thorn.

**Q: In Ex 4:18, why was the name “Jethro” spelled different ways?**

A: Many languages, including Arabic, have a different ending for a noun depending on how it is used in the sentence. The name Jethro was transliterated into Hebrew in one place with one ending, and a different place with another ending. This was also done with Geshem/Gashmu the Arab in Nehemiah 2:19; 6:1-2,6. What is especially interesting about Exodus 4:18 is that both endings are present in the same verse. Apparently, the writers were not too picky about creating consistent spellings of names, and we should not be either. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.333 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 4:18, why did Moses say he wanted to go to Egypt “to see if they were still there?”**

A: Whether his reasons were right or wrong, Moses chose to be vague and hide his main reason to return to Egypt. The Bible does not defend Moses’ secretiveness, it only records it.

**Q: In Ex 4:22, how was Israel God’s firstborn?**

A: A firstborn had special rights, privileges, and responsibilities. Israel was God’s chosen people, through Him God’s word would spread throughout the earth. Israel had the following privileges:

Adopted as sons (Romans 9:4)

Entrusted with the very words of God (Romans 3:2), the receiving of the law (Romans 9:4)

The patriarchs (Romans 9:5)

The human ancestry of Christ (Romans 9:5).

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.52 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 4:24, why did God almost kill Moses?**

A: Four points to consider in the answer:

**Situation:** While God knew Moses would not die, things appeared desperate to Moses and Zipporah.

**Cause:** It does not say how Moses was near death, perhaps by disease, but they knew God not only allowed this, but deliberately caused this.

**Discipline:** Zipporah and Moses had not followed in the covenant of circumcision with Abraham, and God disciplined them until they did or Moses was brought near death.

**Warning:** As Moses discovered, nobody can become so great, they do not have to obey God anymore.

See also *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.139-140, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.111, *When Critics Ask* p.66-67, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.52 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 4:25 (KJV), what does a “bloody husband” mean?**

A: This is better translated “a bridegroom of blood”. *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.52 sees that perhaps Moses did not circumcise his son due to opposition from his wife Zipporah, and it was finally Zipporah who circumcised him.

**Q: In Ex 4:30, should people believe because of signs?**

A: People should not believe in God just because of signs. Signs have a proper place in confirming belief in God’s messengers. These signs did not serve to prove the existence of God to these people; rather, the signs served to verify that Moses was from the Living God.

**Q: In Ex 4:31 and Ex 6:9, did the people believe Moses, or not?**

A: They initially believed in Moses in Exodus 4:31, but they later had doubts in Exodus 6:9 after Pharaoh increased their workload. See *When Critics Ask* p.69 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.344 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 5:2, who was the Pharaoh of Egypt and when was the Exodus?**

A: The Pharaoh who died here was probably Thutmose III. His chief queen was Hatshepsut Meritre (different from his mother, the famous Hatshepsut). The Exodus took place around 1446/1445 B.C. The reason for this 1446/1445 date is 1 Kings 6:1, which says that Solomon began to construct the Temple 480 years after Israelites came out of Egypt, and archaeologists are confident this would be 966 B.C..

As a side note, the historian Eusebius of Caesarea (318-339/340 A.D.) says the name of the Pharaoh’s daughter who drew Moses out of the water was Merris in *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.27. Josephus says Thermuthis in *Antiquities of the Jews* 2 224 (9.5), and the Book of Jubilees 47:5 says her name was Tharmuth. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.310 for more info.

This would be under either Thutmose III, or more probably, under Pharaoh Amenhotep II (1450/20-1401/1385 B.C.). His chief queen was named Tia. Other Christians used to think the Exodus took place much later under Rameses II (1290-1224 B.C.). The 1446/1445 B.C. date fits because:

**1.** 1 Kings 6:1 says 480 years before Solomon’s Temple.

**2.** Under Amenhotep II, Semites were forced to make bricks.

**3.** Dream Stela of Thutmose IV. See the discussion on Exodus 12:29.

**4.** Judges 11:26 says 300 years before Jephthah.

**5.** Hazor was not inhabited after 13th century.

**6.** Tell el-Amarna tablets 1400-1370 B.C. mention the feared “Habiru” or “Abiru” running amok. It mentions that the cities of Arad, Gezer, Ashkelon, and Lachish were already captured.

**7.** Clement of Alexandria, in *The Stromata* (193-202 A.D.) book 1 ch.2, mentions 450 years from the time of Joshua to David.

**8.** The name Rameses was used before the 13th century. See *CHRONOLOGICAL AND BACKGROUND CHARTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT* p.29-30 and *When Critics Ask* p.67-68. Ramose was the name of a nobleman in the time of Amenhotep III, according to *Inerrancy* p.64. See also *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.53 for more info.

The skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.327 says, “To have the Exodus take place then (1449 B.C.) is unthinkable.” However, carbon-14 dating has dated the destruction of Jericho at about 1410 B.C.. The reigning Pharaoh 40 years before that would be Thutmose III.

**Q: In Ex 5:2, was this the same Pharaoh as the one in Ex 15?**

A: According to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.115-116, it was not the same one. The Pharaoh of Exodus 1, probably Thutmose III, wanted to either exterminate or reduce the population of the Israelites. The Pharaoh of the Exodus, probably Amenhotep II 1450/1420-1401/1385, focused on using them as slaves. Remember, there was an 80-year gap between Exodus 1 and Exodus 5.

**Q: In Ex 5:3, Ex 8:26-27, and Ex 10:26, was Moses just making up reasons to have to leave?**

A: Scripture does not say whether God told Moses to give Pharaoh these reasons for leaving, or if Moses said them on his own initiative. If it were the latter, note that scripture is silent on whether Moses said everything correctly.

**Q: In Ex 5:6, why did they use straw to make bricks?**

A: Straw gave the bricks more tensile strength, because the clay clinging to the straw would be less likely to apart.

Q: In Ex 5:6-7, how did the Israelites cope with having to gather their own straw?

A: First you must understand that straw was important to make strong bricks, because it acted as a binder to reduce bricks just crumbling away. Also while bricks were more common in Mesopotamia than in Egypt, some cities of Egypt such as Pithom were built with brick. The tomb of an Egyptian noble named Rekhmere / Rek-mi-Re at Thebes in the 15th Century B.C. has a painting of slaves making bricks. A picture of this is in *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.174.

The ruins at Pithom show bricks with straw at the lowest level, bricks with only stubble at the intermediate level, and bricks with no fibrous material at the top level. Bricks varied from 13 by 13 by 3.5 inches (33 by 33 by 9 cm) to 16 by 8 by 6 inches (41 by 20 by 15 cm).

See also *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.30, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.274-275, the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.458-459 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.52-53 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 6:1, why was God’s mighty hand specifically mentioned here?**

A: *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.341-342 has an interesting speculation here. At this time, Egyptian Pharaohs routinely used the term “possessor of [mighty] arm” as a part of their titles. Exodus 6:1 emphasized that their proud arms were nothing compared to God’s arm.

**Q: In Ex 6:3 and other passages, what are some of the problems with the JEPD theory?**

A: The JEPD theory was first thought up in the nineteenth century prior to scholars being able to prove common people could write in the time of Moses. It says the first five (or sometimes six) books of the Bible were edited together from four previous sources, called J (for Jehovah), E (for Elohim), P (for Priestly), and D (for Deuteronomy).

There are many problems with the JEPD theory, but here are two.

**1.** Liberal scholars disagree on which verses belong to J, E, P, and D.

**2.** This theory hinges on use of different names for God in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. But other works do the same thing. In the book of Hebrews, Jesus and Christ are not mentioned in chapter 1, only “Son”. Christ and Jesus are mentioned frequently after that though. Yet I have never heard of anyone doubting the unity of the book of Hebrews. The Book of Jonah only uses the divine name, except when the sailors are speaking up through Jonah 3:4. After that the narrative uses *Elohim* to refer to the True God also.

**3.** Many verses must be split in the middle. According to *Evidence that Demands a Verdict volume II* p.134, the *Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary* on the Bible version of the JEPD theory splits the following verses into two or more sources.

Gen 2:4; 7:16,17; 8:2,3,13; 10:1; 12:4; 13:11,12; 16:1; 19:30; 21:1,2,6; 25:11,26; 31:18; 32:13; 33:18; 35:22; 37:25,28; 41:46; 42:28; 45:1,5; 46:1; 47:5,6,27; 48:9,10; 49:1,28

Exodus 1:20; 2:23; 3:4; 4:20; 7:15,17,20,21; 8:15; 9:23,24,35; 10:1,13,15; 12:27; 13:3; 14:9,19,20,21,27; 15:21,22,25; 15:13,15; 17:1,2,7; 19:2,3,9,11,13; 24:12,15,18; 25:18; 31:18; 32:8,34,35; 33:5,19; 34:1,11,14

Numbers 13:17,26; 14:1; 16:1,2,26,27; 20:22.

(Deuteronomy is not mentioned because it is considered entirely “D”.)

Just how many verses would need to be split in the middle by this theory, before this theory is no longer tenable? Ninety-one verses is probably too many.

**Q: Prior to Ex 6:3, why do 197 passages use the name *Yahweh*, since Ex 6:3 says God did not reveal Himself by that name to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?**

A: First what is not the answer, and then the answer.

**a) True facts, which are not a part of the answer.**

**a1.** Since Moses wrote Genesis in his time, not Jacob’s, Moses could use whatever name he wished. For example, people correctly write that Columbus arrived in the Americas, even though Columbus did not know the name “America.” See *When Critics Ask* p.68-69 for more info. This alone explains all but 53 places, which are direct quotes or similar.

**a2.** Comparison of the Septuagint and Masoretic text shows scribes were somewhat free in changing names for God. Julius Wellhausen said this was the biggest weakness of his own documentary hypothesis.

**a3.** God’s name was known to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but God was not primarily known as Yahweh. God was revealing a meaning to Moses that God did not reveal to the three men before him.

b) The answer is within Exodus 6:3 itself.

**b1.** Exodus 6:3 does not say revealed “before Moses’ time”. It only says, “to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”.

(This eliminates 5 of the 53 passages.)

**b2.** Exodus does not say they were unaware of God’s divine name. It only says, “I appeared … but by my name Yahweh I never made myself known to them.” While God spoke or appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at least (8, 1, 6) 15 times, God never appeared to these men in a special way associated with His divine name as God appeared to Moses. In fact, when Jacob asked for a name after wrestling in Genesis 32:29, Jacob pointedly was not answered.

See also the next question and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.421 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 6:3, since God did not personally revealed Himself as Yahweh to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, what about where God called Himself Yahweh in the following? Gen 15:7 “I am Yahweh who brought you out of Ur” Gen 18:14 “Is anything too hard for Yahweh?” Gen 28:13 “I am Yahweh, the God of your father…”**

A: These are probably later scribal changes. In all three cases in the Greek Septuagint, the word God (*theos*) is used, not the Greek word for “I Am” in Exodus 3:14 (o Ωv), or the Greek word in Exodus 6:3 (*kurios*). See also the previous question.

**Q: In Ex 6:16-20, how could the Israelites be in Egypt for 430 years, since there were only three generations mentioned between Levi and Moses?**

A: There were more than three generations, as genealogies often had gaps, since child also means descendant, and father also means ancestor. See *When Critics Ask* p.69-70, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.140-142, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.111-112, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.53-54 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 6:20, why did Amram marry Jochebed his aunt, since this is forbidden in Leviticus 18:11?**

A: Two points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Leviticus was not written yet, so they could not be held accountable for a future law.

**2.** Also, the Bible is not condoning this, but honestly reporting what happened.

**Q: In Ex 6:20, were Jochebed and Amram, Levi’s grandson, Moses’ parents?**

A: Not necessarily, since son can mean descendant, and Jochebed was not mentioned by name in Exodus 2:1-9. Since Kohath had 8,600 male descendants in Moses time (Numbers 3:28), it is unlikely Amram, Kohath’s son, was Amram, Moses’ father. See *When Critics Ask* p.69-70, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.111, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.117, 247, and *The NIV Study Bible* p.94, for the same explanation.

**Q: In Ex 6:26-27, did Moses write this book, since it was written about Moses in third person?**

A: There is no reason to doubt that Moses wrote this. Writing in the third person was not unusual in ancient literature. Other examples include the following:

1. Julius Caesar writing *Gallic Wars*.

2. Julius Caesar writing *Civil Wars*.

3. Xenophon writing *Anabasis*.

4. Josephus writing *Wars of the Jews*.

5. The apostle John writing the Gospel of John.

See the *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.112-113 and *When Critics Ask* p.70-71 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 7-11, why did God send the plagues on the Egyptians first, instead of just influencing the Egyptians to let them go?**

A: Exodus 9:16 (and Romans 9:17) say that God did this to show His power and that His name would be proclaimed throughout the earth. Six points to consider.

a) God is sovereign and has the “right” to choose whatever means He wishes.

b) God was not unjust towards the Egyptians, who had 400 years of the “cultural norm” of enslaving the Hebrews.

c) Many times people under a leader suffer the consequences of the decisions of their leaders.

d) God gave them the opportunity to choose to let their slaves go. However, they choose economic advantages of enslaving others over treating others how they would want to be treated.

e) This was a judgment not just on Egypt, but on the Egyptian gods. It showed both that those gods were false, and that He was the only True God with power.

f) God’s name was glorified over all the earth. In fact, Egyptians today look to Moses as a hero and prophet of God.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.54 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 7:1, how could Moses be as God to Pharaoh?**

A: This simile does not say Moses was divine, but all communication and interaction Pharaoh had with the true God would be through Moses, assisted by Aaron as a prophet. See also 2 Corinthians 3:20, where we are epistles (letters) from God to others. As one lady said, “we may be the only Bibles some people ever read.”

**Q: In Ex 7:11,22 and Ex 8:7, how could Pharaoh’s magicians display magic power?**

A: As a side note, a magic trick done today, that uses three cups covering balls, was practiced in ancient Egypt. While people can fool others with clever, non-supernatural tricks, Satan has miraculous power as 2 Thessalonians 2:9 and Revelation 13:13 show. These magicians likely were doing things through Satan’s power. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.113, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.102-104, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.142, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.54 for more info. See *When Cultists Ask* p.31-32 and *When Critics Ask* p.71-72 for more info and an informative chart comparing divine miracles with Satanic signs.

**Q: In Ex 7:17-22, how could water turn to blood?**

A: While the Egyptians likely were familiar with red sediment from Ethiopia, red dirt would not affect the water in jars and stone buckets. There are two views. Since nothing is impossible with God, it is pointless to ask which way God “had” to do it. Rather, you might ask which view has the best supporting evidence for how God chose to do it.

1. The blood is literal blood.

2. The water was red, such as is caused toxic algae that cause the “red tide” seen in various oceans and in the Nile. The algae produce a neurotoxin that kills fish and makes the water undrinkable.

**Q: In Ex 7:19 and Ex 8:16, 24 did the plagues come on “all of” and “throughout” Egypt, or did they bypass Goshen in Ex 8:20,22?**

A: Exodus 9:6 answer this by showing when they said all Egypt, it was implied that Goshen was excluded. See *When Critics Ask* p.72-73 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 7:20, how could the magicians turn some water to blood, since Moses had turned the water in the river to blood already?**

A: Exodus 7:20 only says the water in the river before Pharaoh was seen to turn to blood immediately. The other water could have changed a short time later.

Sometimes, when Satan knows God’s timing, he can try to take credit for what God does. See the discussion on Exodus 12:29 or another possible example. See *When Critics Ask* p.73 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.434-435 for a different view, that “all” meant the greater part of the water.

**Q: In Ex 7:22 and Ex 4:21, who hardened Pharaoh’s heart?**

A: Pharaoh was the first to do so, and God hardened it also. These verses say who hardened his heart:

**The Lord will harden:** Exodus 4:21

**Pharaoh hardened his own heart** Exodus 8:15,32; Exodus 9:34; 1 Samuel 6:6.

**It grew hard (i.e. Pharaoh’s heart itself grew hard):** Exodus 7:13-14,22; 8:19; 9:7; 9:35

**The Lord hardened it:** Exodus 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:4-5,17

**In summary,** Christians such as Clement of Rome, writing in *1 Clement* ch.51, p.20 (96-98 A.D.), did not view this as an either or situation, but both were involved.

A similar situation is in Romans 1:21-32, where God gave unbelieving depraved people over to greater depravity. God even hardened Israel’s heart in Isaiah 63:17. *When Critics Ask* p.65 has a good explanation for hardening in general. See also *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.142-143, *Difficulties in the Bible* p.61-66, *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.161-162, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.51-52, and the discussion on Romans 9:18 for more info.

As a side note, God also hardened the hearts of the Canaanites in Joshua 11:20 and Sihon, King of Heshbon in Deuteronomy 2:30/

**Q: In Ex 8:10, why did Pharaoh ask Moses to remove the frogs tomorrow and not today?**

A: Perhaps because the day was late, but even so they could have been removed immediately. This might show the extent to which Pharaoh’s heart was hard. He wanted to be sure the frogs were not already going away by the time he talked with Moses.

**Q: In Ex 8:16-19, what were these “gnats”?**

A: These might have been what we today call “gnats”, which are bothersome but do not bite. Alternately, they might very well have been mosquitoes. People are not sure of the precise meaning of the Hebrew word *kinnim*, because as *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.122, points out, this is the only place in the Bible this word is used.

**Q: In Ex 8:19, Ex 31:18, Dt 9:10, Ps 8:3, and so forth, does God have a finger?**

A: No. This is an anthropomorphic expression to indicate God’s power. As a side note, the linguistic term for using a portion of something to denote the entire thing is a figure of speech called a synecdoche. For more info, see the discussion on Ps 91:4, *When Critics Ask* p.85, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.153-154, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.62. For a similar example in another religion, Islam, the *Bukhari Hadith* vol.9 book 93 ch.26 no.543 p.409 mentions Allah’s finger.

**Q: In Ex 8:19, Ex 31:18, Dt 9:10, Ps 8:3, and so forth, since it was wrong to make any images of God, why does the Bible use anthropomorphisms of God, such as having hands, etc.? (Many years ago John L. MacKenzie said this.)**

A: The difference between the two is the difference between communication and worship. God choose to communicate in ways people could understand, including using poetry, and anthropomorphic expressions, such as “His right hand”.

However, God is very specific about not wanting us to make images or draw pictures for the purposes of worship or veneration of God.

## **Q: In Ex 8:20-32, what kind of flies were these?**

A: There are a couple of theories. According to *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.122-123, these might have been what are called “dog flies” which have painful bites. These might have represented the Egyptian god Re. Alternately, they might be Ichneuman flies, who represented the god Uatchit. The flies might have been attracted to the decaying frogs.

**Q: In Ex 9:4, Ex 11:23, and Ex 12:13, how could the plagues not affect the Israelites as they affected the Egyptians?**

A: God has power to do as He pleases. Also in Exodus 15:26, if the Israelites obeyed Him, God promised they would not have those diseases in the future either, in Exodus 15:26. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.114-115 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 9:6,19-20, since all the cattle and horses died, how did the horses survive in Ex 14:9?**

A: In Exodus 9:6, all refers to either cattle throughout all of Egypt, or all of the cattle in the fields of Egypt, or both. In context, the closeness of Exodus 9:19-20 to Exodus 9:6 makes it obvious the writer did not intend this to be understood as every single animal, inside or outside, but the animals in the field. See *When Critics Ask* p.73-74 and *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.145-146 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 9:6,19-20, what do we know about cattle-raising in Egypt?**

A: Egyptian cattle were usually kept in stables from May through December during the Nile flooding when the pastures were waterlogged. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.357 says it is likely this plague occurred in January, when some cattle were turned out to pasture. Because the flooding left the Delta later than the rest of Egypt, the cattle would have been in the stables later. If the cattle died of hoof and mouth disease because of the decaying frogs, this would mainly affect the cattle that were in the field.

## **Q: In Ex 9:9-10 (KJV), what are “blains”?**

A: This King James Version expression means “boils” or “festering sores”.

**Q: In Ex 9:16; Ex 11:9, did God raise up Pharaoh just to punish him?**

A: No, scripture does not say this. It says God raised up Pharaoh, with his stubborn wickedness, to demonstrate God’s ability to bring the Israelites out of bondage. In addition to using evil to demonstrate to others His power and judgment, God also allows evil the power to advance, for a time, and God judges the fruit that is produced.

**Q: In Ex 9:19 and Ex 9:27, how could Moses travel outside to see Pharaoh during the destructive plague of hail?**

A: Obviously, the hail was not everywhere at all times. Even in a hurricane, it is calm in the eye of the storm. Moses might have gone to Pharaoh during a temporary lull over part of Egypt. Alternately, God might have protected Moses as he went to Pharaoh. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.146-147 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 9:20, Isa 28:5, Ezek 4:9, what kind of food did farmers grow back then?**

A: People’s diet back then was very different from industrialized societies today, with more variety of natural foods. They did not have corn (maize) or potatoes in the Old World, because those came from the Americas. They had wheat and rye as we do today, but they grew significant amounts of other, ancient grains that we only grow as specialties today. For example, einkorn, emmer, and spelt are sometimes called “covered wheats”; they do not thresh as well as wheat. Rye, sorghum, and millet are not a nutritious as wheat, though sorghum and millet are still used in Africa. Kamut grain, which tastes delicious, was also grown. Other ancient grains are amaranth and quinoa. They did not have another grain, triticale, a cross between wheat and rye, because it was first grown in Scotland in 1875. For more info see <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/proceedings1996/V3-156.html#EINKORNOrigin>.

For sweeteners, besides sugar beets in Europe, and sugar cane far away in tropical countries, people basically just had honey. Honey has a large number of different chemicals in it, and every batch of wild honey is a little different because it depends on the flowers the bees visited. Someone once said about honey, that if a new food today had thousands of unknown substances, and had different chemicals in it every time it was made, there would be no way it would get the approval of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration!

**Q: In Ex 9:23, how can there be fire mixed with hail?**

A: Naturally, this happens all the time in severe storms of hail accompanied by lightning and thunder. This probably is what the fire was based on Exodus 9:29. However, God could do it any way He wanted.

**Q: In Ex 9:30, how are people supposed to fear God?**

A: We do not fear God in the same way as one might fear an unjust, wicked person. However, we are to fear God in two ways.

**1.** Unbelievers should fear God’s judgment and wrath.

**2.** Fear also means respect. All should respect God who created us, the One who is the purpose of our existence, and the One who will judge all and grant people eternal life or condemn them to eternal doom in Hell, the cosmic trash dump. Some non-Christians might feel that God fails to conform to what they want a god to be. The real God conforms to His own character, but perhaps He does not even care about conforming to your standards. See also the answer for Exodus 20:20.

**Q: In Ex 10:21-23, how could there be darkness over just Egypt?**

A: God made the light, and He can control it. Whether this was a temporary change in sun, natural law, or a dark cloud, volcanic ash, other obstruction, or none of the above, God can work as He wants.

**Q: In Ex 10:21-33, is there any archaeological evidence for darkness over Egypt?**

A: Maybe. The *Biblical Archaeology Review* January / February 1991 p.50 says,

“An Egyptian text dated after the end of the XVIIIth Dynasty (c.1350 B.C.) describes a calamity as follows:

‘The sun is covered and does not shine to the sight of men. Life is no longer possible when the sun is concealed behind the clouds. Ra [the god] has turned his face from mankind. If only it would shine even for one hour! No one knows when it is midday. One’s shadow is not discernible. The sun in the heavens resembles the moon….’”

This could refer to the darkness over the land, but it would not refer to the eruption of the volcano on the Island of Thera, as that happened about 200 years earlier.

**Q: In Ex 10:29, Moses says he will never appear before Pharaoh again. Yet, Pharaoh summons Moses and Aaron to himself in Exodus 12:31. How can this be? Was Moses wrong in Exodus 10:29 and if so, was it God who told him to say this, or was that his own initiative?**

A: In Exodus 10:29, Pharaoh was obviously getting tired of seeing Moses, and so Moses' intention was that he would never come before Pharaoh again. When Pharaoh commanded him to come, Moses had to come though. Let's look at this three ways:

a) If this were a prophecy, then this was not true.

b) If this declared Moses' intention, then this was true; Moses did not come of his own initiative; he was called.

c) If this was a promise, then this human (not divine) promise was overridden by having to follow Pharaoh's command.

In short, Moses was not lying or being deceitful, but Moses clearly expected that he would not come before Pharaoh again and Moses was wrong on this.

An important point to see is that prophets were humans, and they could say and do things wrong too. The classic example is Nathan telling David he could build the temple and then God correcting Nathan in 2 Sam 7:3-17. A prophet of God is only without error when he is speaking as a prophet, i.e. "thus saith the Lord", or equivalent. When Moses lost his temper and struck the rock multiple times and called the Israelites rebels, he undoubtedly regretted those words later.

**Q: In Ex 11:3 and Num 12:3, did Moses write himself that he was highly regarded and humble?**

A: There are three different views:

**a)** Moses was matter-of-factly providing background about his reputation. See *When Critics Ask* p.102-103 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.248 for more info.

**b)** As this was being written down by a scribe for Moses, the scribe, under divine inspiration, added this.

**c)** This was a later scribal addition to the text, which God allowed to be preserved through the ages. See also the discussion on Numbers 12:3.

**Q: In Ex 11:5-12:30, apart from the Bible, is there any evidence of any plagues occurring in Egypt during this time?**

A: Perhaps so. David M. Rohl in *Pharaoh’s and Kings : A Biblical Quest* (1995) p.278-279, mentions that there was evidence of a great disaster with a great number of hastily buried bodies. However, the large numbers of deaths does not prove or disprove that this was due to a sudden event overnight. This was discovered by Manfred Bietak at Tell ed-Daba. This is in *Avaris and Pramesse: Archaeological Exploration of the Eastern Nile Delta* (London). 1979 p.295.

In addition, Josephus quotes Manetho about that “a blast of God smote us.” However, this is in the context of invaders from the east invading Egypt, so it could be an unrelated event, or there could have been invaders of Egypt during Moses’ time period about which that Exodus was silent.

**Q: In Ex 12:19 does “cut off from Israel” mean being expelled from the community or possibly death, or executed?**

A: Christian scholars disagree as *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.375 says.

**Expulsion:** *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.128. *The Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.98 says, “that is, excluded from the camp and its privileges. In some contexts, the expression “cut off” means condemned to death.” Most commentators would say it means death.

**Q: In Ex 12:29, how could an [allegedly] all-loving God, who is as loving as possible, kill the firstborn Egyptians?**

A: No verse in the Bible says that God is all-loving, and no verse says God is as loving as possible. God’s love is balanced by His other attributes. As to how the God of the Bible could kill the firstborn Egyptians, see the answer to the next question.

**Q: In Ex 12:29-30, why was God [allegedly] unjust to kill all the Egyptian firstborn instead of Pharaoh himself, since Pharaoh sinned?**

A: God was not unjust. Three points to consider in the answer.

**All the Egyptians** enslaved the Israelites. Pharaoh himself did not whip the slaves, the Egyptian taskmasters did. For 400 years Egyptian society thought it normal to benefit from the Hebrew slaves.

**People often bear the consequences of the actions of others**. Cocaine-addict mothers give birth to babies with smaller brains, addicted to cocaine. Millions died because of the murderous madness of Hitler and others. These things happen in a fallen, unjust world. See the next point though.

**Complete justice is delayed** until judgment day. For example, in Luke 13:1-5 Jesus was told of Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus said that this did not happen because they were worse than other Galileans, but that if you do not repent you also will perish. Some are punished more severely than others for the same things in this life. However, on Judgment Day, God will judge with justice and set everything right.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.56 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 12:29, what archaeological evidence indicates that Pharaoh’s son died right before the Exodus?**

A: In the Dream Stela of Thutmose IV (1421-1410 B.C.) found between the forepaws of the Sphinx of Giza, the god Harmakhis promised Thutmose special help to become the next Pharaoh in return for removing the sand that had built up against the Sphinx. He likely would not have needed special help if he were the first in the succession of his father Amenhotep II (1450/1447-1401/1385). See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.115-116 for more info.

Walter Kaiser in *A History of Israel* p.90 says that the eldest brother of Thutmose IV was named Webensenu. Webensu was given a burial in the royal tomb, and he probably was the one who died during the tenth plague. The second son of Amenhotep II was Khaemwaset, who married before he died. As Kaiser says, “Thus, while the Sphinx Stele cannot be taken as direct proof of the death of the firstborn, enough evidence has been brought to light by Egyptologists to support the early date of the Exodus and the fact that indeed Thutmose IV did not expect to succeed his father to the throne.”

**Q: In Ex 12:29-30, how could a just and loving God kill the firstborn Egyptians when they had no control over Pharaoh’s decision?**

A: Four points to consider in the answer.

**1.** The deaths do not prove that either the Egyptians or their animals were guilty for Pharaoh’s decision.

**2.** Against the infanticide and oppression, the people of Egypt apparently did not stand up or do anything until Exodus 12:33. Even in Exodus 14:5, Egyptian people wanted the Israelites back as slaves.

**3.** It is important to stand up, because people, including children, often suffer disproportionate consequences because of decisions of political leaders.

**4.** Much is unfair in this life. But there is a coming day, Judgment Day, when everything will be made fair. God is just, and the rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed, the Nazis, Cambodians, Sudanese, and everyone else will receive complete fairness at the end of time. — though who can say all they want is fairness, without mercy?

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.113-114 and *When Critics Ask* p.74-75 for other answers.

**Q: In Ex 12:30, how could there not be a house without someone dead, since the Israelites were spared?**

A: In context, this refers to houses in Egypt where the Passover was not celebrated.

**Q: In Ex 12:35 (KJV), why did God command the Israelites to “borrow” from the Egyptians when they would never return the items?**

A: This Hebrew word can be translated as “ask” (without intending to return), and was understood and translated that way in the Septuagint.

As to why the Israelites asked for and took the items of the Egyptians, see the discussion on Exodus 3:22 for the answer.

**Q: In Ex 13, what do the four Passover cups represent?**

A: While Passover was instituted in the Book of Exodus, the different cups offered in Passover are not in the Old Testament, but were a part of Jewish tradition that started during Roman times. They are documented in the Talmud (Pesachim 10:1)  
There were apparently different symbolism, but here is one: the different cups represented different kinds of redemption.

The 1st cup was for the kiddush blessing said at the start of the Passover. This cup is to celebrate God taking them out of Egypt.

The 2nd was before the main meal to celebrate deliverance from Egyptian slavery.

The **3rd cup** was drunk after the “Grace After Meals” to celebrate the demonstration of God's power.

The **4th cup** was at the conclusion of the Hallel to celebrate them becoming a nation.  
Some had a 5th cup, the "Cup of Elijah", which was not drunk.

Some of this information came from a Jewish site: http://2-passover.tripod.com/thefourcupsofwineforpassover.html.

**Q: In Ex 13:2, 13 did the Israelites have to sanctify their firstborn children (sons and daughters), or just the firstborn sons as Ex 22:29 says?**

A: Hebrew and modern translations all say sons:

Exodus 13:2 “the one opening every womb among the sons of Israel”

Exodus 13:13 “every firstborn of men among your sons”

The older, King James version, just said firstborn.

**Q: In Ex 13:4, was the first month Abib, or was it Nisan as in Nehemiah 2:1?**

A: At that time (1445 B.C.) the Israelites called in Abib. Centuries later, (c.500 B.C.) under the Persians it was called Nisan. Iranians (Persians) of today, of all religions have a New Year’s celebration called Nowruz.

**Q: In Ex 13:19, does preserving Joseph’s bones imply that Christians should venerate sacred relics, as some Catholics say?**

A: No. Every time bones were preserved for burial does not mean they were venerated. There is no evidence in the Bible that Joseph’s bones, or anybody else’s for that matter were held as sacred objects of worship.

The second commandment is not to have any images before God. Throughout the Middle Ages, various Catholics attempted to categorize sins, with the “seven deadly sins” being the most famous. The interesting thing about these various lists, is that the authors of all of them forgot about the second commandment.

See *When Cultists Ask* p.32-33 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 13:21-22; Ex 14:19-20; Ex 40:38, how could God follow Israel as a cloud and pillar of fire?**

A: Since God had already appeared as three visitors to Abram and a fire in a bush to Moses, appearing as a cloud or a pillar of file would not be at all difficult to God. It probably is more difficult for us to break our molds of what we think God has to do, than it is for God to appear as something.

**Q: In Ex 14:6-7, why did Pharaoh pursue all the Israelites with only 600 chariots?**

A: While chariots were awesome weapons of war in ancient times, and most of the Israelites did not have weapons, the answer is that Exodus 14:7 says that Pharaoh took 600 of the best chariots, and all the other chariots, and Exodus 14:9 says and the army. Exodus 15:4 also mentions Pharaoh’s chariots and his army.

**Q: In Ex 14:6-7, what were Egyptian chariots like at that time?**

A: Archaeologists tell us chariots in northern Mesopotamia were like carts with three or four people in them, and up to four donkeys or horses. Egyptians had some chariots like these, until the Hyksos conquered most of Egypt, after 1586 B.C. with their superior chariots. After this time, Egyptian chariots were very light, with two horses and two men. One man was the chariot driver and the other was the archer. The wheels were large, with usually six spokes. There were no spikes on the chariot axles until Persian times. Chariots were important weapons of war on dry flat ground, but they were not very useful on mountains or on wet, soggy ground.

See the *New Bible Dictionary* (Eerdmans’ 1962) p.204-206 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 14:9-28 and Josh 24:6, how did the Pharaoh have “horsemen”, since armies at that time did not have cavalry?**

A: As the NIV footnote says, these may refer to “charioteers”, not cavalry. When this word is used, it is always in contrast to the regular army.

**Q: In Ex 14:14, since God fought for the Israelites then, why did God not always fight for the Israelites later?**

A: God was not under obligation to always fight for the Israelites. He could fight for them and refrain from fighting for them whenever He wanted to do so. Often, it appears God let them fight their own battles.

**Q: In Ex 14:17; 15:21, how does drowning the Egyptians exalt God and give Him glory?**

A: It showed in the eyes of the Israelites that God had the power to save them even from a mighty army, and that God would watch over them.

**Q: In Ex 14:17; 15:21, why was God so unjust to drown the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, when the soldiers were just obeying orders?**

A: There is an important lesson here: soldiers should not be obeying orders that are evil. Back then, when the Egyptian soldiers were ordered to kill the peaceful worshippers of God, they were liable for judgment for their “evil obedience”. Today when Muslim “holy warriors” are ordered to kill peaceful worshippers of God just because they are Christians, they too are liable to God’s judgment of hellfire.

**Q: In Ex 14:18, did the Israelites cross the “Red” Sea, or the very shallow “Reed” Sea?**

A: The Hebrew is *Yam Suph*, and it could be either one; we do not know exactly where they crossed. *When Critics Ask* p.75-76 suggests it might be Lake Ballah, which was a shallow “sea” 10-15 miles (16-24 km) wide. (Lake Ballah was destroyed when the Suez Canal was built.)

Even the Sea of Reeds might not have been shallow back then. Exodus 14:22 says the waters formed a “wall” on both sides, so there must have been considerable water, there. If the sea they crossed was shallow, and the Israelites crossed it, then as one person quipped, it would be much more of a miracle if they had crossed the shallow Reed Sea, to drown all those horses and charioteers in just inches of water.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.144-145 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 14:21-29, how could God part the Sea?**

A: The Almighty could do it any way He wanted. Exodus 14:21 records a strong east wind, but there could be other factors too.

**Q: In Ex 14:21-29, could the giant volcanic eruption of Thera have caused the parting of the Red Sea?**

A: This view was advocated by the book *The Bible as History* and by Hans Goedicke. This theory looked popular at one time, because the volcano’s eruption of the Island of Thera seemed to be about 1500 B.C., which was close to Goedicke’s view that the Exodus took place at 1477 B.C. (The Exodus is now believed to have occurred 1445 B.C.) However, study of the calibrated radiocarbon dating of tree rings of both oaks in Ireland and bristlecone pine in California independently indicate a worldwide, tree-stunting cooling about 1628 B.C. +/- 20 years. Dating of Greenland ice sheets indicate cooling about 1645 B.C. Thus, the volcanic eruption on the island of Thera was about 200 years to years earlier. See *Biblical Archaeology Review* January / February 1991 p.41-51 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 14:21-29, how could 2 million Israelites cross the Red Sea in only 24 hours?**

A: Assume that 602,000 men means about 2 to 2.5 million people. If the crossing was perhaps 2 to 2.5 miles (3.2 - 4 km) wide, and were an average of a two yards apart, that would be 1,760 single-file columns of 1,136 people each. Allowing for carts and animals, if they were an average of ten yards from the person in front of them, and the people walked slowly at 1 mile (1.6 km) per hour, they could pass a particular point in 6.5 hours.

Q: In Ex 15, is there any evidence of the Hebrews wandering in the Sinai peninsula?

A: Yes, there is some evidence. *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament* p.30 says there was writing in caves found at Mt. Sinai describing the parting of the sea, Moses, and catching the quail. The most interesting thing is the language: it was a mixture of Egyptian and Hebrew. The historian Diodorus Siculus (10 B.C.) also knew of this. However, *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament* p.30 also adds that the genuineness of the writing cannot be proved or disproved. This is probably because there is no way to date the writing on the rock walls.

The *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.535 says that at the entrance to the copper mines in Sinai there are hundreds of inscriptions. Most of them are in hieroglyphic Egyptian characters, but about 40 inscriptions are in sort of proto-Sinaitic alphabetic script from the 15th century B.C. These are the one of the earliest artifacts of alphabetic writing preserved today.

**Q: In Ex 15:1-21, should this section go with the previous section of Exodus or the following section?**

A: Since this is a narrative, it can go with either one. Many commentators put it with the previous section, since this was probably sung very soon after their deliverance. However, in organizing Exodus I prefer to place it in the following section, because the first half of Exodus 15 and the last half of Exodus 15 make such good mirror images. As they traveled in the wilderness we have to remember the Israelites could not “read ahead” in the Book of Exodus and find out where they were going or what would happen to them. As they traveled, there were basically only two things they could do. They could remember God’s greatness and grace to them, or they could grumble about their current conditions.

In our lives today, there are basically only two things we can do too: please God by glorifying and obeying Him with thankfulness, or set our affection on the world and grumble or go our own way, doubting the provision or care of God.

**Q: In Ex 15:1, how were there “riders”, since the Egyptian army probably did not have cavalry back then?**

A: The word “riders” does not specify what is ridden. Armies at that time relied on chariots, and these are chariot riders, also called charioteers. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.307 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 15:2 (KJV), how can Miriam sing that she will prepare God a habitation?**

A: Where the English King James Version translated “prepare a habitation”, modern translations say “glorify”. The Hebrew word *navah* (*Strong’s* 5115), primarily means to celebrate (with praises) but *Strong’s* also says it can mean prepare a habitation. A similar Hebrew word, *naveh/navah*, (*Strong’s* 5116) means home.

Psalm 22:3 (KJV) says that God “inhabitest the praises of Israel.” While this is actually a different Hebrew Word, *yashab* (*Strong’s* 3427) which means to sit or dwell, the concept is similar.

**Individually**, in the New Testament God makes His home in the heart of each believer. John 14:23 says, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.’” (NKJV). While we will never be as God (the lie Satan taught in Genesis 3:4-5), it is an amazing truth that not only do we abide in Christ (John 15:7), but God abides in us (1 John 4:13-16).

**Collectively** from Old Testament times through now, believers are stones that together make up the Temple of the Living God (1 Peter 2:5; Ephesians 2:20-21).

**Q: In Ex 15:3 in the KJV, how can God be a man of war, since God is not a man?**

A: The Hebrew term “man of war” does not mean God is a man, but that God is a warrior.

Q: Since Ex 15:11 says, “Who among the gods is like you”, is there more than one God?

A: No. This verse, like Isaiah 40:18, shows that God is incomparable. 1 Corinthians 8:1-7 shows there are many idols, but there is only one True God, as is shown by Deuteronomy 4:35-39; 6:4; Mark 12:29-33; Isaiah 43:10-12; 44:6,8; 45:5-6,14,21; 46:9; Joel 2:27; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2:5; and 6:15-16.

**Q: In Ex 15:16, how did God “purchase” the Israelites?**

A: One of the ways that they belong to God is that God saved their lives.

**Q: In Ex 15:22-27, what can we learn from the Waters of Mara and Elim?**

A: God was testing the people according to Exodus 15:25. They people desperately needed water, and they found abundant water at Mara, but this might have seemed like a cruel joke, because it was bitter and undrinkable. Bitter water often is so because it is very alkaline. So not only does it taste bad, but it is harmful to your body. God not only made the bitter water bearable and healthy enough to drink, but actually made it sweet, and pleasant tasting.

Can God provide for you in a dry and thirsty land? God knows your needs, but what if you are in need, and the only provision appears to be nothing more than a cruel joke. Will you still be faithful, and either wait for God to provide you with other water, or, as in this case, miraculously make the apparent “non-solution” to your problem a solution both adequate and even giving contentment.

The Israelites were tested many times, as were David, later Jews, Jesus, and the early Christians. We should not be surprised when we are tested too.

**Q: In Ex 16:1-1-36, what can we learn from the manna and the quail?**

A: The people’s urgent needs of water were satisfied, but what about their living longer term? Rather than asking God about their need, they grumbled against Moses. When you have a legitimate need, and God has not met it yet, what do you do? Do you grumble, or continue to pray to God? Can God feed you in a barren place. When there is no nourishment, either physical food, or emotional, friendship, spiritual, do you think God is mighty enough to take care of you long term? We are to plan for the future (like the wise ant in Proverbs 30:25), but can you look to the future with confidence in Him, not fear?

**Q: In Ex 16:23-30, why were the Israelites supposed to keep the Sabbath in a place called the Wilderness of Sin, since the command was given later with the Ten Commandments at Sinai?**

A: God told them this commandment prior to giving all ten of the commandments.

**Q: In Ex 16:23, is the Wilderness of Sin the same was the Wilderness of Zin?**

A: No. The Wilderness of Sin was just west of Mount Sinai, while the Wilderness of Zin was just south of Judah and northeast of Kadesh Barnea. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.404 says the initial Hebrew consonant is different.

**Q: In Ex 16:31, Num 11:7-9, Dt 8:3,15, Josh 5:12, Ps 78:24,25, 105:40, and Neh 9:15, what exactly is manna?**

A: Scripture only says that was a food miraculously provided by God.

Some have theorized it was the edible secretion of tamarisk trees in the Sinai, insect secretions, etc. but a natural explanation is insufficient. It came six days a week, but not on the Sabbath. Furthermore there would not be enough insects of tamarisk tree secretions to feed such a large population.

Hebrews 9:4 mentions that a pot of manna was put in the ark.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.57, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.622, *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* p.691, and *The New International Bible Dictionary* p.620 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 17:1-7, why was God angry with people who obeyed Him?**

A: Exodus 17:1 says the people traveled from place to place as the Lord commanded. But they grumbled as they obeyed. Obedience is not enough; we are to have cheerful obedience, without complaining or arguing, as Philippians 2:14 says.

**Q: In Ex 17:2 and Dt 6:16, how can people tempt God, since God cannot be tempted by evil in Jms 1:13?**

A: A better translation than “tempt God” is “put the Lord to the test.” God cannot really be tempted by evil, but people can still try. This is an expression of the sin of people who tell God “work this way and perform this miracle, or else.”

**Q: In Ex 17:8, when the Israelites were only winning when Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands, doesn’t that sound like superstition?**

A: All knew the power was with God, not the hands. God sometimes uses physical actions to channel His power. For other examples, see 2 Kings 13:21 (Elisha’s bones), Numbers 21:4-9 (the bronze snake), and John 9:6-7, (Jesus making mud to put on a blind man’s eyes.)

**Q: In Ex 17:15-16, what is the importance of God’s name here?**

A: It is very significant that Moses called God *Yahweh Nissi*, “The Lord is my banner”. In a military battle, the banner was the honor of the army or division, and soldiers would fight to the end to save it at all cost. This means much more than God is strong and mighty. When a large army, determined to defeat the Israelites came right at them, the Israelites did NOT merely believe God was a far-off powerful being, who might give them some help if He felt like it. Rather, they believed not only that God was powerful, but that God would come through in the clutch and save those who called upon His name. Today Christians all believe that God is Almighty, but do you really live like you believe God will come through in the clutch for you? If so, then not only do you believe God is your banner, and you will struggle until the end to stand firm for God, but you also know that you are God’s banner, in the sense that you bear His name and are the apple of His eye (Deuteronomy 32:10; Psalm 17:8), and that God will certainly be with you. Even if you are killed for God, you know that “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.” (Psalm 116:15 NIV)

**Q: In Ex 18:7 since we are supposed to worship only God, why did Moses do obeisance his father-in-law?**

A: Bowing in respect is not worship. Even today people bow or curtsy to the Queen of England out of respect. Abraham bowed in respect to kings, and do obeisance is all right as long as it is not interpreted as worship. In contrast to this it is estimated that up to 50,000 Christians perished during Roman persecution and many people misunderstand why. The Romans did not have a problem with Christians worshipping Jesus. The Romans would not tolerate the Christians refusal to worship anybody except God, especially the Roman emperor. To add insult to injury, Roman pagans labeled Christians “atheists” for not believing in their idols.

**Q: In Ex 18:17-26, why did Moses take Jethro’s advice instead of God’s?**

A: It was not contrary to God’s will, but Moses recognized it as good advice for following God. We are to be practical and take good and upright advice from others as well as from God.

**Q: In Ex 19:3,20; 24:9,13,15,18; 34:4 why did Moses go up to the mountain seven times, and go back to see the Lord (Ex 32:31) yet Moses is only recorded as going down four times in Ex 19:14,24; 32:15; 34:29?**

A: Some have used this to try to support multiple authorship of Exodus, but *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.416 says this does not really help answer the question. The book of Exodus is not required to be in chronological order, there is no problem with it being in chronological order here; the sequence is really quite straightforward.

Exodus 19:3 Moses went up alone

Exodus 19:14 Moses came down alone

Exodus 19:20 Moses went up to the top alone

Exodus 19:24 Moses came down briefly to get Aaron

Exodus 24:9 Moses and 73 others went up

Exodus 24:12-13 God tells Moses to come up, so Moses leaves the elders where they are, and Moses and Joshua went up farther.

Exodus 24:15 says that when Moses went up, apparently alone, so he went up farther.

Exodus 24:18 says that then Moses entered the cloud as he went up, so this is that same trip as Exodus 24:15.

Exodus 32:15 Moses came [all the way] down with two tablets, meeting Joshua. (Moses broke the tables in Exodus 32:19)

Exodus 32:31 Moses went back to the Lord. This does not mean He necessarily went up and down the mountain, though he could have.

Exodus 34:4 Moses went up with two blank stone tablets

Exodus 34:29 Moses came down the mountain with two stone tablets.

Speaking of Moses and mountains, a similar sequence happened during Jesus’ transfiguration. Traveling with the twelve disciples, he separated and went up the mountain with just three of them. Luke 9:32-33 shows that Jesus was some distance from the three when the transfiguration occurred. Then a cloud enveloped them. Luke 9:36-37 shows that the other disciples rejoined Jesus prior to the crowds meeting Jesus at the base of the mountain.

**Summary:** Recognizing that one can travel partway up a mountain with a larger group and farther up a smaller group, and recognizing that the return of every trip does not need to be mentioned, there is no difficulty with the number of Moses’ trips.

**Q: In Ex 19:4, how could the people have eagles’ wings?**

A: This is a metaphor of the way God worked to carry them through, with no effort of their own. (When we have tremendous struggles, God still carries us on eagles’ wings today.)

## **Q: In Ex 19:11, where exactly is Mt. Sinai?**

A: **Region:** The Sinai Peninsula is a south-pointing triangle with the mountains on the southern part, which Exodus 19:2 and Numbers 3:14; 9:1,5; 10:12 call the Wilderness (“Desert”) of Sinai. The Desert of Sin separates Elim from Sinai. Numbers 33:3-50 tells each place the Israelites camped. Unfortunately, we do not know the location of many of these campsites, but by looking at them, we can see what is between what.

Within the Wilderness of Sinai, there are actually two mountains, close to each other, that fit the location of Mount Sinai.

**Gebel Musa/Mousa** (7,363 ft) This is the traditional view, at least since about 500 A.D. It has very steep cliffs. The Monastery of St. Catherine is at the foot of this mountain. Many but not all Muslims view this as Mt. Sinai also. The *New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.674 has a picture of Jebel Musa.

**Ras es-safsafeh** (6,540 ft 1993 meters) is two miles (3.2 km) north of Gebel Musa on the same ridge. It has a wider plain at its foot.

**Gebel Serbal (unlikely):** Eusebius of Caesarea (325 A.D.) believed this. However, *The New Bible Dictionary* (1978) p.1193-1194 mentions there is no wilderness near its foot.

**A few people think** Mt. Sinai is in Mebel al-Lawz in Arabia, perhaps because

a) They mistakenly think the Sinai peninsula was a part of Egypt during the Exodus

b) They forget that Mt. Sinai was outside the land of Midian according to Exodus 18:27 and Numbers 10:29-30

c) Paul said Mt. Sinai in Arabia (Galatians 4:25), and they forget the Sinai Peninsula was in the Roman province of Arabia.

[www.christiananswers.net/abr/scoop.html](http://www.christiananswers.net/abr/scoop.html), after giving the previous reasons, also says the distance to Arabia would be too far from Kadesh Barnea. Since people with flocks and herds would only travel about 6 miles per day. Yet the distance from Jebel al-Lawz to Kadesh Barnea is around 150 miles, and they went from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea in only 11 days.

**Muslims** sometimes try to say Mt. Sinai is Mecca. After all Galatians 4:25 says Mt. Sinai is in Arabia. However, this is not the modern country of Saudi Arabia, but rather the Sinai Peninsula was a part of the Roman Province of Arabia. Also, an 11-day journey around 800 miles from Mecca to Kadesh Barnea, with flocks and herds, young animals, and young children, on foot, would be incredible. See either *The Roman World* p.107 or *Encyclopedia Britannica* under Roman History for a map.

If Mt. Sinai were really Mecca, that would not make any difference to Christians, except that the stages of Israel’s journey would no longer make sense. It is apparently important to some Muslims however, as it would give credibility to the idea that Mecca had some part in God’s work prior to Mohammed. However, other Muslims, such as the footnote 2504 in the *Holy Qur’an : English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* equate Mt. Sinai with Gebel/Jabal Musa, as do the majority of Christians.

See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.988-989 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 20:4-5, is it OK for Christians to wear and have crosses and other religious art?**

A: As reminders it is fine, just as Jews copied scripture as reminders based on Deuteronomy 6:8-9. However, neither crosses, nor scripture, nor anything else is to be worshiped in place of God. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.145-146 *When Cultists Ask* p.33-34, 228-229 for more info.

**Q: Since Ex 20:4-5 says to have no graven images, why were there so many images in the tabernacle (Ex 25-27) and later the temple (1 Ki 6:1-38; 7:13-51)?**

A: It was OK to make the images God commanded for decoration and not for worship. However, even when images God commanded to be made, were used as worship, they should be destroyed. As an example read of the bronze snake in Numbers 21:4-9 and 2 Kings 18:1-4. See Tertullian’s *Five Books Against Marcion* (207/208 A.D.) book 2 ch.22, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.116 for more info and *When Critics Ask* p.83-84 for a useful chart showing the right and wrong use of images.

**Q: In Ex 20:5; Dt 4:24; 6:15; Jo 2:18; Zeph 1:18; 3:18, is God a jealous God, since 1 Cor 13:4 says love is not envious?**

A: Three points to consider in the answer:

**1.** Many verses show we are not to envy others for what they have, or even the things with which God has blessed them.

**2.** God is not a creature, and by His rules, it is OK for Him to be jealous of the worship and devotion that is rightfully his. This is similar to someone expecting devotion and faithfulness from a spouse, or a parent expecting honor and obedience from a child.

**3.** Even beyond this, 2 Corinthians 11:2 shows we should have a godly jealousy for others to continue being devoted to the real Jesus instead of a counterfeit.

**Q: In Ex 20:5, briefly, why does a just God visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation?**

A: Ezekiel 18 and Deuteronomy 24:16 show God does not declare the son guilty for a father’s sins, but Exodus 20:5 and other verses indicate that children bear bad consequences for others’ sins. Many believe God judgment takes into consideration where they started from and what was available to them, but everyone does not start from the same place and have the same opportunities.

**Q: In Ex 20:5; Ex 34:7, Num 14:18; and Dt 5:9 how does God punish the children for the sins of their fathers up to the third and fourth generation, when Ezek 18:4,18-19 and Dt 24:16 say each will die for his own sin, not his fathers, and Ezek 18:19 says the son does not share the guilt of the father?**

A: God apparently thought this an important concept, because the four verses in the Law repeat the same thing using the same two Hebrew words.

**Visit** is *paqad* (Strong’s 6485) which is a neutral word that can mean visit with either a friendly or hostile intent.

**Iniquity** is *‘avon* (Strong’s 5771) which means perversity, evil, fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin.

Some people have thought their sin has no effect on their children; others have thought a child can be guilty just because of their parents. Jeremiah 31:29-30 and Ezekiel 18:2 rebuke people for saying, “The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge.” In Job 21:19 Job says similar. The truth is actually neither of these extremes. First two things that are not the answer, and then the answer.

**Earlier vs. Later Revelation (not the answer):** The Torah (Law) was given around 1440 B.C. and Ezekiel was written after 587 B.C.. As God’s way of dealing with people was different in a large way in Noah’s time, Abraham’s time, under the Mosaic Law, and after Christ, God’s way of dealing with people was different in a smaller way between Moses (when they had only the law) and Ezekiel (when they had prophetic writings too). However, both were under the Mosaic Law, and there was no explicit change of covenant/dispensation between the two. Furthermore, Deuteronomy 24:16 also says fathers and children not put to death for each other, and it was written at the same time as the rest of Deuteronomy.

**Visit Iniquity vs. Die for sins (not the answer):** The verses in the Law do not say children will die for their parents/ancestors’ sins, only that iniquity will be visited upon them. Ezekiel 18 and Deuteronomy 24:16 only say that a child will not die for the sins of his father. However, while Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18 show that [physical and spiritual] death and eternal consequences are not the responsibility of parents but of the person himself, you cannot avoid the fact that the other verses prove that sin has generational effects. There are at least three different effects.

**Consequences:** Physical consequences are the easiest to see: babies born of drug-addicted mothers are born addicted to drugs. Some babies are cursed with fetal alcohol syndrome due to alcoholic mothers. If they start drinking alcohol, they will have an especially strong addiction to it. But God sometimes sets up non-physical consequences too. Canaan and his descendants were cursed with consequences because of Ham’s sin in Genesis 9:25-27. Eli’s descendants were cursed in 1 Samuel 2:31-33 because of the great sins of Eli’s sons. Jehoiachin’s offspring would never again rule in Jeremiah 22:28-30. But there are good generational consequences for obedience too, such as for the Recabite descendants in Jeremiah 35:18-19, and Abraham’s descendants in Genesis 12:2, etc. Finally, Romans 8:28 promises that all things work together for good for those who love God. When we patiently bear curses, God is powerful enough to turn even those into blessings.

**Growing Up In Sin:** Exodus 20:5 and Deuteronomy 5:9 say God visits iniquity on the children of those who hate God. Children often grow up learning the values of their parents. If someone’s parents hated God, they probably grew up being taught that too, either directly or implicitly. However, like Abraham from Ur, The Gideonites of Canaan, Ruth the Moabitess, and the pagans early Christians preached too, we can follow God’s call to move beyond any and all bad upbringing and live a new life pleasing to Him.

**Must Choose to Go Against the Sin:** When a child’s parents were involved in a sin, and particularly if the parents hated God, the child will be visited with an opportunity for that sin. The son or daughter must choose to go against their parents’ patterns, or even against the norm for their culture, and follow God. Just as Abraham was told to leave his family and people where God led him, we all, in some way or another have to leave parts of our culture and upbringing and follow Christ.

**A Simple Example of the three aspects:** The Israelites often sinned in worshipping idols until the Exile. Israelite children born after that suffered the consequences of being in the exile because of their parents’ and ancestors’ sins. During their upbringing they it would be especially tempting to take the easy road and worship the Babylonian gods around them like everyone else was; many did this and were assimilated into that culture. But some, confronted with the idols during the curse of their time in Babylon, chose for God and against sin, and returned to the land of Israel. After that time, Israel never had problems with idols again.

**Conclusion:** Whether people like it or not, God has shown there are generational aspects to sin. God is just and we can understand what God has revealed about His justice. However, God’s justice is defined by His word, we are not free to disregard His Word and demand God conform to our own ideas of justice. In the “independent, autonomous” culture of western society, we might wish to shy away from the fact that there are generational aspects to sin, but God’s justice is defined by what God has said, not what we wish.

See *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.86-88 and *When Critics Ask* p.285-286 for more info.

**Q: Since Ex 20:8 says we are to honor the Sabbath day (Saturday), why do Christians today believe it is fine to work on Saturday?**

A: Genuine Christians have three different viewpoints:

**Saturday:** In the Old Testament the Sabbath was sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. One reason the nation of Judah was exiled to Babylon for 70 years, was because of 70 \* 7 = 490 years of not observing the Sabbath. (Their year was 360 days.) See Leviticus 26:31-36; Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10,16; and Daniel 9:2.

**Sunday:** After Jesus rose from the dead, Sunday became the Lord’s day and was celebrated by early Christians. Paul did not explain to the Corinthians why the first day of the week in 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul assumed they already knew. Revelation 1:10 also refers to either Sunday, or else a vision of the day of the Lord. *Justin’s First Apology* (c.138-165 A.D.) ch.67 p.185-186 also mentions worshipping on Sunday. Irenaeus (182-188 A.D.) in fragments 7 (p.569) also mentions that Irenaeus spoke of Easter and the Lord’s day.

**All days:** In Old Testament times, believers were to be in God’s rest one day a week. However, Hebrews 4:11 indicates we have a different and better rest today. We should devote every day of the week to being in God’s rest. In Colossians 2:16, Paul chastises the Colossians for continuing to keep the Sabbath day. Romans 14:5 speaks, without disapproval, of Christians who take all days alike. In 1 Corinthians 16:2 they stored up collections on Sunday.

See also *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.116-121, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.146-148, and *When Critics Ask* p.77-78 for more info. See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.350-351 for the view that Christians should keep the Sabbath either Saturday or Sunday, and recreation is OK on the Sabbath.

See the question on Romans 14:5 for what the New Testament church did. The Post-New Testament church worshipped on Sunday as shown by

Ignatius disciple of John the Apostle (110-117 A.D.)

*Epistle of Barnabas* (c.70-130 A.D.)

*First Apology of Justin Martyr* (150 A.D.) chapter 67 p.185-186

Dionysius of Corinth (175 A.D.)

Melito of Sardis (175 A.D.)

*Apostolic Constitutions* (2nd century)

Clement of Alexandria (193-217/220 A.D.)

Tertullian’s *Apologeticus* (198-220 A.D.)

Even the heretic Bardesanes (180 A.D.)

Augustine said it was not needful to practice the Sabbath in New Testament times.

Deviations from this were mentioned by Justin Martyr (wrote c.138-165 A.D.) (*Dialogue with Trypho* ch.47 p.218), calls Sabbath-keepers “weaker brethren”, and Eusebius of Caesarea (324 A.D.) mentions Ebionite heretics as keeping the Sabbath.

See *When Cultists Ask* p.34-35 for more info.

**Q: Since Ex 20:13 and Dt 5:17 say, “thou shalt not kill?” (KJV), why were so many people and animals killed?**

A: That is a good question about a commonly misunderstood point. If Exodus 20:13 really meant never to kill any people, that would be news to Moses. On more than one occasion, God told Moses to fight wars and execute lawbreakers. If Exodus 20:13 really meant never to kill anything, that would be news to God, who commands animal sacrifice.

The Hebrew word, *râtsach*, could mean kill people, but *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.148-149 says that of the seven Hebrew words for killing, this word, appearing 47 times in the Old Testament, is the one that means murder. The context of Exodus indicates that some wars and lawful execution are not only allowed, but also commanded. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.121, *Today’s Handbook for Solving Bible Difficulties* p.402-403, *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.59-60, and *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.285-286 for more info.

As an interesting side note, according to *Now That’s a Good Question* p.458-460, a former governor of Pennsylvania vetoed a bill to reinstate the death penalty, quoting this verse and misinterpreting it.

**Q: In Ex 20:13 and Dt 5:17 it says thou shalt not kill. He charged that we not kill and yet He sent His only begotten Son to be sacrificed (i.e. killed) by His people the Jews which confuses me. … Please explain why Jesus had to die for my sins. Why did I have to kill Jesus? Why did we have to break one of His commandments in order to set things right with our God and our souls?**

A: The commandment forbade murder; the Israelites still had war and executions. See the answer to the previous question on killing animals, executions, and wars. As for the atonement, God sent Jesus knowing He would be killed by evildoers. However, they were in a state of disobedience to God when they did so. Nonetheless, God even uses people's rebellion and evil for His purposes. Romans 8:28 is really an amazing verse. It says, “...in all thing God works together for good for those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.” It does NOT say God only works all good things together. Rather, it says God works all things (good and evil) together for good for those who love Him.

Of course, we did not kill Jesus, the Roman soldiers did. Nonetheless, God had Jesus be unjustly murdered to bear the punishment for our sins.

**Q: Since Ex 20:13 and Dt 5:17 says not to murder, why does God sometimes kill people?**

A: The Ten Commandments were given to people; and God, who is all-knowing, is not bound by what He gave us. For example, God accepts worship, and we are not to accept worship.

**Q: Since Ex 20:14,17 says not to commit adultery, why were there polygamous marriages after that?**

A: Polygamous marriage is not adultery. Polygamy was allowed but not encouraged in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament it is not allowed for church leaders.

While Exodus 20:17 says not to covet your neighbor’s wife (singular), this command is operative regardless of whether your neighbor had one or more wives. If it had said not to covet your neighbor’s wives (plural), some might have interpreted that to mean that coveting just one of his wives would be OK. Of course, that is not what God meant.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.121-124, *Now That’s A Good Question* p.381-382, *When Cultists Ask* p.35-36, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.60 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 20:20, why were the people to fear not, since they were supposed to fear in the same verse?**

A: Both they and we are not supposed to be frightened and apprehensive of God who has such a great love for us. But we are supposed to fear God, in the sense of respecting God, and His power and holiness. Today, we are also to be afraid for the lost, that is being afraid of God’s wrath destroying them if they do not repent, as Jude 23 teaches.

However, since Christ has been revealed, we do not have the same fear they had in the Old Testament, as Hebrews 12:18 teaches. See also the discussion on Exodus 9:30.

**Q: In Ex 20:24, was the altar to be made of dirt, or acacia wood as Ex 27:1; 30:1; 37:1; and 38:1 say?**

A: At Mt. Sinai they made an altar of dirt. Later, for the tabernacle, they made a portable altar from the wood of the acacia tree.

See *When Critics Ask* p.79 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.427-428 for a different answer.

**Q: In Ex 20:25-26 and Josh 8:31, why were the people not to use hewn stones?**

A: The Bible does not tell why God commanded this, only that He did. However, rocks hewn by iron chisels would display red rust marks over time. Blue-green marks would be visible with bronze or copper tools.

**Q: Why do Ex 21:2-21, Ex 32:1-6, and Lev 25:46 condone slavery?**

A: Slavery in the Bible was similar to indentured servants. All Hebrew slaves were to be freed every seventh year in Exodus 21:2-5. When the slave was freed, the ex-master was to furnish him or her liberally out of what the master had, according to Deuteronomy 15:13-15. The only exception to freeing a Hebrew slave was if the slave loved the master enough to choose to be a slave for life in Exodus 21:5-6. However, the Hebrews did not always free their slaves, as Jeremiah 34:8-22 shows; God rebuked them for that. The following became slaves:

Thieves who could not pay people back (Exodus 22:3)

Women sold by parents as concubines (Exodus 21:7-11)

People sold themselves as slaves if they were starving

See Hard Sayings of the Bible p.149-150 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 21:13, what does “an act of God” mean here?**

A: This is very similar to the western legal usage of an act of God meaning something beyond human control. The Expositor’s Bible Commentary volume 2 p.432 says that similar expressions are found in the Hammurabi Law Code 249:38-39; 266:77.

**Q: In Ex 21:17, was this a harsh punishment for disrespectful children?**

A: Four points to consider in the answer.

**1.** This would seem harsh to us today, knowing the parents had this power would keep the teenagers from totally despising their parents authority. However, this was mild compared to the Canaanites and Phoenicians, who practiced child sacrifice. Just imagine a Canaanite or Phoenician child acting disobedient, and the parent saying “your behavior is starting to make me feel very religious.” The only Israelites who practiced child sacrifice were idol-worshippers whom God condemned.

**2.** For godly Israelites, given their very strong family orientation, there is no evidence that children ever were so disobedient that parents would resort to this.

**3.** Even if there were disobedient children, Exodus 21:17 does not specify parents had to do this; it was only an option. There is no evidence that any parent choose to do this.

**4.** In later Roman times, Roman fathers had the “right of paterfamilias.” This was the legal right of a Roman father to kill his newborn child for any reason whatsoever.

**Summary:** Sometimes the creation of a law, giving a severe option, accomplishes the desired result without there being a case where it has to be enforced.

**Q: In Ex 21:20, why is someone merely “punished” if they beat a slave and kill him?**

A: Exodus 21:12 specifies the punishment: death for deliberate murder, and fleeing to a refuge for manslaughter. This applies to both slaves and free.

There was no mention of a different punishment for a slave, and no need to mention the punishment was the same, as murder of a freeman or slave was the same in Egypt where they lived. This Egyptian law is mentioned in *Life in Egypt in Ancient Times* by Bernard Romant, translated by J. Smith (Minerva 1978/81) p.124.

**Q: In Ex 21:21 why does Exodus condone beating slaves?**

A: Some behaviors in the old Testament were not advocated but rather allowed, because the people’s hearts were hard. For example, divorce was permitted in the Old Testament because of people’s hard hearts (Matthew 19:8) yet in Malachi 2:16 God said he hated divorce. Beating a person, with no permanent injury, was punished by a monetary fine for lost time in Exodus 21:18-19. Exodus 21:21 merely points out that a slave-owner does not have a fine for lost time, because it was the owner that (perhaps foolishly) lost the time of the slave. However, slave or no slave, if a man hits someone that the victim dies, the man shall be put to death in Exodus 21:12,20. Likewise, if a man causes permanent injury, there shall be either a monetary fine, freedom for a slave, or eye for an eye.

**Q: In Ex 21:22 (NASB, NRSV), should it say “further injury/harm” or “injury/harm”?**

A: The NASB and NRSV translators messed up here. The word “further” is not in the Hebrew, and thus Green’s Literal Translation, the NKJV, and NIV all agree here. The KJV translates this as “mischief”, without using the word “further” either. The NET Bible says, “serious injury”. The problem with the word further is that it makes something that is clear sound ambiguous. Does “further harm” mean harm beyond the infant’s death, because it is ambiguous whether a premature birth is “harm”? The Hebrew is not ambiguous, because it does not say “further”. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.247-248 for more info.

**Q: Does Ex 21:22-23 demonstrate that abortion is wrong, or that a fetus is less than a baby?**

A: *When Critics Ask* p.79 mentions that, according to the Hebrew scholar Umberto Cassuto, in his *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Magnes Press, 1967) “…But if any mischief happens, that is, if the woman dies or the children, then you shall give life for life.”

## Also, the Hebrew word (eats) means to bring forth in live birth as well as miscarriage. There is a different Hebrew word for miscarriage that does not mean live birth, but it was not used here. Finally, the word “child” is a word used of babies.

## As a side note, abortion through chemicals was practiced in Bible times. According to Discover Magazine (September 1998), a plant that grew in Cyrenaica, called Silphium, could induce abortion. Minucius Felix (210 A.D.) wrote why chemical abortions were wrong in The Octavius of Minucius Felix ch.30 p.192. and Hippolytus’ Refutation of All Heresies book 9.7 p.131 (225-235/6 A.D.) Silphium sold for its weight in silver.

## Surgical abortions too were described in detail and condemned by Tertullian (198-220 A.D.) in A Treatise on the Soul ch.25 p.206

***Tertullian’s Apology*** ch.9 p.25 (198-220 A.D.) “In our case, murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the foetus [fetus] in the womb, while as yet the human being derives blood from other parts of the body for its sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier man-killing.; nor does it matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a man which is going to be one; you have the fruit already in its seed.”

Tertullian (198-220 A.D.) says, “The law of Moses, indeed, punishes with due penalties the man who shall cause abortion, inasmuch as there exists already the rudiment of a human being, which has imputed to it even now the condition of life and death, since it is already liable to the issues of both, although, by living still I the mother, it for the most part shares its own state with the mother.” *A Treatise on the Soul* ch.37 p.218

Tertullian also mentions chemical abortion as wrong in *On Exhortation to Chastity* ch.12 p.57

## See also Now That’s A Good Question p.451-456 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 21:29-30, why was the death penalty not carried out for some murders?**

A: As in modern law, there is often no death penalty for manslaughter. It is one thing to deliberately kill a person, and it is another thing to kill a person through recklessness. See *When Critics Ask* p.80 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.261 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 21-22, how did these laws compare with other laws around the same time?**

A: Here are some comparisons.

Ex 21:2-4 When a single man became a slave, and his master gave him a wife, and the man was freed, the wife and children were still slaves of the master in the Akkadian Nuzi texts.

Ex 21:9 S.M. Paul in *Book of the Covenant* p.55, n.3 found an Assyrian document that said if a man has bought a girl to be a wife for his son, and the marriage does not occur, the buyer cannot return her to be a slave girl, “he must treat her as his own daughter, an Assyrian)

Ex 21:18-19 The Code of Hammurabi (206) says that if one man injures another accidentally, and swears as such, he must still pay the doctor’s fee. The Hittite Laws (10) says that he must care for the man he injured, pay the doctor’s fee, and also pay him six (later, ten) shekels of silver.

Ex 22:16-17, if a mean seduced a woman who was not engaged, the Middle Assyrian Law 56 said the man had to pay 1/3 of the bride price, and the father could do as he wished, about allowing the man to marry her or not.

Ex 22:19, Hittite Laws (187-188, 199:16-18) also said to execute someone who had sex with a sheep, cow, or pig, but not with a horse or mule. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.439 says that apparently this was prevalent among the Canaanites.

These examples came from *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.430-440.

**Q: In Ex 22:8-9 and 1 Sam 2:25, did the people come before judges here, or before God?**

A: There is no question about the Hebrew word; it is *elohim*. However, *elohim* can mean True God, false gods, or judges. Here are two views.

**God:** The Septuagint translated this as the people coming before God. Jay P. Greens’ *Literal Translation* also says “God”. The NRSV says “God”, but adds as a footnote “or before the judges”.

**Judges:** *Elohim* can mean human judges, as it does in Psalm 82:6. In this passage *elohim* is translated as judge in the KJV, NKJV. It is also mentioned to be judge in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.142 and the *Believer’s Bible Commentary* p.111.

The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.309 and the NKJV also say *Elohim* refers to judges in Exodus 21:6.

In 1 Samuel 2:25, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.309 and the KJV say this refers to judges, and the NKJV says this refers to God. The NIV used “judges” but puts “God” in the footnote.

**Summary:** Here is what *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.586 declares about 1 Samuel 2:25. “As the NIV margin indicates, we cannot always be sure whether (elohim) means “God” or “(the) judges” in certain contexts. … Here in v.25, and in the Exodus passages, it is perhaps best to leave the question moot, since in any case the “judges” (if such they be) are viewed as God’s representatives who reflect his will and carry out his desires.”

**Q: In Ex 22:18, why were female witches put to death and [allegedly] not the males?**

A: The prohibition against witchcraft, mediums, and dealing with the occult applied equally to men and women. Regardless of gender, God consider attempting sorcery very serious. Christians should not dishonor the name they bear by engaging in séances, Ouija boards, fortune-telling, or other attempts at sorcery.

**Q: In Ex 22:18, a Sunday school teacher once shared that she can figure out how to treat physical ailments by holding a metal chain with a metal pendant over her wrist and asking her body questions. It will swing differently meaning no or yes. What do you think of this?**

A: This is against the Bible. This is asking [some sort of] spirit for answers. This sounds vaguely similar to the Occultic (Satanic) practice of the Ouija board. Ask her how she knows which kind of spirit does she think is doing this? 1 John 4:1-2 says we are not just to believe every spirit. 2 Corinthians 6:17 says that we are to touch no unclean thing.

I once heard of a pastor [correctly] say from the pulpit that we are not to follow astrology. However, to prove there was nothing to it, he had his horoscope read and was going to show everyone how it was all false. Well, it turned out that the things started coming true. He was scared, and repented in front of the congregation of what he had done. Only after that did the rest of the predictions fail to come true.

Satan does have abilities beyond us, and he can sometimes predict things correctly (or else ensure that they happen.) He uses that to get people to trust this source of advice, that he can better deceive people later.

Here is what I would do if I were a member of the Sunday school class.

1. Go to the teacher and explain that you put your trust in Christ, not in familiar spirits. Show her the verses against the occult, and she might see and repent. Some verses saying we are to have nothing to do with the occult, communicating with the dead, etc. are:

Have nothing to do with magic & the occult, such as channeling, witchcraft, astral-projection, mediums, fortune-tellers, astrology, Ouija boards, TM, EST, or Qi-gong. Lev 19:26,31;20:6-8,27; Acts 19:19; Ezek 13:18;22:18; Dt 18:9-14; Micah 5:12; Rev 9:21

Don’t try to communicate with the dead. Dt 18:10-2; Isa 8:19; 1 Sam 28:3,7-12 + Lev 20:6-8

In regard to evil we are to be infants. 1 Cor 14:20; Mt 10:16 yet be on guard. Mt 10:16-7

2. If she is not persuaded to repent, tell the pastor and elders of the church that this should not happen in a church that trusts in Christ, and suggest they remove her as a Sunday school teacher.

3. If that fails, the member has a duty to leave that church, and tell everybody who wants to know why the member is leaving. Your leaving will be a better testimony than your staying and trying to continue to persuade them. As long as you stay, you are implicitly saying this is not so bad.

By the way, I would not give this advice for a Sunday school teacher who believed and taught an error on a secondary issue. But we are to have nothing to do with using “devices” to communicate with the spirit world for advice.

**Q: In Ex 23:19, 34:26, and Dt 14:21, why shouldn’t people boil a kid in its mother’s milk?**

A: -Simply because God told them not to do it. Whether an action is idolatrous, magical, profane, cruel, or contemptuous is not the main point; the ultimate reason is that God disliked it and said not to do it. See *When Critics Ask* p.80 for more info.

There was also an ancient Canaanite and Syrian practice of this going back to at least the 15th century B.C., according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary Volume 3* p.101. The pagan Ugaritic epic called “The Birth of the Beautiful and Gracious Gods” shows the practice of cooking a goat kid in its mother’s milk to petition the gods for rain in Canaan. This is documented in the 15th century Ras Shamra Tablets according to *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* p.179. See the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.595 for more info.

Later Jews expanded on this to not having meat and milk served at the same meal, or even prepared using the same utensils.

**Q: In Ex 23:28, Dt 7:20 and John 24:12, how did “hornets” drive out the Canaanites?**

A: First two things that are not the answer, and then the answer.

**Not the answer, Literal hornets:** An example is that the Greek historian Aelian in *hist. anim.*11,28 says that the Phaselians, Canaanites who lived near the Solymites, were driven out of their land by wasps. Bochart (Hieroz. Iii. P.499 has examples of tribes that left their lands due to frogs, mice, and other animals. However, in all the details provided, Joshua does not mention any animals, insects or otherwise, driving out Canaanites. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.145 says that some hold to this view, others that it is Egypt.

**Note the answer, the Israelites themselves:** While some think the “hornets” God was referring to were the Israelites themselves, Exodus 23:28 clearly refers to “outside help” God providentially provided.

**The answer, Egypt:** However, the badge of Pharaoh Thutmose III was the hornet. He had 17 campaigns, mostly in Palestine. His successors Amenhotep II and Thutmose IV also campaigned in Palestine. This is an acknowledgement that the Israelite army was not the only one that weakened the Canaanites; the Egyptians played a role too.

The Bible is all true, but that does not mean God is prevented from communicating to people using their own metaphors.

See *Christian News* Decembers 31, 1998 p.8, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.447, and *The Keil-Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* vol.1 p.153-154 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 23:31, how could the Philistines be in Canaan in Moses’ time?**

A: See the discussion on Genesis 20 for the answer.

**Q: In Ex 24:1, what can we learn from Nadab and Abihu?**

A: As Aaron’s sons, they were in line to become the next high priest. But being the child of a godly person did not make them “safer” from peril; actually it is a more dangerous position if someone does not want to follow God. The more you know, the more you will be held accountable for disobeying, as 2 Peter 2:21 shows.

**Q: In Ex 24:4, how could Moses write “and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord”?**

A: The same way he wrote Exodus 6:26-27. See the discussion on that. Alternately, Moses’ scribe may have written this. See *When Critics Ask* p.81 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 24:9-11, how could the elders come to Mt. Sinai, since people would be struck dead if they came to Mt. Sinai in Ex 19:12-13?**

A: They could only come to Mount Sinai when they were invited. Similarly, they were supposed to go to the Promised Land, but after the spies’ discouraging report, they refused to go. After God disciplined them and told them they would die in the desert, they decided to go to the Promised Land on their own. They were driven back by their enemies. Doing the right things is not the most important thing. Most important is to love and obey God, which includes doing the right things in the right way, at the right time. See *When Critics Ask* p.82 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 24:10, how could they see God’s form, since God does not have a physical body?**

A: God can assume any physical shape He wants to have. See *When Critics Ask* p.83, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.124, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.152-153, and *When Cultists Ask* p.36 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 25:18, why did God command Moses to make graven images of cherubim?**

A: These were images that adorned the Tabernacle, but these images were not worshipped, prayed to, or venerated. *When Cultists Ask* p.36-37 mentions that the cherubim were for decorative art, they were not images of God, and they were not for either worship or veneration. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.146-147 and *When Critics Ask* p.83-84 for more info.

Q: In Ex 26:11,37; 25:3; 27:2-19; 30:18; 31:4; 35:5,24,32; 36:18,38; 38:2-29; 39:39 (KJV), why does this say brass?

A: It was really bronze, as The NKJV, NIV, NRSV, Green’s Literal Translation, the NET Bible and even the older RSV translate it. Today bronze is an alloy of copper and tin, and brass is a term for an alloy of copper and zinc. However, technically this is not a mistake in the KJV as *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.654 points out that 400 years ago, any alloy of copper was called brass.

The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1123 mentions that the chemical distinction between tin and zinc was not generally known until modern times. Brass was apparently first deliberately made in Roman times, though since copper and zinc do sometimes naturally occur together, brass could have been made much earlier.

## **Q: In Ex 27:1 and Dt 10:3 (KJV), what is Shittim wood?**

A: It probably means wood from the acacia tree. Shittim was a place east of Mount Sinai mentioned in Numbers 25:1. The wood might have been from that place, named after that place, or that place might have been named after the wood.

**Q: In Ex 28:30, what are the “Urim and Thummim”?**

A: They were a means God gave the priests for casting lots to find out God’s will. A description of their exact appearance has been lost, except that Josephus claims they were stones on a breastplate. *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.357 says, “Urim and Thummim” can mean “lights and perfection”.

**Q: In Ex 28:34-35, how do bells keep Aaron, and his descendants, from dying?**

A: Of themselves, the bells do not. But the proper form of worship in this Tabernacle was a serious matter to God, and ignoring this command would result in death. See also the next question.

## **Q: In Ex 28:34-45 and Ex 39:22-26, what was the purpose of the bells on the robe of the priest?**

A: Scripture does not say, but we can speculate on two reasons.

**1.** As the people outside listened, they could hear the priest, whom they could not see, making the atoning sacrifice for them. See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.152 for more info.

**2.** If the bells, stopped, they might indicate God was displeased with the priest and killed him. Then the people could pull the priest out by the rope that was around him.

**Q: In Ex 29:20 and Lev 8:23-24, why put the blood on Aaron’s right ear, right thumb, and right big toe?**

A: While Scripture does not expressly say why God wanted this, the symbolism is not hard to see. It represents a bonding with the sacrifice. As another example, this was done to someone cleansed from a skin disease, when they brought their sacrifice of cleansing to the priest. (Leviticus 14:1-2,14-17)

**Q: In Ex 30, what is the meaning of the objects and what do they represent?**

A: First of all, there might still be some mysteries we do not know yet; God might not necessarily have revealed every reason why everything was exactly this way. Hebrews 8:5 says, “The place where they serve is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary, just as Moses was warned by God as he was about to complete the tabernacle. For he says, ‘See that you make everything according to the design shown to you on the mountain.’” (NET Bible) See Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 for more on the significance of the Tabernacle and objects inside.

Here are more details on Exodus 30.

**Exodus 30:1-9 The altar of acacia wood** was small, about 3 feet high and 18 inches square, but very heavy because it was overlaid with gold. Gold can represent holiness and God, and gold was one of the three gifts the wise men brought to Jesus. This altar is a type of Christ's sacrifice for us. Curiously, no ornament of the temple was mentioned as "most holy" except the altar.

A secondary application to our lives is that just as the priest had to burn incense on the altar every morning and evening, we should talk with God at least every morning and evening too. As Christ sacrificed his life for us, in a lesser way we should be willing to suffer for others, as Paul showed in Colossians 1:24.

**Exodus 30:10 once a year** the high priest of the Israelites, was required to make atonement on the horns of the altar.

Just as the Israelites had a high priest in Exodus 30, we have a High priest who made a sacrifice for us in Hebrews 4:14: Jesus.

**Exodus 30:17-21 Bronze basin for washing**. Aaron and his sons [descendants] were to wash their hands and feet prior to entering the Tent of Meeting, and prior to approaching the altar.

Primarily, we are not to go before God thinking we do not have to be clean. We must be washed. Of course, Christians are priests and kings, and we are washed in the blood of Jesus, so He fulfilled that for us. But we are to live washed, clean lives. See 1 Peter 1:15-16; 2:11-12.

By the way, the bronze came from bronze mirrors donated by the women in Exodus 38:8. A secondary application to our lives is that what was once used for vanity and adornment was remelted to be used for cleansing. It would please God if we were willing to have some of our familiar customs and habits “remelted” that they be transformed to His work. See Romans 12:1-2 and James 1:23-25.

**Exodus 30:22-33 Anointing oil** on holy things. I think the formula was simply done because it has a good-smelling result. Anointing oil is a type of the Holy Spirit and represents sanctification by God. It was salted in Exodus 30:35, probably for a preservative effect. Myrrh was very expensive, and one of the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus.

Primarily, as the anointing oil's fragrance "set the atmosphere" for everything, our cleansing and sanctification through the Holy gives us the aroma of Christ through and through. See 2 Corinthians 2:14-16 for more on us being the aroma of Christ.

A secondary application to our lives is that this anointing oil was not to taken for granted and “made common” by being used for anything else. Our bodies (God's temple 1 Corinthians 6:19-20), our unity of the spirit (Ephesians 4:3), and our lives are not to be made common with unholy uses. We are not to throw our pearls before swine, be yoked with unbelievers (2 Corinthians 6:14-18), regard as holy things that are not holy, or be led astray from our sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)

**Exodus 30:34-38** **Incense** represents intercession and prayers. But the incense was not to be used for anything else. Frankincense was very expensive, and it was one of the three gifts the wise men brought to Jesus. See Revelation 8:3-4 on incense being associated with prayer.

Primarily, as the priest's burning incense was a smell that permeated everything, The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and Jesus (John 16:7) should permeate our lives. Christ, and Christ alone, is our mediator (Ephesians 2:13-17; Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 8:6) and the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us, with groans too deep for words (Romans 8:26-27).

A secondary application to our lives is that in following Christ, we are to continually pray, praising God and interceding for others. (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 4:6)

**Q: In Ex 30:11,15 why did poor have to pay the same as the rich, who could afford it better?**

A: The shekel tax as a ransom for their life, and there is an important point here. The life of the rich person is not any more or less important than the life of a poor person. In all the Old Testament laws, there was no less penalty for killing or harming a poor person than a rich person.

The tax was only for people twenty years and older, and probably just men, which would mean that this was for a family unit. A family would not be penalized for having more children. Also, the shekel was a small unit of money.

See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.473 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 30:12 and Lev 9:7, how can a ram or bull make atonement for a person?**

A: Of itself, it cannot make atonement, according to Hebrews 9:9 and 10:4. However, Hebrews 9-11 shows the Old Testament sacrifices were a type, or figure, of Christ’s sacrifice.

To put this in everyday terms, supposed some people had a great debt (or sin), that was so great they can never hope to repay their creditor (God’s impartial demands for justice). Their credit cannot be trusted. But a rich king (God) steps in and signs his name to an agreement to repay the debt in full. Then His son comes and pays the entire debt. When the creditor came around for the money, the people, in obedience to the king, had an actual sign that their debt was assumed by the king. See *When Critics Ask* p.522 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 30:31-34, isn’t it severe to kill someone for making a particular formulation of perfume?**

A: Yes, it is strict. It is not unfair if everyone knows the rules, though. There is no evidence that anyone ever broke this rule or was punished for it.

**Q: In Ex 31:12, why was observing the Sabbath Day so important?**

A: Many genuine Christians believe that all days are a Sabbath rest under Christ (Hebrews 4:8-11), while other genuine Christians believe we are to keep the Sabbath today. Paul recognizes both practices in Romans 14:5-7, and says what counts is our living for the Lord.

Regardless though, all Christians have to agree that keeping the Sabbath Day was a very important commandment back during the time of the Mosaic Law, and if we lived back then, we would have to be diligent to keep it.

There are three explicit commands, and four explicit reasons regarding the Sabbath, but we can also see more reasons.

**Sabbath Commands:**

1. Keep the Sabbath holy (Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 6:12)

2. Do not work yourself (Exodus 20:10; Deuteronomy 6:13-14)

3. Those under you: son, daughter, servants, even (non-Jewish) foreigners within your gates, even animals, shall have a day of rest. (Exodus 20:10; Deuteronomy 6:14)

**Explicit Sabbath Reasons:**

1. Simple obedience: They are to obey God’s commands.

2. Remembering Our Creator: As God made the earth in six days and then rested, so we too honor Him by resting on the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:11)

3. Remembering slavery and our Deliverer: As the Israelites were slaves in Egypt (presumably with no rest), and God brought them out, they are to remember they and observe the Sabbath. (Deuteronomy 16:15b)

4. As a sign between God’s Old Testament people and God, that they would know God makes us holy. (Exodus 31:13)

5. God blessed the Sabbath and made it holy, so we are to acknowledge that. (Exodus 20:11b)

**Possible Additional Reasons:**

1. The Sabbath was an affront to people’s own wisdom and effort. It would seem obvious to someone wise in this world that if you put in more work, you will get more benefit. And even when you wanted to take a break, you could still make your employees, servants, and animals more hard-working. God did not contradict that thought, or even say whether it was true or not. Regardless of the perceived truth of that mindset, God said to obey Him first.

2. The Sabbath was an affront to their self-reliance and independence. A trader, farmer, craftsman, or any other laborer would want to work the Sabbath if they thought the prosperity or even survival of themselves and their family depended on it. But it boils down to trust: does your prosperity and survival depend on you, or do you believe it depends on God?

3. Having a day of rest would make both them, the people under them, and even their animals healthier, physically, mentally, and emotionally, in having time to refresh and restore from the labor of the week. People today, regardless of their belief, need time to rest and refresh themselves.

4. Having a day of rest helps prevent burnout, from doing the same thing with no variation for years and years. Even Christians who see all days as alike still need time to rest and recuperate.

While genuine Christians disagree on not working on the Sabbath (Saturday), or Sunday, or all days are alike, all Christians ought to agree on two things here.

a) If we believed God wanted us to keep one day without work today, we should do it.

b) All our days, not just one-seventh of them, are to be devoted to serving God.

**Q: In Ex 31:17, can God get weary?**

A: God does not get physically tired (Isaiah 40:28). However, just as people can say they are tired of whining and insincere love, this is an expression showing God’s lack of interest in insincere worship of Him. Isaiah 43:24 says that the Israelite’s sins wearied God. Isaiah 1:14 says their festivals wearied God when they were wicked people. Ahaz’s disbelief wearied God in Isaiah 7:14. Malachi 2:17 says that their words wearied God when they said those who do evil are good, and where is the God of justice. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.212-213 for additional discussion.

**Q: In Ex 32:2-5, how could the prophet Aaron advocate worshipping idols?**

A: Aaron sinned horribly. There is no excuse for what he did, but here is a possible explanation for his actions. When Moses did not come back, many questioned if Moses ever would return at all. Given the pressure of so many stressed and leaderless people asking Aaron to make an idol, Aaron gave in. Perhaps he valued his leading the people as a priest to restore structure and normalcy over waiting indefinitely upon the Lord.

**Q: In Ex 32:1-10, why did God kill the Israelites who worshipped the golden calf, and not Aaron who made it?**

A: God would have been just to kill all of them. However, God has the right to delay justice. He also has the right to extend mercy as He wishes, as Romans 9:15 shows.

**The Circumstances:** The people suggested the golden calf and provided the material. Scripture does not say whether Aaron was enthusiastic or felt coerced to obey all the people around him. The golden calf was using an image to worship the Lord in Exodus 32:5, not a different God. Of course, even though the circumstances can help us realize why Aaron did this, the circumstances still do not excuse Aaron.

**God is merciful to some and can delay His justice:** God was very angry in verse 10 and He considered just destroying them all. God would have been just to destroy Aaron and all the others. God was merciful not just to Aaron, and merciful for not killing all the Israelites too.

**Q: In Ex 32:14 does God change His mind, contrary to Num 23:19 and 1 Sam 15:29?**

A: When our heart and actions change, God’s revealed will towards us can change too. See the answer for Exodus 33:3, *When Critics Ask* p.85, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.209-210 for info.

**Q: In Ex 32:30, how could Moses try to make atonement for the people?**

A: People can try to do impossible things, but even Moses could not take the place of anyone else, as Jeremiah 15:1 shows. Moses begged God to forgive the people of their great sin, and if not, then blot him out of God’s book. This sounds very similar to Paul’s feelings in Romans 9:1-4.

**Q: Does Ex 32:30-32 show that Moses could take the place of the people similar to the Catholic belief in a “treasury of merit”?**

A: No. If anything, it implies just the opposite, for two reasons.

**1.** In Exodus 32:33-34, God said that Moses’ offer was not accepted by God. As a side note, Paul had a similar sentiment of sacrificial love towards the Jews in Romans 9:3, but it did not do the Jews any good either.

**2.** Moses did not offer to suffer for the people. Moses’ offer to be completely blotted out of the book means sent to Hell. Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, and Copts all agree that no Christian goes to Hell for other Christians.

As a side note, in church tradition, the idea of a “treasury of merit” is totally absent from all pre-Nicene Christian writings. See *When Cultists Ask* p.37-38 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 32:12 why did Moses ask God to “repent of this evil against thy people”?**

A: The word “evil” here can also mean disaster. Moses asked God to relent from bringing the threatened disaster, because Deuteronomy 9:8 said God’s wrath was aroused enough to destroy the people.

**Q: In Ex 33:3 and Joshua 1, did God go with the Israelites into the Promised Land, or not?**

A: God’s revealed will is often timely and conditional, and it is sometimes explained as an anthropomorphic expression.

**Timely:** God told the rebellious generation he would not go with them. They all died, and God went with the following generation.

**Conditional:** Many of God’s threats or promises have an explicit or implicit condition with them. For some examples of implicit conditional threats, see Jonah 3 and Genesis 20:3. See *When Critics Ask* p.87 for more info.

**Anthropomorphic:** God, who is beyond time, already knew what they would do, and He already knew what He would do. However, it is sometimes difficult for people to see that and simultaneously see that the people still had a real choice. Certainly if God had just told them what they would do for certain and what He would do for certain, that would limit their choosing.

A person does not have to agree with or even understand the concept that God is beyond time. They do not need to ponder timelessness before God will even communicate with them in a meaningful way. God communicates with people in terms people can all understand. See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.202-205 for more on God communicating anthropomorphically.

Q: In Ex 33:5-6, why were the Israelites to take off their ornaments so that God would know what to do with them?

A: They were to take off the ornaments they had on when sinning, as a sign of mourning, and (hopefully) repentance. There is a key principle touched on here. God’s revealed will to us can change when our heart changes. They had a choice to obey and mourn for their sin, or not.

See the discussion on Genesis 20:3-6, Deuteronomy 20:17; Jeremiah 15:6; Jonah 3-4; Jonah 3:10, and Jonah 4:1-2 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 33:11, could Moses talk with God face-to-face?**

A: As Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe write, a blind man can speak face to face with someone without seeing their face. This is an expression showing that Moses and God spoke intimately with each other, but it does not say Moses saw God’s face as Exodus 33:20 shows. See *When Critics Ask* p.58, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.124-125, *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.82-83, and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.46 for more info.

**Q: In Ex 33:11,23; 24:10; and Gen 32:30 how could Moses, Abraham, or anyone else see anything of God, since God is invisible as Jn 1:18; Ex 33:20; Col 1:15 and 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16 say?**

A: This was an argument Gnostics tried to use to say that, despite Jesus upholding the law, the God of the Old Testament was a different God than the God of the New Testament.

Invisible does not mean not having any form, nor does it mean that God is undetectable by angels or demons. It certainly does not mean that Almighty God is not mighty enough to be able to appear in a visible form. It simply means that we, with only visible eyes, cannot see things in the invisible realm and God is in that realm.

But God, while still remaining in heaven, is also able to “cross-over” and enter the physical realm in space-time. God would still be invisible in nature, but able to make Himself visible. We by nature are close to invisible during the darkness of night, but if we had a flashlight, people could still see where our presence was located. God could do the same, - with a burning bush.

But God did even more. In a way that has no 100% perfect natural analog, God crossed-over to have a localized presence in space-time, not just appearing as a man, but as a real, living, breathing man: Jesus Christ. Jesus both was and still is 100% human and 100% God.

Historically Irenaeus was the first Christian known to have answered this objection. He emphasized that since God is Almighty, He can even make visible, mortal people see invisible things, both in visions and after they put on immortality. See *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 4 ch.20.4-10 p.489-491 for a more extensive answer.

**Q: In Ex 33:19-20, how could Moses see God’s “back”, since God is spirit?**

A: It is hard to refer to various distinctions of a spirit without using anthropomorphic terms. “Back” here does not “the part with a spinal cord”. Rather, “back” can mean “back” as opposed to “front”.

This refers to a reflection of some of God’s attributes. It is not all of God’s glory, as God denied Moses’ request to see God’s glory. (probably for Moses own safety). See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.154-156, *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.83 and R.C. Sproul in the first tape of his *Holiness of God* Series for more info.

**Q: In Ex 34:20, Ex 13:2, and Num 18:15-16, should people kill unclean animals, or redeem them with money?**

A: Exodus 34:20 says the owner had to either kill the firstborn animal or redeem it with money, except that he could redeem a donkey with a lamb. No other distinction was made between clean and unclean animals. Later, in Numbers 18:15-16 the law was narrowed to allow only redeeming with money of the firstborn unclean animals. See *When Critics Ask* p.87 for more info.

Some may have a problem with any God’s law changing, because they do not differentiate three different aspects: moral, civil, and ceremonial. The ceremonial law changed in other ways, too, as situations changed. For example, sacrifices were not at the temple, before the temple was built.

**Q: In Ex 34:23, why did all the man have to appear and not the women and children? (A Muslim asked this.)**

A: We can see the answer when we read both Exodus 34:23 and 24 closely. It says, “Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD, the God of Israel.” I will drive out nations before you and enlarge our territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God.” The women did not fight in the wars, only the men. No man was to “hide” by not appearing.

**Q: In Ex 34:33 (KJV), how can it say, “And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face”, since Ex 34:35 and 2 Cor 3:7,13 show the Israelites saw Moses’ face?**

A: The King James Version did not translate Exodus 34:33 well here. The Hebrew indicates that Moses had finished speaking when he took off the veil. Other modern versions are similar to the New King James, which says, “And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face.”

**Q: In Ex 35-40, what was the symbolism of the furniture within the Tabernacle?**

# A: Some see the following:

**B**razen alter symbolized that even entrance demanded sacrifice

**B**razen laver showed that those within needed cleansing

**B**read of the Presence showed that Christ is our bread, He gives us all that we need for sustenance

**G**olden lampstand represented praise and prayer

**A**rk represented the presence of God

**V**eil showed the way to God’s presence was not open to anyone (except the priest once a year). This changed when the veil is supernaturally ripped in two at the same time Jesus died on the cross.

This was taken loosely from *The Teacher’s Commentary* by Lawrence O. Richards.

**Q: In Ex 36:8-14, I was told that the dimensions that Moses received from God to build the tabernacle were almost exactly the dimensions that other ancients (not Hebrews) to build their own place of worship. Does this affect the credulity of God’s dimensions for the Tabernacle?**

A: First let's assume that presupposition is correct. (I will challenge that later). If it were the same dimensions as the dimensions the other ancients used for their temples, that would not affect the credibility of the Bible. If there were something special about the dimensions, Satan would use that information to make a counterfeit.

On the other hand, I seriously doubt the claim that these were the dimensions other ancients used for their temples, for a couple of reasons.

a) Different ancient worship places had different dimensions among themselves. As a simplistic example, suppose there were 10 ancient temples with dimensions of 100, 105, 110, 120, 125, 130, 135, 140, 145, 150, and the tabernacle had a dimension somewhere between 100 and 150. Now no matter what the dimension of the tabernacle, one could claim it was very similar to one of those 8 temples. - but that does not prove anything.

b) Ancient temples did not generally have a holy of holies, and the ones we know about were stationary temples, not tents.

c) Finally, remember that the tabernacle was built around 1400 B.C., older than all Roman temples and all Greek temples, except for the Myceneans. So, if the dimensions were the same as a later temple, either there was no copying, or the later copied from the earlier, not the other way around. In general, it is not wise to pay credence to such things, unless they can provide examples.

Q: In Ex 36:22 (KJV, NASB), what are “tenons”?

A: Green’s Literal Translation says “pins”. The NRSV says “pegs”. The NIV says “projections”. The NKJV says “tenons” with a footnote says, “Projections for joining, lit. hands”.

Q: In Ex 37:14, does a sevenfold lampstand indicate later authorship, as sevenfold lampstands [allegedly] did not appear until 600 B.C.?

A: Some used to think this, but *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.31-32 points out the archaeologists have found sevenfold lampstands at Tell Beit Mirsim and some tombs at Dothan at the time of Moses show sevenfold lamps. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1006 says that seven-spouted lamps have been found in tombs and in the ruins of Canaanite temples, “Thus, the concept of a seven-fold lamp for sacred use in the Mosaic tabernacle was not anachronistic, as OT critics used to claim.”

Q: Is Ex 38:8 evidence of later composition, as they [allegedly] did not have bronze mirrors back then?

A: No, because they did have bronze mirrors, as *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.31 says. Bronze is an alloy of copper and 2-18 percent tin. (The KJV said brass, because 400 years ago any alloy of copper was called brass.) The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1123-1124 says that bronze objects have been found at Ur from c.2500 B.C..

On p.1139 it says that bronze mirrors were rare, except in Egypt. They were very valuable though, as the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.389 says bronze mirrors did not spread to the common people until Hellenistic times. It also says that in the time of Joshua, the Tell el-Amarna letters mention a vassal presenting Pharaoh Akhenaton with 32 polished bronze mirrors. The Hittite king gave him one silver mirror.

As a side note, the oldest known Old Testament manuscript preserved today is 4Q17 of the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is dated at 250 A.D. and contains Exodus 38 to Leviticus 2. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated* p.474 says it is practically identical to the Masoretic text.

## **Q: In Ex 39:28; Lev 8:9; Lev 16:4 (KJV), what is the mitre?**

A: This Hebrew word can be translated “turban”, as the NASB, NIV, NKJV, NRSV, and NET Bible translate. Green’s Literal Translation says “miter”.

**Q: In Ex 40, how could they build the tent, since there the tent was already there in Ex 33:7-8?**

A: First two facts that are probably not that relevant, then the answer.

**1.** It is not required that Exodus 33:7-8 and Exodus 40 were written in chronological order, though they probably were.

**2.** After constant use under the sun, the tent might wear out.

**Answer:** Exodus 33:7-8 says Moses took an existing tent and called it the tent of meeting. After God anointed Bezalel and Aholiab In Exodus 31:2-7; 35:30; 36:1, they made the sacred implements, including a new tent of meeting, after God’s design.

**Q: In Ex, what applications can we learn from the entire book?**

A: There are at least three applications.

As Moses and the Israelites left Egypt, so too, there may be fears, sins, other things, and situations that we need to be delivered from. And when we are delivered from them we need to leave. Are there certain “old, comfortable ways” of doing things in your life that you need to leave and stop doing?

Moses had already left the bondage of Egypt 40 years prior to the Exodus. But God had Moses go back to Egypt, not to bondage, but to free others. We may be free of some bondage we had, but what about our family, friends, and others? Perhaps God wants to use us to help deliver them too.

Even though all the Israelites were delivered, there were casualties on the way. Some Israelites were killed by plague and fire when they worshipped the golden calf, challenged Moses’ authority, and were immoral with Moabite women. Miriam was made leprous for a while because of her prejudices. Even Moses himself was forbidden to enter the Promised Land because of him losing his temper in front of the people at the waters of Meribah. When you are delivered from something that is not the end of your challenges. You still must persevere. If you do something that makes you a casualty, then repent quickly, and even though there may still be consequences, obey God anyway for the rest of the journey.

**Q: In Ex, what are some of the earliest manuscripts that still exist today?**

A: Here are the earliest ones.

**Ketef Hinnom** scrolls are 650-587 B.C., on silver (so they survived), and have fragments of Exodus 20:6; Numbers 6:24-26; Deuteronomy 5:10; 7:9; Nehemiah 1:5; and Daniel 9:4.

**Dead Sea Scrolls:** (250 B.C. onward) 17 separate copies (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.30 and *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.*), from at least 23 original copies (*The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.*). The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says there are 15 copies. One manuscript from cave 4 is of the Samaritan family. According to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.* p.474, 4Q17 fragment in cave 4 (containing Exodus 38-Leviticus 2) is one of the oldest manuscripts, copied around 250 B.C. It is practically identical to the Masoretic text. These manuscripts are called

1Q2 (=1QExodus) Exodus 16:12-16; 19:24-25; 20:1,5-6,25-26; 21:1,4-5

2Q2 (=2QExodus(a)) Exodus 1:11-14; 7:1-4; 9:27=29; 11:3-7; 12:32-41; 21:18-20?; 26:11-13; 30:21?; 30:23-25; 32:32-34

2Q3 (=2QExodus(b)) paleo-Hebrew of Exodus 4:31; 12:26-27?; 18:21-22; 19:9; 21:37; 22:1-2,15-19; 27:17-19; 31:167-17; 34:10. Curiously it has Exodus 19:9 directly followed by a blank line directly followed by Exodus 34:10

2Q4 (=2QExodus(c)) Exodus 5:3-5

4Q1 (=4QGenesis-Exodus(a)) Genesis and Exodus. Exodus 2:1-5; 3:8-16, 18-21; 4:4-9,26-31; 5:1,3-17; 6:4-21,25; 7:5-13,15-20; 8:20-22; 9:8?

4Q11 (=4QpaleoGenesis-Exodus(i)) paleo-Hebrew of Genesis 50:26 Exodus 1:1-5 (twice?), 2:10,22025; 3:1-4,17-21; 8:13-15,19-21; 9:25-29,33-35; 10:1-5; 11:4-10; 12:1-12,42-46; 14:15-24;16:2-7,13-14,18-20,23-31,33-36; 17:1-3,5-11; 18:17-24; 19:24-25; 20:1-2; 22:23-24; 23:5-16; 25:7-20; 26:29-37; 27:1, 27:4?; 27:6-14; 28:33-35,40-42; 36:34-36; 40:15?

4Q13 (=4QExodus(b)) contains 6 fragments of Exodus 1-5

4Q14 (=4QExodus(c)) contains 36 fragments of Exodus 7-18

4Q15 (=4QExodus(d)) Exodus 13:15-17 followed directly by 15:1

4Q16 (=4QExodus(e)) Exodus 13:3-5

4Q17 (=4QExod-Lev(f)) Exodus 38-Lev2. (250 B.C.)

4Q18 (=4QExodus(g)) Exodus 14:21-27

4Q19 (=4QExodus(h)) Exodus 6:3-6

4Q20 (=4QExod(j)) Exodus 7-8

4Q21 (=4QExodus(k)) Exodus 36:9-10

4Q22 (=2QPaleoExodus(m)) Exodus Samaritan type of paleo-Hebrew Paleographically it is 100-25 B.C. The accelerated mass. Spec. dating at the Tucson lab gave 116 B.C. - 48 A.D.

4Q37 (=4QDeuteronomy(j)) (includes Deuteronomy 11:21 followed by Exodus 12:43-13:5)

7Q1 (= 7QLXXExod) is a copy of the Greek Septuagint version of Exodus 28:4-6 (100 B.C.).

**phylacteries** and **mezuzot** (worn on the forehead and arms respectively) have been found of Exodus and Deuteronomy among the Dead Sea Scrolls according to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.33.

8Q3 is a phylactery which has Exodus 13:1-10; 13:11-16; 12:43-51; 20:11; Deuteronomy 6:5-9; 11:13; 6:1-3; 10:20-22; 10:12-19; 5:1-14; 10:13(?); 11:2; 10:21-22; 11:1,6-12.

8Q4 is a Mezuzah of Deuteronomy 10:12-11:21.

**A Parallel Pentateuch** was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. As some have made one Gospel story by placing various Gospel passages side by side, the Qumran community did the same with the Pentateuch, which is called scroll 4Q158.

Overall, preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls are the following verses from Exodus: **1**:1-22; **2**:1-18,22-25; **3**:1-4,8-21; **4**:1-9,26-31; **5**:1,3-17; **6**:3-21,30; **7**:1-13,26-29; **8**:1,5-22; **9**:5b-35; **10**:1-28; **11**:3-10; **12**:1-2,6-8,12-22,31-51; **13**:1-7,12-13,15-16,18-22; **14**:1-1,25-27; **15**:1,9-21,23-27; **16**:1-8,13-14,1-20,23-36; **17**:1-16; **18**:1-27; **19**:1,7-17,23-25; **20**:1-2,18-19a; **21**:1,4-6,13-14,18-20?,22-32,37; **22**:1-4,6-7,11-13,15-30; **23**:5-16,29-31; **24**:1-4,6-11; **25**:7-29,31-34; **26**:8-15,21-37; **27**:1-3,4?,6-14,18-19; **28**:3-12,22-24,26-28,30-43; **29**:1-5,20,22-25,31-41; **30**:10,12-18,21?,23-25,29-31,34-38; **31**:1-8,13-17; **32**:2-19,25-30,32-34; **33**:12-23; **34**:1-3,10-13,15-18,20-24,27-28; **35**:1; **36**:9-10,21-24,34-36; **37**:9-16; **38**:18-22; **39**:3-24; **40**:8-27; **40**:15?. Ex **34**:23-24,27-28 are very fragmentary.

See *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.2 p.615 and *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* for more info.

**The Nash Papyrus**, dated 150 B.C., contains the Ten Commandments combined from Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-6:4f. The Nash Papyrus was the oldest known Biblical text until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. A photograph of it is in the *New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.228.

**Papyrus Oxyrhynchus** 1074 of Exodus is from approximately the second century (*The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* p.367.

**Vaticanus** (325-350 A.D.) has preserved all of Exodus, except that Exodus 28:23-28 is absent.

We do not have any pages of Sinaiticus (340-350 A.D.) containing Exodus.

**Alexandrinus** (c.450 A.D.) has all of Exodus, except that Exodus 28:23-28 is absent.

**The Septuagint** is a Greek translation of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. *Greek Manuscripts of the Bible* p.60-61 shows a picture of a fragment, called Rahlfs 803 (=Dead sea scroll 7Q1), of Exodus 28:4-6, going back to 100 B.C.

**Samaritans** made their own copy of the Torah in the second century B.C., though the earliest surviving Samaritan copies are from the Middle Ages. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.125-126. *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.1 p.277 says, “the Samaritan Pentateuch tends to expand the text by frequently inserting parallel material from other places in the Pentateuch.”

**A Syriac translation** of the Septuagint was made by Bishop Paul of Tella (616-617 A.D.), which we still have today, according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.35 (footnote).

**Q: In Ex, how do we know that what we have is what was originally written based on the Jewish writer Philo?**

A: As Christians we trust that the Old Testament that Christ validated the Old Testament we have. For that matter, for Muslims their Qur’an says that Jesus was given the Torah in Sura 5:46. We have early manuscripts from the time of Christ, which the next question addresses. However, there is an additional line of evidence. Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish scholar who lived from 15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D. He wrote in Greek, but it is curious that his Greek quotes of the Old Testament agree more closely with the Hebrew Masoretic text instead of the Greek Septuagint. He went into great detail into what different verses mean. Here are verses he referred to in Exodus.

**1**:8,9,11,15,18,20,21; **2**:1,3,6,12,15-16,18,21,23,25; **3**:1-2,4-6,9,14-15,17; **4**:3,10,12,14,22; **5**:2; **6**:3,12,16,23,26,29; **7**:1,12,15,17,23; **8**:1,9,19,26,29; **10**:20-23; **11**:7; **12**:2-4,8,11-12,16,23,34,38; **13**:2,11-13,15,19; **14**:4,7,13-14,19,27,30; **15**:1,4,9,17,20,23,25,27; **16**:4,6,13,15,18,36; **17**:6,11-12; **18**:4,7,11,14,16,25; **19**:6,17-20; **20**:2,5,9,12-13,16,18-22; **21**:5-6,10,12-16,22,26,28,31,33; **22**:1,6-7,26; **23**:1-5,8,10,13,18-20,28; **24**:1,6,10-11,18; **25**:1,22,30,31,33,40; **26**:1; **27**:9; **28**:17,30,34,36; **30**:8,13,15,34; **31**:1-2,39; **32**:1,7,16-17,20,26,27,32; **33**:5,7,12-13,17-18,23; **34**:12,28; **35**:22,30; **38**:8; **39**:3,26

See *The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged*. new updated version for more info.

**Q: Which early writers referred to Exodus?**

**A: Philo the Jew** (15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D.) quotes extensively from Exodus in *On the Confusion of Tongues*, *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, *Preliminary Studies*, and other works.

Early pre-Nicene church writers referenced Exodus extensively.

**Clement of Rome** (96-98 A.D.) quotes Exodus 2:14 *1 Clement* ch.4 p.6. He quotes Exodus 3:11 in *1 Clement* ch.18 p.10.

***Didache*** (=*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*) (c.60-120 A.D.) discusses Exodus 20:13,14,15,16,17.

***Epistle of Barnabas*** (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.12 p.145 quotes Exodus 17:14.

**Justin Martyr** (c.138-165 A.D.) “for Moses says somewhere in Exodus” and quotes Exodus 6:2 ff in *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* ch.126 p.263

Justin Martyr (c.138-165 A.D.) calls Exodus 3:2-4 scripture in *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* ch.60 p.227

Justin Martyr (c.138-165 A.D.) “For the Scripture says thus:” then Justin quotes Exodus 3:2-4. *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew* ch.49 p.220

**Meleto/Melito of Sardis** (170-180 A.D.) “The finger of the Lord - the Holy Spirit, by whose operation the tables of the **law** in **Exodus** are said to have been written” fragment 9 p.761

Melito of Sardis (170-177/180 A.D.) “having made myself accurately acquainted with the books of the Old Testament, I have set them down below, and herewith send you *the list*. Their names are as follows:- The five *books* of Moses-Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the four *books* of Kings, the two of Chronicles, the *book of the* Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, also called *the Book of* Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Job, *the books of* the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, of the twelve contained in a single book, Daniel, Ezekiel, Esdras.” *From the Book of Extracts* p.759

**Theophilus of Antioch** (168-181/188 A.D.) quotes Exodus 20:3; 23:6; 22:21 as God is speaking. *Theophilus to Autolycus* book 3 ch.9 p.114

**Irenaeus of Lyons** (182-188 A.D.) quotes Exodus 3:7-8 as God is speaking. *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 4 ch.12.4 p.476

**Clement of Alexandria** (193-217/220 A.D.) “It is He also who teaches Moses to act as instructor. For the Lord says, ‘If any one sin before Me, him will I blot out of My book; but now, go and lead this people into the place which I told thee.’” (Exodus 32:33,34) *The Instructor* book 1 ch.7 p.224. See also The Instructor book 1 ch.8 p.218 where he calls Exodus 3:8 Scripture.

**Tertullian** (198-220 A.D.) first quotes Exodus 3:17 and then says, “Likewise in the same *book* of Exodus:” and quotes Exodus 20:2,22,23. *Scorpiace* ch.2 vol.3 p.634

Tertullian (204/205 A.D.) quotes half of Exodus 20:16. *Five Books Against Marcion* book 4 ch.12 p.363

**Hippolytus** (222-235/6 A.D.) criticizes Simon’s over-allegorization of Genesis and Exodus in *Refutation of All Heresies* book 6 ch.10 p.78, and Simon’s allegorization of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy in ch.11 p.78

**Origen** (240 A.D.) refers to Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. *Commentary on the Song of Songs* prologue p.47

Origen (225-254 A.D.) wrote commentaries on Romans, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua, 1 Kings, Jeremiah, and Luke

**Novatian** (250/4-256/7 A.D.) “And although the heavenly Scripture often turns the divine appearance into a human form, as when it says,” and quotes Psalm 34:15 “or when it says,” and quotes Genesis 8:21. “or where there are give to Moses the tables” and quotes Exodus 31:18. “or when the people of the children of Israel are set free from the land of Egypt” and quotes Psalm 136:12 “or when it says,” and quotes Isaiah 1:20. *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* ch.6 p.615.

Novatian (250/4-256/7 A.D.) quotes Exodus 4:13 as by Moses. *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* ch.9 p.618

***Treatise Against Novatian*** (c.246-258 A.D.) ch.12 p.660 quotes Exodus 9:28.

**Cyprian of Carthage** (c.246-258 A.D.) quotes from Exodus, saying it was from Exodus in *Treatise 12* the third book 11,13,113 among other places.

Cyprian of Carthage (c.246-258 A.D.) mentions Exodus in *Treatise of Cyprian* Treatise 12 Second book ch.15 p.521

**Gregory Thaumaturgus** (240-265 A.D.) “And in the book of Exodus it is said, with reference not only to the case of finding what is a friend’s, but also of finding what is an enemy’s: ‘Thou shalt surely bring them back to the house of their master again.’” *Canonical Epistle* canon 4 p.19

**Dionysius of Alexandria** (c.246-256 A.D.) alludes to Exodus 12:30 in *Epistle 12 to the Alexandrians* p.108.

**Anatolius of Alexandria** (270-280 A.D.) “two Agathobuli, who were surnamed the Masters, and the eminent Aristobulus, who was one of the Seventy who translated the sacred and holy Scriptures of the Hebrews for Ptolemy Philadelphus and his father, and dedicated his exegetical books on the law of Moses to the same kings. These writers, in solving some questions which are raised with respect to Exodus, say that all alike ought to” *Paschal Canon of Anatolius of Alexandria* ch.3 vol.6 p.147

**Adamantius** (c.300 A.D.) quotes Exodus 20:13-15,16. *Dialogue on the True Faith* Second Part 15 b p.94.

**Victorinus of Petau** (martyred 304 A.D.) quotes half of Exodus 24:8 as by Moses. *Commentary on the Apocalypse* from the fifth chapter verse 5 p.350.

**Methodius of Olympus and Patara** (270-311/312 A.D.) quotes Exodus 30:1-9 as He [God] says *Banquet of the Ten Virgins* discourse 5 ch.7 p.328

**Athanasius** (318 A.D.) quotes from Genesis 1:6-11,29; Exodus 20:3; Deuteronomy 6:4,5,13; Psalm 119:90; 146:7-9; 33:6 in *Against the Heathen* ch.46 p.28-29.

Lactantius (c.303-320/325 A.D.) alludes to Exodus 23:20. *The Divine Institutes* book 4 ch.10 p.108

**Post-Nicene writers who referred to Exodus**

**Eusebius of Caesarea** (318-339/340 A.D.)

**Aphrahat the Syrian** (337-345 A.D.)

**Hegemonius of Sirmium** (4th century) translating Archelaus (c.262-278 A.D.) alludes to Exodus 12:35 as by Moses. *Disputation with Manes* ch.40 p.214

**Hilary of Poitiers** (355-367/368 A.D.)

**Athanasius** (367 A.D.) lists the books of the Old Testament in *Paschal Letter* 39 ch.4 p.552.

**Ephraim the Syrian** (350-378 A.D.) wrote commentaries on Genesis and Exodus. (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series* vol.13 p.125 [Intro])

**Basil of Cappadocia** (357-378/379 A.D.) refers to Exodus as scripture.

**Cyril of Jerusalem** (c.349-386 A.D.) says Exodus 7:23 was by Moses in Lecture 13 ch.3 p.82

**Ambrose of Milan** (370-390 A.D.)

Gregory Nanzianzen (330-391 A.D.) alludes to Exodus

**Pacian of Barcelona** (342-379/392 A.D.) God addresses Moses and quotes Exodus 32:33. *On Penitents* ch.5.1 p.75

**Gregory of Nyssa** (c.356-397 A.D.)

**Didymus the blind** (398 A.D.) quotes Exodus 7:13,22 as Exodus. *Commentary on Zechariah* 7 p.147

**Rufinus** (374-406 A.D.)

**Epiphanius of Salamis** (360-403 A.D.) quotes Exodus 1:7 as scripture. *The Panarion* section 1 ch.8,4,5 p.25

**John Chrysostom** (-407 A.D.) refers to Exodus 17:12 as by Moses vol.14 *Commentary on John* Homily 14 p.50

Orosius/Hosius of Braga (414-418 A.D.) alludes to Exodus 6:23,24:1; Lev 10:1-2; Num 3:2,4; 1 Chronicles 6:3. *Defense Against the Pelagians* ch.9 p.125

**Council of Carthage** (393-419 A.D.)

**Sulpicius Severus** (363-420 A.D.) refers to Exodus 20:14 as Exodus in *History* book 1 ch.13 p.77

**Jerome** (373-420 A.D.) discusses the books of the Old Testament. He specifically discusses Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, Job, Jesus son of Nave [Joshua], Judges, Ruth, Samuel Kings (2 books), twelve prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Letter 53 ch.7-8 p.99-101.

**Augustine of Hippo** (338-430 A.D.) wrote an entire commentary on Genesis and a commentary on Exodus.

**John Cassian** (Semi-Pelagian) (319-430 A.D.)

**Among heretics**

**Ebionites** quote of part of Exodus 33:20 as “the law”. *Recognitions of Clement* ch.29 p.122

The Pelagian heretic **Theodore of Mopsuestia** (392-423/429 A.D.) quotes Exodus 32:4. *Commentary on Hosea* ch.2 p.45

**Q: In Ex, what does the “parallel Pentateuch”, (Dead Sea Scroll 4Q158) say?**

A: Here is a small part of it. The scriptures it refers to are in italics. The translation is taken from *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* volume 2 p.307.

“*Ex 20:12-17* your [father] and your mother [so that your days on the soil which YHWH your God gives you are lengthened. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not rob. You shall not give] false evidence [against] your [neigh]bour. You shall not cover the wife of [your] neigh[bour, or his house, or his servant, or his maid, or his ass, or anything of what belongs to your neighbour.] And YHWH said to Moses: *Dt 5:30-31*, Go and tell them: Go back to [your tents! You, however, stay here with me, for I am going to explain to you all the commandments, the laws] and the statutes, which you shall teach them, so that they shall do (them) in the land which [I give them so that they can possess it…] And the people did return, each man to his tent. But Moses remained in the presence [of YHWH…].”

**Q: In Ex, what are some of the translation differences between the Hebrew and Greek Septuagint?**

A: Here are a few of them in the 1,213 verses of Exodus. To get a sampling of Masoretic vs. Septuagint variations, the following focuses on chapter 30. Except where noted the first phrase is the Masoretic text (MT) and the second the Septuagint (LXX).

**Ex 1:5** “And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls, Joseph being in Egypt.” (MT) vs. “But Joseph was in Egypt. And all the souls born of Jacob were seventy-five.” (Septuagint) The Dead Sea Scrolls also say 75 descendants. In Acts 7:14 Stephen said 75 descendants.

**Ex 1:22** “born” vs. “born to Hebrews” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, and Targums)

Ex 2:25 “[God] knew/was concerned about them” vs. “[God] made himself known to them” (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 says the Septuagint is in error here.)

Ex 3:6 “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he feared to look upon God.” (MT) vs. “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraam, and he God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and Moses turned away his face, for he was afraid to gaze at God.” (Septuagint) vs. “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Acts 7:32)

**Ex 3:19** “go unless compelled by a mighty hand” vs. “go, no not by a mighty hand” (Septuagint, Vulgate)

Ex 4:22 “my first-born son” vs. “My own people” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938)

Ex 8:22 “separate/deal differently” vs. “distinguish marvelously” (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.356 says the Septuagint translators misunderstood the Hebrew word here)

**Ex 8:32** “upon your people” vs. “of your people” (Septuagint)

#### Ex 8:23 “make a distinction” vs. “put a deliverance/redemption” in the Septuagint and Vulgate.

**Ex 9:32** A Hebrew word for the second grain, probably “emmer” vs. “rye” in the Septuagint, vs. “herbs” in the Coptic version. (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 says the grain emmer is found in Egyptian tombs, while the grain spelt is not.)

**Ex 12:22** “basin” vs. “threshold”

#### Ex 12:40 “children of Israel lived in Egypt” (MT, Dead Sea Scroll 2Q2 (=2QExod(a), Acts 7:6; Genesis 15:13) vs. “children of Israel lived in Egypt and Canaan” in (Septuagint) vs. “children of Israel and their fathers lived in Egypt and Canaan” (Samaritan Pentateuch). Josephus writing about 93-94 A.D. in *Antiquities of the Jews* 2.15.2 also says they were in Egypt 215 years which is consistent with the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint. Josephus said it was 430 years after Abraham came into Canaan. See *Pharaohs and Kings : A Biblical Quest* p.330-331 for more info. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937 says, “in the land of Canaan”. See <http://dssenglishbible.com/scroll2Q2.htm> for more on 2Q2.

**Ex 14:25** “removed” vs. “clogged/jammed” (Samaritan, Septuagint, Syriac)

Ex 15:8 “breath from your nostrils” vs. “breath from you” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938)

**Ex 18:5** “eat bread” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “offer bread” (Syriac, Targums, Vulgate)

**Ex 18:12** “brought” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “offered” (Syriac, Targum, and Vulgate) *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume p.413-414 says that “brought” is the correct word, and “offered” was just an interpretation.

#### Ex 19:18 “the whole mountain” vs. “all the people” in a few Hebrew manuscripts and the Septuagint.

**Ex 20:12** “…mother, so that you may live long” (MT) vs. “…mother, so that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the good land” (Septuagint). Deuteronomy 5:16 has “…mother, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land”

Ex 20:17 is immediately followed by Dt 11:29-30 and 27:2b-3a,407, telling the Israelites to build the temple on Mt. Gerizim in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Ex 20:18** In the Nash Papyrus the sixth and seventh commandments are reversed according to *The Journey from Texts to Translations* p.188.

Ex 20:24 “in the place where I have caused my name” vs. “in every place where I will cause my name” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938)

Ex 22:8 “The master of the house shall come forward before *Elohim*” vs. “The master of the house shall come forward before *El*” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938. It says the Samaritan Pentateuch “avoids any suggestion of polytheism: e.g., the plural predicates with ‘elohim in the MT (Gen 20:13; 31:53; 35:7; Ex 22:8) are changed to the singular.”) (It is *Theon* in the Greek Septuagint) The NIV translates this word a “judges” with a footnote saying “Or before God; also in verse 9” The NKJV also says “judges”.

**Ex 23:20** “Behold, I *am* about to send an angel before you to guard you in the way, and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.” vs. “And, behold, I send my angel before thy face, that he may bring thee into the land which I have prepared for thee.”

**Ex 23:21** “Be observant before Him, and listen to His voice. Do not be rebellious against Him, for He will not forgive you transgressions; for My name is in Him.” vs. “Take heed to thyself and hearken to him, and disobey him not; for he will not give way to three, for my name is on him.”

**Ex 23:25** “he [God] will bless” vs. “I will bless (Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Ex 24:10** “And they saw the God of Israel. … clearness” vs. “And they saw the place where the God of Israel stood … purity”

**Ex 24:11** “He did not stretch out His hand to the nobles of the sons of Israel. And they saw God” vs. “there was not even one missing, and they appeared in the place of God”

**Ex 28:23-28** present in the Hebrew Masoretic text and the Complutensian Septuagint. Dead Sea scroll 4Q22 (=4QPaleoExodus(m)) contains fragments of 28:22-24,26-28,30-43. Absent from the Vaticanus and Alexandrinus versions of the Septuagint. See *The Septuagint Version : Greek and English* by Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton. p.1131-1132 for more info.

#### Ex 29:9 “on Aaron and his sons” vs. “on them” in the Septuagint.

**Ex 30:1** “An altar, a place of burning incense” vs. “an altar of incense” in the Septuagint.

**Ex 30:1** “acacia-wood” vs. “incorruptible wood” in the Septuagint.

**Ex 30:6** “[the altar] in front/before of the veil” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “[the altar] behind the veil” (Samaritan Pentateuch, according to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.934)

**Ex 30:12** “destruction” vs. “plague” in the Septuagint

**Ex 30:21** “feet, and shall not die” vs. “feet with water, whensoever they shall go into the tabernacle of witness; they shall wash themselves with water, that they die not.” (Perhaps the Septuagint translator accidentally repeated part of a line.)

**Ex 30:27,28** Septuagint added “and all its furniture” four times

**Ex 30:35** “salted, pure and holy” vs. “a pure and holy work” in the Septuagint

**Ex 31:4-5** “bronze and in cutting of stones for settings” vs. “brass and blue, and purple, and spun scarlet, and works in stone”

**Ex 32:29** “Today ordain yourselves” vs. “Today you have ordained yourselves” (Greek, Vulgate)

Ex 33:16 “are distinguished” vs. “shall be glorified” (*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.356 says the Septuagint translators misunderstood the Hebrew word here)

Bibliography for this question: the Hebrew translation is from Jay P. Green’s *Literal Translation* and the Septuagint rendering is from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton’s translation of *The Septuagint : Greek and English*. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5, and the footnotes in the NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV Bibles also were used.

**Bible Query from Leviticus**

## **Q: In Lev, why is this book called Leviticus in English?**

A: The English name comes from the Latin for “relating to Levites”. The Hebrew name is taken from the first sentence “And He [God] called”

**Q: In Lev, what is the main point of having this book in the Bible today?**

A: Since Jesus and the early church all accepted Leviticus as God’s word, we should treasure this book of the Torah as scripture regardless of whether we see the point or not.

Actually, there are so many lessons on holiness one can get from studying Leviticus, and you could almost rename it “pictorial lessons in holiness.”

**Q: In Lev, what are various ways to understand the book?**

A: There are at least five levels one can view the Book of Leviticus.

**A mystery:** God is most gracious and understanding, but some try to see God as only grace, without an understanding of why God’s grace is needed. God is holy, and without us having holiness, no one will see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). Without understanding this key aspect of the character of God, and the character we have, Leviticus will remain a “closed book” with few clues as to why it is there.

**Rules to please God:** At a basic level, some see only a set of ceremonial and personal rules the Israelites were to follow. It is that, and God was serious about those rules, but it is also much more.

**Ancient wisdom for living:** People have looked at Leviticus and seen great wisdom for keeping healthy, especially in an unsanitary environment without much water for cleaning. Many times animals and people get whatever parasites were in any uncooked meat they ate. Generally, animals that ate dead things, bugs, and other animals were forbidden. While Egyptian rulers sometimes married their sisters, intermarriage in the immediate family was specifically forbidden in Leviticus. Specific regulations about skin diseases were not only wise, but extremely important with a lot of people together in a climate with little water to wash. However, for other rules we do not see any practical, earthly reason. There might not have been one. Perhaps they only reason was a reminder to the people that they too were to be set apart, and holy to God. Leviticus is a wise book, but it is less a book about healthful practices than a book illustrating holiness.

**General Lessons on holiness**, whether God’s holiness, or our life of holiness are not an easy to grasp; perhaps that is why God took an entire book to explain. The Israelites coming out of Egypt came out of a culture that had less reverence for their idols than most. When Egyptians prayed to their statues for help, if the help did not come, they would occasionally whip the statue. But Leviticus shows that the true God has a “separateness” from the commonness of life. They could not just give sacrifices to God, they could only do them in the prescribed way. As for childbirth, eating, and religious ceremonies there was only one way that was God’s way. Leviticus 22 is an entire chapter showing how someone could give up something to make an offering or sacrifice, and it be unacceptable. Today when we want to serve God in our way, subject to our conditions, we should be careful that even though we might make sacrifices, our efforts might not be acceptable, if we have no concept of holiness. We are individually called to be holy (1 Peter 1:16-17) and we are called to be a holy people (1 Peter 2:9). As we live holy lives reflecting the holiness of God, we ourselves can be lessons on holiness (2 Corinthians 1:12), letters from Christ written with the Holy Spirit of God (2 Corinthians 2:3).

**Specific motivations and patterns in our Service to God:** The Bible has so much wisdom that mature Christians need to be concerned about balance: do we focus on one aspect of knowing, loving, and serving God to the neglect of other aspects? Leviticus illuminates a number of different ways of serving God, and a growing Christian can appreciate, be nourished by, and learn to praise God through them all.

**Q: In Lev, what is an outline of the book?**

A: Leviticus is the middle book of the Pentateuch, and it can be organized as five parts.

**I. Five Kinds of Offerings to God (Lev 1-7)**

**A. Burnt Offering (*‘Olah*) – Commitment of Total Surrender (Lev 1:1-17)**

1. A young bull (Lev 1:1-9)

2. Male sheep or goat (Lev 1:10-13)

3. Pigeon or dove (Lev 1:14-17)

**B. Grain Offering (*Minchah*) – Memorial Praising God (Lev 2:1-16)**

1. Unbaked flour, oil, and incense (Lev 2:1-3)

2. Baked flour with oil (Lev 2:4-10)

Note: No yeast, but salt (Lev 2:11-13)

3. Firstfruits of crushed grain, oil, and incense (Lev 2:14-16)

**C. Peace/Fellowship Offering (*Zebach Shalamim*) – Thankfulness, vows, and Freewill (Lev 3:1-16)**

1. Male or female cow (Lev 3:1-5)

2. Male or female lamb or goat (Lev 3:6-16)

a. Lamb (Lev 3:6-11)

b. Goat (Lev 3:12-16)

Note: at all times, never eat fat or blood (Lev 3:17)

**D. Sin Offering (*Chattat*) – Confession and Atonement (Lev 4:1-5:13)**

1. Sin of an anointed priest: young bull (Lev 4:1-12)

2. Sin of the community: young bull (Lev 4:13-21)

3. Sin of a leader: male goat (Lev 4:22-26)

4. Individual sins unintentionally: female goat or lamb (Lev 4:27-35)

5. Not speaking up, touching uncleanness, thoughtless oaths: female lamb or goat (Lev 5:1-6)

6. Considerations for the poor: two doves, pigeons, or flour (Lev 4:7-13)

**E. Guilt Offering (*‘Asham*) – Forgiveness for Sins Against Holiness: Ram (Lev 5:14-6:7)**

1. Unintentional sins against God’s holy things (Lev 5:14-16)

2. Unintentional sin against God’s commands (Lev 5:17-19)

3. Deceiving a neighbor and +1/5 restitution (Lev 6:1-7)

**II. On Being a Priest (Lev 8-10)**

**A. Consecration of priests (Lev 8)**

1. Preparation for consecration (Lev 8:1-13)

2. The bull offering (Lev 8:14-17)

3. The first ram offering (Lev 8:18-21)

4. The second ram offering (Lev 8:22-30)

5. The food and the wait (Lev 8:31-36)

**B. Ministry of priests (Lev 9)**

1. Private instructions (Lev 9:1-4)

2. Public service (Lev 9:5-22)

3. God’s pleasure (Lev 9:23-24)

**C. Failings of priests (Lev 10)**

1. Willfully serving your own way (Lev 10:1-3)

2. Going forward after others fail (Lev 10:4-15)

3. Attitude for unintentional failing (Lev 10:16-20)

**III. Holy Laws for Individuals (Lev 11-20)**

**A. Our Physical Diet (Lev 11)**

1. Land animals (Lev :11:1-8)

2. Seafood (Lev :11:9-12)

3. Flying creatures (Lev :11:13-23)

4. Unclean animals (Lev 11:24-44)

**B. Childbirth (Lev 12)**

**C. Skin diseases and Mildew (Lev 13-14)**

1. Skin diseases (Lev 13:1-46)

2. Mildew (Lev 13:47-59)

3. Cleansing from skin disease (Lev 14:1-32)

4. Cleansing from mildew (Lev 14:34-54)

**D. Discharges (Lev 15)**

**E. Yom Kippor (Day of Atonement) (Lev 16)**

**F. Eating Blood is Forbidden (Lev 17)**

**G. Unlawful Sexual Relations (Lev 18)**

1. Unlawful sexual relations (Lev 18:1-20)

2. No child sacrifices to Molech (Lev 18:21)

3. No homosexuality (Lev 18:22)

4. No animal relations (Lev 18:23)

5. Don’t be like peoples around you (Lev 18:23)

**H. Laws with Others (Lev 19)**

**I. Molech, Spiritism, and immorality (Lev 20)**

1. No child sacrifice to Molech (Lev 20:1-5)

2. Don’t be a medium but he holy (Lev 20:6-9)

3. Not cursing parents (Lev 20:10)

4. Adultery with in-laws (Lev 20:11-12)

5. No homosexuality (Lev 20:13)

6. Unlawful sexual relations (Lev 20:14-21)

a. No animal relations (Lev 20:15-16)

7. Blessings and curses (Lev 20:22-26)

8. Execute mediums (Lev 20:27)

**IV. Holy Laws for the priests (Lev 21-22)**

1. Priests and their families (Lev 21)

2. Unacceptable in priests and people (Lev 22)

**V. Holiness is Corporate Too (Lev 23-27)**

**A. Feasts and Holy Days to the Lord (Lev 23)**

1. The Sabbath (Lev 23:3)

2. Passover and unleavened bread (Lev 23:4-8)

3. Feast of Firstfruits (Lev 23:9-14)

4. Feast of Weeks (Lev 23:15-22)

5. Feast of Trumpets (Lev 23:23-25)

6. Day of Atonement (Lev 23:26-32)

7. Feast of Booths (Lev 23:33-44)

**B. Our Continual Holiness (Lev 24:1-9)**

**C. Stoning for Blasphemy (Lev 24:10-23)**

**D. Special Sabbath and Jubilee Years (Lev 25)**

1. Sabbath year (Lev 25:1-7)

2. Jubilee on the 50th year (Lev 25:8-17)

3. Abundance by itself on Sabbath years (Lev 25:18-23)

4. Redemption in Jubilee years (Lev 25:24-54)

**E. Consequences of the Law (Lev 26)**

1. Reward for obedience (Lev 26:1-13)

2. Punishment for disobedience (Lev 26:14-39)

3. Accepting their repentance (Lev 26:40-46)

**F. Dedication and Redemption to the Lord (Lev 27)**

**Q: In Lev 1, what can we learn today from the burnt offering?**

A: The burnt offering was a total sacrifice: nobody could eat or otherwise use any part of it. But could someone barter with God?

Let’s say a young bull weighed 1,000 pounds. One could try to reason that since every part of the animal was an aroma pleasing to God, someone could just eat the bull and give God 1,000 pounds of tails from other bulls. But that is not what God required. He required the entire animal, not just the leftovers. Today some are happy to serve God with their “leftovers”. Their excess money, undeveloped talents, leftover time when they have nothing better to do. But that is not what God requires. God requires total commitment.

Let’s say someone really wanted to impress God, so that they ate the tougher parts of some bulls, and gave God 1,000 pounds of the best parts of five bulls. But that is not what God required either. He did not require you to work yourself to death to buy five bulls, but he required all of one bull. In fact, some parts of our service that we might think less valuable, but yet we are the most reluctant to give up, might be the parts God holds most precious. God only required one animal, but he required all of one animal. Today there might be other people with more gifts, talents, and money, and God does not require us to devote to him what others have and we do not. But our Lord does require us to give Him all our lives.

As Christians we do not sacrifices bulls, sheep, goats, or birds today. Instead of giving dead sacrifices Romans 12:1 says we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices to God. There is no bartering with God. But why should we want to do so? God in His grace has given us so much, both in this life and eternally, giving Him everything we have is actually infinitesimal compared to what He has promised us.

**Q: In Lev 1-7, does all these detailed offerings show that this was written in the 5th century B.C., since they would have had time to develop the temple worship and come up with all this, as Julius Wellhausen declared?**

A: Not at all. Wellhausen’s assertion assumes people were not smart enough or could not have sophisticated offering systems prior to this time. But in the 15th century B.C., the Ugaritic Ras Shamra Tablets have terms like “offering made by fire”, “peace offering”, “sin offering”, trespass offering”, and possibly even a “heave offering”. It also mentions boiling a goat kid in its mother’s milk. See *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* p.179 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 1:3,5,10; 5:15; 22:19, why were male and not female animals required for a burnt sacrifice?**

A: Scripture only says that is what God wanted. A male or female was fine for offerings in Leviticus 3:1 and 27:3-4, and only a female lamb was suitable in Leviticus 4:32. As a side note, the word atonement, *kipper*, is used almost 50 times in Leviticus, and about 50 more times in the rest of the Old Testament according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.538.

**Q: In Lev 1:11, why couldn’t any offerings have leaven (yeast) or honey?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, when I was a budding twelve-year old chemist, I learned how bad burning sugars smell, and honey is mainly sugar. In the Bible, yeast often represents things that grow, like tradition and the Pharisee’s teaching.

## **Q: In Lev 1:14, why not specify just male birds?**

A: Scripture does not say. One possible reason is that it is difficult to easily tell the gender of many wild birds.

**Q: In Lev 1:17 and Lev 5:9, why can’t the priest cut the bird in half?**

A: Scripture only says that God wants it this way. In Genesis 15:10, Abraham was not supposed to cut the birds in two in his sacrifice either.

## **Q: In Lev 2:13, why put salt on the offerings?**

A: Scripture only says that is what God wanted. Here are some possible reasons, though.

**1.** Salt was a valuable commodity in the ancient world.

**2.** The priests and Levites ate some offerings, and they needed salt, too. (Leviticus 6:16-18,26; 7:6-9)

**Q: In Lev 2:14, Lev 23:14, Dt 11:14, Dt 12:17, Dt 14:23, Dt 16:9, Dt 18:4, Dt 23:25, and Ru 2:2 (KJV), why does the Bible mention corn and full ears, since corn (maize) was not known in the Old World until Columbus arrived in the Americas?**

A: Over 400 years ago, when the King James Bible was translated, the word “corn” commonly meant “grain”.

**Q: In Lev 3:2, was blood from the offering sprinkled on the altar, or poured out as in Dt 12:27?**

A: There are two views.

**Poured vs. poured out:** The first view, to which *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.219-220 and *When Critics Ask* p.89 credit the Middle Age Jewish scholar Maimonides, notes that the verbs are “poured/sprinkled” vs. “poured out”. Thus, a little bit of the blood was sprinkled on the altar, and the rest was poured out on the ground.

**A later time:** Three points to consider

**Leviticus 3:2** specifically mentions offerings slaughtered at the tent of meeting, which was only used before they entered the Promised Land.

**Deuteronomy 12:1,18,27** explicitly mentions sacrifice at the chosen place after they entered the Promised Land. Deuteronomy 12:8 specifically states that some of the sacrificial regulations will change when they entered Canaan.

**Why?** Scripture does not say why God wanted this changed, but we can speculate. All were to sacrifice their food animals at the Tent of Meeting, which was on open ground. Pouring all the blood there might cause logistical problems. Later, Deuteronomy 12:21-22 gives permission to slaughter animals away from the center of worship, after they entered Canaan. With fewer animals being slaughtered, and probable provision being made for the blood in the permanent place, the blood could be poured out now.

**Q: In Lev 4, since Jesus had to die to atone for our sins, what of the sin offering that atoned for sins in the Old Testament?**

A: Two points to consider in the answer.

**1.** The Old Testament sacrifices only covered over the sin, did not take away the sin.

**2.** The Old Testament sin offerings were only for unintentional and thoughtless sinful acts and an unclean state. There was no offering for willful sin. (Numbers 15:22-30; 35:31)

**Q: In Lev 4:13, how can a just God hold people guilty of unintentional sin?**

A: Scripture gives us three points about unintentional sin.

**1.** When somebody commits a sin unintentionally, that does not mean he or she was innocent, either. It could be that when a person found out they sinned, he or she was glad they did it. To show that is not the case, the person offered a sacrifice. (Deuteronomy 21:1-9)

**2.** Both the Bible and modern law recognize that some unintentional is still criminal. Manslaughter, and risking the lives of others recklessly deserve punishment, even if the murderer did not desire the death of the victim (Numbers 35:22-28). The penalty for manslaughter was being forced to stay in a city of refuge until the current high priest died.

**3.** Regardless of whether the action was intentional or not, if the person committing the sin had no opportunity to know it was evil, Romans 4:15 and 5:13 say that unintentional sin is still sin, but sin is not counted where there is no law.

**Q: In Lev 4:14, was the congregation to offer just a young bull for a sin offering, or both a young bull and a young goat in Num 15:24?**

A: The context of both is the whole community, but

a) Leviticus 4:14 is during the time of the Exodus

b) Numbers 15:24 is from that time to all generations to come.

There is a lesson we can see here about God’s gracious dealings with people. The lesser sacrifice in Leviticus was the Law, which was still relatively new to them, and the greater sacrifice in Numbers was after they should have already learned. Apparently, God not only distinguishes between if someone did wrong intentionally or unintentionally, but for unintentional sins, God distinguishes between the amount of time someone had to learn what was right.

*When Critics Ask* p.105 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.242 give a somewhat different answer. Leviticus 4:14 is specifically for “doing” wrong, or sins of “commission”. Numbers 15:24 is specifically for failing to keep a command, or sins of “omission”.

## **Q: What does Lev 5:1 mean?**

A: When there is a public call for witnesses, and a person is silent about what they have seen, that is sin. The next sentence, saying that they will be held responsible can be severe. If an innocent person is wrongly executed because a witness failed to speak up, then the witness is presumably guilty of murder.

**Q: In Lev 5:13, Lev 9:7, Lev 16:16,24,32-33, and Lev 17:11; 23:28, did the priest make atonement for the people, or did Christ do that in Heb 10:1-4?**

A: The Old Testament sacrifices atoned for sins in the sense that they covered over the sin, but did not take it away. Hebrews 9:9-10 says these external things did not internally cleanse the conscience of the worshipper. They were only in effect until Christ came.

For those who disagree, remember that in John 1:29-31, John the Baptist said in the presence of Jesus “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Jesus did not correct John. Peter said similar in 1 Peter 1:19 One of the three must be true. Either:

**1.** John was wrong to say this

**2.** John was correct

**3.** John was correct, but the meaning was different, or

**4.** John’s Gospel was corrupted on this key point.

**If 1**, then Jesus was remiss not to correct Him, and God was remiss not to correct John, Jesus Apostle.

**If 2,** then we should believe what it says

**If 3,** then it sounds like a deliberate falsehood (lie), because for 1400 years the Israelites knew exactly what was meant by a sacrificial lamb of God.

**If 4,** then it must have unknown to the early Christians, because none of them said it was. It could not have been corrupted after 150-200 A.D. because we have many manuscripts containing John 1, the earliest one still existing being the Bodmer II Papyrii, dated 150-200 A.D. We also have the text of this verse recorded by Origen (225-254 A.D.) and Chrysostom (c407 A.D.). If it were corrupted, then God must have desired or at least allowed all of His followers to be fooled for all this time.

**Q: In Lev 5:15, was the sacrifice brought to God, or to the priests as Lev 5:18 says?**

A: Since the Israelites could not enter Heaven themselves, and since the priests represented God, bringing it directly to the priests was the means God set up for presenting sacrifices to Him. *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.245 simply says the priest acted as God’s deputy. See *When Critics Ask* p.89 for essentially the same answer.

**Q: In Lev 5:16, when someone sinned unintentionally in regard to sacrifices, why add a “fifth part” as a punishment?**

A: Scripture does not actually say. The person’s wrong was not intentional, but the person should have known the Law better. A fifth part was also added as restitution if someone got property by lying or cheating in Leviticus 6:5.

## **Q: In Lev 6:13, why should the fire never go out?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, it could symbolize both the need for a continual sacrifice and the availability of being able to sacrifice to God at any time.

**Q: In Lev 7:1-2 and Lev 8:17, why were the animals killed outside the camp, or the ashes carried outside the camp in Lev 6:11?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, the bodies and ashes were taken away from where people ate, slept, and lived. In Hebrews 13:11-13, mentions that Jesus was crucified outside the city gate (and disrespectfully) just as the bodies of the animals were burned outside of the camp.

**Q: In Lev 7:15, must all of the sacrifice of the peace offering be eaten on the same day, or could some of it be eaten on the following day too, as Lev 7:16-17 and Lev 19:6 says?**

A: Three points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Leviticus 7:16 distinguishes between two kinds of peace offerings, the offerings for thanksgiving, and voluntary ones of their own free will.

**2.** The sacrifice of the peace offering *for thanksgiving* must all be eaten on the same day as Leviticus 7:15 says.

**3.** The sacrifice of the peace offering that is *voluntary* or of his own free will can also be eaten on the next day as both Leviticus 7:16-19 and Leviticus 19:6 say.

See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.148-149 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 7:23-25, why couldn’t they eat the fat in meat and what about undetectable bits of fat in meat?**

A: Scripture does not say why God commanded that. However, we know today that large amounts of fat, especially saturated fat in red meat, is not healthy for people. While some fat is unavoidable, eating microscopic portions is far different than eating pure lard.

**Q: In Lev 7:26-27 and Lev 17:10-14, why couldn’t the Israelites eat blood?**

A: Actually, this was first commanded in Genesis 9:4, not for the Israelites, but for everyone. Also, in Acts 15:20, the early church commanded everyone not to eat blood.

The answer is in Genesis 9:4 and Leviticus 17:11,14. The life is in the blood, and it is through blood that atonement is made for us. In Old Testament times, blood covered over people’s sins (Hebrews 9:22), until Christ’s blood was shed for us.

**Q: In Lev 7:30-31, Lev 8:16,20, and Lev 16:25 why were they to burn the fat?**

A: Scripture says that it was a sweet aroma in Leviticus 8:28. Just as fat dripping in a barbecue pit has a good smell, and makes smoke, burning the fat in the sacrifices probably had a similar effect.

**Q: In Lev 7:36 and Lev 16:31,34, since the statutes on sacrifice were forever for the Israelites, why did Jewish Christians stop in Acts 15:1-29?**

A: Actually, the sacrifices were offered to God not by the people, by the priest. Today it is the same. We need a sacrifice that is offered to God by our priest. He have that in our High Priest, Christ Jesus, as John 1:29 implies and Hebrews 8-10 and 1 John 2:2 shows.

## **Q: In Lev 8:8, Dt 33:8, Ezra 2:63, and Neh 7:65, what were the Urim and Thummim?**

A: **Purpose:** At this time, the Urim and Thummim were a means of the high priest determining God’s will on a matter. (Exodus 28:30; Numbers 27:21). God was sometimes silent through the Urim and Thummim (1 Samuel 28:6).

**Description:** It was a breastplate with twelve stones in it, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

**How It Worked:** It had no intrinsic power of its own, but it only worked because God chose to use it to communicate. How did it work? We do not know. The Jewish rabbi Josephus, writing (c.93-94 A.D.), thought that God caused the stones to light up as appropriate.

**Q: In Lev 8:13 (KJV), why were Aaron’s sons wearing girdles and bonnets?**

A: These were the King James English words to translate what we would call the breastplate and turban. In Leviticus 8:13, the Hebrew word for “turban/bonnet” is different than the Hebrew word in Leviticus 8:9; 16:4.

**Q: In Lev 9:12-13, how could they kill and put the burnt offering on the altar, since it was already burnt?**

A: Burnt offerings are cattle, sheep, or goats that are going to be killed and burned, even before they are burned.

**Q: In Lev 10:1-2 and Num 3:4, why did God kill Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu, who offered unauthorized fire to God?**

A: God takes the worship of Himself very seriously. For them to have the audacity to reject God’s exact way of worshipping and knowingly do what they were not authorized to do was punished as an example to others. Hebrews 12:18-23 tells us things are different now. While they worshipped at a mountain where there was burning fire, since the resurrection of Jesus, today we come with confidence to a joyful assembly. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.65-66 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 10:6, why couldn’t Aaron mourn for his own children?**

A: Leviticus 21:1-4 says that priests could become unclean for their own children. However, Leviticus 21:10-12 says that a high priest could not become unclean at all, even for the death of his own father and mother.

**Q: In Lev 10:9, should it say “strong drink” (KJV) or “fermented drink” (NIV)?**

A: To modern readers, strong drink implies distilled alcohol, and they did not have distilled alcohol in ancient times, so their “strongest drinks” were not strong drink in the modern sense. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.568 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 10:16-20, why was Moses angry with Aaron, and why did Moses become content?**

A: Given that God killed two of Aaron’s sons for improper sacrifices, Moses was likely both angry with Aaron and afraid that he might share the same fate. However, when it became clear to Moses that Aaron’s mistake was accidental and that Aaron was sorry for that, Moses, who knew God’s heart, was not worried.

## **Q: In Lev 11 and Dt 14, what is a summary of the dietary laws?**

A: Here is a brief summary.

**No fat** - Leviticus 7:23-25

**No blood** - Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 7:26-27; 17:10-14; 19:26

**Some plant-eating animals** with parted hooves, cloven feet, and chew cud are OK. Camel, hyrax, rabbit, and pigs are not. - Leviticus 11:3-8; Deuteronomy 14:6-8. As a side note, pigs carry tapeworms, trichinosis, erysipelas, and typhoid.

**Only fish**, no seafood, unless it has both fins and scales. No crab, lobster, shrimp, eel, shark, or dolphin (Leviticus 11:9-12; Deuteronomy 14:9-10). As a side note, the prohibited animals were generally scavengers.

**No eagles**, hawks vultures, kites, owls, cormorants, swans, pelicans, stork, or bat (Leviticus 11:13-19; Deuteronomy 14:11-18). As a side note, many of these birds were scavengers, and the birds that were not fed off of rats, mice, and other scavengers.

**Few bugs,** only some locusts, grasshoppers, and beetles. No chocolate-covered ants or roaches (Leviticus 11:20-23; Deuteronomy 14:19). So, you can tell you wife you’ll skip the roaches for dinner tonight. ;-)

**Miscellaneous:** no rat, weasel, tortoise, lizard, snails, or moles (Leviticus 11:26-31).

**Q: In Lev 11 and Dt 14, could Moses have learned his health principles from the Egyptians?**

A: Not a chance. The Egyptian health practices were well-documented and preserved today. There are the numerous references to the healing powers of worm blood, magic water, fly excrement, and manure, but they are (thankfully) absent in the Old Testament. There is no mention in Egyptian texts of the sanitary practices of the Old Testament. See *Evidence for Faith* p.140-142 for more info.

The Egyptians had some sophisticated knowledge though, with 48 types of surgery, according to the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.370. There is no evidence of this in the Bible either.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.66 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 11 and Dt 14, were Jews then and today allowed to hunt animals?**

A: Some Jews today think not. Their reasoning is that hunting animals you do not eat is cruel, and Jews should not eat even kosher hunted animals, because their blood was not drained properly.

However, that is not what God’s word says. There is no prohibition against hunting for food or sport. In the Mosaic Law, Leviticus 17:13 says that you can hunt for animals and birds, just be sure to drain the blood. Now draining the blood of an animal in the field is not as thorough as the kosher process of Jews today, but draining as a hunter would drain it is all that God required.

## **Q: In Lev 11 and Dt 14, how come they could eat birds that fly? Birds that fly have only dark meat, which is caused by a higher percentage of blood in the meat.**

A: The point of the command against blood was to “drain the blood”, i.e. the blood that flowed out of the body. It was not to remove all microscopic traces of blood.

**Q: In Lev 11:3-8 and Dt 14, why couldn’t they eat animals that chewed the cud?**

A: Scripture only says that is what God commanded. God not only specifically described animals they knew, but He provided general rules for animals with which they might not yet be familiar.

**Q: In Lev 11:6 and Dt 14:7, why does it say coneys (hyraxes) and hares (rabbits) chew their cud, since zoologists know for certain that they do not?**

A: The Hebrew word is consistent with the ancient classifications of animals, not modern ones. The English term “chewing the cud” refers to animals called ruminants, with multiple stomachs for digesting plants. One stomach starts the digestion, and then the food is partly regurgitated and sent to another stomach. An animal cannot chew the cud if its digestive system does not support it. Four points to consider in the answer.

**Not ruminants:** Coneys and rabbits do not have a digestive system that supports what we today term chewing the cud.

**Appear like ruminants:** Since coneys and rabbits move their jaws sideways like ruminants, and they eat the same food, they give the appearance of chewing the cud. Even the naturalist Linnaeus at first thought they were ruminants.

**God communicates understandably:** God’s purpose was to communicate to the Israelites practical rules to follow in words and concepts they could understand, and the Israelites classified the coney and rabbit as those that “raise up what has been swallowed.”

**Using their own terms:** God used their own language, terms, and descriptions to communicate with them. Any Hebrew living before modern times would understand animals that “chew the cud” to include rabbits and coneys. To apply a different and modern classification system to Moses’ writing anachronistically is forcing a modern meaning on ancient words.

See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.90, *When Critics Ask* p.89-90, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.158-160, *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.89-90, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.126, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.78 and Stephen Caesar “Zoology in the Pentateuch: Three Alleged Errors” Science, Scholarship and Scripture in *The Christian News* July 2, 2001 p.26., for all basically the same answer.

**Q: In Lev 11:9-10,31, why could they eat fish with fins and scales, and not other fish, squid, and shrimp?**

A: Scripture does not say, but one reason might be that God did not want them to get diseases by improperly cooking bottom-feeding fish. The fact that the Mosaic Law prohibited bottom-feeding fish was noticed as far back as 100 A.D in the *Epistle of Barnabas* ch.10 p.143-144.

**Q: In Lev 11:11 and Ex 35:7, since dolphin carcasses were an abomination, was did God command the Tabernacle to be covered with them?**

A: The Bible never said dolphins were abominable animals of themselves. It only said that eating dolphins was abominable and using their skins for common use was an abomination.

This was not a commonly used Hebrew word, so there is some uncertainty here. The common dolphin lived in the Mediterranean Sea. However, the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.97 says the animal here was the dugong (or sea cow). Dugongs sometimes swam along the shores of the dead sea. The NIV translates this as sea cows, and *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.31 also adds that dugongs are abundant in this area, and Arabs make sandals out of their skins today. Ezekiel 16:10 uses the same Hebrew word in mentioning sandal “leather”.

**Q: In Lev 11:13-19, how come twenty birds are mentioned, since Dt 14:11-18 mentions twenty-one birds?**

A: The two lists contain the same birds, with the following exceptions:

Leviticus 11:13-19 Deuteronomy 14:11-18

Any kind of black kite Black kite

Any kind of falcon

Both lists say any kind of hawk. While modern zoologists classify falcons as a type of hawk, technically speaking, that is irrelevant, as you cannot impose modern classifications on ancient lists in another language and culture. The key point is that the ancient Hebrews apparently viewed falcons as a type of hawk, too.

A second answer, given by *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.391, is that the “falcon” is an extraneous scribal error. He says this because in Hebrew “vulture/falcon” (*daah*) is only one letter different from “glede” (*raah*), and “vulture” is absent in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, and many Hebrew manuscripts.

**Q: In Lev 11:18 (KJV) should this word be “swan”?**

A: No, it is actually a white owl in the NKJV, NIV, uNASB, and NET Bible. The NRSV translates this as “water hen”. Green’s literal translation says “barn owl”.

**Q: In Lev 11:20-21 (NASB, NKJV, NIV), is this word “insect” or is it more generic such as “swarming thing” or “bug”?**

A: According to both Jay P. Green’s literal translation and *Strong’s Concordance*, the definition is broader than insect. However, this is not really relevant to the next question.

**Q: In Lev 11:20-21, is it wrong to say there are four-footed insects (an atheist and a Muslim both asked this)?**

A: The Hebrew idiom, “on fours” means it does not walk upright. Thus, a dog with a leg cut off still goes “on fours.” The Hebrews apparently did not have the word parallel. Come to think of it, even in English or Chinese, how would you briefly explain to someone how four-, six-, and many-legged animals all walk in common without using the word parallel?

**Q: In Lev 12:1-8, why are women [allegedly] sinful after childbirth? (A Muslim asked this.)**

A: Scripture does not say sinful, only unclean. When someone in a Levite’s family died, God commanded them to bury the body, and they would be unclean until evening. Becoming unclean is different from being sinful, as proved by God commanding them to become unclean in certain situations.

**Q: In Lev 12:1-5, why is a mother unclean after having children?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, being unclean would relieve her from the chores of daily life, and the restful time would be good for her.

**Q: In Lev 12:1-5, why is a new mother unclean for 7 days for a son, and 14 days for a daughter?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, unclean does not mean sinful. One likely reason is that baby boys were circumcised on the eighth day, and by shortening the time for boys, the mother could be present at the circumcision ceremony.

**Q: In Lev 12:5-7 why did new mothers bring a burnt offering and a sin offering for having children, since Ps 128:3 says motherhood is a blessing?**

A: Motherhood is a blessing. However, like nearly everything else we do, it is also tainted by sin. Even the children born have a sinful nature. See *When Critics Ask* p.90-91 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.230 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 13, why did the symptoms of leprosy back then not have the same characteristics we know of as leprosy?**

A: The Hebrew word meant a wide variety of skin diseases, and not just what we call leprosy, or Hansen’s disease.

As a side note, imagine just how important skin hygiene would be in the ancient world, when people were not able to bathe often.

**Q: In Lev 13, which diseases back then might be considered as leprosy?**

A: The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.462 gives the following list:

True leprosy (Hansen’s disease), Syphilis, Smallpox, Scabies, Favus, Tinea of the scalp, Systemic fungus infections, Boils and furuncles, Pemphigus, Dermatitis herpetiformis, and Cancer of the skin. This list came from the paper “Leprosy in Ancient Hebraic Times” by Harold M. Spinka, M.D. It was in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, March 1959.

## **Q: In Lev 13:32, what is fretting leprosy?**

A: Many skin diseases back then were eradicated by modern times. The Hebrew term apparently means a type of serious skin disease we are not familiar with today.

**Q: In Lev 13:54-59 and Lev 13:54-59, how can clothing and houses “get sick” and have leprosy?**

A: Clothing can spread skin disease. Fungus and mold can grow on both clothes and people, and clothing can be a carrier of disease too. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.126-127 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 14:12, why did someone have to give a trespass and sin offering when they were healed of a disease?**

A: Scripture does not explicitly say, but

**1.** A sacrifice was always involved with a ceremonial cleansing.

**2.** There is no mention that the person was “guilty” or “more sinful” than others were because he or she had this disease.

There is a spiritual application we can learn here. In addition to the fact that God forgives believers of all their sins, we still need cleansing as well for our sinful nature.

**Q: In Lev 14:14,17, why put blood and oil on the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe?**

A: Scripture did not specifically say, but this probably is to identify the one making the offering with the offering. Other examples of using the right ear, right thumb, and right big toe are Leviticus 8:23-24 and Exodus 29:20.

## **Q: In Lev 15:2-3 (KJV), what is a running issue?**

A: It is the pus, often contagious, that seeps out of a sore or wound.

**Q: In Lev 15:16, Lev 22:6, and Dt 28:67 (KJV), what does “until the even” mean?**

A: The King James Version phrase means until evening.

**Q: In Lev 15:16, since people were unclean after sex until evening, does that mean sex within marriage is in any way sinful?**

A: No. Uncleanness does not mean disobedience to God, but greater care due to sanitary risk. For example, when a close relative died, you were supposed to bury the relative, and (without being disobedient) you were unclean until evening. Laws on cleanliness were very important in a desert culture with little water.

An example of a priest becoming unclean because he was obeying God’s will is in Numbers 19:8.

**Q: In Lev 15:19-30,33, why are women [allegedly] sinful during their menstruation? (A Muslim asserted this.)**

A: They are not sinful, only unclean. When someone in a Levite’s family died, God commanded them to bury the body, and they would be unclean until evening. Becoming unclean is different from being sinful, as proved by God commanding them to become unclean in certain situations.

Since this was a concern to this Muslim, perhaps he would care to comment on these things: from the Sharia. Blowing your nose and menstruating are acts of Satan *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.2 no.969 p.87.

He should ask Muslim scholars why Muslim women are forbidden to pray during their time of month. Here are some sources from the Sharia he can use to ask them.

A black dog or a woman, or a dog and menstruating woman cut off prayer. *Abu Dawud* vol.1 no.702,703 p.181; *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.2 no.949-953 p.78-80

A menstruating woman is not allowed to recite the Qur’an. *Abu Dawud* vol.1 footnote 111 p.56

**Q: In Lev 16:1-2, why did God give Aaron a little slack, since God did not give Aaron’s two sons, Nadab and Abihu, any mercy?**

A: The context shows that Aaron made his mistake out of ignorance, and Romans 4:15 and Romans 5:13 demonstrate that God does not count sins we commit out of innocent ignorance as transgression.

**Q: In Lev 16:8, who is Azazel, and what relationship does he have with the scapegoat?**

A: The skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.158-159 claims that this was evidence of a prior, more primitive Jewish mythology. Three points for a Christian response.

**1.** No, there is no evidence at all for his invention of a mythical Jewish mythology. The evidence we have of idolatrous Israelite practice is consistent with all being borrowed from surrounding peoples.

**2.** Christians freely admit that from the earliest times many Israelites had idolatrous, mythological practices. One needs only read of the golden calf at Mount Sinai, or the constant exhortations against idol worship, to see that the Old Testament candidly admits this wickedness, though the Bible does not go into too many details.

**3.** Asimov’s claim has the presupposition that the Old Testament rituals could not have been given by a transcendent God. Rather, Asimov assumes the source must have been idolatrous practices, and by using circular reasoning, he uses the example of Azazel to prove his point. Asimov’s flaw is that while he uses the comparison of Azazel with a hypothetical idolatrous Israelite practice to show this ritual was not given by a transcendent God, there is no evidence of idolatrous Israelites having a practice similar to Azazel.

**Q: In Lev 16:10,22,26, why did God introduce the concept of a scapegoat?**

A: The Biblical concept of a scapegoat is different from the modern term. The modern term means one who is blamed for something for which they were not responsible.

In the Bible, the scapegoat was released to go live in the wilderness, and the goat symbolically had all the guilt laid upon him. In the Biblical sense, Jesus is our scapegoat.

The idea of a scapegoat being a symbol for Satan was a Jewish tradition that sprung up much later. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.159-160, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.127-128 and *When Critics Ask* p.92 for more info.

## **Q: In Lev 16:12,15 and Isa 3:23 (KJV), what is a “vail”?**

A: This is not a valley, but rather a “veil” in modern spelling.

**Q: In Lev 16, why did everything have to be done exactly this way?**

A: One could write a book on the reasons, and God did - specifically, the Book of Hebrews. See especially Hebrews 7-10 and 13.

**Q: In Lev 17:3-4,9, could people kill any animal without it being a sacrifice?**

A: At the time of the Exodus, no. The reason for this was because God not only wants us to worship Him, He wants us to worship Him alone, and not to worship or sacrifice to any other gods, as Leviticus 17:7 shows.

However, Deuteronomy 12:20-23 expressly states that this would change when they entered Canaan.

**Q: In Lev 17:7, were the demons here (sairrim), wild goat gods, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.159 claims?**

# A: According to Green’s Literal translation, the Hebrew here means “sacrifices to goats”. Thus, they were tempted to make sacrifices to goat-gods, as Asimov puts it.

**Q: Should Lev 17:7 (RSV) say “satyrs” or demons?**

A: As the previous question shows the Hebrew here is “goats”. The NIV translates this as “goat idols”. The NKJV says “demons” with a footnote saying “having the form of a goat or satyr”. The KJV says “devils”, the NRSV says “goat-demons” and the NASB says “goat demons”.

**Q: In Lev 17:13, was the blood drained and covered with earth, or was the blood poured out like water as Dt 12:24 says?**

A: Both are correct. There are three points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Blood being poured and drained are essentially the same thing.

**2.** The context of Deuteronomy is eating meat in general, especially at their home, where people will keep their house clean. Thus, no detail was given on how to dispose of the blood in a manner to keep their house clean.

**3.** Leviticus specifically mentions hunting in the field. While a hunter might be tempted to just leave the blood on the ground, Leviticus 17:13 specifically adds that the hunter must “clean up after himself” and cover the blood with dirt.

See *When Critics Ask* p.121 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 18:1-17 and 20:12,14, what is a summary of the Levitical marriage laws?**

# A: From the Holiness Code of Leviticus 17-25, here are the restrictions on marriage.

**Man’s viewpoint** **Woman’s viewpoint**

Daughter (close relation) Son (close relation)

Mother (close relation) Father (close relation)

Mother/step-mother Son/Step-son

Full-/half-/step-sister Full-/half-/step-brother

Granddaughter Grandfather

Parent’s sister Sibling’s son

Father brother’s wife Husband brother’s son

Daughter-in-law Father-in-law

Brother’s wife Husband’s brother

Mother-in-law So-in-law

Living wife’s sister Living sister’s husband

Not restricted:

Sibling’s daughter Parent’s brother

Wife brother’s daughter Father sister’s husband

# Mother brother’s wife Sister’s son

Parent brother’s daughter Parent brother’s son

Brother’s daughter Father’s brother

Mother brother’s wife Husband sister’s son

**Asymmetry:** The restrictions are “asymmetrical” with respect to the following. A woman can marry her sister’s son but not her brother’s son. A man can marry his mother’s brother’s [former] wife but not his father’s brother’s [former] wife.

**Q: In Lev 18:5, can people be saved by keeping the law, since the New Testament teaches that only Christ can save us?**

A: The truth in Leviticus 18:5 is just one piece of the mosaic of God’s law, mercy, and grace. Here are some of the other pieces that fit together with Leviticus 18:5.

**1.** Hypothetically, a person would not need God’s mercy if they kept the Law perfectly.

**2.** They (and us) should try to live a sinless life, and obey God perfectly.

**3.** However, we are not able to do so. No one is without sin (Proverbs 20:9, Psalm 14:2-3; 19:12).

**4.** Once we realize this, we should turn to God and appreciate His mercy and grace.

**5.** God promised the people who followed Him in the Old Testament that (somehow) if they committed themselves to God and His law, they would be saved. Many other verses in addition to Leviticus 18:5 show this.

**6.** God revealed the one and only means He chose for forgiving both their sins and ours in Jesus Christ.

**7.** Even though we live after Christ’s resurrection, Leviticus 18:5 is applicable to us in a secondary sense today. God commands all men to believe and obey Jesus (2 Thessalonians 1:8). If someone believes and obeys God, they will have eternal life.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.160-161 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.67 for a different answer.

**Q: In Lev 18:16 and Lev 20:21, why was a man forbidden to marry his brother’s wife, since Dt 25:5-10 commanded him to marry his brother’s wife?**

A: Leviticus 18:16-18 says not to marry your brother’s wife, during his lifetime. The command to marry your brother’s wife in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 is for the purpose of carrying on his name after your brother has died. See *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.292 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 18:8-18; 20:11-14; 17-21, why is incest discussed in the Bible? (a Muslim brought this up)**

A: Why is incest not discussed in the Qur’an? This unpleasant topic needed discussing; Egyptian royalty and later Persians practiced incest regularly. The Qur’an does not forbid incest, and Muslims regularly break the Levitical rules on incest when they marry cousins.

**Q: In Lev 18:19 and Lev 20:18, should husbands and wives have intercourse while the wife is having her monthly period?**

A: This verse shows that under the Mosaic Law they should not.

**Q: In Lev 18:21 and Lev 20:2 (KJV), what does “giving your seed to Molech” mean?**

A: This means the abominable practice of sacrificing your little children to the idolatrous god Molech. Molech is also mentioned in Leviticus 20:3,4,5b; 1 Kings 11:7; 2 Kings 23:10; Jeremiah 32:35.

## **Q: In Lev 18:22,24 and Lev 20:13, is homosexuality still wrong, or is it something that changed, like eating pork or something unchanged, like no infant sacrifice?**

A: No. Not only do we have New Testament silence on any changing of this, we have confirmation from Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9 that this is still sinful.

Leviticus 18:22 is right after a verse forbidding infant sacrifice and before the verse forbidding bestiality, so God perhaps views the three similarly. Leviticus 20:13 is two verses before two verses forbidding bestiality. See also the discussion on Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9. See *When Critics Ask* p.92 and *When Cultists Ask* p.40 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 18:22-24 and Lev 20:13, were homosexuality and bestiality condemned solely because no children could be produced?**

A: No, that was not the reason God gave. The reason is clearly spelled out in Leviticus 18:22-23. Just as sex with an animal is perversion, sex with two men is detestable to God and in those times was punishable by death. See *When Critics Ask* p.93 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 19:18, who is the neighbor the Jews were to love?**

A: Leviticus 19:18 says it included any of their own people. Presumably, it also included sojourners (travelers and temporary residents) in the land, but not the Canaanites.

**Q: In Lev 19:20, why punish a female slave who engaged in sex?**

A: The Mosaic Law did not punish any woman, slave or free, who was raped. But if a woman were not raped, or she was in a town and did not cry out, a free woman would be killed. A slave woman, given her circumstances, was not killed. See the previous question for her punishment.

This is in sharp contrast to later Roman law, where a slave girl could be punished by cutting off her nose for the “crime” of modestly covering herself up in front of her master. The Mosaic Law is also in sharp contrast with Islamic Law, where sex with female slaves and captives was allowed and nowhere even discouraged. They were called “women whom our right hands possess”. For documentation on this in Sunni Islamic Law, read the *Bukhari Hadith* vol.3 book 34 ch.113 after no.436 p.239-240.

**Q: In Lev 19:20 (KJV), since a man lies with a slave girl betrothed to another, why is only the woman scourged and the man has to bring a ram?**

A: Three points to consider in the answer.

**Monetary fine:** The man was also punished monetarily and publicly, by having to bring a ram.

**Both physically punished:** While only the man paid a fine, both were still punished. The Hebrew does not specify that only the woman was scourged. It is only the King James Version that limits the scourging to the woman.

**Type of punishment uncertain:** The Hebrew word might be “inquest/punishment” instead of “scourged”. See the next question for more detail.

## **Q: In Lev 19:20, was the woman scourged?**

A: There is uncertainty in the Hebrew word. Here are some of the translations.

**King James Version:** “she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death…”,

**New King James Version**: “for this there shall be scourging; but they shall not be put to death…”.

**NIV:** “there must be due punishment. Yet there are not to be put to death…”

**NASB:** “there shall be punishment; they shall not, however, be put to death…”

**Jay P. Green’s Interlinear Bible:** “there shall be an inquest; they shall not be put to death…”

The translations fall into two groups, either the Hebrew word is scourging or it is inquest/punishment. Obviously, the woman received some kind of punishment. However, it is only the 400-year-old King James Version that says only the woman was scourged.

## **Q: In Lev 19:26,31; 20:6,27, why were enchantment, magic, and mediums forbidden?**

A: These scriptures mention that

**A.** If you turn to a medium, you will be defiled by a medium (Leviticus 19:31)

**B.** If you turn to them you are (spiritually) prostituting yourself to them. (Leviticus 20:6)

Other reasons why they are wrong are:

1. People seek their wisdom instead of God’s

2. People trust in their power instead of God

3. People are devoted to magic and mediums instead of God.

4. People sometimes venerate and worship these things instead of God.

Even if you do not do all four of these things, even doing one of them would mean that A and B apply to you. Christians should not go to fortune tellers of any kind, even for fun at the fair.

**Q: In Lev 19:27, why was God concerned about hairstyles?**

A: Scripture does not say. Hair is conspicuous, and not cutting the hair at the corners here would be one way to identify Jewish men. Note that in this culture, even non-Nazirites could have long hair. See also the discussion on 1 Corinthians 11:14.

**Q: In Lev 19:28, does this mean a person should not get a tattoo?**

A: This is a part of the Mosaic Law. However, the New Testament says we are God’s Temple, and we do not want to put graffiti on the wall of God’s Temple. Revelation 13:16-18 says most people, except believers, will have a mark on their right hand or forehead representing 666, the number of the beast. The only case that can be made for having tattoos is that in Egypt today some Coptic people tattoo a cross prominently on their newborn children. This is because otherwise Muslim fundamentalists are prone to steal their children and raise them as Muslims.

**Q: In Lev 20, why were so many crimes punished with the death penalty?**

A: Apparently, these things were serious enough to merit execution in God’s eyes. Instead of trying to fit God into our own preconceived notions, let us learn what God taught, and then look for reasons for this. Crimes meriting the death penalty fall into three categories:

**Taking human life:** intentional murder and unintentional murder if they do not flee to a city of refuge. An important difference between the Old Testament Law and other laws is that it did not matter if the victim was slave or free. A person being executed for taking human life is fitting punishment for taking human life.

**Sexual sins:** Most sexual sins, adultery, homosexuality, incest, bestiality, are punished with death. Many sexual sins are addictive, and they try to entangle others in their sin. For the good of the community at that time, they were executed.

**Open defiance:** Worshipping other gods, fortune telling, etc. is defiance against God for God’s chosen people, the Jews. Of course, a Jew could leave the people, assimilate in another country, and do what they wished. But for Jews living as the chosen people, God did not tolerate defiance against Himself. He also did not tolerate defiance against parents, such as openly cursing them. (Leviticus 20:9).

*735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.67-68 points out that the Old Testament had fewer crimes punished by the death penalty than other law codes. Many other law codes would kill thieves.

As a contrast to the Old Testament Law, the Islamic Sharia Law is different. If a freeman and a slave kill a slave together, the slave is executed and the freeman only has to pay half the blood money. Here is the quote: “Malik said about an adult and a child when they murder a man together. ‘The adult is killed and the child pays half the full blood-money.’ Malik said, ‘It is like that with a freeman and a slave when they murder a slave. The slave is killed and the freeman pays half of his value.’” *Muwatta Malik* 43.3.3

**Q: In Lev 20:2, does “Molech” really refer to “melech” (king), and is this a prohibition against the god of the people, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.162 claims?**

A: No. The name Molech might have been derived from the word for king. However, this was a specific idol the Ammonites worshipped. There is evidence a god with the name Muluk was known in the city-state of Mari c.1700 B.C. according to the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.705.

**Q: In Lev 21:1-4, why could a priest only mourn for parents, brothers, and sisters living at home, but not others?**

A: Apparently, the importance of a priest being ceremoniously clean for his duties was considered more important than becoming ceremonially unclean for any but his closest family.

**Q: In Lev 21:11, why could the high priest not become ceremonially unclean for even His own parent’s funeral?**

A: The importance of the High Priest’s office apparently precluded this.

**Q: In Lev 21:18-23, why does God appear to dislike the less-abled, and forbid those with a physical handicap from becoming a high priest?**

A: If God wanted, God was free to choose only short people, tall people, black-haired people, left-handed people, or any kind of people He wanted. If God choose people who did not have physical defects, and did not see a need to tell us His reasons, that is God’s prerogative.

We can speculate that the reason might be related to the priest acting as a “model” for the people in offering the sacrifices. Of course, the animal sacrifice had to be free from defects, too, as Leviticus 22:20-25 shows.

**Q: In Lev 22:11 (KJV), how can a priest eat “a soul that he has”?**

A: The original Hebrew meaning for this unusual King James translation is that all in a priest’s household, even slaves, can eat of the sacrifices.

**Q: In Lev 22:27 (KJV), what does “under dam” mean?**

A: A dam here is a female or mother. The calf was to remain with its mother for seven days.

**Q: In Lev 22:27, why couldn’t they kill the mother and child animals for a sacrifice on the same day?**

A: Scripture does not say. Perhaps it is related to Exodus 23:19, “do not boil a kid in its mother’s milk”. See the discussion on that verse for more info.

**Q: In Lev 23:6, Is it true that “Undoubtedly the use of unleavened bread in ritual is extremely ancient, dating back to long before the Exodus” as *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.156 claims?**

A: We have no record of this being performed prior to the Exodus. If Asimov thinks it significant that we have no record of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kipper) prior to the Exile (see the discussion on Lev 23:26-32), why does he think the use of unleavened bread was very ancient?

Someone else could argue (with just as little support) the opposite, that the Day of Atonement was before the Exodus, and using unleavened bread was after the Exile. Of course, all the scriptures that mention unleavened bread could be dismissed as “additions apparently written after the exile, since unleavened bread indicates a late date.”

I am guessing Asimov got this from the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* volume 6 p.756 and especially p.759-760 under “Theories of Origin”. However, this liberal book provides no evidence of this being celebrated outside of the Bible. Apparently, this theory started with Julius Wellhausen in the 19th century.

As for me, since the only evidence shows the Israelites practicing both here, I choose to go with the evidence.

**Q: In Lev 23:26-32, Lev 16:1-34, and Num 29:7-11, Is it true that there is no record of the Day of Atonement being observed until post-Exilic times, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.158 claims?**

A: Asimov provides no record of it being observed in Old Testament Post-Exilic times either, but that is beside the point. One would not expect many records of temple rituals that say, “we performed it like we were supposed to do.” Similarly, one does not have historical records of wood being gathered for the Temple, but we do know that Gibeonites, who were the wood gatherers, performed their function both before and after the exile. Likewise, we do not have pre-Exilic records of any Temple ritual, besides what is already written in the Bible.

On the Year of Jubilee, a trumpet was sounded on the Day of Atonement according to Leviticus 25:8-9. Thus, celebration of the year of Jubilee includes celebration of the Day of Atonement.

It would seem strange that Moses would have written down the rituals for the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:1-34; 32:26-32; and Numbers 29:7-11, and then immediately not follow it.

**Q: In Lev 23:29,32 and Num 29:7 (KJV), why did God give the Sabbath to “afflict their souls”?**

A: This King James expression is a literal translation of a Hebrew word that can also mean to fast, or to exercise or practice this command.

**Q: In Lev 23:32, was the feast of the Day of Atonement on the ninth day, or the tenth day as Lev 16:29 [allegedly] says?**

A: It was the ninth day. Three points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Leviticus 23:32 says precisely that the time was from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth day.

**2.** People generally did not do any work after dark.

**3.** Leviticus 16:29 only says not to do any work on the tenth day.

See also *When Critics Ask* p.94 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 23:42-43, did the Israelites coming out of Egypt live in booths, or tents as Ex 16:16; 33:8; and Num 11:10 say?**

A: One answer is that the Hebrew word for booth, *cukkah,* is a general word that can mean hut or tent. However, that probably is not the correct answer, as there is a more reasonable explanation.

Here are the points of the answer.

**1.** In the wilderness, the Israelites lived over 40 years in durable tents, not just hastily-constructed huts, as Exodus 16:16; 33:8, and Numbers 11:10 prove, and Joshua 7:22 shows.

**2.** Back in Egypt, Exodus 12:7,22-23 proves they lived in houses (huts), because during the Passover they all had to put the blood on the doorframes of their houses.

**3.** The Israelites had only one day to pack and be ready in Exodus 11:4-12:14. Exodus 12:11 is a reminder that their leaving was done in great haste.

**4.** Therefore, while they constructed tents in the wilderness, they did not have the tents when they first left Egypt.

**5.** Note that Leviticus 23:42-43 does not commemorate the Israelites living in booths for over 40 years, but living in booths at the time they were brought out of Egypt.

**6.** It would be easy for someone to miss this distinction between living in tents for over 40 years and living in booths at first, unless they were writing about what they had experienced firsthand.

See also *When Critics Ask* p.94 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 24:3, why would God want a lamp with olive oil to burn continually day and night, even when no people would see it?**

A: People would still know it never went out. Perhaps this was to symbolize that God never sleeps, He never ceases to watch the world, and He never ceases to watch over us.

**Q: In Lev 24:10-22, was stoning a blaspheming son to death extreme?**

A: No. This was not just foul language, but blaspheming the holy name of God with a curse. This was more than even taking God’s name in vain, but defiance of God’s law under the theocratic government. Of course, we do not live under that government today, and if someone were to do that we should not try to harm him.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.68 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 25:35, and Ex 22:25, why could they not charge interest to their own people, since they could charge interest to foreigners in Dt 23:20?**

A: Deuteronomy 23:20 shows that charging interest to foreigners is OK for commercial reasons. However, a godly person still would not charge excessive interest according to Proverbs 28:8 and Ezekiel 18:8. Nevertheless, helping a friend or fellow Israelite should not be for commercial reasons. They were commanded to give to the poor Israelites, and not dodge their responsibilities by making money on loans to the poor instead. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.151-152 and *When Critics Ask* p.128-129 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 25:35 and Ex 22:25, since they could charge interest to foreigners but not their own people, does this violate many verses which say certain laws were to be the same for the Israelite and the foreigner?**

A: The verses below show that much of the religious and civil law was the same for both the native-born and non-Israelite. However, no verse says the laws needed to be the same on lending money. Here are all the relevant verses.

**Exodus 12:49** and **Numbers 9:14** speak of the Passover laws for non-Israelites who voluntarily wish to keep the Passover.

**Leviticus 24:22** and **Numbers 15:29-30** say the laws are the same for ceremonial sins and blasphemy.

**Leviticus 16:29** refers to the Sabbath laws. It would leave the Israelites at a marketing disadvantage if the foreigners could sell on the Sabbath and godly Israelites did not.

**Leviticus 19:33** says they must not mistreat non-Israelite strangers in their land.

**Leviticus 24:22** says the laws of murder and injury are to be the same for native-born and foreigner.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.152-152 for more info.

**Q: Why do Lev 25:46; Ex 21:2-21 and Ex 32:1-6 condone slavery?**

A: Slavery in the Bible was similar to indentured servants. All Hebrew slaves were to be freed every seventh year in Exodus 21:2-5. When the slave was freed, the ex-master was to furnish him or her liberally out of what the master had, according to Deuteronomy 15:13-15. The only exception to freeing a Hebrew slave was if the slave loved the master enough to choose to be a slave for life in Exodus 21:5-6. However, the Hebrews did not always free their slaves, as Jeremiah 34:8-22 shows; God rebuked them for that. The following became slaves:

Thieves who could not pay people back (Exodus 22:3)

Women sold by parents as concubines (Exodus 21:7-11)

People sold themselves as slaves if they were starving

See Hard Sayings of the Bible p.149-150 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 26:16 (KJV), what is “consumption and burning ague”?**

A: The NASB and NRSV say “consumption and fever”. The NIV and NKJV translate this “wasting disease and fever”.

**Q: In Lev 26:30 did God abhor Israel, or were they the apple of His eye in Zech 2:8 and not abhor them in Lev 26:44?**

A: God viewed the elect Israelites as precious in His sight, as the apple of His eye. God viewed the disobedient Israelites who rejected God’s law as abhorrent and worthless (Jeremiah 2:5; 12:8). In a similar manner, Christ died as an atoning sacrifice for the whole world (1 John 2:2), but to those who reject Christ, God is not shy about telling us the extent of His wrath. See *When Critics Ask* p.94 for more explanation of the same answer.

**Q: Does Lev 27:1-8 show that males are more valuable than females?**

A: No. Genesis 1:27 shows that both male and female are created in the image of God, Galatians 3:26-28 shows that males and females, Jews, and non-Jews, are all equally valuable as sons of God. But Leviticus 27:1-8 shows that in that time men had a higher economic cost than women or children.

Leviticus 27:1-8 refers to vowing the monetary equivalent of something to the Lord. So, for example, the value of a 60+ year old male was less than for a female younger than sixty years.

**Q: In Lev 27:28-29, does devoting people to the Lord for destruction sanction human sacrifice?**

A: No, because execution is not human sacrifice. Killing of murderers and other criminals was done because God commanded it for order. The context of Leviticus 23-27 deals with laws, and has nothing to do with any animal sacrifice, much less human sacrifice. The Bible never sanctions anything resembling sacrifice of humans, with two exceptions. God tested Abraham to see if He would offer up Isaac, though no human sacrifice occurred, and Jesus voluntarily died for us.

See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.149-153 for more info.

**Q: In Lev 27:30-33, Num 18:21-32; Dt 12:5-14; 14:22-29; 26:12-15, and Mal 3:10, are Christians supposed tithe today?**

A: No. We are still to give materially for God’s work today (2 Corinthians 8-9). However, it is not an exact tithe, because Romans 7:6 says, “But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.” (NIV)

Our entire lives should be dedicated to God, so that we can give more than a tithe. But since the Old Testament specified a tithe, and we have a higher standard than the Old Testament, tithing can be said to define the limit of generosity. But 2 Corinthians 9:7 says that we should give cheerfully, not under compulsion.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.68-69 for more info.

**Q: In Lev, how do we know that what we have is what was originally written from Philo the Jew?**

A: As Christians we trust that the Old Testament that Christ validated is the Old Testament that we should have. For that matter, for Muslims their Qur’an says that Jesus was given the Torah in Sura 5:46. We have early manuscripts from the time of Christ, which the next question addresses. However, there is an additional line of evidence. Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish scholar who lived from 15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D. He wrote in Greek, but it is curious that his Greek quotes of the Old Testament agree more closely with the Hebrew Masoretic text than the Greek Septuagint. He went into great detail into what different verses mean. Here are verses he referred to in Leviticus.

**1**:3,9,13; **2**:1,11,13; **3**:12,16,17; **4**:22,31; **5**:2,4,5,20,21; **6**:9,13,20; **7**:5,34; **8**:29-36; **9**:1-14,24; **10**:1-3,6,8,9,16; **11**:3,4,9,10,20-22,42,43; **13**:3,11,12,14; **14**:35,36; **15**:31; **16**:7,10,17,20; **17**:11; **18**:1,6,7; **19**:13,4,9,11,13,14,16,23-25,32,35,36; **20**:18; **21**:11,17; **22**:4,6,10,12; **23**:1,2,10,27; **24**:2,15; **25**:4,8,9,10,23,31; **26**:3,8,10,12,36; **27**:3,32,33; **35**:5

See *The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged* new updated version for more info.

**Q: Which early writers referred to Leviticus?**

A: Pre-Nicene writers who quoted or alluded to verses in Leviticus are:

Epistle of Barnabas (c.70-130 A.D.)

**Justin Martyr** (c.138-165 A.D.)

**Meleto/Melito of Sardis** (170-177/180 A.D.) listed Leviticus among the books of the Old Testament in his letter to Onesimus. It is unusual that he switches the order of Numbers and Leviticus. *On Pascha* p.72. This is preserved in *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History* 4.26.

**Irenaeus of Lyons** (182-188 A.D.) quoted half a verse

**Clement of Alexandria** (193-217/220 A.D.)

**Tertullian** (198-220 A.D.) “…when the sacerdotal law was being drawn up, through Moses, in Leviticus, we find it prescribed…” *An Answer to the Jews* ch.5 p.156

**Origen** (225-254 A.D.)

**Cyprian of Carthage** (c.246-258 A.D.)

**Anatolius of Alexandria** (270-280 A.D.)

**Victorinus of Petau** (martyred 204 A.D.)

**Methodius** of Olympus and Patara (270-311/312 A.D.)

After Nicea other writers referred to Leviticus too.

**Jerome** (373-420 A.D.) discusses the books of the Old Testament. He specifically discusses Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, Job, Jesus son of Nave [Joshua], Judges, Ruth, Samuel Kings (2 books), twelve prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Letter 53 ch.7-8 p.99-101.

**Q: In Lev, what are some of the earliest manuscripts that still exist today?**

A: **Dead Sea Scrolls:** (250 B.C. and onward) 13 copies according to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.30. and *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.1 p.488. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.* records at least 12 originals. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says there are 8 copies. According to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.* p.474, fragment 4Q17 containing Exodus 38 through Leviticus 2 is dated from 250 B.C. Its contents are nearly identical with the Masoretic text. The copies are referred to as

1Q3 contains 21 fragments, which are from 3 or 4 original manuscripts.

2Q5 (Leviticus 11:22-29 in palaeo-Hebrew)

4Q23 Leviticus 26:2-16 in Greek. (150-1 B.C. due to early Hasmonean formal hand) (15 textual differences from the Septuagint)

4Q24 contains 30 fragments, but they are all likely from the same original. 1st century B.C.

4Q25 only 6 or 9 fragments preserved from chapters 1, 3-5, 8.

4Q26 has four fragments (30 B.C. to 20 A.D. early Herodian script

4Q26a nine fragments from chapters 3, 19-22

4Q26b one fragment from Leviticus 7:19-26

4Q119 (Septuagint)

4Q120 (Septuagint)

6Q2 (Leviticus 8)

11Q1

11Q2 has two fragments that were likely from the same original. (fragments from chapters 7-10, 14-15, 25 (ca. 50 A.D. because of a “late Herodian hand”)

**Dead Sea Scrolls Septuagint:** The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says the oldest known existing copy of the Septuagint is a text of Leviticus from cave 4 of the Dead Sea scrolls; it is dated 100 B.C.

Overall, preserved in the Dead Sea scrolls are the following verses from Leviticus: **1**:1-17; **2**:1-16; **3**:1-14,16-17; **4**:1-8,12-14,18-19,23-28,30; **5**:6,8-10,12-13,16-20-24; **6**:none; 7:19-26; **8**:12-13,26-28,31,33-34; **9**:1-10,12-13,15,22-24; **10**:1-2,9-20; **11**:1-40; **12**:none; **13**:3-9,32-33,39-43,58-59; **14**:16-34,40-57; **15**:1-5,10-11,19-24; **16**:1-15,15-29,34; 17:1-11; **18**:16-21,27-30; **19**:1-8,30-37; **20**:1-6,20-24,27; **21**:1-4,6-12,17-24; **22**:1-33; **23**:1-8,10-29,40; **24**:2-23; **25**:28-36,45-49,51-52; **26**:2-33; **27**:5-22,30-31? See *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.423 for more details.

**Masada** had two preserved copies of Leviticus:

Mas1a (Leviticus 4:3-9) (50-1 B.C.)

Mas1b 45 fragments of Leviticus 8:31-11:40 (25-75 A.D.) (identical to the Masoretic text.

See *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.2 p.615 and *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* for more info.

**Aramaic translations**, called targums, have been found of Leviticus among the Dead Sea Scrolls as 4Q156. Two small Aramaic fragments are from the 2nd century B.C. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.32-33 and *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd edition*.

**Greek manuscripts** include Vaticanus (325-350 A.D.) (all of Leviticus), Alexandrinus (c.450 A.D.) (all of Leviticus) See *General Introduction to the Bible* p.391-394.

**Sinaiticus** (340-350 A.D.) contains Leviticus 20:27-22:30.

**Samaritans** made their own copy of the Torah in the second century B.C., though the earliest surviving Samaritan copies are from the Middle Ages. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.125-126.

**A Syriac translation** of the Septuagint was made by Bishop Paul of Tella (616-617 A.D.), which we still have today, according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.35 (footnote).

**Early church writers** recognized Leviticus as a part of the Bible.

**Q: In Lev, what are some of the translation differences between the Hebrew and Greek Septuagint?**

A: Here are a few of them, but first, here are some general language translation issues.

**Hebrew Masoretic text Greek Septuagint**

tabernacle of the congregation tabernacle of witness

burnt offering whole-burnt offering

impurity of uncleanness separation for uncleanness

detestable an abomination

disgusting acts abominations

etc.

Leviticus has a total of 859 verses. Below are a few of the fragments of verses with manuscript variations. The first phrase is the Masoretic text, and the second is the Septuagint, unless stated otherwise. This does not go through all of Leviticus, but it is focused primarily on chapters 16-18. Except where noted the first phrase is the Masoretic text (MT) and the second the Septuagint (LXX).

**Lev 1:16** crop and its “\*”. Unclear if “\*” is “contents”, “feathers”, or another word.

**Lev 3:1-11** appear to be absent in 4Q24

Lev 4:7 “will pour” vs. “will pour” misspelled in the Masada txt Mas1a

**Lev 4:19** “the broad tail, and that which covers, and the kidneys” vs. “the broad tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat on them” (NRSV footnote)

**Lev 7:21** “detestable thing” vs. “swarming thing”

**Lev 7:29-38** is not in the Septuagint.

**Lev 9:19** “the broad tail, and that which covers, and the kidneys” vs. “them” (Septuagint)

**Lev 11:13-19**, vulture” (21 birds) vs. absent (20 birds) Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch

**Lev 11:26** “is hooves and does not chew the cud” vs. “it hooves and chews its cud” (Septuagint, 2Q5)

**Lev 14:24** the original scribe omitted this verse, and it was added above the line in 4Q23.

**Lev 14:45** the original scribe omitted this verse, and it was added above the line in 4Q23.

**Lev 14:31** “such as the person can” vs. “which a person can afford, one” in the Septuagint and Syriac translations. (NRSV footnote)

**Lev 15:31** “separate the sons / children of Israel from their uncleanness” vs. “cause the children / sons of Israel to beware of their uncleannesses”

**Lev 16:1** Septuagint adds after died, “in bringing strange fire”

**Lev 16:10** 2 times “scapegoat” vs. “complete-removal”

**Lev 16:12** “incense” vs. “fragrant incense”

**Lev 16:13** “the testimony” vs. “the tables of testimony”

**Lev 16:20** “when he having finished” vs. “he shall finish”

**Lev 16:25** “he shall burn as incense the fat of the sin offering” vs. “he shall offer the fat for the sin-offering”

**Lev 16:34** “And he did as Jehovah had commanded Moses” vs. “as the Lord commanded Moses”

**Lev 17:2** “To Aaron and to his sons and to…” (MT, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “To Aaron and to…” (11Q2)

**Lev 17:3** “of Israel” vs. “of Israel or of the strangers/sojourners sojourns/abiding among you”

**Lev 17:3** absent (MT) vs. “sojourns/abiding in Israel” (4Q26) vs. “sojourns/abiding among you” (Septuagint)

**Lev 17:4** “as an offering to Jehovah, before the tabernacle of Jehovah” vs. “so as to offer it as a gift to the Lord (*kuriou*) before the tabernacle of the Lord”

**Lev 17:6** “Burn the fat as incense for a sweet-smelling fragrance” vs. “offer the fat for a sweet-smelling savour”

**Lev 17:7** “sacrifice their sacrifices any to goats” vs. “sacrifices to vain [gods]”

**Lev 17:8** “aliens who sojourn in your midst” vs. “sons of the proselytes abiding among you”

**Lev 18:5** “I am Jehovah” vs. “I am the Lord (Kuriou) your God”

**Lev 18:11** “daughter of your father’s wife, begotten by your father, she [is] your sister” vs. “daughter of thy father’s wife; she is thy sister by the same father”

**Lev 18:14** “she is your aunt” vs. “she is your relation”

**Lev 18:17** “are flesh” vs. “are your flesh” (Septuagint)

**Lev 18:21** “pour over them to Molech” vs. “serve a ruler” [perhaps the Septuagint translators did not know how to render the idol ‘Molech’ in Greek]

**Lev 18:21** “pollute the name of your God “ vs.” profane my holy name”

**Lev 18:21** 2 times “animal” vs. “quadruped”

**Lev 18:21** “shameful mixing” vs. “an abomination”

**Lev 18:25** “I will visit its iniquity on it and the land is vomiting out its inhabitants” vs. “I have recompensed their iniquity to them because of it, and the land is aggrieved with them that dwell upon it.”

**Lev 18:27** “The people of the land committed” (MT, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “You, the people of the land, committed [and he was disgusted with them and said to you y] shall inherit their la’n’.” (11Q2)

**Lev 18:28** “vomit” vs. “aggrieved”

**Lev 19:2** “You are holy” vs. “Be holy”

**Lev 19:36** “from the ears of the righteous stones of righteousness” (MT, Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “stones of righteousness” 4Q26a

**Lev 22:9** “guilt for it and die in it” vs. “guilt and die in the sanctuary” (Vulgate)

**Lev 22:22** “Either a wart or eczema or a moist skin eruption” (MT, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “Either a moist skin eruption or eczema or a wart” (11Q2)

Lev 26:31 “your sanctuary” vs. “your sanctuaries” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5)

Bibliography for this question: the Hebrew translation is from Jay P. Green’s *Literal Translation* and the Septuagint rendering is from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton’s translation of *The Septuagint : Greek and English*. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5, and the footnotes in the NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV Bibles also were used.

**Bible Query from Numbers**

## **Q: In Num, why is this book called “Numbers” in English?**

A: This name is based on Greek Septuagint translation (*arithmoi)*, from which we get the English word “arithmetic”. This name was due to the census tallies in the book. The Hebrew name is taken from the first verse “In the desert”. The fact that some people can feel lost in the wilderness when it comes to math, is not relevant!

## **Q: In Num, what is the main point of this book?**

A: One can see the focus of Numbers by simply remembering that it is the book with many genealogies and censuses. The main point deals with individual and corporate responsibility before God. God holds people individually guilty for their own sins, but people often suffer the consequences for what others do too.

For some, the Book of Numbers is both an offense and an enigma. God is the most loving being in the universe, but some imagine God as nothing but love. Numbers is one book that those who would look that there is more to God than this. God is holy, and God has wrath too.

**Q: In Num, what is an outline of this book?**

A: There are various ways to outline this book. Most commentators agree on the small sections of a chapter or so, but disagree on which small sections stand alone and which are part of larger sections. Here is one outline that stresses what we can learn and apply from Numbers to our lives, when we metaphorically “Go beyond the peak: The wilderness from Sinai to the Promised Land.”

**I. 19-Day Sinai Training (Num 1-10:10)**

**A. Placement of the people (Num 1-4)**

1. Counting the first census: 603,550 (Num 1)

2. Commands and obligations (Num 2-4)

**B. Purity of the people (Num 5-10:10)**

1. Purity and jealousy (Num 5)

2. Separation of a Nazirite (Num 6:1-21)

3. Temple duties (Num 6:22-7:89)

4. Levite duties (Num 8)

5. God’s Provisions: Passover, the Cloud, and the silver trumpets (Num 9-10:10)

**II. Handling opposition within: the 34-year long wilderness journey (Num 10:11-20:13)**

**A. From Sinai to Kadesh (Num 10:11-12:16)**

1. Setting out from Sinai (Num 10:11-36)

2. Fire at Taberah, quail, and plague (Num 11)

3. Miriam and Aaron oppose Moses (Num 12)

**B. Catastrophe at Kadesh (Num 13-20:13)**

1. The 12-spy report; doubts & delays (Num 13)

2. Rebellion leads to defeat (Num 14)

3. Offerings and remembrance tassels (Num 15)

4. Korah’s revolt among the leaders (Num 16)

5. Aaron’s staff of vindication, a sign for rebels (Num 17)

6. Priestly duties and support (Num 18)

7. The red heifer and cleansing water (Num 19)

8. The sins of Moses (Num 20:1-13)

**III. The plains of Moab: Handling opposition: (Num 20:14-25:18)**

**A. Handling estrangement and death (Num 20:14-27)**

1. Edom: when relatives refuse (Num 20:14-21)

2. Death of Aaron (Num 20:22-27)

**B. Learning to do fight different kinds of battles (Num 21)**

1. Arad’s little attack (Num 21:1-3)

2. How to fight snake poison (Num 21:4-9)

3. Fighting Sihon and Og (Num 21:10-35)

**C. Moab against Israel (Num 22-25)**

1. Balaam’s cursing to blessing (Num 22-24)

2. Seduction and plague (Num 25)

**IV. Preparation for the Promised Land (Num 26-36)**

**A. Num 26 Counting the 2nd census: 601,730**

**B. Obligations: family, public, and personal (Num 27-30)**

**C. Taking the Transjordan (Num 31-32)**

1. Judgment on the Midianites (Num 31)

2. Less than the best: stopping short of the Promised Land (Num 32)

**D. Covering past ground and future groundwork (Num 33-36)**

1. Importance of retracing the past (Num 33)

2. Set future boundaries beforehand (Num 34)

3. Know your places of refuge (Num 35)

4. Choices to preserve the legacy (Num 36)

**Q: In Num 1 and Ex 1, how could the Israelites have such a high birth rate to have 602,000 men from 67 men in 430 years?**

A: That would be 2.15% per year, which is not that high an annual population growth rate. For reference, the 1983 annual population growth rates of New Guinea, Indonesia, and Malaysia was 2.5%. The 1983 annual population growth rate of central America was about 3.16%. Also for reference, the annual birth rates of New Guinea, Indonesia, and Malaysia were 4.2%, 4.15%, and 3.07%, respectively. The annual birth rate of Mexico was 4.2%, and other central American countries ranged from 3.5% to 4.86% per year.

If the Israelites were free from war and famine for 430 years, and they had a longer lifespan (as in Exodus 6:16-20), they might grow by 2.15% due to natural reasons alone. A mixed multitude of non-Israelites went with them (Exodus 12:38, Leviticus 24:10) and God also promised to increase Abraham’s numbers in Genesis 17:2. See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.311-312 for more on the mixed multitude.

**Q: In Num 1 and Ex 1, how could the Sinai Peninsula support over 600,000 men plus women and children?**

A: The skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.166 says this is implausibly large. Even with more abundant rainfall back then, it still could not support them, as Exodus 16:3 indicates. That is why the miracles of the manna and quail (Exodus 16) were not merely helpful, but necessary. See also *When Critics Ask* p.96 and p.131 for more info and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.129-134 for a particularly extensive answer.

**Q: In Num 1, could the number be 30,000 instead of 600,000 men?**

A: No. This theory was first published around 1955 to translate the Hebrew word (*‘eleph*) as “clan” instead of “thousand” However, when this word is used, the following words are hundreds and then tens and ones. Furthermore, the total number, 600,000+, is consistent with reading (*‘eleph*) as thousand, and not consistent with reading (*‘eleph*) as clan. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.129-134 for more info.

**Q: In Num 1 and Num 3, what is a short answer to why there was such a relatively low number of firstborn sons?**

A: The number, 22,273 probably just counted those born in the two years that had wandered in the wilderness. The Passover already covered the others. Alternately, Pharaoh might have had many firstborn sons killed in Egypt. See the next question for more info.

**Q: In Num 1 and Num 3, why was there such a relatively low number of firstborn sons?**

A: First the basic facts, less-relevant info, and then the answer.

# **Basic facts:** Numbers 1:46 and Numbers 2:32 say that in the first census, there were 603,550 non-Levite males who could serve in the army twenty years and older. Numbers 3:42 says the number of firstborn males, one month and older was 22,273. This gives a ratio of 27:1. The ratio could be considered even higher, as the first number is 20+ healthy males, and the second numbers is one month+ males.

**Less-relevant info:** While there is a lower percentage of firstborn sons when there are large families, that is probably not the main reason for the high ratio. Of course, God could have miraculously altered the ratio of females to males, but the Bible never claimed that God performed that miracle, and an appeal to that miracle is unnecessary to satisfactorily answer the question.

**The answer** has three parts.

Remember why this was done. All the firstborn who left Egypt were already “covered” by the Passover blood, so there was no need to sacrifice for the same firstborn twice. The Egyptians who were not covered already had their firstborn killed. Thus, there was no need for a sacrifice or exchange of these firstborn. The need for an exchange or payment for the firstborn was only for those males who were born in the period after they left Egypt.

How long was this period? Numbers 1:1 says the first census was taken on the first day of the second month of the second year after they left Egypt. Since males under one month were excluded, that would be the firstborn males born in a 24-month period. The population growth rate of the Israelites in Egypt appeared to be around 2.15 % per year, and the annual birth rate of countries today with a similar annual growth rate varies from 3 to 4.86%. (See the discussion on Numbers 1 and Exodus 1 for these numbers.) In two years, 603,550 males and a 3 to 4.86% birth rate would be expected to produce between 37,000 and 61,000 more male infants, given an equal ratio of men to women. Of course, deaths of babies less than two years old would make this figure less, but the fact that couples were might have been often separated by the men working on pyramids were now together all the time would perhaps more than offset the infant mortality.

While the 37,000 to 61,000 range of **total males** is actually about right for 22,273 **firstborn males,** given that some firstborn were probably killed when they were born in Egypt. (By the way, Exodus 13:12 shows that for man or animal, it is the firstborn, of the mother, not the father that is counted for dedication. The *New Bible Dictionary* p.423 says the same. (While inheritance was often counted as the firstborn of the father, that was inheritance, not offering.)

**Pharaoh’s decree:** If you do not accept that the sacrifice was only for those born after leaving Egypt, but all firstborn males, then consider this: If Pharaoh’s law were strictly enforced, there would be no firstborn Israelite males. While Exodus 1:15-20 says that Shiphrah and Puah let the firstborn boys live in Exodus 1:15-20, this was 80 years before the Exodus. Exodus is silent on whether the successors of Shiphrah and Puah had similar latitude in administering the midwives, especially during the times just prior to the Exodus.

**Conclusion:** It is doubtful somebody back in 1400 B.C. could have thought of all the mathematics and birth rates to concoct these numbers. The number of the firstborn serves as a validation of the accuracy of the census given the true record of the events.

See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.62-63 for a different answer.

## **Q: In Num 1, why did God have Moses just number the men?**

A: Numbers 1:3,49 provides the answer. It was not all the males they were numbering, but the warriors. Those who could not fight, and Levites who should not fight, were excluded.

**Q: In Num 1, in the second year of the Exodus, was the census taken in the second month, or the first month as Ex 40:2 [allegedly] implies?**

A: The military census was in the second month. Four points to consider in the answer.

**1.** The counting by tribes for military purposes (Numbers 1:46) was done on the second month (Numbers 1:1-2).

**2.** While the Tabernacle (Tent of Meeting) was set up in the first month (Exodus 40:2), it does not say the tax for the Tabernacle, was collected immediately at that time.

**3.** If there was only one census count, in the second month, then of course the total number and the sum of the tribes would match.

**4.** If there were two census counts, one in the first month for the Tabernacle tax, and one in the second month for military purposes, the numbers would match because they were so close together.

See *When Critics Ask* p.97 for more info.

**Q: In Num 1:2-42, is there any extra-Biblical evidence that some Israelites tribes were in Palestine long before the Exodus?**

A: No. In the early part of the Twentieth century, some pointed to words in Ugaritic Epics that had similarities to the words Asher and Zebulun. K.A. Kitchen *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* p.71 says, “The supposed references to Asher, Zebulun, etc., in the Ugaritic epics were proved non-existent long ago.” In his footnotes, he mentions W.F. Albright *BASOR* 63 (1936) p.27-32 and *BASOR* 71 (1938) p.35-40. R. de Langhe Les Textes de Ras Shamra-Ugarit…, II 1945, p.469-519.

**Q: In Num 2, where did the non-Israelite “mixed multitudes” mentioned in Ex 12:38, camp?**

A: Some probably went their own way and left the company of the Israelites. Others of them undoubtedly camped on the outskirts of the Israelite camp, such as the blaspheming half-Israelite in Leviticus 24:10. If they could get the manna and quail too, it would be worthwhile. Still others probably lived among a particular Israelite tribe.

**Q: In Num 3:12 and Num 18:15 (KJV), what does “opened the matrix” mean?**

A: This means the one who opened the womb, in other words, the firstborn child.

**Q: In Num 3:12, since the firstborn of all the tribes were to be given to the Lord, why was the entire tribe of Levi given to God instead?**

A: Scripture does not say why the tribe of Levi was exchanged. Of course, since all were God’s people anyway, God could establish things the way He wished. As a side note, in Geneses 47:7, Jacob prophesied that the tribe of Levi would be dispersed. See *When Critics Ask* p.97 for more info.

**Q: In Num 3:13, how does God killing the firstborn Egyptians make the firstborn Israelites belong to God?**

A: There is no logical requirement that it had to be that way. Scripture does not tell us why God made the choice to include that as part of the agreement between Him and His Covenant people. However, we can speculate on three reasons.

**Past reminder:** This custom would serve as an important reminder of their deliverance from Egypt.

**Timeless truth:** Everybody really belonged to God anyway, while God could have required this of everyone, He chose to just require it of some.

**Future purpose:** This practice could serve as some protection against them copying the Canaanite practice of sacrificing the firstborn children to idols.

**Q: In Num 3:16-34, why were only Levite males counted?**

A: The census was for the purpose of doing the physical work with the Tabernacle and sacrifices, and the men did that. See also the next question.

**Q: In Num 3:16-34, why were Levites from one-month old counted, since males one-month old were not counted for the other tribes?**

A: Scripture does not say. One possible reason might be that the ratio of men to young boys was not affected by war, since the Levites did not go to war.

## **Q: In Num 3:28, why do the totals not add up?**

A: There likely is a copyist error here, copying 8,600 when it should have been 8,300. See *The NIV Study Bible* p.194 for more info.

**Q: In Num 3:42-46 why does the percentage of firstborn males appear low?**

A: Either this is the firstborn born in the wilderness, or Pharaoh had most of the firstborn in Egypt killed. See the discussion on Numbers 1 for the answer.

**Q: In Num 3:48, why did they have to pay for the odd number?**

A: God could deal with the Israelites however He wanted. God apparently desired to deal with them in a way they could understand.

**Q: In Num 4:3, did the Levites start serving at age thirty, or twenty-five in Num 8:24, or twenty in Ezra 3:8?**

A: **Numbers 8:24** says all Levites, 25 to 50 years old are to take part in the work in the Tent of Meeting.

**Numbers 4:3** says to count the Kohathite men 30 to 50 years, “who come to serve in the work in the Tent of Meeting.” It never said the 25 to 30 years old Kohathites did not serve, only not to count them. This might have been because the Levites had a period of apprenticeship.

**In Ezra 3:8**, when the exiles were building the Temple, the Levites 20+ years not to serve in the Temple, but to supervise the building of the Temple. The young age might have been a practical consideration due to the small number of Levites.

See *When Critics Ask* p.97-98, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.134-135, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.164, and *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.153-154 for more info.

**Q: In Num 4:6, were the poles to be removed from the Ark of the Covenant, or were they to stay in the Ark as Ex 25:15 suggests?**

A: Numbers 4:6 says the poles were [\*] the ark when it was being transported. The word in [\*] can mean fastened, inserted, or possibly adjusted.

Exodus 25:15 says the poles were not to depart from the ark. This could also mean the poles were not to be removed from the holes in the ark.

There are two possible answers.

1. When the ark was at rest, the poles were removed from the ark, but kept close by it.

2. The poles always remained in the holes of the ark, but they were adjusted and fastened before transport. See *When Critics Ask* p.98 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.242 for more info on the second answer.

**Q: In Num 5:8-10, why is there emphasis on giving to the priest?**

A: If there is a person who was wronged, then the person must be paid back, plus one-fifth extra. But if there is no one around anymore to take the payment, then the person in the wrong should not get off scot free. It should not be a sham offering, either, by giving the offering, and then getting to keep it at the end. Rather, they give the offering, the priests accept it, and it belongs to the priests. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.741 for more info.

**Q: In Num 5:13-22, if all drank the same water, doesn’t this seem superstitious?**

A: Not at all. There was no natural cause why the guilty would swell and the innocent would not. God would supernaturally cause the difference. See *When Critics Ask* p.98-99 for more info.

## **Q: In Num 6:2, could a woman be a Nazirite?**

A: Sure. Numbers 6:2 expressly teaches women could be Nazirites, too.

**Q: In Num 6:5, since a Nazirite was not to cut his hair, and Paul said men should not have long hair in 1 Cor 11:4, could only bald men be male Nazirites?**

A: First, Paul was talking about ordinary life, not the special vow of a Nazirite, because after writing 1 Corinthians, Paul himself paid the expenses of Nazirites in Acts 21:23-24. Second, Nazirite vows were not mentioned for non-Jews, including non-Jewish Christians. See *When Critics Ask* p.99-100 for more info.

Q: In Num 7:9, why did God have the things of the sanctuary carried on the backs of the men, when ox-drawn wagons could carry everything else?

A: God probably wanted this for two reasons.

**Practical:** Things get scratched and dinged less if they are carefully carried by people than if they are in a cart drawn by oxen that might travel in rough terrain.

**Symbolic:** This would be an illustration to the Israelites that the parts associated with the priestly worship were to be treated with respect, even when worship was not being conducted. In 1 Samuel Uzzah was killed by God when he touched the ark when it was being carried in a cart.

**Q: In Num 8:17-19, why did God “swap” the Israelite firstborn for the Levites here?**

A: Four points to consider for a possible explanation.

**1.** God as Creator can claim the right over the firstborn, second born, and all the born.

**2.** God’s saying this served as a reminder that God rescued the firstborn of the Israelites during the Passover, when all the firstborn of Egypt were killed.

**3.** To serve as a reminder, God required the “sacrifice” of the firstborn of all the animals and people. Since people are not to be physically killed in any sacrifice, they could be given to the Lord’s work for life.

**4.** Instead of the firstborn of Israel being given to the Lord’s work for life, God had the Levites take their place.

**Q: In Num 8:24, were all Levite men 25 years and older to come to take part in the work of the tent of meeting, or were all Levite men 30 years and older who came to work at the tent of meeting counted in the census, as Num 4:3 says?**

A: This could be a scribal error, but *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.770 suggests there could have been a five-year apprenticeship.

**Q: In Num 8:24 were the Levites to take part in the temple work at 25 years old, or were the Levites who worked 20 years old as Ezr 3:8?**

A: Both, because they refer to different things. First what is not the answer, and then the answer.

**Not the answer:** Numbers 8:24 gave the law for the Levites in Moses’ time, and Ezra 3:8 says what Zerubbabel appointed Levites 20 years and older for the special circumstances in a different time. This is not the answer because it implies Zerubbabel ignored the Mosaic Law, and there is a much simpler explanation that does not require this.

**The answer:** A sacrifice helper is different than a construction worker. The regulations in Numbers 8:24 were for Levites 25-50 years old who did the work assisting the priests in the tabernacle and later the temple. Ezra 3:8 spoke of Zerubbabel appointed as construction supervisors Levites 20 years and older.

See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.72-73 for more info.

**Q: In Num 9:15-21, how could the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night follow the Israelites?**

A: Obviously, these were supernatural signs God used simply and very visibly to assure them of His presence. Even so, the Israelites often were disobedient. Today, when God dwells inside of us, we do not have such visible signs of His presence, it might be easy to say, “if only I saw more miracles I would be more obedient.” Well, the Israelites saw many miracles, but they still were disobedient. Also, many of the people in the crowds that followed Jesus later would not follow him? Thus, not even supernatural signs alone are sufficient to convince some people.

**Q: In Num 10:30-31, why did Moses ask Hobab to guide the Israelites, since Num 10:34 and Ex 13:21-22 said God was leading them by a cloud and a pillar of fire?**

A: One answer would be that perhaps Moses was simply mistaken in thinking Hobab would be needed since God was guiding them. However, this is probably not correct; even with God guiding them Hobab would still have been useful.

Exodus 13:21-21 and Numbers 10:34 indicate that the purpose of the cloud and pillar were to tell them when to set out, to provide light for their travels by night, and to guide them on their way.

In Numbers 10:30-31, Hobab was not asked to tell them where they should travel, but rather to direct them where to camp, to be their eyes in the desert.

Today some people can rely solely on human judgment and not look to God. Others can look to guide and disdain all human help. We should be guided by God, but we must also recognize that sometimes God providentially provides people to give us help and wise counsel.

See *When Critics Ask* p.100 for more info.

**Q: In Num 10:33, was the ark before the camp, or in the middle of it as Num 2:17 says?**

A: Each of the tribes had its own camp, facing the center. Thus, the ark was in the middle, before the front of every tribes’ camp (except the Levites in the center). See *When Critics Ask* p.100-101 for more info and other suggestions.

**Q: In Num 11:4-6, the people had a strong craving for meat and began to complain. I was wondering - couldn't the people have killed some lambs and had that for meat? In verse 22 Moses even asks God if the animals should be slaughtered to provide food for the whole nation. I know Moses spoke in frustration, but perhaps lambs could have just been killed for those who had the intense craving. As I understood it, the people were allowed to eat lambs, cows, etc., and they did have access to those animals at this time since they had to sacrifice them for trespass offerings, atonement offerings, etc., while in the wilderness. Am I right in my understanding of that period? Couldn't they have killed some of the livestock instead of complaining about God? I don't think Moses would have denied their request. I welcome your thoughts and any insight you can provide.**

A: While we don't know all the particulars, we can make a few observations about their situation. Climate wise, that region of the world was somewhat more rainy in the past than today. But even so, it was still a dry wilderness, Moses indicated in Numbers 11:21-22 that the land would not have been able to sustain the flocks and herds necessary to feed everyone. They had a legitimate need for more food than the land and their herds could provide, and God provided for them with manna. I am sure they did supplement the manna by killing some sheep and cattle. It does not say they did not eat anything besides manna, but only that they were complaining as it that was the case. But they got tired of the current situation, and rather than respectfully ask God about their desire, they disrespectfully said, “If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost - also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna.” (Num 11:4b-6 NIV).

God was not angry in Numbers 11:10 because they asked God, but rather because of how they asked. There is a lesson for us there too. When we have needs, and also wants, it’s fine to us to ask God, but we should be careful to ask respectfully.

**Q: In Num 11:8, did manna taste like bread made with oil, or did it taste like a bread made with honey in Ex 16:31?**

A: The two are not mutually exclusive, especially noting that the oil taste would be stronger after manna was cooked in oil. See *When Critics Ask* p.101 for more info, and *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.352 for an excellent discussion of what manna was.

**Q: In Num 11:16,25, were the seventy elders God’s idea, or Jethro’s idea in Ex 18:14-27?**

A: Instead of God directly telling Moses this idea, God knew that Jethro would see this solution and suggest this to Moses. Since this was a good idea that Moses knew that God approved, Moses was right in following this idea, regardless of the fact that He first heard it from Jethro, and not God.

This small detail from back then could easily have been omitted from the Bible, but I believe it was included to teach us a timeless lesson. When we know something is right and God wants us to do it, it does not matter whether we heard it directly from God, a Christian, or a non-Christian.

**Q: In Num 11:24, since they had to go outside their camp to get to the Tabernacle, how could the Tabernacle be inside the camp in Num 2?**

A: The tabernacle surrounded the ark, so see the discussion on Numbers 10:33

**Q: In Num 11:27-29, why was there this situation with Eldad and Medad?**

A: Either they were unable to come, which would be quite understandable, or they were unwilling to come, which is more probable. If it were the unfortunate situation that they were able to come but unwilling, this situation would be similar to Jonah and Balaam. See the discussion on Jonah for more info.

**Q: In Num 11:31, were the quail piled three feet on the ground, or did they fly three feet above the ground?**

A: The Hebrew word can mean either “upon” or “above”. The KJV takes this to mean “upon”, the NKJV says, “fluttering … two cubits above the surface of the ground”, and the NIV takes this to mean flying “above” the ground. *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.30 says that today at times swarms of quail fly a few feet above the ground and are caught in nets.

**Q: In Num 11:31-34, why did God punish the Israelites for eating the quail He had just provided for them?**

A: Almost all the people were more concerned about eating meat than following God, who could give them meat. So, God gave them all the meat they wanted, and God killed some of them as an example to others. While the death could have been from food poisoning, we do not know for sure.

As a sidenote, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.164 mentions that every spring there was a quail migration from Africa across the Red Sea. If a strong wind drove them east, the quail would be over the Sinai Peninsula.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.135-136 and *When Critics Ask* p.101-102 for more info.

**Q: In Num 11:31-34, why did God punish the Israelites for grumbling, since God did not punish them when they grumbled the year before in Ex 16:11-18?**

A: While Scripture does not say, we can see a combination of four reasons.

**1.** Repeated and continued disobedience is more serious than first-time disobedience.

**2.** The second time was likely more than just grumbling. It was also challenging God’s goodness and provision.

3. Some see significance in that this happened after the covenant at Mt. Sinai, while Exodus 16:11-18 was before they had the Law of Mosaic Covenant. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.73 for more on this.

**3.** The grumbling was not just from a lack of faith, for God had provided for them last year. The place was named “Kibroth Hattaavah, for “graves of craving”, because the central issue was craving to be satisfied apart from God. Today, people can go astray, even to their death, by craving contentment, peace, or thrills that are not from God and in effect telling God they despise what He has provided.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.164-165 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.73 for more info.

**Q: In Num 12:1-6, why did Moses [allegedly] marry an Egyptian woman, when Ex 34:16; 1 Ki 11:2 says they were not to marry from other nations? (A Muslim asserted this.)**

A: She was not from Egypt (Mizraim) but a Cushite. 1 Kings 11:2 mentions a prohibition of marrying from certain nations, but not Cush, and the Law was given after Moses married the Cushite. Anyway, Exodus 34:11,16 mentions not inter-marrying with the Canaanite peoples, again not Cushites. In Numbers 12:1-6, when Miriam and Aaron opposed Moses marrying a Cushite (not an Egyptian or Mizraimite, but a Cushite), I am somewhat mystified as to how this Muslim thought this shows that God’s rules do not apply to God’s favorites, males.

**Q: In Num 12:1, was Moses right to marry a non-Israelite Ethiopian (Cushite)?**

A: While the Law to marry only a believer was not given yet, we can assume she believed, because why else would she want to spend her life wandering in the wilderness? That being the case, it is only man, not God who restricts marriage among people because of their race.

**Q: In Num 12:1, could the “Ethiopian” woman, actually have been an Arabian, since the Hebrew word is Cushi?**

A: *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.167-168 mentions this as a possibility. I had not found any Arab tribe of that time with that name. However, there was a Mesopotamian tribe with that name, and perhaps that is to what Isaac Asimov was referring.

While it is remotely possible that the woman might have been from that rather distant tribe (east of Babylon), it is more likely the woman was from Ethiopia, and “Cushite” would be the term to tell us that.

**Q: In Num 12:1, could this “Cushite” woman have been Zipporah, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.168 suggests?**

A: Most likely not, as Zipporah was from the Midianite tribe, and not from the Cushites. However, if some Black people were accepted as part of the Midianites, it is possible that Zipporah could have been black, and thus called a Cushite.

Even if Zipporah was dark-skinned, she was most probably not the woman mentioned in Numbers 12:1, as Moses had been married to Zipporah prior to leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

**Q: In Num 12:3, why would Moses write that he was a humble man?**

A: This verse was written (by someone) to explain why Moses made no effort to defend himself here. *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* (p.248) believes this verse was written down by Moses to objectively say why he did not defend himself. Other examples in ancient literature of people who have written about themselves in third person are Julius Caesar (*The Alexandrian War* 75), Paul of Tarsus (2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11-12), probably John, and most likely Mark.

However, many other Christians believe it is much more probable that this was written down in Moses’ time, by a scribe under Moses’ supervision. See *When Critics Ask* p.102-103, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.136-137, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.165-166, and the discussion on Exodus 11:3 for more info.

## **Q: In Num 12:8 (KJV), what does it mean that God spoke to Moses “mouth to mouth”?**

A: This King James expression is better translated today as “face to face”.

## **Q: In Num 12:8 (KJV), what are “not in dark speeches”?**

A: This King James Version expression means God does not speak to Moses in riddles, like He did to other prophets, such as Miriam and Aaron.

**Q: In Num 12:14, why would a father ever spit in his daughter’s face?**

A: This neither commands nor encourages that. In the Middle East especially, spitting on somebody is a way of showing contempt. This verse is saying that a father spitting in his daughter’s face would show how contemptible the father viewed his daughter’s actions. God is not telling fathers to do that, but rather telling Moses that in His viewpoint Miriam’s criticism of Moses was just as bad. See *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.74 for more info.

**Q: In Num 13:3, did the twelve spies come from Paran, or from Kadesh Barnea as Num 20:1 says?**

A: This question is similar to the following: does the governor of California live in California, or in Sacramento (the capital of California)? In the same way, Kadesh Barnea was a site in the wilderness of Paran.

See the discussion on Numbers 20:1, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.166, and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.137 for more info.

**Q: In Num 13:16, how could Moses rename Hoshea to Joshua, since Joshua was already referred to as Joshua in Ex 17:9; 24:13?**

A: The events of Exodus 17 preceded Joshua’s new name. However, Moses or his scribes obviously wrote down Exodus 17 after Joshua received his new name. It was better to use the new name in Number 13:16, as the readers then and now would be more familiar with the new name than with the old. For a similar example in the New Testament, Matthew refers to Simon as Simon Peter three times, and Peter three times prior to Jesus calling him Peter. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.137 and *When Critics Ask* p.103-104 for more info.

**Q: In Num 13:32, how could Canaan “devour its inhabitants”, since it was such as good land as in Num 13:27?**

A: This paradox caused no problem for the Israelites, and it should cause no problems for anyone else. The land was fertile, however, the people living on the land were warlike and violent. See *When Critics Ask* p.103 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.137-138 for more info.

**Q: In Num 13:32, how could the Israelite spies say they saw the Nephilim, since the Nephilim were killed in the flood in Gen 6?**

A: They only said they saw the Nephilim, and what people say is not always true. Either:

1. They meant this as a metaphor.

2. They mistook large men for Nephilim.

3. The spies who spoke were not telling the truth but exaggerating.

**Q: In Num 14:15, why was God considering killing all the Israelites?**

A: The all-wise God knew He was not going to kill all of the Israelites. God threatened to kill the Israelites because God wanted them to tell them how dangerously they were living. Obedience to God is not something to take lightly. At this point God would have been just to pour His wrath on them, and He wanted them to be aware that at this point they were alive because of His mercy, not because they deserved to be.

**Q: In Num 14:18, does God punish children for the sins of their parents?**

A: Children do not have the guilt for the sins of their parents (Ezekiel 18:4,17-20). However, the Bible from the time of Abel onwards shows that people suffer consequences in this life for sins for which they are not guilty. In addition, as children grow up they can chose whether or not to participate in the sins they saw their parents do since they were little. See *The Complete Book of Bible Answers* p.168-169 for more info.

**Q: In Num 14:20-23,29, since God pardoned the people, why wouldn’t He let them go into the Promised Land?**

A: God can forgive people for their sins, but still discipline them, both for their sake and as an example to others.

**Q: In Num 14:34, why did God count one day of spying equal to one year of discipline?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, a forty-day delay for forty days of unified disobedience would seem very mild. Sometimes if people commit to keeping in the same state and reject advancing to serve God, it seems fitting that they should stay that way.

**Q: In Num 14:34-35, since all but two of the adults died in the wilderness during this forty year period, where are all their bones today?**

A: If they did not give the bodies a deep burial, the corpses would have decomposed or taken by wild animals. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.138 and *When Critics Ask* p.105 for more info.

**Q: In Num 15:5,10, since drinking wine is [allegedly] bad, why was wine offered to God?**

A: No verse in the Old or New Testament says that drinking wine is wrong. Many verses teach that getting drunk is wrong, though. See the discussion on 1 Timothy 5:22 for more info.

**Q: In Num 15:16, why is there one law for both the Israelites and non-Israelites in the land?**

A: There was no discrimination in the law courts. The laws for murder, stealing, false witness, and so forth were the same for the Israelite as the non-Israelite. A testimony of a non-Israelite was counted the same as an Israelite, and a woman’s testimony was equal to a man’s, unlike what is true in many Muslim countries. However, it is true that the non-Israelites that lived in Israel had to respect some of the religious laws, but they did not have to bring sacrifices.

**Q: In Num 15:32-36, why was a man killed for gathering sticks on the Sabbath?**

A: Gathering sticks was fine on other days. However, his actions at this time showed utter contempt for God’s law. It was the display of an attitude of contempt, not the gathering of sticks, for which the man was stoned.

**Q: In Num 15:34 (KJV), what does “put him in ward” mean?**

A: This King James Version word means to confine him or put him in a jail, awaiting his sentence.

Q: In Num 15:35-36, what is unusual about this passage?

A: This is organized as a Hebrew chiasm. (The English translation is NRSV)

- The Lord said to Moses

- - The man shall be put to death

- - - All the congregation shall stone him outside the camp

- - - The whole congregation brought him outside the camp and

- - stoned him to death

- Just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

## **Q: In Num 15:38 (KJV), what is a “ribband”?**

A: This King James Version word means ribbon.

**Q: In Num 16:5, why did Moses tell them to put fire in their censors, since Moses knew what happened to Nadab and Abihu?**

A: They knew what happened to Nadab and Abihu as well as Moses did. They did so anyway because they were so intent on opposing Moses. Perhaps Moses was not being kind or unkind to them, but if they wanted to worship God in their own separate way, Moses said to go ahead, and we will see what God will do.

**Q: In Num 16:13-14, what about the complaint of Dathan and Abiram? God promised them they would go into the land of milk and honey, but Num 14:29-34 made it clear God would never lead them there after all, only their children.**

A: The people certainly understood the promise to mean that the Israelites would go to the Promised Land, and not necessarily every individual present would live to enter. God did not say He was going to force individuals into the Promised Land. When they refused to go in, God punished their open revolt by permanently honoring the decision of the people who rebelled.

If you willingly choose to rebel against God, God may later perhaps grant you a repentant heart to come to Him later. On the other hand, God may not, and God is not required to do so.

**Q: In Num 16:31 were Korah and his 250 followers swallowed by the earth, or were the 250 followers burned to death in Num 16:35?**

A: Numbers 16:31 shows that the earth swallowed Korah, Dathan, Abiram and their families. Numbers 16:35 shows that fire burned up the other 250 men who were not related to Korah. See *When Critics Ask* p.105-106 for more info.

**Q: In Num 16:31-35, how was it just for the earth to swallow up the even the little ones (Num 16:27) of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, too?**

A: It was just because God has the right to allocate to every individual whatever lifespan He chooses, and He has not obligated Himself to give everyone the same lifespan. This is very similar to the question of why God had even the infant Canaanites killed. See the discussion on Joshua 6:21 for the answer.

**Q: In Num 16:32, were all the men of Korah killed, or only some as in Num 26:11?**

A: All the men of Korah who followed Korah were killed, but the ones who did not follow Korah were not killed. Numbers 26:11 clearly shows that some of the descendants of Korah were not among those who did not rebel and were not killed. Actually, the prophet of Samuel was descended from Korah (1 Chronicles 6:22-28). See *When Critics Ask* p.106 for more info.

**Q: In Num 16:37-38, how did the censors of the rebellious men become holy?**

A: Numbers 16:39-40 answers why God chose to designate them to be remembered as holy.

Origin: It was offered to God.

Use: The bronze was used to overlay the altar.

Reminder: It was to be a sign, that the Israelites would not try to come to God on their own.

There is no indication the 250 men had done any more bad things than anyone else. However, they thought they could come to God their own way, not God’s way, on their own righteousness instead of through the sacrifices God required. People still try similar things today.

**Q: In Num 16:45-47, why did God start to kill all the Israelites?**

A: The entire community was grumbling against Moses and Aaron. While God’s action protected Moses and Aaron, God could have protected them in other ways, too. The main purpose for God sending the supernaturally rapid plague appears to be discipline to teach the Israelites not to harden their hearts in rebellion against God.

**Q: Since Num 17:5 says God used Aaron’s rod to stop the Israelite murmuring, how come they still murmured in Num 20:2-5?**

A: The miracle of Aaron’s rod had the short-term effect of stopping their murmuring in Numbers 17. In fact, the Israelites almost went to the opposite extreme in Numbers 17:12-13.

When the Israelites later murmured in Numbers 20, the same rod was used (Deuteronomy 20:8) to stop the murmuring then.

Unfortunately, the external miracle of Aaron’s rod did not change people’s hearts inside, and could not permanently stop the grumbling.

**Q: In Num 17:8-10, how could a cut branch blossom and yield almonds, since almond wood does not have this property?**

A: God, who made the plants able to grow and produce seed, miraculously made this happen.

**Q: In Num 18:1-2, why did God make these people, and their sons, responsible for their things?**

A: Aaron’s ancestral house is the tribe of Levi, so this means the Levites, including Aaron and his sons, were responsible for offenses committed against the tabernacle. Aaron, his sons, and their descendants alone were responsible for offenses committed against the priesthood.

These people were not only held accountable for what they personally did, but they were responsible for offenses against the sanctuary and the priesthood. People could not approach the Tabernacle without their permission, so if they were negligent in their watch over the Tabernacle and others desecrated it, they would be responsible for their own negligence too.

**Q: In Num 18:2, what is unusual about this verse?**

A: Numbers 18:2 is a wordplay, where “to join you” *weyillawu* is a play on words for “Levite” *lewi*. So, a super-literal reading is “the tribe of Levi … will ‘levi’ with you. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.851 for more info.

**Q: In Num 19:8, why was the priest unclean until evening, since he was obeying God regarding the red heifer sacrifice?**

A: Here is an interesting situation of a priest, obediently doing God’s will, becoming unclean. It did not say the priest sinned, or that God was unhappy with the priest, only that He was unclean and could not come around the sacred things for a time. Thus, there is a marked distinction between ceremonial uncleanness and personal guilt.

When Jesus died on the cross, He became unclean for a time in the sight of God the Father. This was done obediently to take upon Himself the punishment for our sins. Jesus was not sinful, and Satan did not “enter into Jesus” as some cultists teach; rather Jesus simply became unclean.

**Q: In Num 20:1, was Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, or was Kadesh in the wilderness of Paran as Num 13:26 says?**

A: The Sinai Peninsula had four wilderness regions:

**The Wilderness of Shur** on the northwest, bordered by Egypt on the west and the River of Egypt on the east, and Elim on the south. Genesis 16:7; 20:1; 25:18; Exodus 15:22; 1 Samuel 15:7; 27:8

**The Wilderness of Sin** on the southwest. It was between Elim [on the north] and Sinai [on the east] according to Exodus 16:1. Exodus 17:1 and Numbers 33:11,12 also mention the Wilderness of Sin.

**The Wilderness of Paran** on the southeast. It was bordered by the Wilderness of Sin on the northeast and Kadesh on the west. Genesis 21:21; Numbers 10:12; 12:16; 13:3,26; Deuteronomy 1:1; 33:2; 1 Samuel 25:1; 1 Kings 11:18.

**The Wilderness of Zin** on the northeast extending to the Dead Sea and the Arabah on the east and the town of Kadesh on the west. Numbers 13:21; 20:1; 27:14; 33:36; 34:3,4 Deuteronomy 32:51; Joshua 15:1,3

Kadesh was on the border of the Wilderness of Paran and the Wilderness of Zin.

**Q: In Num 20:8, should the pronoun be translated as “his” as the KJV says, or “its” as other translations?**

A: Grammatically, the Hebrew pronoun can be properly translated as either “its” or “his”. But in this context it should probably be “its” because Moses is told to speak to the rock. It is translated “its” in the NET Bible, NIV, NKJV, Green's translation, Updated NASB, NRSV, and the Jewish Tanakh.

**Q: In Num 20:10-13, why was God was angry with Moses, since Moses did what God told him to do?**

A: Moses did the right thing, but he had the wrong attitude, and he displayed the wrong attitude to others. Instead of hitting the rock being a miracle that brought attention to God’s mercy provision, Moses apparently struck the rock as if in anger, saying “Listen you rebels…”

There is a lesson for us to learn here. If we do the things God wants, but with the wrong attitude, God is not pleased with what we do either. See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.566-568 for more info.

**Q: In Num 20:12, was Moses forbidden to go into Canaan because of unbelief, or rebellion (Num 27:12-14), trespassing (Dt 32:51-52), or rash words (Ps 106:32-33). (An atheist asked this)**

A: There was only one incident, at the waters of Meribah, and all four verses are a description of the same reason.

**Number 20:12** says because Moses did not believe God, to revere God in the eyes of the Israelites.

**Numbers 27:12-14** says Moses rebelled against God’s command to revere Him.

**Deuteronomy 32:51** says that Moses trespassed [sinned] against God, because Moses did not revere God among the Israelites.

**Psalm 106:32-33** says that they (the Israelites) rebelled against God’s Spirit at the waters of strife (Meribah), and so Moses spoke rashly.

All the verses give a consistent message. The Israelites contended against Moses (Numbers 20:2-5, Psalm 106:33), Moses was not believing in God’s provision (Numbers 20:12). His speaking rashly (Numbers 20:10; Psalm 106:33), was not revering God among the Israelites (Numbers 20:12; 27:12-14; Deuteronomy 32:51).

There is no question about what happened, and the last three passages are simply reminders of what people could read for themselves in Numbers 20.

**Q: In Num 20:16, did an angel lead the Israelites out of Egypt, or was it God Himself in Ex 3:8?**

A: Many verses say it was God who brought them out of Egypt. Numbers 20:16 says in Hebrew that God sent an angel and [\*] brought us out of Egypt. The [\*] is unspoken in the verse, and could refer to the angel or refer to God Himself.

The [\*] does not really need to be specified, because it is true both ways. God could have had His angels create the cloud and pillar of fire, and send the strong wind that parted the Red Sea. God Himself was involved in at least two ways.

**1.** The angels were acting in complete obedience to God’s orders

**2.** God Himself also had a localized presence there, which may account for the severity of punishment for their sinning.

**Q: In Num 20-24, what is the extra-Biblical evidence that Balaam was a real person?**

A: In 1967, in the Jordan Valley at Beir Allah (or Deir ‘Alla), archaeologists found a schoolboy’s writing practice mentioning Balaam son of Beor three times. This was radiocarbon dated to 800/760 B.C. This was first published in 1976. See also J. Hoftijzer “The Prophet Balaam in a 6th-century Aramaic Inscription” in *Biblical Archaeology* 39 (1976) p.11-17 and Jo Ann Hackett *The Balaam Text from Deir ‘Alla* (1984).

See *the J.E.P.D Theory* by Walter Kaiser, Jr., *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.4 p.759 or *The NIV Study Bible* p.223 or listen to the John Ankerberg tape *Exploding the J.E.P.D Theory* by Walter Kaiser, Jr..

**Q: In Num 21:6,8 how were these serpents “fiery”?**

A: This does not necessarily mean they were glowing or a bright red color. Rather, it means their bite felt like fire.

**Q: In Num 21:9, why did the Israelites have to look to a bronze serpent after being bitten, since this seems like idolatry.**

A: God commanded them to look at the bronze serpent on a pole so that they would recover from the snakebite. However, in later times, people did turn this into an idol, calling the bronze snake by the name Nehushtan. Because of this idolatry, Hezekiah ordered the snake destroyed in 2 Kings 18:4.

The first writer known to have answered this objection was Tertullian in *Five Books Against Marcion* book 2 ch.22 p.314 (207/208 A.D.). Prior to that, *The Epistle of Barnabas* (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.12 p.145 and the *First Apology of Justin Martyr* (150 A.D.) ch.50 p.183 also wrote on this, but they apparently did not see any difficulty to discuss. See *When Critics Ask* p.107 for more info.

**Q: In Num 21:9, what is “The Book of the Wars of the Lord”?**

A: We only know of this book from its mention in the Bible. This book was apparently a factual historical detail of these events. There is no mention that it was God’s word or that it should have been in the Scriptures.

## **Q: In Num 21:29 and Jer 48:46, who is Chemosh?**

A: Chemosh was the idol of Moab. 2 Kings 3:27 says that infants were sacrificed to Chemosh.

**Q: In Num 22:1; 26:3; 31:12; 33:48; 34:15; 35:1; and 36:13 what is unusual about this phrase?**

A: The phrase “The Jordan of Jericho” is an unusual way of describing this river. It might just be a description of where the Jordan River was, but the NIV footnotes say it might be a very ancient name for that river.

**Q: In Num 22:5, do we have any extra-Biblical evidence of Balaam’s hometown of Pethor?**

A: Possibly so. An inscription of Shalmaneser II mentions a town on the Euphrates and Sagur rivers just west of Carchemish called *Pitru*, and this might be Pethor. *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.183 also adds the Egyptians called this *Pedru*. See *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.775 and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1322 for more info.

**Q: In Num 22:5-7, was Balaam primarily a true prophet of God, who was led astray by greed, or was he primarily a pagan diviner, through whom the True God spoke in this situation?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, because of the evil advice he later gave, Balaam’s heart was certainly not for God and His people. If a schoolboy exercise of 800/760 B.C. was unearthed can be relied upon, it would seem that Balaam was a pagan diviner through whom the True God spoke at this time.

**Q: In Num 22:7, how could God give a prophecy to someone who practiced divination?**

A: God can give prophecy to whoever he wants to do so. Scripture does not say whether Balaam first practiced divination, or if he were first given the prophecy, and it could have been either way.

If Balaam first attempted to practice divination to the true God, God permitted what he did in ignorance and did not correct it at that time.

If Balaam first was given the gift of prophecy, and later sinned in trying to “excite and augment” his prophetic gift through divination, this would be an example of God not taking away our gifts when we sin. For a somewhat similar example, when Jesus healed ten lepers in Luke 17:12-17 and only one returned to thank him, Jesus asked where the other nine were, but Jesus did not specifically “unheal” them.

**Q: In Num 22:7, when Balaam used divination to curse other people besides the Israelites, did his curses ever work?**

A: While the people who paid Balaam thought the curses might work, Scripture does not say if they really worked or not. At least as far as Israel was concerned, Balaam knew that his curses were useless.

See *Astrology & Psychic Phenomena* for more on the view that any of Balaam’s curses were never effective except as a placebo effect.

**Q: In Num 22:12-17, why was God very angry with Balaam when he allowed Balaam to go?**

A: For the sake for money Balaam wanted to get as close to disobeying God as possible. As *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.74-75 says, God gave him permission but not direction. Though Balaam obeyed God’s directive not to curse Israel, he advised Balak how to morally corrupt the Israelites and have them incur God’s displeasure in Numbers 31:16; 25.

**Q: In Num 22:22-33, why was God angry with Balaam, since Balaam apparently obeyed God?**

A: Reading the entire chapter is instructive on the kind of obedience God desires. Balaam never did a single action that directly disobeyed God. However, when the messengers came, Balaam did not tell them to go away, and that he did not desire to go with them, because it would not please God. Instead, even though Balaam knew what God wanted, Balaam said he wanted to go with them, but God refused Balaam. Balaam tried to stay as far away from obeying what God wanted as he could, without directly disobeying God. That is why God was angry with him.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.140 and especially *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.166-168 for an extensive discussion.

**Q: In Num 22:27-28, is a talking donkey absurd? (a Muslims says this)**

A: If a person truly believed that God is Almighty, God can do anything.

The Muslim might not be aware of what is in his own hadiths. “The prophet used to stand by a stem of a date-palm tree (while delivering a sermon). When the pulpit was placed for him we heard that stem crying like a pregnant she-camel till the Prophet got down from the pulpit and placed his hand over it.” (*Bukhari* vol.2 book 13 ch.24 no.41 p.19). Now I do not believe that happened, but I do not reject that that God Almighty had the power to make that (or anything else) happen.

**Q: In Num 22:34, did Balaam obey God in speaking only what God told Balaam to say?**

A: According to Numbers 22:38, Balaam did obey at that time. However, sometime later he gave evil (but correct) advice of how to turn the Israelites away from God.

**Q: In Num 22:41, is it true that Baal, meaning “Lord”, was never the name of any specific god as the skeptical *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.185 claims?**

A: Isaac Asimov is giving out false information here. Apart from the Bible, Ugaritic literature mentions a specific idol named Baal, as the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.121 mentions. On p.593, one specific writing is called “The Baal Epic”.

**Q: In Num 23:10, how come Balaam’s prophecy of dying the death of the righteous was definitely not fulfilled?**

A: Balaam counseled the Moabites and Midianites to turn the Israelites away from God by sending their women to have sex with them (Numbers 31:16). The Israelites executed Balaam according to Numbers 31:8 and Joshua 13:22.

Balaam was not stating a prophetic fact, but only his desire that he die the death of the righteous. His desire was not fulfilled due to his own sin. Likewise, people today can sincerely have good desires, which do not come about due to their own fault.

**Q: In Num 23:14, why did Balaam prophecy the Israelites would be like a lion that drank the blood of its prey, since drinking blood is forbidden?**

A: Lions killed unclean animals as well as drank blood. Both were forbidden to people, though not to lions. The point was not to live like a lion, but that the Israelites would be as strong and fierce in battle as a lion.

**Q: What does Num 23:19 say about the concept of God at the core of Mormonism (LDS), that “as man is God once was, as God is man may become”?**

A: Contrary to Mormon theology, it says that

a) The True God is not a human.

(A Mormon might say that God is not a man anymore, but used to be a man and is now a glorified man. I have never heard a Mormon use this line, though.)

b) The True God is not a son or descendant of a man, either of which rules out part a).

See also 1 Samuel 15:29 and the next question.

## **Q: For Num 23:19, what are Mormon responses?**

A: One Mormon man I talked seemed to have a high respect for the Bible. However, when I had him read this verse, and I did not give him any explanation, he said, “Well, well, that’s just wrong.” We did not talk much more, but I felt I did my job. I showed him a difference between the Bible and what Mormonism taught him, and now he had a choice to make.

I have talked with more Mormons than I can remember about this verse as well as 1 Samuel 15:29, and with one exception, they all had no answer.

However, one Mormon missionary I talked with did have an answer. He said that verse meant “God is not the kind of man that He should lie, nor thekind of son of man that He should repent.”

A couple of points here:

**1.** The words “kind of” are not in the Hebrew.

**2.** The novel interpretation “kind of” was unknown to every single Jewish, Christian, and even heretic writer until Mormonism had started in the 19th century.

**3.** Since no Hebrew or Greek-speaking believer would understand the verse this way, then if this were the correct interpretation, it was a “secret-code” understandable only to Mormons.

Beware if in order to have your theology survive, you have to interpret a sentence in a foreign language in a such a way that no native speaker of that language can be found who would recognize it that way.

**Q: In Num 23:19, why should we pay attention to something said by a man who practiced divination?**

A: While Balaam sinned greatly later, at this time, while Balaam was speaking this, Balaam was speaking the words God put in His mouth (Numbers 23:16), and only the word God put into His mouth (Numbers 22:34).

**Q: In Num 23:19, why does it says God does not repent / change His mind, when 1 Sam 15:35 and Ex 32:14 says that He does? (a Muslim said this)**

A: God’s revealed will is often timely and conditional, and it is sometimes explained as an anthropomorphic expression.

**Timely:** God told the rebellious generation he would not go with them. They all died, and God went with the following generation.

**Conditional:** Many of God’s threats or promises have an explicit or implicit condition with them. For some examples of implicit conditional threats, see Jonah 3 and Genesis 20:3. See *When Critics Ask* p.87 for more info.

**Anthropomorphic:** God, who is beyond time, already knew what they would do, and He already knew what He would do. However, it is sometimes difficult for people to see that and simultaneously see that the people still had a real choice. Certainly if God had just told them what they would do for certain and what He would do for certain, that would limit their choosing.

A person does not have to agree with or even understand the concept that God is beyond time. They do not need to ponder timelessness before God will even communicate with them in a meaningful way. God communicates with people in terms people can all understand. See *Now That’s A Good Question* p.202-205 for more on God communicating anthropomorphically.

**Q: In Num 24:7, how could Agag be alive at this time, since Agag lived in the time of King Saul in 1 Sam 15:8?**

A: There are two possible answers.

**Two kings with the same name:** Kings having the name of a previous king are not uncommon. Examples are many British kings named Henry, two northern Israelites kings named Jeroboam, two Phoenician kings named Hiram, and many Egyptian pharaohs named Thutmose and Rameses. Thus, the Agag in Saul’s time was a successor of the Agag mentioned here. So, this question is like asking, “How could Henry [*the Eighth*] of England have executed his wives when Henry [*the First*] died centuries before they were born.”

**Agag a title, like Pharaoh:** The Phoenician *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum I* 3196 mentions an Agag at a different time and location than these two Agags. We do not know much about the Amalekites, and “Agag” could have been a title for the ruler of the Amalekites, like Pharaoh was a title for the ruler of Egypt. The *Keil-Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* vol.1 p.189 advocates this view.

**Q: In Num 24:8 (KJV), how could the Israelites be as strong as a unicorn, when unicorns are an imaginary fable?**

A: The King James Version translates this incorrectly. The correct translation is “wild ox”. Unicorn in Isaiah 34:7 (KJV) should also be wild ox. As an example, in Deuteronomy 33:17 the same Hebrew word is used, and the animal has more than one horn.

There is a type of antelope in the Arabian desert, called the oryx, that while it has two long straight horns they are close together, and from the side it looks like it has only one horn. That might be where the European fable of unicorns came from.

See Stephen Caesar “Zoology in the Pentateuch: Three Alleged Errors” Science, Scholarship and Scripture in *The Christian News* July 2, 2001 p.26. See also Hoch, E. (1979) “Reflections on Prehistoric Life at Umm an-Nar (Trucial Oman) Based on the Faunal Remains from the Third Millennium BC.” In South Asian Archaeology 1977. And Harrison, D.L. and P.J.J. Bates (1991) “The Mammals of Arabia, 2nd ed. Sevenoaks, Kent (England): Harrison Zoological Museum.

## **Q: In Num 24:17, who is prophesied here?**

A: There are two applications.

**Immediate:** For the immediate destruction of Moab and Edom, King David, or the tribe of Judah, is prophesied.

**Messianic:** This probably is also a foreshadowing of Jesus, also of Judah, who would come and destroy all the armies gathered against Him. The Essenes and others also believed this to be a Messianic prophecy. Bar Cochba, who led a revolt against the Romans in 135 A.D., was called “Bar Kochba”, or “son of the star” because of this verse.

Writers who viewed this as messianic include Justin Martyr (wrote c.138-165 A.D.), Athanasius (296-373 A.D.), and the Jewish writings Targum Onkelos, Targum Jonathan, and the Almud in Jerusalem Taanith 68:4; Debarim Rabba (section 1), Pesikta Sotarta 58:1. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Damascus Document CD:7:9-20) and the War Scroll (1 QM:7). See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.911 for more info.

**Q: In Num 24:24, how can ships come and afflict Asshur, since Asshur was an inland city?**

A: Numbers 24:24 says “Asshur”, not the immediate vicinity of the city of “Asshur”. Both the Phoenicians and the Greeks were a constant thorn in the side of the Empire of Assyria. To give you an idea of the influence of Phoenicia, *The New Bible Dictionary* (1978) p.1194 says that the Phoenicians even traded with India. For more on the Phoenicians, see the *National Geographic Magazine* August 1974 p.149-189.

**Q: In Num 25:1, what is unusual about the choice of words here?**

A: This might be a wordplay or double entendre here. While *wayyahel* means “began”, the root *halal* means “to pollute, defile, or profane. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.916 for more info.

**Q: In Num 25:7-13, what did God praise Phinehas for killing Cozbi and Zimri?**

A: Five points to consider in the answer.

**1.** The people were about to embark on a serious undertaking, the invasion of the Promised Land. Phinehas showed that he understood the seriousness of God’s holiness. In an underhanded way, Balaam understood the importance of holiness. That is why Balaam gave effective advice for harming the Israelites. However, Balaam was killed along with Cozbi and Zimri in Numbers 31:8.

**2.** Guilty of a capital crime for sexual immorality.

**3.** It is possible (but not proved) that this immorality could be connected with religious practices.

**4.** The crime was all that more serious for being brazenly and defiantly in front of the whole assembly.

**5.** Phinehas was not a vigilante. Since the crime was a capital punishment, and Phinehas was in a position of authority as a priest, Phinehas was carrying out God’s law for the Israelites.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.168-170 for more info.

**Q: In Num 26 and Num 1, how come the tribe of Simeon lost about 60% of it members?**

A: Most tribes lost a few members, as the total went from 603,550 to 601,730. However, Simeon went from 59,300 to 22,200 as *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.166 points out. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.1592 also mentions this and says a probable reason is that many of them might have been executed along with their leader, Zimri, during the Baal of Peor occurrence in Numbers 25:1-15.

**Q: In Num 26:5-50; 57-62, should we study these genealogies, since 1 Tim 1:4 and Tt 3:9 says not to devote ourselves to genealogies?**

A: These genealogies can be studied for historical purposes. However, we do not get the same of wisdom, correction, and encouragement we get from other kinds of Bible verses.

**Q: In Num 26:33; Num 27, and Num 36, how do you pronounce “Zelophehad”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* says “zel-O-fe-had” with all the vowels are long except the “a”, and the accent is on the second syllable. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* also has the accent on the second syllable, but only the first two vowels are long.

**Q: In Num 26:51, how come this number, 601,730 is almost the same (0.1% less) than the 603,550 mean in the census taken over forty years earlier in Num 2:32?**

A: Scripture does not say why these numbers are so close, but one can see two concurrent reasons:

**Human:** Wandering in the wilderness, battles, and plagues took their toll on the Israelites, and thus their population did not grow.

**Divine:** If the number had been greater, they might think the forty years extra wandering was a good thing, because they had more warriors. If the number had been much less, then either God had more soldiers than was needed the first time, or they had too few soldiers to fight. The numbers being almost the same depicts the fact that their disobedience and their punishment did not help or hurt them as regards to the number of warriors.

**Q: In Num 27:5, why did Moses have to inquire of the Lord instead of just settling their claim reasonably?**

A: While we do not know this specific case, there are at least four reasons in general why it is good to pray and go to the Lord.

**1.** Perhaps Moses already felt they should have an inheritance, but Moses still prayed because he realized that he was fallible, and he could be wrong.

**2.** Other people have different ideas of inheritance for women. For example, in Islam daughters only have half the inheritance of sons in Sura 4:11. In some cultures, women could not even inherit at all.

**3.** There was a precedent, in Job giving an inheritance to his daughters in Job 42:15. Sometimes someone like Moses can already have the right idea, but still need God’s guidance for some details. For example, while Zelophehad’s daughters and their descendants inherited the land forever, they had to marry within the tribe according to Numbers 36:6-9.

**4.** Even if Moses had already known exactly what to do, knew exactly all the details, and knew He knew this information, going to the Lord in prayer, and waiting for an answer, was not only honoring God, and acknowledging that God knew better than he did, but also showed others who might have different views that Moses did not just make a snap decision.

**Q: In Num 28, what is a summary of the sacrifices God commanded?**

A: There were sacrifices due to events and circumstances, and sacrifices at a given time. Numbers 28 covers the sacrifices at a given time. They are:

Daily: (Exodus 29:28-32; Numbers 28:3-8)

Weekly: (Leviticus 23:3; Numbers 28:9-10)

Monthly New moon: (Numbers 28:11-15)

Unleavened Bread and Passover (Leviticus 23:4-14; Numbers 28:16-25; Deuteronomy 16:1-8)

Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) (Leviticus 23:15-21; Numbers 28:26-31; Deuteronomy 16:9-12)

Feat of Trumpets (Leviticus 23:22-25; Numbers 29:1-6)

Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-28; 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7-11)

Feast of Booths (Leviticus 23:33-39, 43; Numbers 29:12-38; Deuteronomy 16:13-17)

See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.248 for a chart with very good detail of the Calendrical offerings.

**Q: In Num 29:16-34, why is this not-so-exciting passage in the Bible?**

A: We should respect God’s word even if we did not see the reason why God wanted us to read it. These genealogies probably meant a lot to the Old Testament Jews who read it. However, 1 Timothy 1:4 says we are not to devote ourselves to endless genealogies.

**Q: In Num 30:1-15, why did God give these rules concerning vows, when centuries later Jms 5:13 says not to swear at all?**

A: James 5:13 refers to swearing an oath, not to all making promises. Numbers 30:1-15 is more general, which refers to making a promise, whether it be by swearing or not.

**Q: In Num 30:3-16, why does it say that woman’s vow can be cancelled by her father or husband? (A Muslim asked this.)**

A: Married women, and women not yet married (and presumably living in their parents’ home), could have their vows canceled by their husband or father, respectively. In the ancient world, the husband or father was the one primarily responsible for earning money, and a vow could be financially costly. However, as *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.75 says, “It is important to note that a widow or divorced woman, who was responsible for herself, had no such restriction imposed on her. This rule concerning vows thus was in no way a slight on women. It instead simply reflected economic realities of the time and God’s caring involvement in every detail of His people’s lives.”

This does show the headship of a father in the family, and a husband over the wife. Muslims in general (this one excepted) would have no problem with this. Since he wanted to bring this up, he is welcome to explain the following in Islam.

A wife cannot fast (superogatory) or allow someone to enter their home without her husband’s permission. *Abu Dawud* vol.2 no.2452, 2453 p.677-678. (superogatory means beyond what is required)

Outside of Ramadan, a wife can only fast with her husband’s permission. *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.3 no.1761-1762 p.62

Mohammed did not rebuke a husband who beat his wife for praying and fasting extra. *Abu Dawud* vol.2 no.2453 p.677-678

Men tell their wives when to take a bath. “If anyone makes (his wife) wash and he washes himself on Friday, goes out early (for Friday prayer), attends the sermon from the beginning, walking, not riding, takes his seat near the Imam, listens attentively, and does not indulge in idle talk, he will get the reward of a year’s fasting and praying at night for every step he takes.” *Abu Dawud* vol.1 no.345 p.91. No reward for the wife is explicitly mentioned.

A woman should not give a gift from the joint property with her husband. *Abu Dawud* vol.2 no.3539 p.1006. This is generally because a woman lacks wisdom and intelligence. *Abu Dawud* vol.2 footnote 2991 p.1006.

A wife cannot give a gift without her husband’s consent. *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.3 no.2388 p.423

**Q: In Num 31:1-24, was the war with the Midianites an unhistorical story to mask an inconclusive war with the Moabites, as Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.190 asserts?**

# A: The Israelites fought the Midianites because of the incidents in Numbers 22:4 and 25:14-18. Asimov characteristically provides no evidence for his assertion. However, common sense suggests that if an ancient people lived close by another nation for many years, either they would become friends or they would have some battles between them. The Israelites and Midianites never became friends.

**Q: In Num 31:1-24, why did a righteous and good God command the Israelites to wipe out the Midianites?**

A: The Israelites fought the Midianites because of the incidents in Numbers 22:4 and 25:14-18.

God is Holy and it is consistent with both His righteousness, goodness and holiness to destroy evil. The Midianites were descended from Abraham according to Genesis 25:1-4. Not only did their ancestors know of the God of Abraham and cease to follow God, but they deliberately tempted the Israelite men to sin.

Other peoples in other parts of the world might have been just as bad as the Midianites and they did not get wiped out right away. However, the Midianites knew more since they came from Abraham, and with more knowledge comes more accountability. (See Romans 4:15; 5:12; ~John 9:41) Also, God is just, but He is not necessarily equitable in this life. God will set everything aright on judgment day, but until then some people get wiped out when they should have been spared, and others who should have been wiped out escape, for a time. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.142-143 for more info.

**Q: In Num 31:16, did the memory of the incident at Peor strengthen the position of later Yahvists against foreign intermarriage, as *Asimov’s Guide to the Bible* p.190 claims?**

A: Asimov assumes the Old Testament did not come from God. He is trying to read in to it a political battle between those who were against intermarriage and those who were for it.

While there were struggles in the Old Testament between Israelites who were serious about following God’s Law and those who were not, the early date of composition of Genesis was prior to the alleged political groups Asimov is trying to create.

**Q: In Num 31:17, why kill the baby Midianite boys?**

A: This is very similar to the question of why God had even the infant Canaanites killed. See the discussion on Joshua 6:21 for the answer as well as the next question.

**Q: In Num 31:17-18, why kill all the Midianite boys and not the virgin women and little girls?**

A: Scripture does not say. Perhaps because Israelite family lineage was traced through males, the boys would not fit into society as well, since they were not from the twelve tribes, and adoption was not their custom.

Scripture here is only honestly reporting what Moses commanded. There is no indication that God either approved or disapproved. See also the next question.

**Q: In Num 31:17-18, why did Moses order the keeping of young female prisoners for several reasons? (An atheist asked this)**

A: First of all, “for several reasons” is an insinuation that is not found in scripture. These soldiers were Israelites, not Muslims (whom some American atheists apparently do not mind so much).

The women would be slaves, and the men could marry them if they wished. However, for men who had sex with women, even women captives, without becoming their husbands, the Bible says they were to be punished with death.

**Q: In Num 31:18, why could men, even married men, keep captured women for themselves, since Ex 20:1-4 and Dt 5:18 command people not to commit adultery?**

A: Marriage is not adultery. This question confuses legitimately marrying a captive woman with adultery. With marrying a woman, whether captive or free, the children were legitimate, called by the father’s name and a part of his ancestral tribe. As regards to inheritance, suspicion of adultery, and other matters, the wife who was formerly a captive had all the rights of the wife who was never a captive. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.147 for more info.

**Q: In Num 31:18 and other passages, why were the Israelites permitted to marry women they captured?**

A: Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* (193-202 A.D.) book 2 ch.18 p.367 explains this custom well. “Further, it forbids intercourse with a female captive so as to dishonour her. ‘But allow her,’ it says, ‘thirty days to mourn according to her wish, and changing her clothes, associate with here as your lawful wife.’ … Do you see humanity combined with continence? The master who has fallen in love with his captive maid it does not allow to gratify his pleasure, but puts a check on his lust by specifying an interval of time; and further it cuts off the captive’s hair, in order to shame disgraceful love: for it is reason that induces him to marry, he will cleave to her even after she has become disfigured [shorn].”

## **Q: In Num 31:28,30,38 (KJV), what are the “beeves”?**

A: This King James word means “cattle”. In Old English this is the plural form of beef.

**Q: In Num 32:1-2, why did Reuben and Gad settle outside the Promised land?**

A: The boundaries of Numbers 34:12 make it clear this was outside of the Promised Land. The pragmatic reasons they settled on the east side of the Jordan river are:

1. This land was already conquered,

2. They saw that the land was good for cattle

3. Moses and they agreed that they could have it if they helped the other tribes fight for the Promised Land.

As to whether they should have occupied this land, see the next question.

**Q: In Num 32:1-2, should any of the Israelites have settled on the east side of the Jordan River?**

A: Bible says they were to settle in the Promised Land. The other tribes mentioned that the land might be defiled and to come over to the promised Land in Joshua 22:19. In the future, the tribes in the promised land needed more manpower to defeat the rest of the Canaanites and Philistines. Looking at the future destiny of the two and a half tribes, they were constantly attacked by the Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites, until all their descendants that were not killed were assimilated into the other nations, and they completely forgot the Lord their God. Near the end of Joshua’s conquest, the two and a half tribes saw that the other tribes might neglect them in Joshua 22:24-28.

There is a lesson here for Christians today. 1 Corinthians 12:21-27 says all the parts of the body of Christ need each other. When we are not where God wants us to be, there is not one problem but two. One problem is that we miss out on aspects of fellowship with God by our disobedience. A second problem is that others that need our help and God-given gifts miss out, too.

**Q: In Num 32:8, how do you pronounce “Kadesh Barnea”?**

A: *Cruden’s Concordance* and the *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* both say the first “a” and the last “e” are long. The accents are on the syllables “ka” and “bar” as in KA desh BAR nea.

**Q: In Num 32:13 did God’s anger against the Israelites last 40 years, or does it abide only for a minute as Ps 30:5 says? (A Muslim asked this)**

A: There can be a difference between how long in God’s time He is angry, versus how long in our time the consequences last. Regardless though, Psalm 30:5 does not say “60 seconds” but a moment. God’s anger and discipline towards His people is only momentary compared to His favor being with Him forever.

For the Israelites in the Wilderness, as well as others who rejected following Him, God sends those individuals to Hell forever. However, God was angry with the Israelite people in that He did not let them enter the Promised Land for forty years. But discipline on earth, even if it forty years, is just a moment compared to eternity.

**Q: In Num 33:4, how did God execute judgment on the Egyptian idols?**

A: The idols themselves were lifeless, but God apparently “executed judgment” to demonstrate to the worshippers of those idols how powerless the idols were, in a very specific way.

Most of the ten plagues of Exodus were the symbol of a specific Egyptian deity.

**1. Bloody Nile:** Apis, Isis, and Khnum were gods of the Nile.

**2. Frogs:** The goddess Heqet, who assisted women at childbirth, had a frog head.

**3. Gnats:** Set was the god of the desert. He was considered good in early Egyptian mythology but was considered evil, as the dismemberer of Osiris in later Egyptian mythology.

**4. Flies:** Possibly relating to Re the sun god.

**5. Dead animals:** The god Hathor had a cow head, and the god Apis had a bull’s head.

**6. Boils:** Sekhmet was the goddess to cure disease; Sunu was the god of plague, and Isis was the goddess of healing

**7. Hail:** Nut was the sky goddess.

**8. Locusts:** Osiris was the god of crops and fertility.

**9. Darkness:** Re was the sun god.

**10. Passover:** The goddess Isis, was supposed to protect kids. Of course, the Pharaoh’s son, the next Pharaoh, was considered a god.

See *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.118-126 and *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 2 p.352-353,354 for more info.

After this period, the Egyptians had less respect for their idols than most cultures. When they prayed to an idol and the prayer was not answered, they were known to take a whip and beat the idol. (*Everyday Life in ANCIENT EGYPT* by Jon Manchip White (Dorset Press 1963) p.131.

**Q: In Num 34:5, how could the southeastern border of the Promised Land [allegedly] be the Nile, the river of Egypt?**

A: The phrase “River of Egypt” does not refer to the great Nile River. Rather it refers to a small stream separating Egypt from Canaan. Many maps show this river, in the northeast part of the Sinai Peninsula, where it empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

**Q: In Num 34:11, Dt 3:17; and Josh 12:3; and Josh 13:27, where is the Sea of Kinnereth?**

A: The Sea of Kinnereth is an ancient name for the Sea of Galilee. According to *The NIV Study Bible*, Kinnereth means “harp”, and the Sea of Galilee is shaped like an ancient harp.

**Q: In Num 34:13-15, since Moses passed away before he entered Canaan, how come he told the Jews that the tribes Reuben, Gad, and the Manasseh (half) already had the land east of the Jordan?**

A: The Jordan River is the boundary of Canaan, so the land of Reuben, Gad and half of Manasseh, east of the Jordan River, is outside of Canaan. Moses himself could be in the land already given to the 1.5 tribes, and he could see Canaan from a mountain east of Jordan, but Moses was forbidden to cross the Jordan River.

Theologically there are some interesting points here. God promised the Israelites the land of Canaan. But these 2 1/2 Israelite tribes looked around and thought this land was pretty good, so they chose not to live in God’s Promised Land. The land looked OK, except that it was more susceptible to attack, and after David's time you do not hear much of these tribes anymore. Some of them were killed, and some assimilated, losing the knowledge of who they were. Today God may promise us something, and we can look around and living someplace else might look more inviting than living under God's promise. However, God knows the future, and it is always safer to live under God's promise, remembering who you are.

**Q: In Num 34:14; 1:18-44; and Lev 24:10, Jewish tribal ancestry was allegedly only through the birth father. If Jesus had no human father, then how would he have tribal affiliation with Judah?**

A: Before answering this question, let's first clear up what the verses do NOT say. Numbers 34:14 does NOT say that tribal affiliation is only through the biological father. It says, "because of the families of the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh." Numbers 1:18-44 merely lists the tribes and the census of men. Leviticus 24:10 does not directly address the question either, but since the son had an Israelite mother and Egyptian father, and the son was a part of the group, that would tend to indicate that he was considered an Israelite. Furthermore, it does actual mention the tribal affiliation of Dan - through the mother.

**Two complementary answers:** Tribal/clan affiliation was normally through the father; however, in a few cases it was considered through the mother. Also, it could be from the legal father.

**Biological ancestry all from Judah:** Jesus had no human ancestry except Jewish ancestry. Since Mary was descended from David (from the tribe of Judah) biologically Jesus as affiliated with Judah. The Old Testament gives us three examples in the Old Testament where tribal affiliation was through the mother.

**Attai:** In the tribe of Judah, Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. So, he gave his daughter in marriage to his Egyptian servant Jarha, and they had a son named Attai. Attai’s genealogy is given with the other Israelites in 1 Chronicles 2:34-41.

**Jair** was a grandson of Hezron of the tribe of Judah and the daughter of Makir, a Manassite. In 1 Chronicles 2:21-23 Jair controlled twenty-three towns in Gilead (in the territory of Manasseh). Yet even though Jair’s mother was from Judah, Jair is still called a Manassite in Numbers 32:41 and Deuteronomy 3:14.

**Sons of a daughter of Barzillai**. A third example is Ezra 2:61 and Nehemiah 7:63, where sons of a priest who married a daughter of Barzillai were called the sons of Barzillai. See the *Keil-Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* vol.1 p.213 for more info.

**Legal ancestry form Judah too:** It was important that Jesus’ adopted/legal father be from Judah too. If Joseph had not been descended from David, Jesus would have no claim to David’s throne.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 shows that ancestral rights were through the legal father and not the biological father. When a married man died childless, his brother was to marry the widow, and the legal father of the son was the dead man, not the biological father. Deuteronomy 25:6 says, “Then the first son she bears will continue the name of the dead brother, thus preventing his name from being blotted out of Israel” (NET) Ruth 4:5-6 shows that it was the legal father, not the biological father, affected the inheritance.

Tribal affiliation was important for land distribution, and that was through the father - normally. However, when there was no father/male, Numbers 27:1-11 shows that they made allowances for special situations.   
In summary: Jesus was biologically only from Judah, and in the Old Testament tribal affiliation was sometimes through the mother. Jesus was also from Judah through his adopted father, and the law of Levirate marriage showed it was the legal father, not the biological father that was important for that.

**Q: In Num 34:24 (NIV) should it say “son of Joseph” before “From the tribe of Ephraim?**

A: *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.998 says this is not in the Hebrew. English translators added it to make it more parallel and easier to understand, since it was already implied.

**Q: In Num 35:21, how come there was no ransom for murder, since there presumably was a ransom allowed for other crimes?**

A: There were a number of crimes worthy of death in the Torah. However, for most of these crimes, the guilty could pay an agreed upon fine and escape death. Two exceptions were murder and blasphemy against God. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.160-163 and 170-171 for more info.

**Q: In Num 35:30, could a person be convicted of murder on circumstantial evidence?**

A: Yes if there were multiple witnesses. Numbers 35:30 says that two witnesses are required, but it did not say they had to be eyewitnesses. Leviticus 5:1 shows that a witness is not necessarily an eyewitness, but one who had relevant knowledge regarding something “he has seen or learned about.” For example, if a person heard the killer boast of the act, or threaten to commit the act, that person would be a witness to what they heard.

**Q: In Num 35:33, since the land cannot be cleansed of unjustly spilled blood, is all the earth unclean today?**

A: No. The land cannot be cleansed, by man, of unjustly spilled blood. However, God can make holy even the place where Jesus was unjustly killed for our sins.

**Q: In Num 36, why could women [allegedly] not inherit here? In Islam for example, daughters do have the right to inherit, though it is half as much as sons.**

A: Five points to consider in the answer.

**Zelophehad’s daughters did inherit** from their father. This was right and proper as God’s will, according to Numbers 27:7-8. Furthermore, Numbers 36:8 also says speaks in the future of every daughter who inherits land, so they could inherit.

**Even prior to this**, Job’s daughters inherited along with their brothers in Job 42:15.

**Inheritance passing from tribe to tribe** in Numbers 36:9 is the issue here, not the prosperity of Zelophehad’s daughters.

**The resolution** was the daughters kept the land, but they had to marry within their own tribe of Manasseh. In the future, all women who inherited land had to marry within their tribe.

**In the New Testament**, 1 Peter 1:3-4 shows that all who believe have the most important inheritance of all, an inheritance in heaven kept for us.

**As a side note**, in orthodox Islam daughters only get half the inheritance of their brothers. Sura 4:11 says, “Allah (thus) directs you As regards your children’s (inheritance): to the male, A portion equal to that of two females:…” (Yusef Ali’s translation p.209).

**In summary**, since Numbers 36:8 speaks of daughters inheriting land, and Numbers 27:7-8 speaks of daughters inheriting in general, it would be against the Old Testament not to allow daughters to inherit. Galatians 3:28 says that in Christ there is no male nor female, and in the rest of the Bible, old and new, there is nothing restricting a woman’s rights of inheritance, or of economic opportunities in general. In contrast to Islam, women in Christianity have just as much to look forward to in heaven than men.

See the *Keil-Delitzch Commentary on the Old Testament* vol.1 p.212-213,267-268 for more info.

**Q: In Num, what references do we have in the writings from Philo the Alexandrian Jew?**

A: As Christians we trust that the Old Testament that Christ validated the Old Testament we have. For that matter, for Muslims their Qur’an says that Jesus was given the Torah in Sura 5:46. We have early manuscripts from the time of Christ, which the next question addresses. However, there is an additional line of evidence. Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish scholar who lived from 15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D. He wrote in Greek, but it is curious that his Greek quotes of the Old Testament agree more closely with the Hebrew Masoretic text instead of the Greek Septuagint. He went into great detail into what different verses mean. Here are chapter:verses he referred to in Numbers.

**3**:12; **5**:2,14,15,18,27; **6**:2,9,14,18; **7**:5,14; **8**:24; **9**:10; **10**:29; **11**:4,5,7,8,11,16,17,20,23,31; **12**:6,7,12-14; **13**:18,23,25; **14**:1,9,11,20,24,44; **15**:19,30; **16**:1,15,48; **18**:12,20,26,28,31; **19**:1,15; **20**:17,25; **21**:5,6,17,18,27,30; **22**:29,31; **23**:7,8,19; **24**:7,17,20; **25**:1,4,7,8,11,12; **26**:16; **27**:3,4,16,17; **28**:2; **29**:13; **30**:10; **31**:8,26,28,40; **35**:1,25,30

See *The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged new updated version* for more info.

**Q: In Num, what are some of the earliest manuscripts that still exist today?**

A: Here was the earliest ones.

**Ketef Hinnom** scrolls are 650-587 B.C., on silver (so they survived), and have fragments of Exodus 20:6; Numbers 6:24-26; Deuteronomy 5:10; 7:9; Nehemiah 1:5; and Daniel 9:4.

**Dead Sea Scrolls of the Bible:** (before Christ ) 8 copies. (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.30. *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.,* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.*). The Dead Sea Scrolls have parts of every chapter of Numbers except chapters 6 and 14. The Dead Sea Scroll manuscripts are:

**1Q3** 150-100 B.C. (paleo-Leviticus, but has 8 words of Numbers 1:48-50 and 36:7-8? in it.

**2Q6** (=2QNum(a)) (two separate fragments) 40-60 A.D. (24 words) Numbers 3:38-41,51; 4:1-3

**2Q7** 30-1 B.C. (19 words)

**2Q8** (=2QNum(b)) 20-50 A.D. Numbers 33:47-53

**2Q9** (possibly the same manuscript as 2Q7) 30-1 B.C. (3 words) Numbers 7:88

**4Q23** (=4QLevNum(a)) 150-100 B.C. (710 words) Of the 40 text variants in these parts of Numbers, 4Q23 agrees with the Masoretic text in 30 of them, the Samaritan Pentateuch in 12, 8 with the Septuagint, and does not agree with any other manuscript in 5. 1:1-5,21-22,36-40; 2:18-20, 31-32; 3:3-19,51; 4:1-2, 40-49; 5:1-9; 8:7-12, 21-22; 9:3-10, 19-28; 10:13-23; 11:4-5,16-22; 12:3-11; 13:21; 26:5-7; 30:3?,7?,9?,13?; 32:8-15,23-42; 33:5-9,22-34,52,54

**4Q27** 400-20 B.C. (1528 words) This is about 9% of the entire book. It has Numbers **11**:31-35; **12**:1-6,8-11; **13**:7,10-13,15-24; **15**:31; **16**:1-11,14-16; **17**:12-17; **18**:25-32; **19**:1-6; **20**:12-13b,16-17,19-29; **21**:1-2,12a-13a,20-21a; **22**:5-21,31-34,37-38,41; **23**:1-4,6,13-15,21-22,27-30; **24**:1-10; **25**:4-8,16-18; **26**:1-5,7-10,12,14-34,62-65; **27**:1-5,7-8,10,18-19,21-23b; **28**:13-17,28,30-31; **29**:10-13,16-18,26-30; **30**:1-3,5-9,12-17; **31**:2-6,21b-25,30-33,35-36,38,43-44,46-54; **32**:1,4-5,7-10,13-17,19,21-30,35,37-39,41; **33**:1-4,23,25,28,31,45,47-48,50-52; **34**:4-9,19-21,23; **35**:3-5,11-12,14-15,18-25,27-28,33-34; **36**:1-2a,4a-7;

**4Q121** (4QLXXNum) 25 B.C. to 25 A.D. (134 words) This is a rather curious manuscript in Greek. The Masoretic text and Septuagint are fairly close in Numbers, but 4Q121 is in between them. Scholars debate whether 4Q121 is more like the original version of the Septuagint, and later versions of the Septuagint deviated more, or whether 4Q121 was an attempt to bring the Septuagint even closer to the Masoretic text. Numbers 4:1?,5-9,11-16; 3:3a?,40-43,50-51?

The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says there are 6 copies. Nathan Jastrum, Dead Sea Scroll researcher, said that one copy of numbers was 30-50 B.C. (Issues etc. Radio program 4/17/99)

*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.551 says, “The Hebrew text (the MT) of the Book of Numbers is relatively free of difficulty. Since the Torah was especially revered in ancient times, its transmission seems to be cleaner than most other biblical books.”

**Parabiblical Dead Sea Scrolls:** Non-biblical texts from Qumran that refer to Numbers include 4Q364-366; 4Q423 5.2; 11Q19 49.5-51.6; 4Q251 6.2-6; 4Q276-277; 4Q284 4; 4Q394-399 B 13-17, 72-74; 11Q19 13-14, 17-19, 25-29; 11Q19 52:13-54.5;

**Wadi Murabba’at** Scroll 1 lines 6-7 (75-125 A.D.) has 31 words from Numbers 34:10; 36:7-11

**Nahal Hever in the Cave of Letters** (=5/6Hev 1a) (50 B.C. to 50 A.D.) has Numbers 19:2-4; 22:7-8.

**Nahal Hever** (X Hev/SeNum) has Numbers 27:2-13; 28:11-12)

Overall, preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls are the following verses from Numbers: **1**:1-5,21-22,36-40,48-50; **2**:18-20,31-32; **3**:3-19,38-43,50-51; 4:1-16,40-49; **5**:1-9; 6:none; **7**:88; **8**:7-12,21-22; **9**:3-10,19-20; **10**:13-23; **11**:4-5,16-22,31-35; **12**:1-11; **13**:7,10-13,15-24; 14:none; **15**:41; **16**:1-11,14-16; **17**:12-17; 18:8-9(or Lev 23:1-3),25-32; 19:1-6; **20**:1-2,7-8,12-13,16-17,19-29; **22**:5-24,31-34,37-38,41; **23**:1-4,6,13-15,21-22,27-30; **24**:1-10; **25**:4-8,16-18; **26**:1-10,12,14-34,62-65; **27**:1-13,18-19,21-23b; 28:11-17,28,30-31; **29**:10-13,16-18,26-30; **30**:1-3,5-9,13?,15-17; **31**:2-6,21b-25,30-33,35-36,38,43-44,46-54; **32**:1,4-5,7-17,19,21-42; **33**:1-9,22-34,45,47-53; **34**:4-10,19-21,23; **35**:3-5,11-12,14-15,18-25,27-28,33-34; **36**:1-2a,4a-11

See *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.2 p.615 and *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* for more info.

**Samaritans** made their own copy of the Torah in the second century B.C., though the earliest surviving Samaritan copies are from the Middle Ages. See *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.125-126.

**Christian Bible manuscripts,** from about 350 A.D., contain the Old Testament, including Numbers. According to *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* p.746, the Chester Beatty Papyrii (2nd-4th century A.D.) contains Numbers.

Chester Beatty VI (Numbers-Deuteronomy) 2nd century (Kenyon), or 117-138 A.D. (Wilcken) according to *The Complete Text of the Earliest New Testament Manuscripts* p.17.

**Vaticanus** (325-350 A.D.) contains all of Numbers.

**Sinaiticus** (340-350 A.D.) has Numbers 5:26-6:18; 6:22-7:20; 16:7-16:31; 16:31-20:28; 23:22-26:2.

**Alexandrinus** (c.450 A.D.) contains all of Numbers.

**A Syriac translation** of the Septuagint was made by Bishop Paul of Tella (616-617 A.D.), which we still have today, according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.35 (footnote).

**A silver scroll** from the 7th century B.C. was found in a cave near Jerusalem containing Numbers 6:24-26. See *Christianity Today* 9/7/1998 p.51 for more info.

**Early church writers** recognized Numbers as a authoritative scripture. See the next question for a complete list prior to Nicea.

**Q: Which early writers referred to Numbers?**

A: Pre-Nicene writers who quoted or alluded to verses in Numbers are:

**Clement of Rome** (96-98 A.D.) quotes Numbers 12:10. “blessed Moses also, a ‘faithful servant in all his house,’ noted down in the sacred books all the injunctions which wee given him,…” *1 Clement* ch.43 p.16

***Epistle of Barnabas*** (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.12 p.145 refers to Num 21:8-9 “And Moses spoke unto them, saying, ‘when any one of you is bitten, let him come to the serpent placed on the pole; and let him hope and believe that even though dead, it is able to give him life, and immediately he shall be restored.” And they did so.” Though hast in this also [an indication of] the glory of Jesus;”

**Justin Martyr** (150 A.D.) also tells of the brass serpent in Numbers 21:6-9. He begins with “for in the writings of Moses it is related how at that time, when the Israelites went out of Egypt and were in the wilderness, they fell in with poisonous beasts, both vipers and asps…” *First Apology of Justin Martyr* ch.50 p.183.

*Shepherd of Hermas* (c.115-155 A.D.) ch.3 p.12 alludes to Eldad and Modat in Numbers 11:26-27.

**Meleto/Melito of Sardis** (170-177/180 A.D.) listed Numbers among the books of the Old Testament in his letter to Onesimus. It is unusual that he switches the order of Numbers and Leviticus. *On Pascha* p.72. Preserved in *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History* 4.26.

**Irenaeus of Lyons** (182-188 A.D.) quotes Numbers 16:15 as by Moses. *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 3 ch.26.4 p.497

**Clement of Alexandria** (193-217/220 A.D.) quotes Numbers 6:9 as by the “Instructor” saying though Moses. *The Instructor* book 1 ch.2 p.210.

**Tertullian** (198-220 A.D.) discusses the incident at Baal Peor “as we are told in Numbers” *Scorpiace* ch.3 p.636. He also discusses Numbers 21 in *Five Books Against Marcion* book 2 ch.22 p.314 (207/208 A.D.).

**Hippolytus** (222-235/6 A.D.) wrote a work called Balaam’s Blessings. A paragraph has been preserved (81 words in English) and is in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 5 p.160.

**Origen** (240 A.D.) refers to Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. *Commentary on the Song of Songs* prologue p.47

***Anonymous Treatise Against Novatian*** (c.246-258 A.D.) ch.2 p.658 quotes Numbers 5:2 as by Moses.

***Anonymous Treatise on Baptism*** (c.248-256 A.D.) ch.15 p.676 quotes Numbers 11:17 as said by God to Moses in the Old Testament.

**Cyprian of Carthage** (c.246-258 A.D.) quotes from “Numbers” in *Treatise 12* the third book14.

**Archelaus** (262-278 A.D.) The Christian Diodorus discusses Moses commanding the stoning of the man who was gathering wood on the Sabbath in Numbers 15:32. *Disputation with Manes* ch.40 p.214. He also alludes to Numbers 15:32 in *Disputation with Manes* ch.31 p.204.

**Victorinus of Petau** (martyred 304 A.D.) alludes to Numbers 23 in discussing Balaam and Balak putting a stumbling block before Israel. *Commentary on the Apocalypse* From the second chapter 14-16 *ANF* vol.7 p.346-347.

**Methodius of Olympus and Patara** (270-311/312 A.D.) quotes the Septuagint of Numbers 6:2 as “That which is laid down in the Book of Numbers” *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins* Discourse 5 ch.4 p.326.

**Lactantius** (c.303-c.325 A.D.) “[Moses also says] In Numbers” and paraphrases Numbers 23:19 in *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* ch.46 p.241

**After Nicea,** others who refer to the Book of Numbers are (in chronological order), Eusebius of Caesarea, Aphrahat the Syrian, Athanasius, Ephraim the Syrian, Basil of Cappadocia, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, Gregory of Nanzianzen (allusion), Gregory of Nyssa, Rufinus, Jerome, Council of Carthage (393-419 A.D.), Epiphanius of Salamis, John Chrysostom, Orosius of Braga (allusion), the heretic Theodore of Mopsuestia (allusion), Augustine of Hippo, John Cassian, and others.

**Jerome** (373-420 A.D.) discusses the books of the Old Testament. He specifically discusses Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, Job, Jesus son of Nave [Joshua], Judges, Ruth, Samuel Kings (2 books), twelve prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Letter 53 ch.7-8 p.99-101.

**Q: In Num, what are some of the translation differences between the Hebrew, the Greek Septuagint, and other translations?**

A: Here are a few of translation differences, and a few other manuscript uncertainties in the 1,288 verses of Numbers. This especially focuses on Numbers 21. Except where noted the first phrase is the Masoretic text (MT) and the second the Septuagint (LXX).

**Num 2:14** the name “Reuel” vs. “Deuel” in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate, and many Masoretic manuscripts. The Hebrew letters for “r” and “d” are very similar, and this is like “Rodanim” vs. “Dodanim” in Genesis 10:4. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.715 says that Deuel is probably the superior reading.

**Num 3:9** “to him” vs. “to me” in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and some Masoretic manuscripts.

**Num 3:12** “I have taken the Levites … instead of every firstborn” (MT and 4Q23 vs. “I have taken the Levites … they will be the ones redeemed instead of every firstborn” (Samaritan Pentateuch

**Num 3:28** “89,600” vs. “8,300” in some Septuagint manuscripts

**Num 3:39** “and Aaron” with special dots over the word (many Masoretic texts) vs. “and Aaron” (Septuagint) vs. absent in numerous Hebrew manuscripts, Syriac, and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Scribes would do this to express doubt about the verse. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.728 for more on this.

**Num 4:3** “from 30 years old” (MT, 4Q23, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “from 25 years old) (Septuagint)

**Num 6:2** “shall vow the special vow of a Nazirite” (MT) vs. specially vow a vow to separate himself” (Septuagint, Methodius (270-311/312 A.D.) *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins* discourse 5 ch.4 p.326)

**Num 9:3** “in the evening” (MT, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint) vs. “in the day” (4Q23)

**Num 9:16** “it” vs. “it by day” Greek, Syriac, Vulgate)

Num 10:11 is immediately preceded by Dt 1:6-8 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Num 13:8** Hoshea (Hebrew) vs. “Oshea (Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Num 14:33** “shepherds” vs. “wanderers/nomads” (Vulgate)

Num 14:41 is immediately preceded by Dt 1:20-23 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

Num 20:13 is immediately followed by Dt 3:24-28 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

Num 20:13b is immediately followed by Dt 2:2-6 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Num 21:1** “lived in the south” vs. “dwelt by the wilderness”

**Num 21:2** “hand” vs. “power” (same meaning in this context)

**Num 21:2** “utterly destroy their cities” vs. “devote it and its cities”

**Num 21:3** “delivered up the Canaanites” vs. “delivered the Chananite into his power”

**Num 21:3** “utterly destroy them and their cities” vs. “devote him and his cities”

**Num 21:4** “impatient” vs. “lost courage”

**Num 21:5** “Why have you brought” vs. “Why is this? Why have you brought”

**Num 21:6** “fiery serpents” vs. “deadly serpents”

**Num 21:7** “And Moses prayed on behalf of the people” vs. “And Moses prayed to the Lord for the people”

**Num 21:7** “put it on a pole” vs. “put if on a signal-*staff*”

**Num 21:8** “whenever anyone is bitten” vs. “whenever a serpent shall bite a man,”

**Num 21:8** “when he sees it he shall live” vs. “everyone *so* bitten that looks upon it shall live”

**Num 21:9** “copper … pole … copper” vs. “brass … signal-*staff* ... brazen/brass”

**Num 21:11** “Ije-abarim, in the wilderness that is before Moab, toward the rising of the sun.” vs. “Achalgai, on the farther side in the wilderness, which is opposite Moab, toward the east”

Num 21:11 is immediately followed by Dt 2:9 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

Num 21:12 is immediately followed by Dt 2:17-19 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Num 21:13** “which is in the wilderness” vs. “in the wilderness”

**Num 21:14** “Waheb in Suphah” vs. “What He did in the Red Sea” (Vulgate)

Num 21:20 is immediately followed by Dt 2:24-29,31 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Num 21:28** “and the lords of the heights” vs. “and swallowed up the heights”

**Num 21:30** “we have shot at them; Heshbon has perished” vs. “So their posterity has perished from Heshbon” (Septuagint)

Num 22:20; 23:4,5,16 “God” (MT) vs. “an angel of God” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5)

**Num 24:6** The tetragrammaton (for LORD) was left out in 4Q27 but was corrected.

**Num 24:9** 4Q27 accidentally transposed two letters in a word.

**Num 24:17** (uncertain) vs. “the skulls” in the Samaritan Pentateuch

**Num 26:17** “Arod” vs. “Arodi” in the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Syriac

**Num 26:23** “through Puvah/Puwah/Puwwah, the Punite” (many Hebrew manuscripts) vs. “through “Pu’ah, the Puite” in the Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate, and Syriac.

**Num 26:39** “Shephupham” vs. “Shupham” in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate, Syriac, Septuagint, and some Masoretic manuscripts

**Num 26:40** absent vs. “through Ard” in the Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate

**Num 27:7** feminine gender for the pronouns vs. masculine gender for Zelophehad’s daughters.

**Num 27:22** “took Joshua” vs. “took Joshua the son of Num” (Dead Sea Scrolls 4QNumb)

**Num 27:23** the Samaritan Pentateuch adds “and said to him and then adds Deuteronomy 3:21-22.) *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.2 p.94

Num 27:23 “through Moses” vs. “by Moses. [And Mose]s [said] to him, ‘Your eyes have seen that which the LORD your God has done to [these] two k[ings; so shall the LORD do to all the kingdoms into which you are going. You shall not fear them; for the LORD your God, he is the one who fights for you.]” (Dead Sea Scroll 4QNumb) *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.110 calls 4QNumb (30 B.C.) “The Jewish Living Bible”, giving this as just one example of expansions that were added.

**Num 31:6** “priest to the war” vs. “priest” (Septuagint)

**Num 32:11** “twenty years old and more” vs. “twenty years old and more who know good and evil.” (Septuagint)

**Num 32:29,31,33** “Gad … Reuben” 3 times ( Masoretic, 4Q23) vs. “Reuben … Gad” 3 times (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

**Num 33:8** “from before Hahiroth” vs. “Pi Hahiroth” in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate, and many Masoretic manuscripts

**Num 33:52** In Dead Sea Scroll 2Q7 the first “all” is absent.

**Num 34:6** “and coast” vs. “and its coast” (Syriac)

Bibliography for this question: the Hebrew translation is from Jay P. Green’s *Literal Translation* and the Septuagint rendering is from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton’s translation of *The Septuagint : Greek and English*. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5, and the footnotes in the NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV Bibles also were used.

**Bible Query from Deuteronomy**

**Q: In Dt, what is the main point of this book?**

A: This is a summary of the law in the previous three books of Moses. This has less detail that Leviticus, and less historical background than Exodus and Numbers. The name in Greek and English comes from the Greek words “second law”, but it can more properly be thought of as a condensation of the law.

**Q: In Dt 1:6,9,14; Dt 15:2,5; Dt 11:2,7, why did Moses tell the people they were witnesses of what happened before the 40 years wandering, since Num 14:29-30 and Num 26:64-65 say all would die in the wilderness?**

A: Four points to consider in the answer.

**For an estimated seven years,** the people were in the wilderness before the curse of 40 years wandering was given.

**Numbers 26:64-65** said only all those counted in the army census were not alive before.

**Number 14:29-30** promised only that the men counted in the previous census would all die before reaching the promised land, except for Joshua and Caleb.

**Thus, excluded from the curse** were all the men under 20 (which were not counted in the census), the Levite men of all ages, and all the women. Many of these would be alive as personal witnesses of the previous events. People born after the 40 years started would only be second-hand witnesses, learning from their parents and the community.

See *When Critics Ask* p.113-114 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.357-358 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 1:8-12, is the “I” that is speaking here Moses, or God?**

A: In Deuteronomy 1:6 Moses related “This is what God said”, so the “I” in verse 8 is God. When Moses finished repeating what God said at the end of verse 8, from verse 9 and onward the “I” refers to Moses.

**Q: In Dt 1:13, did the people choose their own judges, or did Moses appoint them in Ex 18:25?**

A: An analogy might help here. Does the President of the United States nominate people to cabinet positions, or does the Senate confirm them?

Both are true. In the Bible, the people brought forward people to be their judges, and Moses choose those men. Moses may have chosen everyone that was brought forward, but He did not necessarily do so. See *When Critics Ask* p.114-115 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.350-351 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 1:22-23, why did the followers of an All-Knowing God need to send spies throughout the land?**

A: There are two distinct points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Moses probably thought this was a good idea, because God lets us learn many things on our own. They could spy out Canaan to know the best way to enter, and the relative strength of their armed forces.

**2.** However, God never commanded them to send out the spies. The people approached Moses with this suggestion, and Moses just thought it was good in verse 23. However, it turned out to be a catastrophe, because when they saw some difficulties they lost faith. They did not lose faith that God was there, rather they lost faith that God would protect them.

There are two key lessons here for Christians today. First, analyzing a situation is in general a good thing. However, if one purpose of the analysis is to decide whether or not to trust in God, or whether or not to obey God, the analysis itself is evil because it springs from evil motives.

The second key lesson has to do with leadership. Moses did not have any bad motives here, and he was probably unaware that a hidden motive for some of the people asking to send spies was to decide if they wanted to obey or not. When someone asks us for a strange request that appears harmless, instead of impulsively granting or denying it, it is better to first understand why.

**Q: In Dt 1:26-43, since God wanted the Israelites to go to Canaan immediately, and after they first refused, why was God angry with them when they decided to go?**

A: Romans 14:23 explicitly states the principle illustrated in Deuteronomy 1:26-43: “whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.” At first the Israelites refused to go due to a lack of trust in God. Later, they decided to go because they trusted in themselves. God was not as concerned with their going or not at a specific time, as their obedience to Him.

If you had difficulty with this question before reading the answer, you might want to remember the following. Some people focus on the things to do, or not do, to be right with God. This is missing the point. God wants us not just to try to obey Him at a distance, but to call on Him and draw near to God and obey Him. Read Romans 14 for some examples that you can only understand if you understand this principle.

## **Q: In Dt 1:28, Dt 2:10, Dt 9:2, who are the sons of Anak (Anakim), Emites, and Rephaites?**

A: The Anakites were descendants of a man named Anak. The Anakites were a tribe whose men were fearsome warriors, probably because of their size and strength. Since bows were not that powerful back then, and a long reach and strength were valuable fighting qualities for people who fought with swords and clubs, these three related clans produced many feared warriors. See the discussion on Deuteronomy 31:3 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 1:39, what is meant by the knowledge of God and the age of accountability?**

A: The age of accountability is a concept that children reach an age, before which they are accountable before God for their choices. No verse indicates that this age is the same for every child. Three of the principles of God’s justice are demonstrated in this passage.

**1.** God judges based on what people know, and little children who do not choose what is right, out of ignorance, are not judged for that. Sin is not counted where there is no law (Romans 4:15; 5:12).

**2.** God does not judge people for what they could not choose. A woman raped in the countryside, where her screams could not be heard, was not punished for sexual sin (Deuteronomy 22:25-27). Likewise, even teenagers who understood right from wrong, but had no voice in the assembly or its decision, did not fall under the punishment of dying in the wilderness.

**3.** Nevertheless, in this life people often suffer the consequence of the evil others did. The children still had to live in the wilderness for 40 years. However, God will make everything just on judgment day.

**Q: In Dt 2:4-8, why were the Israelites unable to defeat the Edomites, since the Israelites were so much stronger?**

A: The Israelites never fought them, and you do not defeat a weaker nation when you refuse to fight them. Nowhere does it say that were incapable of defeating the Edomites. Rather, God commanded them not to fight the Edomites, and they obeyed.

**Q: In Dt 2:4-7, why did God tell the Israelites they are about to pass through Edom, since Num 20:14-21 and Dt 2:8 shows they never did? Did God not know that in advance?**

A: Three points to consider in the answer.

**1.** God knows everything that is going to happen to us (Psalm 139:16, Isaiah 46:10; 41:22-23; 42:9; 44:7, 1 John 3:20)

**2.** God told Moses to give the Israelites these orders.

**3.** They were “about” to pass through Edom, and they would have passed through if the Edomites had let them.

As Gleason Archer pointed out in the next question, a different answer is that they were probably in Edom when they made their request of the Edomites, and passed through the outskirts of Edom, so actually they passed through Edom after all.

**Q: In Dt 2:4-7 and Num 20:14-21, did the Israelites go around Edom, or through Edom as Dt 2:4-7 says?**

A: Deuteronomy 2:4-7 never said they passed through Edom. Rather, prior to their reaching the border of Edom, the Israelites were told they were about to pass through Edom, and make sure not to provoke the Edomites to war.

Both Numbers 20 shows the Edomites would not let them go through Edom, and the Edomites mobilized their army. So, the Israelites passed around Edom.

Sometimes people can be about to do something, and when an army comes against them, the people decide to do something else instead. See also the next question

Gleason Archer gives a different answer. If you follow their journey, they likely were in Edom when they were discussing things with the Edomites. Then they passed along the (unmarked) border of Edom, so in a sense they still did pass through, though not by the easier route they would have wanted to pass. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.138-139 and *Bible Difficulties & Seeming Contradictions* p.157 for more info on this answer and *When Critics Ask* p.106-107 for more on both answers.

**Q: In Dt 2:7, did the Israelites lack nothing, or were the conditions bad enough to grumble about as in Ex 16:2-3 and Num 11:4-6?**

A: The conditions were tolerable, in that the people had enough food, water, and clothing. However, just like today, whether or not a situation is worth grumbling about depends on the grumbler as much as the situation. For believers, Paul commanded in Philippians 2:14 that we are to do everything without complaining or arguing.

**Q: In Dt 2:9-12,22,37, why did the Israelites not conquer the Moabites and Ammonites?**

A: For the simple reason that God commanded the Israelites not to fight them. Likely reasons God commanded this are that the Moabites and Ammonites were related to the Israelites, the Israelites were to be focused on the Canaanites, and no use having even a single warrior die in a fight over land that they were not told to take over anyway.

**Q: In Dt 2:10-12, how was Canaan the “land of their possession”, since they had not entered it yet?**

A: The land west of the Jordan River was promised as their possession. In addition, Deuteronomy was probably written last, and the 2 1/2 tribes had already taken possession of the land east of the Jordan River.

See *When Critics Ask* p.115-117 for more info and some interesting contrasts between the view of those who hold to the authority of Scripture versus the critical view of Christian liberals. (The term “Christian liberal” by the way, refers to religious views and not to politics.)

**Q: In Dt 2:19, did God not give the Ammonite land to the Israelites, or did Moses give it to them in Joshua 13:25?**

A: Both are true. The Ammonites had parts of their kingdom, the ancestral part, and the part they got from conquest. Prior to both verses, the Israelites occupied the second part. Thus, Deuteronomy 2:19 was specifically written to tell the Israelites not to take over the land which the Ammonites currently, and originally, possessed.

In addition to this, the land on the eastern bank of the Jordan River was not a part of Canaan. The Israelites conquered it and occupied it, but God did not promise it to them. Sometimes today, we can acquire things God does not want us to have, to our later regret. See *When Critics Ask* p.117 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.365-366 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 2:30, why did the Lord harden the heart of Sihon, King of Heshbon?**

A: Probably for a similar reason that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. See the discussion on Exodus 7:22.

## **Q: In Dt 3:11, how long was the bed of King Og of Bashan?**

A: This was about 13 to 13 1/2 feet long. The Hebrew word for “bed” here is obscure. It could refer to the bed where he spent the night, or it could be the “grave bed”, (really tomb), where his body would rest.

## **Q: In Dt 3:11, how could King Og’s bed be iron, since they did not have sophisticated iron-working technology?**

##### A: According to *The New Geneva Study Bible* (p.245), this does not necessarily mean the entire bed was made out of iron (that would be rather uncomfortable). Instead, the bed was trimmed with iron. Egyptians used iron from meteorites as ornaments and daggers since at least 3000 B.C.

**Q: In Dt 3:12-17, why did the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh live on the east side of the Jordan, since the people were to live in Canaan?**

A: Simply because they chose to live there. Scripture records their choice without approving it. History shows that their choice was not a wise one.

Sometimes today, if believers want to do something that is not openly defiant, but is not completely what God wanted us to do, God allows us the freedom to make our unwise choice, and often to see its consequences.

**Q: In Dt 4:2, does the command not to add to the word God gave, mean there should be no books in the Bible after Deuteronomy?**

A: No. The verse is specifically a restriction on people not to add or subtract from the commands in the Book of Deuteronomy. It is not a restriction on God to send further revelation.

**Q: In Dt 4:10-15, did God give Moses the Ten Commandments in Horeb at the Mountain, or at Mt. Sinai as Ex 19:11 says?**

A: There are two alternative answers.

**Synonyms:** The *New Bible Dictionary* (1978) p.1194 says that the two names were used interchangeably, similar to Moses’ father-in-law being named both Jethro and Reul. Multiple names are very common in places where there are multiple languages and cultures.

**Region:** Horeb might include more than just Mt. Sinai. It might be the name for the region or plateau, not just the peak.

See *When Critics Ask* p.117 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.376 for more info.

## **Q: In Dt 4:12,16 (KJV), what is a similitude?**

A: The King James Version expression, in this context, was a translation of “physical form”.

**Q: In Dt 4:12, did the people not see God’s form, or did Moses see God’s form in Num 4:12?**

A: Both. Moses saw the form of God (probably a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ. The people did not see any form. This is similar to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus hearing the voice of Jesus while his companions only heard a sound. See *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.76 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 4:16-18, did this command prohibit all artwork of people or animals?**

A: Obviously not, because there were statues of cherubim over the ark in Exodus 37:8-9. Moses also was commanded to make a bronze snake in Numbers 21:4-9. In Solomon’s temple, there were also cherubim in 1 Kings 6:23-27. Many other pictures of cherubim were carved in the Temple in 1 Kings 6:39,32,35.

What is prohibited is the use of images as objects of worship. Pagans both worshipped the statues themselves and worshipped pagan gods through the image of their statues.

## **Q: In Dt 4:20, why was Egypt a “furnace”?**

A: It was a furnace in at least three different ways.

**1.** Egypt was a dry, hot place; hotter than Palestine.

**2.** Furnaces can consume, burn, and destroy perishable things.

**3.** Furnaces are useful to refine metals and remove the dross.

Some experiences today are like furnaces. The same experience can destroy one person, and refine another person, purifying the “gold” in the person’s heart.

**Q: In Dt 4:20, why was Egypt like an “iron” furnace, since 1447 B.C. is pre-Iron age, and they did not have any furnaces made out of iron?**

A: Archaeology shows that Egypt had iron implements since 3000 B.C.. However, iron was difficult to work with and very expensive, because iron required a higher temperature than bronze or copper. This verse not refer to a furnace composed of iron, but rather a furnace built for smelting iron.

**Q: Since Dt 4:25-26 said they would utterly perish if they worshipped idols, and they worshipped idols, why did they not utterly perish?**

A: You can find the answer by reading the very next verse: Deuteronomy 4:27. God would destroy the Jews as a people, and scatter them among the nations. However, destroy here does not mean utterly destroy. Deuteronomy 4:28-29 qualifies verses 25-27 by saying that if they then seek the Lord, that those who did, would return.

Observing the Jews from a cultural perspective, there was one huge difference between the Jews before they went to Babylon, and after they returned from Babylon. Ever since they returned from Babylon, for all their faults, they no longer succumbed to the temptation to worship idols. If nothing else will work, sometimes it takes a catastrophic event to cure a person or a people of a sin.

**Q: In Dt 4:41 (KJV), how did Moses “sever” three cities?**

A: This King James expression simply means to “set apart”. They especially set apart these three cities as cities of refuge, where someone who accidentally killed another could flee.

**Q: In Dt 4:41, does the literal expression in Hebrew “toward the sun rising” mean the sun goes around the earth?**

A: No. Even the most knowledgeable of scientists today speak of sunrise and sunset. The fact that God used a colloquial expression does not validate a scientific view any more than a scientist today is kicked out of his field for saying he enjoys sunsets.

For a verse in the Bible to either agree or disagree with a scientific view, the verse needs to be asserting as fact something about our world, like some verses in Genesis do.

**Q: In Dt 5:6-21, why was this just a paraphrase of Ex 20:2-17, which was the exact words of God?**

A: The short answer is that Deuteronomy 5:6-21 records a reminder to the people and Moses paraphrased here. This is probably deliberately this way to demonstrate to us that it is the meaning that matters, not the exact words.

The long answer shows the differences and gives four points to consider in the answer.

**Differences** in Exodus vs. Deuteronomy

Remember (20:8) vs. Observe … as the Lord God has commanded you (5:12)

Nor your animals (20:10) vs. nor you ox, your donkey or any of your animals (5:13)

[absent] (20:10) vs. (5:14) add so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do.”

All of 20:11 vs. all of 5:15

[absent] (20:12) vs. as the LORD your God has commanded you… and that it may go well with you (5:16)

house … wife (20:17) vs. wife … house or land” (5:21)

**Same commands:** There are no differences at all in what was to be obeyed.

**Deuteronomy 5:6-21 may be exact too:** Deuteronomy might also be exact words. It might be the exact words of the paraphrase of Moses. However, there is no problem if it were not Moses’ exact words. The ancient concept of quoting included both exact quotes and what we call paraphrases.

**What we can learn:** It is the meaning that God wanted people to remember more than the exact words.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.146-147, *When Critics Ask* p.119, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.172-173 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 5:9, since God visits iniquity down to the third and fourth generation of those that hate God, is God just?**

A: The Bible teaches that all God’s ways are just (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 99:4), but before we can understand what justice is, we have to define four terms.

**Justice:** God gives the rewards for righteous deed that He promised, and God gives the punishment for disobedience to Him as He promised. God’s justice is not some mysterious, incomprehensible thing, but is described in His word, the Bible.

**Equitable:** Equitable means both that everyone is treated exactly the same, and that God would always treat everyone exactly the same. God is not equitable, nor does God claim to be in the Bible, as Matthew 20:1-16, Deuteronomy 5:9, Romans 9:10-81, and other verses show. John 19:11 and 2 Peter 2:21 shows that those who have more knowledge are judged more strictly. This implicitly shows that everyone is not given the same amount of knowledge, which is inequitable. God is still just though, and God takes this into account (Romans 4:15; 5:12). Many humans have very different concepts of justice, and if your opinion on justice does not permit any inequitableness, remember that God has only promised to be just by His definition of justice, as shown in the Bible, and not by any particular human definition.

**Guilt/Liability:** Guilt can be a human emotion, but that is not the type of guilt discussed here. Here guilt is liability, by the demands of God’s justice, to be under the wrath of God. There is greater and lesser guilt (John 19:11). Each person is guilty for his own sin; we are not liable for the sins of our ancestors (Ezekiel 18; Deuteronomy 24:16), and we do not share the guilt of our children (Ezekiel 18:20).

**Consequences:** Many blessings, curses, and other consequences for one person’s actions are inherited and passed to others. When a mother can choose to refrain from or indulge in smoking, drinking, poor diet, or cocaine and others drugs, the baby has the consequences. Some examples of passed on consequences are someone born of Christian parents, a baby with birth defects born in a very polluted area, and babies who are aborted or murdered after birth.

Consequences seem unjust, and they would seem to make God unjust if this short, earthly life was all there is. A former editor of *Scientific American*, an agnostic named Martin Gardiner, made a profound point in his book, *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*. He said that if you believe in justice (and he did), then you have to believe in an afterlife. In other words, life is so unjust on this earth, that if everyone does get justice, there must be a time after death when justice is dealt out. We Christians call this Judgment Day. Centuries before, Lactantius (c.303-325 A.D.) made almost the same point in *The Divine Institutes* book 6 ch.9 p.171-172.

Now to answer the question on God’s justice in Deuteronomy 6:4. God is just, but not equitable. People can inherit consequences, but not guilt. But praise God that He is not only just, but merciful.

**Q: In Dt 5:15, were the Israelites to keep the Sabbath because they were slaves in Egypt, or did God command it because He created the heavens and the earth in six days as Ex 20:11 says?**

A: Both reasons are true. The reason of following God’s work in Creation is given in Exodus 20:11. An additional reason, because they were slaves (with no Sabbath) in Egypt is given in Deuteronomy 5:15.

It might be useful to consider a human example of doing things for three different motivations. We may tell one person not to gossip because that is what God commands. We may tell a second person not to gossip because that shows their love and respect for God. We may tell a third person not to gossip because of their love for others. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.209-210 for another example.

Generalizing on this, Christians can be motivated to do good based on God’s character, based on the past experience of themselves or others, based on present love for God and others, or based on future hope. The strongest motivation is probably all of the above combined. *When Critics Ask* p.118 has a similar answer, saying that something can be remembered for two reasons. One was the “initial” reason for Creation, and the other was a “subsequent” reason for redemption. See also *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.234 for more info.

**Q: Since Dt 5:17 and Ex 20:13, “thou shalt not kill?” (KJV), why was there capital punishment?**

A: God never said “thou shalt not kill” (KJV), rather God commanded “though shalt not murder” (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17). Not only can this be seen from the Hebrew, but the context itself shows this, as the Israelites were instructed to execute people for certain crimes, as in Exodus 21:12-17. Furthermore, in both Exodus and Deuteronomy wars were justified under certain circumstances.

In the New Testament, we are told to love our enemies (Luke 6:27-36 and Matthew 5:43-44), and as individuals we should not take revenge, as Romans 12:17-21 teaches. However, balancing that, the very next chapter teaches that the government has a responsibility to God to “bear the sword as an agent of wrath to punish evildoers”, as Romans 13:4 shows.

**Q: Why does Dt 5:21, the last of the ten commandments, [allegedly] teach that wives are the possessions of men? (A Muslim asserted this.)**

A: It does NOT teach wives are the possessions of men. It says a man is not to covet his neighbor’s wife or possessions, but that does not mean the wife is a possession.

On the other hand, I know of at least one Muslim who, when he came to America and had to declare his possessions, and put his wife on the list. After you have explained “women your right hands possess” in the Qur’an, perhaps we would want to explain the following from the Sunni hadiths.

When one is given a woman, servant, or cattle, one should seize its forehead and pray to Allah. *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.3 no.1918 p.157

Treat women well, for they are [like] domestic animals (‘*awan*) with you and do not possess anything for themselves.” *al-Tabari* vol.9 p.113. [Other Muslim scholars did not agree with Tabari, that women were forbidden to own anything themselves.]

**Q: In Dt 6:4, since God is “One”, what about the Trinity?**

A: Here are some of the words for one used in the Old Testament.

***chad***: simply means “one” and is rarely used.

***‘ishshah***: one, each, every, female

***‘oysh***: a man or an individual. (very common in he Old Testament)

***‘echad***: which means “united, alike, alone, and altogether.”(very common in the Old Testament)

The word used in Deuteronomy 6:4 is *‘echad*. Thus, one could translate this word as “united”, though “one” is a broader and more preferred translation. The same word is also used in:

Genesis 2:24 says the husband and wife are one flesh.

Deuteronomy 6:4 says there is one God.

Genesis 1:5 says, “evening and morning were one day.”

*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.64 says an example of this word meaning a unity made up of several parts in Exodus 26:6,11, where fifty clasps hold the curtains (plural) so the tent would be “one”. Ezekiel 37:17,19,22, also talks of two sticks being joined together as “one”, using the same word.

See also *When Cultists Ask* p.41-42 for more info.

## **Q: In Dt 6:4, why does it say heart, soul, and strength?**

A: Scripture does not say, but we can see the following.

**1.** Imagine the Bible said to only love God with our soul. We would trust Him to preserve our life, and we might want to keep our soul clean, but that does not mean we would have any commitment to God.

**2.** Imagine the Bible said to only love God with our strength. We would do our duty for God, and work hard in God’s service, but commitment does not mean we have any affection or fondness for God.

**3.** Imagine the Bible said to only love God with our heart. We would have great desire for a deeper relationship with God, without ceasing to trust in ourselves and without diligently doing anything to obey and serve Him.

Try as we might, we cannot completely love God without all three elements. For a fourth element, see the question on Mark 12:30.

**Q: In Dt 6:7,20 instead of teaching children and “brainwashing them”, shouldn’t we let our kids grow up to decide for themselves?**

A: Teaching is not brainwashing, and just as a parent would be remiss in not teaching his children about safety, Christian parents are remiss if they do not teach their children about God. Our children are our responsibility. We are not accountable to God for the choices they freely make, but we are held to account for how we raised them and what we taught them. Proverbs 22:6 says to train up a child in the way he should go. Ephesians 6:4 is a command for fathers to bring their kids up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Jesus in Matthew 19:14 said to let the children come unto Him, and do not hinder them.

**Q: In Dt 6:8-9, should believers have the shema (Dt 6:4) on their forehead, and hands?**

A: See the next question for how to know when you are taking something hyper-literally and legalistically.

There is no evidence that anyone in Israel understood this passage hyper-literally until the time of the Pharisees. We have no record that Moses or Joshua themselves did this.

On the other hand, Christians today often have decorations in their home with Bible verses on them. This is not done out of legalism, but out of desire to have God’s word in our hearts.

**Q: In Dt 6:8-9, since believers do not need to be wearing Bible verses on their forehead, how can you tell if you are interpreting a passage hyper-literally?**

A: If you are going to take this passage hyper-literally, you should be consistent and take the entire passage the same way. Deuteronomy 6:6 says the words should be on our heart, and since open-heart surgery is done today…

Seriously, before finding the answer on how to interpret a passage, it is important to prayerfully ask the correct question. The correct question is, “how did God and the human writer intend for believers to interpret the passage.” There is a five-part test you should apply to your interpretation of any passage, to answer this question.

**1.** Is my interpretation consistent, or am I interpreting part of the passage one way and part of it the other way?

**2.** Does my interpretation make parts of the passage meaningless? If so, there is something wrong with my interpretation.

**3.** Does my interpretation make sense in light of the context of the verses before and after the passage?

**4.** Is my interpretation consistent with what God said in the rest of Scripture about these truths and about this passage. However, keep in mind that a passage can contain more than one truth.

**5.** Finally there is a test of lesser importance. See how God has God led Biblical Christians, both early and modern, to interpret this passage.

**Q: In Dt 6:20, why teach the sons and not the daughters?**

A: They were supposed to teach all the children, male and female, in Deuteronomy 6:7. In Hebrew, man can refer to people in general, and sons can refer to children in general. According to an article in *Christianity Today* 10/27/1997 p.35, there is no Hebrew word for “children”, only a word for “sons” and a word for “daughters”. When a Hebrew speaker meant both sons and daughters, the word “sons” was used.

**Q: In Dt 7:1, what was the estimated population of the seven nations in Canaan who were greater than the Israelites? If the Israelites had killed all the people of Canaan, would the land have less than one seventh of the previous population?**

A: No. Three points to consider in the answer.

**1.** The Israelites had fewer people than the combined population of the Canaanites.

**2.** There was more abundant rainfall in Palestine back then, so the land could support more people. 2.5 million Israelites in Bible times is still less than the 5 million Israelis today.

**3.** Here are the population figures at the time of Joshua, estimated at ±40%.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Region | Pop. |
| Northern Canaan (excluding Phoenicians) | 800 K |
| Phoenicians in West Asher | 315 K |
| Southern Canaan (excluding Amalekites) | 888 K |
| Amalekites | 110 K |
| Transjordan Amorites | 340 K |
| Ammonites + Moabites + Edomites | 209 K |

See the next question for the source of these figures.

**Q: In Dt 7:1, what is the source of the population figures in the previous question?**

A: I did not find any literature that had the ancient population broken down to this level of detail, so the previous is a summary of my own estimates. Here are my numbers. Remember that the number beside a particular town is not the population living inside that town, but rather the town’s population plus the surrounding rural area.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| NORTHERN CANAAN 1155 | | | |
| ...PHOENICIANS (W ASHER) 315 | | | |
| Abden | 10 | Irqata | 10 |
| Acco [port] | 15 | Kanah | 15 |
| Achseph | 15 | Misrephoth Ämaim | 10 |
| Achzib | 15 | Nahariya [port] | 10 |
| Ahlab | 10 | Greater Sidon 4000B.C. | 30 |
| Ambi | 10 | Lesser Sidon [port] | 15 |
| Ardata | 10 | Simyra | 10 |
| Batuna | 10 | Tripoli [port] | 15 |
| Beth-Emek | 10 | Tyre [port] 1900 B.C. | 10 |
| Berytus (Beirut) [port] | 20 | Ullaza (Orthosia) | 10 |
| Byblos 7000 B.C. | 20 | Uzu | 10 |
| Hammon | 10 | Zerephath 1600 B.C. | 15 |
| ...EAST ASHER’S LAND 85 | | | |
| Aphek | 10 | Karmel | 10 |
| Arruboth | 5 | Rehob (3150 B.C.) | 10 |
| Beten | 10 | Sharon | 5 |
| Dor | 15 | Shiqmona | 5 |
| Helkath | 5 | Zeror | 5 |
| Kabul (Cabul) | 5 |  |  |
| ...NAPHTALI’S LAND 180 | | | |
| Abel-beth-maacah | 10 | Janoah | 10 |
| Adami-Nekeb | 10 | Kadesh | 10 |
| Beth-anath | 10 | Kinnereth 3000 B.C. | 10 |
| Beth-Shemesh (north) | 10 | Madon | 5 |
| En-hazor | 5 | Merom | 10 |
| Hammath | 10 | Meroz | 5 |
| Hazor (175 acres) | 40 | Ramah | 10 |
| Hukkok | 10 | Zer | 5 |
| Iron | 10 |  |  |
| ...ZEBULUN’S LAND 115 | | | |
| Bethlehem (north) | 10 | Gath-Hepher | 15 |
| Chesulloth | 10 | Nahalal | 10 |
| Daberath | 10 | Sarid | 10 |
| Hannathon | 15 | Rimmon | 10 |
| Harosheth | 10 | Shimron | 15 |
| ...HERMON HIVITES 35 | | | |
| Baal-gad | 10 | Laish | 15 |
| Ijon | 5 | Mizpeh | 5 |
| ...NORTHERN BASHAN 50 | | | |
| Aphek | 10 | Golan | 15 |
| Ashtaroth | 10 | Karnaim | 15 |
| ...ISSACHAR’S LAND 115 | | | |
| Beth Shan | 25 | Jezreel | 10 |
| Beth-Haggan | 10 | Jokneam | 10 |
| Endor | 10 | Ophrah | 10 |
| Harod | 10 | Shunem | 15 |
| Jabneel | 15 |  |  |
| ...WEST MANASSEH’S LAND 128 | | | |
| Abel-Meholah | 5 | Shiloh | 10 |
| Bezek | 10 | Zeror | 5 |
| Dothan | 15 | Taanach -1500 B.C.- | 10 |
| Ibleam | 15 | Thebez | 10 |
| Kedesh | 5 | Tirzah | 10 |
| Megiddo 3500 B.C. | 18 | Zanaanim | 5 |
| Shechem -1800 B.C.- | 10 |  |  |
| ...EPHRAIM’S LAND 132 | | | |
| Aphek | 10 | Naaroth | 10 |
| Ataroth | 15 | Pirathon | 5 |
| Baal-Hazor | 5 | Shaalbim | 5 |
| Beth-Horon (Lower) | 12 | Shiloh | 10 |
| Gezer 3000 B.C.- (30 acres) | 15 | Tappuah | 10 |
| Lebonah | 10 | Timnah-Serah | 10 |
| Michmatheth | 5 | Zerethan | 10 |
| SOUTHERN CANAAN 983 | | | |
| ... BENJAMIN’S LAND 172 | | | |
| Ai | 12 | Jericho c.7000 B.C. | 10 |
| Anathoth | 5 | Jerusalem c.3000 B.C. | 25 |
| Bahurim | 5 | Kephirah | 5 |
| Beeroth | 5 | Kiriath Jearim | 10 |
| Beth-Hoglah | 5 | Micmash | 5 |
| Beth-Horon (Lower) | 5 | Mizpah | 10 |
| Bethel 2000 B.C.- | 10 | Nob | 5 |
| En-Rogel | 5 | Ophrah | 5 |
| En-Shemesh | 5 | Ramah | 5 |
| Geba | 5 | Remaraim | 5 |
| Gibeah | 10 | Shalishah | 5 |
| Gibeon | 20 |  |  |
| ...DAN’S LAND 230 | | | |
| Amarna | 10 | Gibbethon | 10 |
| Antipatris 3000 BC | 10 | Jabneh (Jabneel) | 10 |
| Bene-Berek | 10 | Jaffa (Joppa) 4472 B.C. | 10 |
| Beth-Shemesh 2200BC. (south) | 20 | Lod | 10 |
| Chesalon | 10 | Ono | 10 |
| Ekron 50 acres | 40 | Tappuah | 10 |
| Eltekah | 10 | Timnah | 10 |
| Eshtaol | 10 | Yavneh | 10 |
| Gath-Rimmon | 10 | Zorah | 10 |
| Geoloroth | 10 |  |  |
| ...AMORITE KINGDOMS 120 | | | |
| Azekah | 10 | Jarmuth | 2 |
| Debir 2350 B.C. | 15 | Lachish c.3100 B.C. | 23 |
| Eglon | 25 | Libnah | 15 |
| Hebron | 20 | Makkedah | 10 |
| ...PART OF JUDAH/SIMEON 352 | | | |
| Adullam | 5 | Hazar-Shual | 5 |
| Anab | 5 | Joktheel | 5 |
| Aphek | 10 | Jattir | 5 |
| Ashan | 2 | Juttah | 5 |
| Ashdod | 15 | Kain | 5 |
| Ashkelon (-2850 B.C.-) | 25 | Kabzeel | 5 |
| Baalah | 2 | Keilah | 5 |
| Beersheba | 10 | Lehi | 5 |
| Bethlehem (south) | 1 | Madmannah | 5 |
| Beth-Eglaim 2200 B.C.- | 15 | Maon | 5 |
| Beth-Palet | 5 | Masada | 5 |
| Beth-Zur 1750 B.C. | 10 | Michmatheth | 5 |
| Bethul | 5 | Mizpeh | 5 |
| Carmel | 5 | Moladah | 5 |
| City of Salt (Qumran) | 5 | Natophah | 5 |
| Eltolad | 5 | Ramah | 5 |
| Ezem | 5 | Raphia | 5 |
| En-Gedi | 5 | Sharuhen | 10 |
| En-Rimmon | 5 | Socoh | 5 |
| Eshtamoa | 5 | Tamar | 5 |
| Etam | 5 | Tekoa | 5 |
| Gath | 25 | Tell abu Matir | 2 |
| Gaza | 25 | Zanoah | 5 |
| Gedor | 5 | Zenan | 5 |
| Gerar | 5 | Ziklag | 10 |
| Gibeah | 5 | Ziph | 5 |
| ...AMALEKITES 110 | | | |
| Abronah [oasis] | 5 | Jotbathah [oasis] | 5 |
| Arad | 10 | Kadesh-Barnea | 15 |
| Aroer | 10 | Moseroth | 5 |
| Bene Jaakan [oasis] | 5 | Mount Seir | 10 |
| Beth-Palet | 10 | Rehoboth | 5 |
| Ezion-Geber [oasis] | 5 | Tamar | 5 |
| Hor Haggidad [oasis] | 5 | Timna by Elath [oasis] | 5 |
| Hormah | 10 |  |  |

**Q: In Dt 7:1, how come Moses said they would cross the Jordan River this day, since it was very likely more than 24 hours later?**

A: The Hebrew word for day, *yom*, can also mean a period of time, such as the Day of the Lord. Another example is the coming “Day of the Lord” immediately preceding Christ’s return, which will be more than 24 hours. Of course, they still could have crossed the Jordan in 24 hours too, if the column of the people crossing was very wide.

## **Q: In Dt 7:6, why did God choose the Israelites?**

A: Part of the answer is given in Deuteronomy 7:7-9. It was not because they were a powerful or wonderful people. Rather it was because of God’s love and choosing of Abraham, and then Isaac and Jacob. Many times people have good consequences because of what others before them have done. Will other people have good consequences because things you do?

See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.131 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 7:10, why does God feel the need to repay some people, especially since we are not supposed to get revenge ourselves?**

A: We are not to get revenge, not because others never deserve it, but because God is the judge who meets out the appropriate punishment. If God dealt punishment to some who committed a wrong, and just ignored others who committed the same wrong or others equally serious, this would not be consistent with what God has revealed in the Bible about His justice. See also the next question.

**Q: In Dt 7:10, given that God has to deal out punishment justly, why does God want to deal out any punishment at all?**

A: Should God let everybody get away with anything and still go to Heaven? What if they did not want to go to Heaven and live with God forever? Also, what kind of Heaven would that be?

Imagine Hitler, Tamerlane, Stalin, Idi Amin, or other “great” murderers, unrepentant, being in Heaven anyway? What kind of pure place would that be. If the greatest thing in Heaven is to worship God, can you imagine God forcing people to be in Heaven forever against their will? I cannot.

## **Q: In Dt 7:13 (KJV), what is “kine”?**

A: This King James expression means “kind” or “kinfolk. God was going to increase their population.

**Q: In Dt 7:14, since God would take infertility away from the Israelite women, what about Michal (2 Sam 6:20-23), Hannah (1 Sam 1:2,5-8), and Elizabeth (Lk 1:7)?**

A: Michal was not necessarily barren. It is more likely David had no conjugal relations with her. Hannah and Elizabeth were both barren for part of their lives, but God took their infertility and made it a special blessing. Sometimes, when God is going to give us something wonderful, like children, we have to wait for His timing.

**Q: In Dt 7:19, Ex 13:14, Ex 15:8,12,16, Ex 31:8; Ps 91:4; Heb 4:13, do these prove that God has fingers, hands, arms, nostrils, wings, feathers, and eyes?**

A: No. This is an anthropomorphic expression. See the discussion on Exodus 8:19 for the answer.

## **Q: In Dt 8:2, is God really all-knowing?**

A: Yes. Nothing that has happened, is happening, or ever will happen is hidden from God. God knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Every day of our lives was written in God’s book before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:16). Who would be saved was known before we existed (Romans 9:10-23; 8:29; Ephesians 1:4. God examines all our paths (Proverbs 5:21)

In John 21:17, Peter said to Jesus that Jesus knew all things, and Jesus did not correct that view. 1 John 3:20 says that God knows everything. However, a hypothetical instance is not necessarily a thing. For example, if pigs could fly, would the sky be green? Scripture is silent about God knowing every hypothetical detail of every possibility.

See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.215-216 and *When Critics Ask* p.119 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 8:4; 29:5, how could the Israelites clothes and sandals not wear out?**

A: It is not natural for clothes and sandals to last forty years in the desert sun. This shows one way supernatural blessing are given by God. It is wonderful to see that God not only does a few big miracles, but He can also do millions of similar little miracles.

**Q: In Dt 8:7, is Palestine today drier than it was in Moses’ time?**

A: Yes. In historical times, the weather has varied greatly. For example, weather scientists say there as a “Medieval warm epoch” in the last part of the Middle Ages. They have even seen evidence of this in a drought in California in 1340 A.D. (*Natural History* September, 1996). Barley was grown in Greenland after 1,000 A.D. For another example, climatologists say the Sahara was not a desert before around 4000 B.C.

Q: In Dt 8:9 where were the hills containing copper the Israelites were promised?

A: There were many furnaces and copper slag found 20 miles (33 km) south of the Dead Sea. Some of the deposits of copper are still visible on the surface. See *Can Archaeology Prove the Old Testament?* p.27 for more info on this.

*The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 3 p.75 also mentions the extensive copper mines of Solomon at Ezion Geber.

*The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.1124 says that copper workers lived in Beersheba as early as the Chalcolithic Age (4500-3100 B.C. The ore came from 60 miles to the south. The oldest copper object in Palestine is from Jericho, as early as 4500-4400 B.C.

**Q: In Dt 9:1, when did they cross the Jordan River?**

A: “This day” means at this time, not this 24-hour period according to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.78. The NIV translates this as “now”.

In Zechariah 14:7 the phrase “one day” *yom 'ehad* is the same word used in Genesis 1. It is not specified if this is exactly 24 hours or not.

**Q: In Dt 9:3, were the Canaanites destroyed quickly, or were they destroyed slowly as in Dt 7:22?**

A: The Israelites occupied Canaan with lightning speed. This is because God did quickly destroy the Canaanites before Israel a number of times, including at Jericho and the Valley of Aijalon. Deuteronomy 9:3 is prophesying God would do this.

However, while some of the Canaanite peoples were totally annihilated, Deuteronomy 9:3 does not say every Canaanite nation would be quickly 100% annihilated. In fact, anyone reading through the book would see that Deuteronomy 7:22 qualifies Deuteronomy 9:3 by saying that not all the Canaanites would be destroyed quickly.

See *When Critics Ask* p.119 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.403-404 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 9:18, did Moses really fast, without even water, for forty days and nights?**

A: This was no ordinary fast, as this would be impossible by natural means. However, when we are in Heaven, we will have no earthly sustenance, and when Moses was with God, God was capable of keeping Moses alive without eating, too.

## **Q: In Dt 9:28, Ex 32:31-35, and Num 14:11-19, did Moses have a valid point?**

A: Yes. God spoke this to Moses so that Moses could demonstrate His correct understanding of God’s character in two ways.

1. Moses took God’s words very seriously, as Moses knew God, by His justice, had every right to totally destroy the Israelites.

2. Moses knew enough of God’s promises and faithfulness to “remind” God that He would not destroy these stiff-necked people.

There is a point here we can learn about our conversation with God. In our prayers, it is fine to stand on the promises God has made.

**Q: In Dt 10:3, was the ark made after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, or prior to the 40 years as Ex 25:10; 35:12; and 37:1 imply?**

A: There are two issues here.

1. Deuteronomy in general, including chapter 10, is a condensed summary of their journeys. It says the ark was made prior to the second set of stone tablets; it does not say how long before this the ark was made.

2. The ark was made after the first trip to Mount Sinai in Exodus 19. *The Expositors Commentary vol.3* p.83 mentions that when Deuteronomy 10:1 says, “at that time” it refers to the time of the prayer in Deuteronomy 9:25-29, not the time later when chapter 10 was written down.

See also *When Critics Ask* p.119-120 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.407 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 10:3, did Moses make the Ark of the Covenant himself, or did Bezalel make it in Ex 37:1-9?**

A: Moses closely directed the making of the ark by Bazalel. As *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 3 p.84 mentions, it is not uncommon for a leader to say he did something (like build a pyramid or collect taxes), when it was done by workers under his direction.

**Q: In Dt 10:6, did Aaron die at Moserah, or was it at the top of Mount Hor as Num 20:28 and Num 33:37-38 say?**

A: There are two different answers.

**Region of Moserah:** It never said Mount Moserah, but simply Moserah and Mount Hor. While Aaron died specifically on Mount Hor, it was in the region of Moserah.

**Multiple “bitterness” places:** The word Moserah means bitterness, and it is not known as a place name outside of the Bible. It could be a nameless region, and the Israelites could likely have named more than one place Moserah. As an example, there are two places in Arabia fairly close together called Nakhla. One is outside of Mecca towards Ta’if, and the other is a valley outside of Mecca on the way to Iraq. In Israel there were two towns each with the names of Beth-Shemesh and Bethlehem.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.166, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.147, *When Critics Ask* p.120 and *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 3 p.84 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 10:6, did the Israelites camp at Bene Jaakan and then at Moserah, or at Moseroth and then Bene Jaakan as Num 33:37-38 says?**

A: Christians have two different answers.

**Two different places:** Moserah and Moseroth are different places. The names are similar, the but the consonants are different in Hebrew. Numbers 33 and Deuteronomy 10 are of different times during the Exodus, when they returned to the same general region.

**One place and one region:** Moserah was the region, and Moserath was the actual place. While Aaron died specifically on Mount Hor, it was in the region of Moserah.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.166, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.147 and *When Critics Ask* p.120 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 10:12, what does it mean to “walk in God’s ways”?**

A: In part, it means to obey God’s laws, to do what God explicitly says to do, and not do explicitly what God says not to do. However, it means much more than just that. We are to seek to know God, to draw near to God, and to find out what pleases the Lord.

Walking in God’s ways is so easy a child can do it, and so rigorous that the most righteous and wisest adult is challenged by it.

**Q: In Dt 10:17 since God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, could there be more than one God?**

A: No and Yes. No, in that there was, is, and will forever be only one true God. Yes, in that besides the one true God, there are many counterfeit false gods. While the nations around them worshipped many national and other idols, the God of Israel, was not equivalent to them. He was the God over all nations, idols, and superstitions too. Second, if someone is ever afraid of an idol, or of an evil spirit, they should know that the evil spirit has more to be afraid of from the One True God than a believer has to be afraid of the evil spirit.

See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.22 for more info.

## **Q: In Dt 11:6 (KJV), is the earth female since the earth opened “her” mouth?**

A: No. The King James Version simply literally translated the gender of the Hebrew pronoun. Today we speak of ocean-going ships as “her” and hurricanes and typhoons by women’s and men’s names, but that does not mean they are male or female.

**Q: In Dt 11:25, since no one would stand against the Israelites because of the dread God would put into Israel’s enemies, how come Israel’s enemies sometimes defeated the Israelites?**

A: Deuteronomy 11:22 begins with one very important word “if”, and the entire passage of Deuteronomy 11:23-25, starts out with another important word, “then”. This is one of many examples of a conditional promise, and when the conditions are not met, there is not assurance that it will come true.

*Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.344 summarizes this by saying that the first passage was in the context of a conditional promise by God. When the conditions were not met, the promise was not binding. See also *When Critics Ask* p.120-121 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 11:26-28, why did God lay before them a curse, since God loved them?**

A: God uses curses in a variety of ways. Curses can be used as reminders, to get people’s attention, as discipline, as punishment, and to destroy. Since whatever words God says comes to pass, curses also are God’s way of executing discipline, punishment, judgment, and wrath.

**Q: In Dt 12:3, why were they to burn down the sacred groves of trees? I thought trees were good.**

A: Trees themselves are neither good or bad. However, when trees are used in idolatrous worship, then the trees are for an evil purpose for those people.

**Q: Does Dt 12:15,22 say the Israelites could sometimes eat unclean as well as clean animals?**

A: No. Rather, it says that ceremonially clean and unclean people could eat clean animals.

**Q: In Dt 12:15,20,21, and Dt 14:26 (KJV), since it is wrong to lust, why could they have whatever they lusted after?**

A: This King James Version word is better translated “desire”, not “lusted after”.

**Q: In Dt 12:16,23-25 and Lev 17:11-12, is eating blood prohibited today?**

A: See the discussion on Genesis 9:4 and Genesis 9:12 for the answer.

**Q: In Dt 13:1-16 and Dt 18:10-12, today should we kill enchanters, necromancers, and all those the Old Testament says to kill?**

A: No. Three points to consider in the answer.

**1. Government investigation:** Even back then, you could not just take it in your own hands to personally kill someone you suspected of that. Deuteronomy 13:14 said the town was to make a thorough (and presumably official) investigation first.

**2. Only under theocracy:** The Israelites lived under a “theocracy” where those who lived in the land had covenanted with God the Torah was the legal code. When godly Jews, such as Daniel, Jonah, Ezekiel, and Nehemiah, lived and traveled outside of Israel, where they were not under a theocracy, they made no effort to harm enchanters, idolators, or others.

**3. Today,** we do not live under a “theocracy”. While some people such as the Puritans, attempted to set up a theocracy, the New Testament gives no such indication that we should attempt to do so. Thus, Christians today should not harm immoral heterosexuals, practicing homosexuals, idolators, cultists, and so forth. While murder, theft, and other crimes still should be punished today, that is a government function; there should be no Christian vigilantes. However, even today we should not do those things ourselves.

**Q: In Dt 14:21, since it was wrong to eat an animal that was already dead, why was it OK to sell it to strangers? Even non-Israelites living in Israel could not eat blood in Lev 17:10,12.**

A: Eating an animal that died without having its blood drained, was a less serious offense than eating blood. While Leviticus 17:10,12 says a person who eats blood should be killed, Leviticus 17:15 says that one who eats a dead animal that did not have its blood drained must wash himself and his clothes, and he will be unclean until evening.

On the surface, these might seem archaic verses, but that contain a point that is relevant today. Christians should want to have laws banning everyone from doing some things: murder, stealing, rape, etc. However, while other things are sinful, it is OK to allow others who want to commit the sin to do so. For example, while drinking alcohol is not a sin, and getting drunk is a sin, it is OK for a Christian to work for a grocery store chain that sells alcohol.

**Q: In Dt 14:22-25, could they redeem firstborn animals with money, or could they not as Num 18:17 says?**

A: Five points to consider in the answer.

**1.** Numbers 18:14 says every firstborn of every kind of must be set aside or redeemed with money.

**2.** Redeemed with money means that you pay money and keep the animal.

**3.** Numbers 18:17 qualifies this by saying the firstborn of an ox, sheep, or goat cannot be redeemed with money.

**4.** Deuteronomy does not say an ox, sheep, or goat could be redeemed with money either.

**5.** Deuteronomy 14:24-25 says that if the distance is too far, one could “exchange the animal” which meant selling the animal for money, going to Jerusalem, and using the money to buy an equivalent animal.

See *When Critics Ask* p.121-122 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.224-255 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 14:26 and Ex 29:40, is strong, alcohol liquor OK, or is it not for kings (Prov 20:1), and only for those near death as Prov 31:4-7 says?**

A: Since alcohol was OK for people to drink, but not get drunk, under normal circumstances, how much more appropriate it would be as a sedative for people near death. Alcohol was not for priests when they entered the tent of meeting (Leviticus 10:8-10) and kings should reach for a higher standard, as Proverbs 20:1 suggests.

See *When Critics Ask* p.122-123 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.147-148 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 15:1-3, since they had to cancel all loans to fellow Israelites every seven years, why not cancel loans to non-Israelites, too?**

A: Loans were cancelled to fellow Israelites out of compassion. Scripture does not say why loans were not cancelled to non-Israelites, but it is not difficult to see a reason.

Since the Israelites were to own the land in Israel, the foreigners there with debts would be there for commercial reasons or as hired laborers. The foreigners could always go back to their own people.

**Q: In Dt 15, how does the Old Testament compare with other ancient laws?**

A: While a slave would go free after six years in Deuteronomy, a slave could go free after three years according to the code of Hammurabi. The Babylonian Code of Lipit-Ishtar says a slave could go free after serving for twice his debt, or twice his purchase price. This seems to definitely give advantage to the owner. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.107 for more info, and photograph of a tablet of the code of Lipit-Ishtar in the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.358.

## **Q: How does Dt 15:1-11 relate to Ex 23:10-11?**

A: The “seventh year” or year of Jubilee, is the same in both cases. It was the year the fields were to be unplowed, debts cancelled, and slaves freed. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.149-150 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 15:4, why should there be no poor among the Israelites, since Dt 15:11 says the poor will always be among them?**

A: God gave them an obligation to take care of all the poor among the Israelites. However, God knew that not everyone would fulfill their obligations and that there would always be poor among them.

The Bible is both a book of ideal goals and realism; we are to have both high ideals and realism, too. If someone has goals but is out of touch with reality, their idealism is not very useful. Seeing reality and having no ideals in not very useful, either. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.173, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.150, and *When Critics Ask* p.123-124 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 15:12-13, why does the Bible seem so male-chauvinistic and always use “He”?**

A: In Hebrew they never used “he/she” like people sometimes do in English. Like English, sometimes they used “he” to mean “he” or “she”. An example, in both Hebrew and English, is Deuteronomy 15:13 says “he”, when the context is clearly male or female in Deuteronomy 15:12.

## **Q: Does Dt 15:12-18 contradict Ex 21:26?**

A: No. Exodus 21:26 says that any slave had the right to go free if the owner destroyed his eye or knocked out his tooth. Deuteronomy 15:12-18 says that Hebrew slaves were to be set free every seven years, during the year of the Jubilee. The only exception was Hebrew slaves who loved their masters and had voluntarily chosen to be their slaves for life.

If the master later did destroy their eye or knock out their tooth, accidentally, the slave had the right to go free, but they were not forced to exercise that right.

This law is interesting in that while the punishment for the master seems mild it would still be effective in removing all incentive for mistreating slaves.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.149-150 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 16:5 was the Passover lamb to be killed at the sanctuary, or in the home as Ex 12:7 says?**

A: In Egypt, before there was a sanctuary or temple, the Passover lamb was to be slain in the home. After there was a sanctuary, the lamb was to be slain there. Later, when they dwelled in the Promised Land, the Jews celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem. See *When Critics Ask* p.124 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.377 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 16:16-17, why were the men to appear and the women and children were not mentioned?**

A: Deuteronomy 16:16-17 says every man was to appear, and not be empty-handed. In other words, no man, as the head of a family, was exempted from bringing the required tithes and offerings.

**Q: In Dt 16:21, why couldn’t the Jews plant a tree for religious purposes?**

A: Three good reasons.

**1.** Deuteronomy 16:21 simply says not to do so, and they were supposed to obey what God said.

**2.** Trees were never a part of a sacrifice to the True God.

**3.** Deuteronomy 12:3 shows that sacred groves of trees were a part of the worship of other gods. Tress were prominent in worship of Baal and some of the Greek gods.

The third reason is especially important. If doing an activity is a part of a pagan religion, and it would

a) Tempt you to worship the pagan gods

b) Tempt others to worship the pagan gods, or

c) Give the appearance that you were worshipping pagan gods,

then do not do it.

**Q: In Dt 17:6, Dt 19:15, and Num 35:30, is it wrong to convict anyone of murder unless two or more human witnesses are present?**

A: The two-witness requirement was for adultery and theft as well as murder, and two eyewitnesses rarely see adultery or theft. Two points to discuss on the use of the Hebrew term for witness.

**1.** Leviticus 5:1 shows that a witness is not only an eyewitness of the crime. A witness is also anyone who knows of evidence that can prove a person innocent or guilty.

**2.** The word for “witness” can also mean evidence as well as a person. For example, in Exodus 22:13 the parts of a dead animal can be a witness, too. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.143 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 18:10, what does it mean not to “pass your children through the fire?**

A: This was a custom of the Canaanites to sacrifice their firstborn by burning them to death, as Deuteronomy 12:31 explains.

**Q: In Dt 18:10, why not allow enchanters and necromancers to live?**

A: To some, this seems like a serious punishment for people who do no physical harm to others. However, they do spiritual harm to others in leading them to Hell. Thus, under the theocratic government in the Old Testament, the punishment was the same as for idolators.

**Q: In Dt 18:10, does the prohibition against contact with the supernatural contradict having prophets in the Bible, as an atheist claimed?**

A: No. This is ridiculous for two reasons.

**1.** Even if there had been a ban against “all” supernatural contact, certainly no serious student of God’s word would have understood that God was banning all prayer to Him.

**2.** There was never a ban against all supernatural contact as the atheist apparently imagines. Rather, the ban is against divination and sorcery. People are not to try to contact the spirits of dead people, demons, or angels. While angels did appear to godly people later, such as Daniel, it was the angel who initiated the contact, not the human being.

See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.469-470 for a good discussion of why a Christian cannot be a spiritualist.

**Q: In Dt 18:17-18; Dt 33:1-2, and Dt 34:10-11, was Mohammed prophesied here, as some Muslims claim?**

A: No. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 says God will raise up a prophet, that they will hear, like Moses from their midst, among their brethren. Was Jesus a prophet? Did many Jews hear Jesus? Was Jesus among the Jews? Was Jesus a Jew? Muslims should have no problem agreeing that this verse fits Jesus more than Mohammed. Here are a few more points.

**a.** Deuteronomy 33:1-2 says “the Lord”, and Muslims do not call Mohammed their Lord. (‘Alawite Muslims and other ghulat groups consider Mohammed God, but they are exceptions.)

**b.** Deuteronomy 34:10 that “since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses.” This epitaph was written, probably by Joshua, long before Jesus came.

**c.** Deuteronomy 34:10 mentions “face to face”, and Mohammed never said he got his words directly from Allah, but through angels (Sura 2:97). Jesus communicated directly with God the Father according to John 1:18 and other passages.

**d.** The next verse, 34:11, says no other prophet did those awesome miracles like Moses did. Mohammed in the Qur’an generally did not perform miracles, except for allegedly visiting the mosque in Jerusalem (which can be proved to not be existing at that time), and splitting the moon in two (which was not seen by anyone else.)

**e.** In the Qur’an itself, Sura 29:27 says the prophethood came through Isaac and Jacob. In Yusuf Ali’s translation of the Qur’an, he says, “And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained Among his progeny Prophethood and Revelation,…” While the parentheses around Abraham is in Yusuf Ali’s translation, the entire word, “Abraham” is not in the Arabic, and Yusuf Ali felt the need to add “Abraham” to what Muslims view as God’s word.

**f.** Finally, Jesus’ apostle Peter said this was fulfilled in Jesus in Acts 3:22-26. The apostle Peter would be in a great position to know.

**1. Either,** Jesus made a great mistake allowing a deceiver like Peter to mislead people for almost 2,000 years who were trying to follow God, and God did not lift a finger to tell people the truth.

**2. Or,** Jesus knew what He was doing when he selected Peter, and God did not correct something that needed no correction.

**3. Or else,** Peter did not say that, and the Book of Acts was corrupted prior to the first extra-Biblical mention we have of this referring to Christ, which was about 138 A.D.

Here are the earliest Greek manuscripts we have, and their dates, of Acts 3:22-36.

Vaticanus [B] 325-350 A.D.

Sinaiticus [Si] 340-350 A.D.

Bohairic Coptic [Boh] 3rd/4th cent.

Alexandrinus [A] c.450 A.D.

Sahidic Coptic [Sah] 3rd/4rth cent.

Ephraemi Rescriptus [C] 5th

Bezae Cantabrigiensis [D] 5th,6th

Here are translations we have in other languages of these verses

Armenian [Arm] 5th century

Georgian [Geo] 5th century

Latin Vulgate [Vg] 4th to 5th century

Ethiopic [Eth] 6th century

Syrian Peshitta [SyrP] 4th to 7th cent.

The early church writers mentioned this verse as referring to Jesus. Some of them were

**Justin Martyr** was born around 114 A.D., though some think 110 A.D. His *First Apology* was written between 138 A.D. and his death in 165 A.D. Obviously, he had to have read of this prophecy referring to Christ before he wrote it down.

Irenaeus wrote 182-188 A.D.

Tertullian 220-220 A.D.

Origen 225-254 A.D.

**Archelaus** (262-278 A.D.) also discusses Deuteronomy 18:15 showing how it refers to Jesus Christ in *Disputation with Manes* ch.43 p.219

Chrysostom 407 A.D.

A Muslim would have to say not only that Justin was wrong, but all New Testament manuscripts recorded Peter’s saying incorrectly.

In addition, translations to other languages were made very early; the dates above or not the dates of the first translations, but only the dates of the earliest manuscripts that survive today. These are valuable because they are an independent chain of transmission, that people can use as a crosscheck on the Greek manuscripts. The chain of transmission of these manuscripts, from Africa to Asia, all agree that Peter said this refers to Jesus.

See *When Cultists Ask* p.43-44,45-46 and *When Critics Ask* p.125-126, p.131-132, and p.133 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 18:20-22, how can you tell if a prophet is a false prophet?**

A: The Bible gives two reasons and shows two qualifications.

**1.** If they advocate worshipping other gods, or prophesy or teach things about God that God did not command. Deuteronomy 18:20-21; 1 John 4:1-3; Jeremiah 6:13

**1st Qualification:** If a prophet speaks his opinion about what the true God wants, without prophesying, his opinions can be wrong just like anyone else’s. For an example, see Nathan’s words to David in 1 Chronicles 17:2-4.

**2.** If the prophet makes a prediction that is false. Deuteronomy 18:21-22.

**2nd Qualification:** If a prophet makes a conditional prophecy, and the conditions are not satisfied. Prophecies of judgment and destruction are always conditional upon the person or nation not repenting. For an example, see Jonah 3:1-10.

See *When Critics Ask* p.124-125 and *When Cultists Ask* p.42 for more info and a list of twelve ways to discern if a teacher is from God or not.

**Q: In Dt 19:19, isn’t it severe to punish a false witness with the same punishment the falsely accused was going to get?**

A: Not at all. A person can murder with his words just as easily as with his hands. Whether they used their hands, or used malicious deceit and the legal system, the falsely accused would still have been dead. At least with murder by their own hand, the victim’s reputation is intact. Murdering by words destroys the person’s reputation as well as kills their body.

For reference the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi also says that someone who falsely accused another of murder should be put to death. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.126 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 19:21, Lev 24:20, and Ex 21:22-24, why does the Bible say, “an eye for an eye”?**

A: The three Old Testament references are a part of the judicial law. The compensation paid and punishment was to match the crime: no more and no less. In the one New Testament verse Jesus is telling believers to practice forgiveness and mercy instead of an eye for an eye. Here are the four places.

**Exodus 21:22-24** mentions legal judgments, including a court, when a man hits a woman such that she goes into labor prematurely.

**Leviticus 24:20** mentions the judgment for hurting or killing others. However, the cities of refuge were available for unintentional murder, and presumably unintentional harm.

**Deuteronomy 19:21** speaks of a false witness, who should have done to him what his lies would have caused happen to someone else.

**Jesus said in Matthew 5:38** that while you have heard it said, “An eye or an eye…”, we were not to resist the evil person but turn the other cheek.

Tertullian in *Five Books Against Marcion* book 2 ch.18 (207/208 A.D.) was the first we know of to answer this question, and he reminded his readers that the purpose of this law served to restrain violence. *What You Know Might Not Be So : 220 Misinterpretations of Bible Texts Explained* p.62-63 says that this limits vengeance. In a society without police, vengeance should not be more severe than the original act. The punishment of a crime done to a poor person should be the same as the punishment of a crime done to a rich person.

Also, the people had to learn what justice was before they could learn what mercy and forgiveness were. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.150-151 and *735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered* p.61 for more info as well as the next question.

**Q: In Dt 19:21, why does the Bible seem unloving to teach “an eye for an eye?**

A: While this refers to justice, and not love, you have to understand justice before you can appreciate mercy. If you do not realize wrong things have serious punishment, it is impossible to value forgiveness from those things. See the previous question for why this command was given.

Pretend for a moment that people were never told of “an eye for an eye”, and the three Old Testament passages where it is mentioned did not exist.

**In Exodus 21:22-24**, then it would not be serious to kill babies or have abortions.

**In Leviticus 24:20**, it would be only a minor problem to maliciously injure an adult.

**In Deuteronomy 19:21**, a witness who lied to try to have someone unjustly punished would be unpunished.

A society that has justice and also love, is actually a more loving society than one that attempts (in vain) to have love without a concept of justice. Unfortunately, the latter is what some people think society can be.

**Q: In Dt 20:1-15, why did God permit offensive war?**

A: This does not specify Canaanites or non-Canaanites. The Israelites needed to fight to overthrow the oppression of the Midianites, Ammonites, Syrians and others.

This demonstrates that God was not a pacifist in the Old Testament, and likewise, He is not against all killing, such as executions for valid reasons, in the New Testament in Romans 13:4.

**Q: In Dt 20:16-18, were the Israelites to kill everyone of the enemy, or were they to spare some as Dt 20:11-14 says?**

A: Between verses 11-14 and verses 16-18 is verse 15. Verse 15 says the preceding verses were for the cities that were far from where they lived. Verse 16 says the following is for the Canaanite cities in the Promised Land. See *When Critics Ask* p.126-127 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.258 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 20:17, since God knew the Hittites (=Gibeonites) in Palestine would become His loyal temple servants, why did God say to annihilate them here?**

A: This is an interesting case where God’s revealed will differed from His desired will, yet God’s revealed command had a part in bringing out His desired will.

**1.** Neither the Hittites nor the Israelites were told, “don’t worry, the Hittites will be spared”. The Gibeonites had the same fears as the other Canaanites, but they acted on their anxiety to seek peace with the Israelites.

**2.** Then God’s providence, manifested through a mistake on the part of the Israelite leaders, caused them to spare the Gibeonites.

**3.** The Gibeonites used deception and lies, but God is not restricted to using good means to accomplish His will.

**4.** Later in history, the Gibeonites became loyal Temple servants.

A second, very similar case should be familiar to use today. God desires all to be saved. God knows who the elect are. Yet God (truthfully) warns everyone that they will go to Hell if they reject Jesus. On one hand the elect have nothing to worry about, because they would become God’s children. On the other hand, God did not say who the elect were.

A thought to ponder, concerning election and free agency, is that nothing stopped all the other Canaanites from doing what the Gibeonites did. Yet, there is no record that any other Canaanites tried to do this, or even desired to try.

See the discussion on Genesis 20:3-6, Deuteronomy 20:17; Jeremiah 15:6; Jonah 3-4; Jonah 3:10, and Jonah 4:1-2 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 21:15-16, since a father should not give his inheritance to a younger son and slight the older son, why did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do that? Why did David make Solomon the next King, and not Adonijah?**

A: As for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the command in Deuteronomy 21:15-16 came after they had died. People are not responsible to keep a command God had not given yet.

In David’s case, the law applied to personal property, and a kingdom is not personal property, -though some emperors and kings in history might have thought so.

**Q: In Dt 21:15, why does God [allegedly] teach that a man is to love one wife and hate the other? Is this justice from a Biblical God? (A Muslim asserted this.)**

A: It teaches nothing of the sort. Deuteronomy 21:15-16 really says, “Suppose a man has two wives, one whom he loves more than the others, and they both bear him sons, with the firstborn being the child of the less loved wife. In the day he divides his inheritance he must not appoint as firstborn the son of the favorite wife in place of the other wife’s son who is actually the firstborn.” (NET) So if a man loves one wife but not the other, the man cannot give the son who is not the firstborn the rights of the firstborn son. God is NOT saying a polygamous man should love one wife more than another. However, perhaps this Muslim can explain Mohammed’s behavior in this.

When Sauda was old she was afraid Mohammed would divorce her, so she gave her turn to ‘A’isha. *Abu Dawud* vol.2 no.2130 p.572

Another Muslim did the same. A man had a wife for many years, who bore him many children. He intended to “exchange her” (Majah’s choice of words) but he kept here when she agreed to give up her turn with him. *Ibn-i-Majah* vol.3 no.1914 p.188.

**Q: In Dt 21:15-17, since the right of the firstborn belongs to the firstborn son, why did Jacob and not Esau receive the birthright in Genesis 27?**

A: First two facts which are not a part of the answer, and then the answer. Jacob purchased the birthright in Genesis 25:29-34. Also, Jacob was wrong to trick his father Isaac into giving it to him in Genesis 27.

The answer is that Jacob and Esau lived over 400 years before God gave this command in Deuteronomy 21:15-17.

**Q: In Dt 21:18-21, why was the Law so severe as to allow a father to have his son killed by stoning for disobedience?**

A: This was not for simply disobedience one time, but for adamant refusal to ever obey. This law shows how seriously God meant for children to obey their parents. However, as strict a warning as the law would be, there is no record of this sentence ever being carried out.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.174-175 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 22:5, why should a man not wear women’s clothing and vice versa?**

A: Scripture does not say. Given the many other principles in both the Old and New Testaments, the reason appears to be that God does not want us to forget that men and women have different roles in the family.

**Q: In Dt 22:5, is it OK for women to wear jeans, and both of them to wear t-shirts?**

A: A few genuine Christians think it is not OK. However, most Christians see no problem here. In the Bible men and women both wore cloaks and sandals. Today jeans and t-shirts are neither exclusively male or female. See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.150-151 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 22:6-7, why couldn’t they take a mother bird along with its young?**

A: Scripture does not say why, except that is what God commanded. If you were to take the young or the eggs for food, and leave the mother, then you might have more young or eggs next year.

Q: In Dt 22:8, why would they have to have a parapet? (A skeptic had a problem with this)

A: On a lighter note, this has to do with the “fall of man”. Seriously, there is a legal concept here of guilt of manslaughter (unintentional murder) through recklessness. It is the fault of a careless person if he is killed or injured falling off a roof, but the owner is also at fault if he was reckless in not having reasonable safety precautions.

**Q: In Dt 22:9, why not sow with various kinds of seed?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, when you sow the same crop year after year, insect and fungal pests build up that attack that crop. If you rotate crops, that reduces attack from the same pests, and can keep from wearing out the nutrients in the soil.

**Q: In Dt 22:10, why not yoke an ox and a donkey together?**

A: Scripture does not say. However, they can often have different strength and walk at a different pace. Thus, this command, along with Proverbs 12:10, relates to being kind to animals.

## **Q: In Dt 22:11, why not wear wool and linen together?**

A: Scripture does not say. Functionally, wool is very useful as an insulator that is not too adversely affected when wool gets wet. A possible reason is that interweaving wool and cotton could hurt the garment’s value as an insulator.

**Q: In Dt 22:11, can we wear wool and linen together today?**

A: Yes. We serve in the new way of the spirit, not the old way of the written code (Romans 7:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6-7; ~Romans 2:29). While we still obey the moral requirements of the law, we do not obey the rules of ceremony, diet, and clothing.

**Q: In Dt 22:13-21, was the test if a woman was a virgin the sheet on the wedding night, or was the test for an unfaithful wife for her to drink bitter water as Num 5:13-22 says?**

A: Both are true, under different circumstances. Deuteronomy 22:13-21 discusses before marriage, and Numbers 5:13-22 discusses after marriage. See *When Critics Ask* p.127 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.258-259 for more info.

## **Q: In Dt 22:19 (KJV), what does “amerce him” mean?**

A: This phrase means to give someone a monetary fine. Actually, an “amercement” is not an archaic phrase, but is still in use in British Law today.

**Q: In Dt 22:30 and Dt 27:20 (KJV), what does “discover his father’s skirt mean?**

A: It means to uncover his father’s nakedness or dishonor his father by sleeping with his father’s wife.

## **Q: In Dt 23:1 (KJV), what is a man’s “privy member”?**

A: It is a male’s private parts.

**Q: In Dt 23:2, why couldn’t a descendant of an illegitimate child enter the congregation down to the tenth generation?**

A: God has the right to choose anybody He wants to enter His assembly. Scripture does not directly say God’s reasons, but there are four points that give an indication.

**1.** This and other verses seem to fit a pattern. People could not enter the assembly if they are considered unclean. This includes people who have touched a dead body, and people with infectious skin diseases.

**2.** Unclean did not mean the person is sinning, more sinful than others, or “too sinful” to enter. For example, priests (except the high priest), were supposed to bury their near relatives, which would make them unclean. On the Day of Atonement, the one who led the scapegoat into the Desert was unclean for doing so, and he was doing what God commanded.

**3.** Not coming into the assembly is a reproach, not for the child, but for the parents. Someone being an illegitimate child does not mean they cannot be used by God though. Perez, an ancestor of Jesus, was the illegitimate son of Judah. In the Book of Judges, the judge Jephthah the Gileadite was used by God to defeat the Ammonites. The background of Jephthah’s mother caused Jephthah problems with his half-brothers, but it did cause any problem for God to use him.

**4.** This rule was only for the assemblies for Israelites in the Old Testament. In New Testament times, all people who seek God, regardless of the nationality or circumstances of their birth, are welcome into God’s churches.

See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.313 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 23:3, why couldn’t an Ammonite or Moabite enter the congregation down to the tenth generation?**

A: No one of a forbidden marriage could down to the tenth generation in Deuteronomy 23:2.

The reason for this, is that a child would be “illegitimate” not only if it was born out of wedlock, but also if it was born of an “illegal” marriage. God commanded the Israelites not to marry outside of Israel. See the discussion on Deuteronomy 23:2 for why illegitimate children were excluded from the assembly.

Of course, if a person was classified as “a foreigner who bound himself with Israel” (Isaiah 56:6), such as Ruth, then “your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.” (Ruth 1:16). There is no evidence that the Israelites did not fully accept Ruth’s conversion and change of citizenship. In fact, King David was Ruth’s great-grandson, according to Ruth 4:21-22, Matthew 1:5-6 and Luke 3:31-32. Likewise, Isaiah 56:3 also says that foreigners who have bound themselves to the Lord will not be excluded from God’s people, though some interpret Isaiah 56:3 as relating to the end times.

**Q: In Dt 23:3, was the tenth generation the tenth generation from the time of the prohibited marriage, or the tenth generation forward from the entrance to the Promised land?**

A: It could be either way. However, it is more likely to be the tenth generation from the forbidden marriage.

**Q: In Dt 23:15, should we pay our employees at the end of every single day?**

A: Normally Christian bosses do not need to do so. As a part of the Old Testament Law, Deuteronomy 23:15 does not say to pay all workers every day, but the poor and needy workers who need it. We should pay our employees at the proper time on their payday though, and not withhold money.

**Q: In Dt 23:7-8, why couldn’t an Edomite or Egyptian enter the congregation down to the third generation?**

A: Probably for similar reasons as the Ammonites and Moabites could not join down to the tenth generation. Scripture only records this, it does not say why the All-Knowing God said this. However, reasons might be that the Edomites were more closely related to Israel, and the Egyptians originally treated the Israelites well.

## **Q: In Dt 23:17, what is a Sodomite?**

A: This refers to a male prostitute, according to *Strong’s Concordance*, NIV, and NET Bible. The New King James translates this as “perverted one”, and The *Interlinear Bible* (Jay P. Green) translates this as “homosexual”.

**Q: In Dt 23:17, was homosexuality condemned only because it was connected with idolatry, as some New Agers say?**

A: No, like infant sacrifice and prostitution, homosexuality was absolutely condemned, regardless of the context. This is no isolated verse, as Leviticus 18:22,24; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27, and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 also condemn homosexuality. See the discussion on Romans 1:26-27, *When Cultists Ask* p.44, and *When Critics Ask* p.127-128 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 23:18, why should the earnings of some not be brought into the house of God to pay vows?**

A: God is not impressed with people giving Him money that was not theirs and which they robbed from other people. In a similar way, David could have freely taken the land where the Temple would be built, but David insisted on paying for the land. Likewise money that was “earned” (in a manner of speaking), or gained doing evil things was not suitable to give as a gift to God’s House.

In Luke 19:1-10, when Zacchaeus the corrupt tax collector believed in Jesus, he decided to pay back people he cheated and to give half of his possessions (gotten mainly by cheating) to the poor.

**Q: How does Dt 24 compare with other laws of the time?**

A: The Babylonian Code of Hammurabi codes 14 and 22, kidnapping and robbery are punishable by death. In the Hittite law the rights of the laborer are not considered. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.148 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 24:1-4, why does this teaching on divorce undeniably differ from Mk 10:2-12 and 1 Cor 7:10-16?**

A: Jesus answered this in Mark 10:5: God permitted divorce because their hearts were hard. In the Old Testament (Malachi 2:16), God says that He hates divorce.

When we can justify something as not being against the Bible, yet we know that God is still displeased with it, we should not do it. Romans 14:23 says that whatever does not proceed from faith is sin, and James 5:17 says that any who know the good they ought to do, and does not do it, sins.

See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.175-176 and *When Critics Ask* p.129 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 24:16, why does it say children are not supposed to be killed for their fathers’ sins, since they were killed for the fathers’ sins as the sons of Saul were in 2 Sam 21:5-9 and David and Bathsheba’s baby in 2 Sam 12:15-18?**

A: Saul’s sons were guilty, too. After the death of Saul and Jonathan, 2 Samuel 3:1 says the war between the house of Saul (meaning Saul’s sons) and David lasted a long time. You can read more about this in 2 Samuel 3 and 4.

In 2 Samuel 21:5-9, Saul’s seven sons were the two sons of Saul and Aiah, and the five sons of Saul’s daughter Merab. (Note that there were two princes named Mephibosheth; Jonathan’s son was spared, and Saul and Aiah’s son was not.) Saul was thirty when he began his reign, and Saul reigned 42 years, according to 1 Samuel 13:1.

As for the baby born to Bathsheba, both this passage and modern experience show that little children often bear consequences for the evil of others. God can take life as he decides, but Deuteronomy 24:16 says that children are not to be executed for the sins of their fathers.

See *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.152-153, *When Critics Ask* p.129-130, and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.177-179 for more info.

## **Q: In Dt 25:2 (KJV), does this mean to beat people on their face?**

A: Not at all. As modern translations show, this means that the judge will face the guilty person when the person is punished. Presumably, this would show that the punishment is judicially authorized.

**Q: In Dt 25:5-6, why would a childless widow have to marry the brother of her deceased husband?**

A: At that time, this is something the widow would want to do for financial support and the memory and name of her first husband.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 teaches that if a man died with no children, it was his brother’s responsibility to marry the widow and the first son shall carry on the name of the dead brother. For examples, see Genesis 38:8-10 and Ruth 1:11-13.

In the ancient Middle East outside of the Bible, the Nuzi tablets also say that when a father gets a wife for his son, if the son dies, then the girl marries another son. See the *Wycliffe Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* p.360 for more info.

Levirate marriage seems very strange to westerners, but many other cultures thought this was natural. Wikipedia says that the custom of levirate marriage was practiced by the Scythians, later Kurds, Hsiung-Nu (Xiongnu) of China, the Huns, Kirghiz, Karo people of Indonesia, many Somalis, the Mambila tribe of Nigeria and north Cameroon, some parts of Nigeria, the Marogoli tribe of west Kenya, the Julu, the Shona of Zimbabwe, and the Dinka and Nuer tribes of south Sudan.

Since the time of the New Testament, there is the understanding that believers are to take care of their families, including their extended family, given the strict nature of the command in 1 Timothy 5:8. While there is no levirate marriage for Christians today, we should still financially help out extended family too.

As an aside, the Hebrew word for son, *ben*, can mean son or mean child depending on the context. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.151 for more info.

**Q: Why does the law in Dt 25:5-10 differ from what was expected with Judah, Onan, and Tamar in Genesis 38?**

A: Remember that the Law of Moses had not yet been given in the time of Judah. Judah believed he had an obligation to Tamar, and he violated his conscience by choosing not to live up to that obligation.

**Q: In Dt 25:13-15, Prov 11:1; 20:10,23 and Lev 19:35-36, what are divers (or differing) weights?**

A: This refers to the evil practice of measuring grain or other items using a lighter weight when you were selling it, and using a slightly heavier weight when you were buying it.

## **Q: In Dt 26:17 (KJV), what does “avouched” mean?**

A: This colorful King James Version word means “declared” (NASB, NET, NIV, and Green’s Literal translation) or “proclaimed” (NKJV). The NRSV translates this as “obtained the Lord’s agreement”.

Q: In Dt 27:9, what is significant about the Israelites becoming a people of the Lord?

A: There are two aspects, both spelled out in Deuteronomy 27:12-13. Because the people were special to the Lord, God would especially bless their obedience. On the other hand, they would be cursed for disobeying God, even more than other peoples. Remember that the Israelites knew God’s will more than other peoples of that time, and they were accountable both for what they knew, and their commitment to be a people of God.

For New Testament believers, James 3:1 says that many should not become teachers, because teachers will be judged with greater strictness. For unbelievers, 2 Peter 2:21 says that a person would be better off not knowing the way of truth, than to know it and reject it.

**Q: In Dt 28, why is the Book of Lamentations so similar to this chapter?**

A: They are very different in style, since Lamentations was written a thousand years later in a precise, poetic way. However, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary : Old Testament* p.1209 points out there are fifteen similarities in content. This is probably because the author of Lamentations (most likely Jeremiah) was deliberately trying to show how the disaster that occurred was not a chance event, but God deliberately fulfilling the prophetic curses in Deuteronomy 28.

**Q: In Dt 28:15-26, outside of the Bible when did people use the word “Amen”?**

A: A vassal saying “Amen” is in Esarhaddon’s Nimrud treaty and in the response of Hittite soldiers. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* vol.3 p.165 for more info.

## **Q: In Dt 28:26 (KJV), what does “carcase” mean?**

A: This means dead body. The NASB and NKJV says “carcasses”. The NRSV says “corpse” and Green’s literal translation says “body”.

**Q: In Dt 28:55-58, why did God decide that disobedient Israelites would be cannibals and eat their children?**

A: God did not desire this, but warned them that their punishment for disobedience would be a siege of Jerusalem that was so severe that He foresaw this would happen.

**Q: Did Dt 28:68 prophesy a second bondage in Egypt as the Muslim Ahmad Deedat says?**

A: This is a conditional prophecy if they continued in their rebellion. It does not prophesy a captivity in Egypt, but rather that they will voluntarily flee to Egypt. After the Babylonians exiled most of the Jews to Babylon, many of the ones who were left chose to flee to Egypt, taking an unwilling Jeremiah with them. Jeremiah 41:11-44:30 has an extensive discussion of what happened.

**Q: In Dt 29:29, what does it mean that the secret things belong to God but the things He has revealed, are ours forever?**

A: There are two kinds of knowledge differentiated here.

**1.** Secret things which God has not revealed to us. We are not responsible to know them or obey them. Some of these things we might not know until we get to Heaven, and others things we might never know. That is OK, though.

**2.** Things which God has revealed we are responsible to know, obey, and teach our children and others.

**Q: In Dt 30:6, did God circumcise the hearts of the Israelites, or were the Israelites themselves supposed to as Dt 10:16 says?**

A: This is like asking are we responsible for faith, or does God give us faith. The correct answer is both, because whether in salvation, or dedication to God, there is an interaction between God and a person. See *When Critics Ask* p.130 and *Haley’s Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* p.166-167 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 31:3, what were the peoples of Canaan like, and are there any people similar to them today?**

A: Many peoples lived in the land of Canaan. Colonies of Hittites and Amorites came from Asia Minor. A few Philistines and Sea peoples came at that time from the northwest. One of the more unusual peoples was the Anakim. Bones have been found that showed some of them to be 10 1/2 feet tall. Most of the Canaanites though, are thought to have come from northern Arabia. A people living today are believed to be “cousins” of the Canaanites; they live in the nation of Qatar.

Canaan was governed by a large number of small city-states; they were experienced in war with each other. Their city walls were thicker than Israelite city walls, built centuries later. Both the northern and southern parts of Canaan paid tribute to Egypt. Joshua conquered thirty-one kings in both parts. However, the plains were not conquered because the Canaanites used chariots, which were effective weapons on the plains.

The religion of the Canaanites was both decadent and cruel. Each region worshipped a local lord, or Baal. The Canaanites also venerated the goddess Ashtarte (or Ishtar) the goddess of sex and war. In one legend her husband, the god Tammuz, was sent to hell by her (nice lady!). Three “attractive” elements of this religion were sex, violence, and materialism. They not only sacrificed animals, but their firstborn children had to “pass through the fire”. Each temple supported itself by sacrifices and partly by the “holy” prostitution of priestesses. Since the Canaanites had a more sophisticated civilization and their religion certainly appealed to the flesh more than the worship of God, it was a great temptation to the Israelites to turn from the Living God.

It is easy to look at the infant murder and prostitution and overlook seeing another really evil thing. A few people murder and become prostitutes in most cultures, but the great evil is this: if a Canaanite were to sincerely desire to seek the Creator and live a good, moral life, he was taught the only way was by killing your firstborn and committing fornication. Can you imagine how nearly impossible it would be to seek after a moral God if the only way you knew was by these ungodly deeds?

Because of the Canaanites’ great sin (Genesis 15:16), and because of the temptation (Deuteronomy 7:16), God ordered them to be totally destroyed (Deuteronomy 20:16-18). We can ponder how bad sin must become before God annihilates a people, but we really cannot question God’s right to do with His own creation as He wishes.

**Q: In Dt 32:11, what birds put their young on their wings?**

A: Only birds of prey have strong wings to do this. One bird that does this is the golden eagle. They swoop under the eaglets and fly upward with the eaglets on their backs, when the eaglets are learning to fly, according to the April 2001 issue o the National Geographic.

See Stephen Caesar “Zoology in the Pentateuch: Three Alleged Errors” Science, Scholarship and Scripture in *The Christian News* July 2, 2001 p.26 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 32:21 does the foolish people here refer to pre-Islamic Arabs, as the Muslim Ahmad Deedat says?**

A: This can also be translated “people slow to learn”, but regardless, there is no reason this refers to Arabs any more than Gentiles in general. Specifically, the early Christians who were not of Jewish background were mainly Gentiles of the Roman Empire.

**Q: In Dt 32:48 was Moses’ anger a “sin unto to death” as mentioned in 1 Jn 5:16,17 because he was punished with dying before entering the promised land?**

A: No, this is fundamentally different from Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), some believer’s who took the Lord’s supper lightly (1 Corinthians 11:31,32), Korah’s rebellion (Numbers 16), Achan’s sin (Joshua 7:16-26). The others died right away, while Moses lived many years before dying. Moses sin was only a sin unto death in the sense that Adam, Eve, and all of us will die as a consequence of sin.

See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.70 for a different answer.

**Q: In Dt 32:50, since there is life after death, what does “gathered to his people” mean?**

A: See the discussion on Genesis 25:8 and Genesis 49:33 for the answer.

**Q: In Dt 33:2, does God shining forth with 10,000 saints refer to Mohammed conquering Mecca, as the Muslim Ahmad Deedat says?**

A: No. While the army from Medina was about 10,000 strong, that is the only similarity here. Paran was in Edom, east of Mt. Sinai. Both Mecca and Medina are far south of Paran.

**Q: In Dt 33:6, does the Hebrew say “let” his men be few or “let not/nor let” his men be few?**

A: The NIV and NET Bible show in footnote that it could be translated either way. Jay P. Green’s literal translation says, “let his men be numbered”. The NRSV says, “even though his numbers are few”. The NASB says, “Nor his men be few”, and the NKJV “*Nor* let his men be few” (italics means the word is implied but not present in the Hebrew). The Septuagint was a fairly reliable Greek translation for the first five books, and they understood it as “let him be many in number”.

**Q: In Dt 33:7, as Judah’s kingship is not mentioned, does this show this was composed after the northern tribes split away, as the skeptical Asimov’s Guide to the Bible p.206 says?**

A: No, it would be equally valid to say that no mention of Judah’s kingship would be made if it was before David and the united kingdom, as it would be to say it was after the time of the united kingdom. Actually, since these were blessings of Moses, there was no need to either mention or not mention Judah’s kingship.

**Q: In Dt 34, how could Dt be written by Moses, since his death is mentioned?**

A: Most Christians think the last chapter of Deuteronomy was written down after Moses’ death. See the first answer in Bible questions from the Torah. See *Hard Sayings of the Bible* p.179-180, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.112-113 and *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* p.153-154 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 34:1-2 (KJV), how did Moses see “all” of the land?**

A: The King James version accurately translated the Hebrew word, but “all” here does not mean every single square foot (even the ground on the far side of each mountain and building). Rather, it means Moses saw the land as a whole. See *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* volume 3 p.234 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 34:5, why was Moses buried in a secrete place?**

A: Scripture does not say, but there are two conjectures.

Josephus the Jewish writer said that if the place was known, the Israelites might have made an idol of Moses’ body. See *1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.311 for this.

Jude 9 says that the archangel Michael and Satan contended over the body of Moses. It might have something to do with this, or that Moses would appear later to Jesus at the transfiguration.

**Q: In Dt 34:10, how could Moses write that he was a greater prophet than Jesus? (An atheist asked this)**

A: Many conservative Christians do not believe Moses wrote the epilog to Deuteronomy after he died. I must admit, though, this is the first time I have heard of an atheist thinking Moses wrote after his own death. Either way though, the answer is the same.

In Deuteronomy 34:10, says there was no greater prophet “until this time”. The writer of the epilog to Deuteronomy was accurate, because this was written long before Jesus came.

You have to give atheists credit though, for their diligence in looking through the Bible and their cleverness in seeing problems that nobody else sees. See *When Critics Ask* p.132-133 for more info.

**Q: In Dt 34:7, how could Moses be 120 years old and still be strong with good eyesight?**

A: God can preserve youth, and God can even restore youth, as Job 33:25; Psalm 103:5; and possibly Psalm 110:3 show.

**Q: In Dt 34:7, was Moses as strong as in his youth, or could Moses no longer go out and come in as Dt 31:2 says?**

A: Moses was as strong as when he was younger. To find out the true reason Moses said Deuteronomy 31:2, one only has to read Deuteronomy 31:3, where Moses tells the people that God said Moses would die right before reaching the promised land. This is why Moses handed over the leadership of the people to Joshua in Deuteronomy 31:1-8. See *Bible Difficulties and Seeming Contradictions* p.154-155 for more info.

**Q: In Dt, how do we know that what we have is what was originally written from Philo the Jew?**

A: As Christians we trust that the Old Testament that Christ validated the Old Testament we have. For that matter, for Muslims their Qur’an says that Jesus was given the Torah in Sura 5:46. We have early manuscripts from the time of Christ, which the next question addresses. However, there is an additional line of evidence. Philo of Alexandria was a Jewish scholar who lived from 15/20 B.C. to 50 A.D. He wrote in Greek, but it is curious that his Greek quotes of the Old Testament agree more closely with the Hebrew Masoretic text instead of the Greek Septuagint. He went into great detail into what different verses mean. Here are verses he referred to in Deuteronomy.

**1**:17,31,43; **4**:1,4,6,12,19,29,39; **5**:16,27,31; **6**:7,10,11,13; **7**:1,7; **8**:2,3,12,14,15,17,18; **9**:5; **10**:9,10,16,17,18,20-22; **11**:8; **12**:28,31; **13**:1,4,6; **14**:1,4,10; **15**:1,6,8,12,16; **16**:3,19-22; **17**:6,15,18; **18**:18; **19**:14-17,19; **20**:1,5,10,19,20; **21**:10,14,15,17-21,23; **22**:8,10,13,27; **23**:1-5,12-14,16,18,19,21; **24**:4,7,10,15,19,20; **25**:4,11-13,17,18; **26**:1,13; **27**:2,3,9,15,17,19; **28**:12,15,23,28,33,65; **29**:4; **30**:4,9-12,14-15,20; **32**:4,5,7,8,13,15,18,32,34,39; **33**:1,4,6,9; **34**:4-6,10

See *The Works of Philo : Complete and Unabridged*. new updated version for more info.

**Q: In Dt, what are some of the earliest manuscripts that still exist today?**

A: Here are the earliest ones.

**Ketef Hinnom** scrolls are 650-587 B.C., on silver (so they survived), and have fragments of Exodus 20:6; Numbers 6:24-26; Deuteronomy 5:10; 7:9; Nehemiah 1:5; and Daniel 9:4.

**Dead Sea scrolls:** (before Christ) 29 separate manuscripts. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.30. According to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated : The Qumran Texts in English 2nd ed.* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English 4th ed.*, they are:

4QPaleoDeut[r] has Dt 19:2-3

1Q4

1Q5

2Q10

2Q11

2Q12

4Q28 (= 4QDeut a)(Deuteronomy 23:36?; 24:1-8) (175-150 B.C.)

4Q29 (= 4QDeut b) (Deuteronomy 29:24-27; 30:3-14; 31:9-17, 31:24-32:3) shows affinities with the Hebrew text behind the Septuagint. (Dated 150-100 B.C.)

4Q30 (= 4QDeut c ) (120 verses from 19 chapters including 31:16-19) (c.150-100 B.C.) Dt 3:25-26; 4:13-17,31-32; 7:3-4; 8:1-5; 9:11-12,17-19,29; 10:1-2,5-8; 10:8-12; 11:3,9-13,18; 12:18-19,26,31; 15:1-4,15-19; 16:2-3,6-11,21-22; 17:1-5,7,15-20; 18:1; 26:19; 28:1-14,20,22-25,29-30,48-50,61; 29:17-19; 31:16-19; 32:3

4Q31 (= 4QDeut d) (Deuteronomy 2:26-33; 3:14-29; 4:1)

4Q32 (parts of Deuteronomy 3,8)

4Q33 (=4QDeut[f]) parts of 93 verses: Dt 4:24-26; 7:22-25; 8:2-14; 9:6-7; 17:17-18; 18:6-10,18-22; 19:17-21; 20:1-6; 21:4-12; 22:12-19; 23:21-26; 24:2-7; 25:3-9; 26:18-19; 27:1-10

4Q34 “is virtually identical to the tradition underlying the Masoretic Text in spelling practices, paragraph divisions, and content.” *The Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.1 p.199

4Q35 (Deuteronomy 1-2, 31, 33 in the Greek Septuagint)

4Q36

4Q37 (=Deuteronomy(j)) (includes Deuteronomy 37 and Exodus 12:43-13:5)

4Q38 (11 fragments of Deuteronomy 5, 11, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 32) These likely belong to two different manuscripts.

4Q39

4Q40

4Q41

4Q42

4Q43 (=4QDt(p)) contains Dt 6:4-11

4Q44 Deuteronomy 32:37-43 agrees with the Hebrew behind the Septuagint.

4Q45 92 verses

4Q46 palaeo-Deuteronomy (250-200 B.C.) Deuteronomy 26:14-15

4Q122 (Greek Septuagint)

5Q1 (c.200-165 B.C.) chapters 7, 8, start of 9.

6Q3 (a few letters of Deuteronomy 26:19)

11Q3 (=11QDeut) Deuteronomy 1:4-5

The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* p.436-438 says there are 25 copies, but it might not be counting the Septuagint fragments. *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.261 says there are 14 at least different manuscripts of Deuteronomy in cave 4 alone. A photograph of a Deuteronomy 5 on animal skins is in *The New International Bible Dictionary* p.583, and Deuteronomy 8:5-10 is on p.270.

**Many phylacteries and mezuzot** (worn on the forehead and arms respectively) of Exodus and Deuteronomy are among the Dead Sea Scrolls according to *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.33.

**The Nash Papyrus**, dated 150 B.C., contains the Ten Commandments combined from Exodus 20:2-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-6:4f. This was the oldest known Biblical text until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. A photograph of it is in the *New International Dictionary of the Bible* p.228.

**The Septuagint** is a Greek translation of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. According to *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* p.746, we have Septuagint fragments of Deuteronomy going back to the second century B.C.

*Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.34 says there are more than one hundred existing copies of the Greek of Deuteronomy 17-33. The oldest copy was from the second century B.C. (Papyrus Rylands 458 fragment B) contains Deuteronomy 25:1-3, and is in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, England. Another fragment of Deuteronomy 31:28-30 and Deuteronomy 32:1-7 is from the first century B.C. You can see pictures of these, along with more discussion, in *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.60-61. In the Freer Gallery in Washington is a copy of Deuteronomy and Joshua from the fifth century A.D. You can see a picture of one leaf, Deuteronomy 10:6-15 in *Greek Manuscripts of the Bible* p.84-85.

At **Masada** was found Mas1C containing Deuteronomy 33:17-21; 34:2-6

**Nahal Hever** has XHev/Se3 of Deuteronomy 9:5-6, 21-23

The **Wadi Murabba’at** site has preserved Deuteronomy 10:1-3; 11:2-3; 12:25-26; 14:29; 15:1 or 2, called Mur 2.

Overall, preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Masada, Nahal Hever, and wadi Murabba’at are the following verses from Deuteronomy: **1**:1-17,22-25,29-39,41,43-46; **2**:1-6,8,24-36; **3**:14-29; **4**:1,13-17,24-26,30-34,47-49; 5:1-33; **6**:1-11; 7:2-7,12-26; **8**:1-20; **9**:1-2,5-7,10-14,17-19,21-23,27-29; **10**:1-3,5-12,14-15; **11**:2-4,6-13,18,27-32; **12**:1-5,11-12,18-19,22,25-26,31; **13**:1-14,16,19; **14**:1-4,19-22,24-29; **15**:1-6,8-10,14-19; **16**:2-4,6-11,21-22; **17**:1-5,6?,7,12-20; **18**:1,6-10,18-22; **19**:2-3,8-21; **20**:1-19; **21**:4-12,16?,23; **22**:1-9,1-19; **23**:6-8,12-16,22-26; **24**:1-8,10-22; **25**:1-9,14-19; **26**:1-5,14-15,18-19; **27**:1-10,24-26; **28**:1-18,20,22-25,29-30,44-50,61,67-68; **29**:2-5,9-20,22-27; **30**:3-14,16-20; **31**:1-19,24-30; **32**:1-3,6-11,13-14,17-29,33-35,37-43; **33**:1-24,29; **34**:1-6,8?. See *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* vol.2 p.615 and *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* for more info.

**Papyri Fouad Inv. 266** is over one hundred fragments of parts of Deuteronomy 17-33 in Greek. It dates from the first century B.C. according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.34, 60. Among other parts, it contains Deuteronomy 31:28-30; 32:1-7

**Christian Bible manuscripts,** from about 350 A.D., contain the Old Testament Septuagint, including Deuteronomy. According to *The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* p.746, the Chester Beatty Papyrii (2nd-4th century A.D.) contain Deuteronomy. The **Freer Washington Codex** (4th/5th century) contains Deuteronomy 10:6-15.

**The Lucianic Recension** was a copy of the Septuagint made by Lucian, a presbyter and martyr (312 A.D.) from Antioch. He corrected the Greek grammar and style. We have the Lucianic recension preserved in the John Ryland Papyrus Greek 458 Deuteronomy 23:24-24:3; 25:1-3; 26:12,17-19, 28:31-33.

**Vaticanus** (325-350 A.D.) contains all of Deuteronomy

**Sinaiticus** (340-350 A.D.) contains leaves of Deuteronomy 3:8-4:21; 28:68-30:16.

**Alexandrinus** (c.450 A.D.) contains all of Deuteronomy

**Samaritans** made their own copy of the Torah in the second century B.C., though the earliest surviving Samaritan copies are from the Middle Ages. *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* p.125-126.

**A Syriac translation** of the Septuagint was made by Bishop Paul of Tella (616-617 A.D.), which we still have today, according to *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* p.35 (footnote).

**Early church writers** recognized Deuteronomy as a part of the Bible. See the next question for a complete list prior to Nicea.

**Q: Which early writers referred to Deuteronomy?**

A: Pre-Nicene writers who quoted or alluded to verses in Deuteronomy are:

**Clement of Rome** (96-98 A.D.) quotes Deuteronomy 13:8-9 in *1 Clement* ch.29 vol.1 p.12-13.

***Epistle of Barnabas*** (c.70-130 A.D.) ch.8 p.142 quotes Deuteronomy 10:16.

**Justin Martyr** (c.138-165 A.D.) quotes Deuteronomy 32:15 as “by Moses” in *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* ch.20 p.204. He also quotes from Deuteronomy 10:16 as by Moses in the same work ch.126 p.262

**Meleto/Melito of Sardis** (170-177/180 A.D.) listed Deuteronomy among the books of the Old Testament in his letter to Onesimus. *On Pascha* p.72. Preserved in *Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History* book 4 ch.26.

**Irenaeus of Lyons** (182-188 A.D.) quotes Deuteronomy 5:8 as “Moses said” *Irenaeus Against Heresies* book 3 ch.6.5 p.420.

**Clement of Alexandria** (193-217/220 A.D.) quotes from Deuteronomy in many places, including Deuteronomy 6:4 as by Moses in *Exhortation to the Heathen* ch.8 p.195 and the same verse in *The Stromata* (193-202 A.D.) book 5 ch.14 p.471.

**Tertullian** (198-220 A.D.) “To the following effect also, in Deuteronomy” and then quotes Deuteronomy 6:4,12,27; 12:2,3,30; 13:1,6,16; 27:15 *Scorpiace* ch.2 p.635

**Theodotus the probable Montanist** (ca.240 A.D.) quotes half of Deuteronomy 17:6 in *Excerpts of Theodotus* ch.13 p.44

**Hippolytus** (222-235/6 A.D.) quotes Dt 9:3 as by Moses. *Refutation of All Heresies* book 6 ch.27 p.88. He also discusses Dt 5;22 as “And Moses has not been silent on this point, when he says, that there are three words of God, ‘darkness, gloom, tempest, and added no more.” *Refutation of All Heresies* book 8 ch.1 p.118

**Origen** (240 A.D.) refers to Deuteronomy by name. *Commentary on the Song of Songs* book 3 ch.6 p.187

**Novatian** (250/254-256/7 A.D.) quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 as the “word of the law” in *On the Jewish Meats* ch.5 p.648

Novatian (250/254-256/7 A.D.) quotes Deuteronomy 32:8 as “Deuteronomy” in *Treatise Concerning the Trinity* ch.17 p.627

***Anonymous Treatise Against Novatian*** (250/4-256/7 A.D.) quotes Dt 1:17 as in Deuteronomy.

**Cyprian of Carthage** (c.246-258 A.D.) quotes from “Deuteronomy” in *Treatise 12* the third book18.

Cyprian of Carthage (c.246-258 A.D.) “In Isaiah … in the 117th Psalm … Also in Zechariah … Also in Deuteronomy: … Also in Jesus [Joshua] the son of Nave” *Treatises of Cyprian* Treatise 12 ch.2.16

**Gregory Thaumaturgus** (240-265 A.D.) quotes Deuteronomy 22:26,27 as in Deuteronomy. *Canonical Epistle* Canon 1 p.18.

**Dionysius of Alexandria** (246-256 A.D.) quotes Dt 19:14 in Epistle 7 to Philemon, a Presbyter p.102

**Dionysius of Rome** (259-269 A.D.) mentions “Moses in the great song of Deuteronomy” *Against the Sabellians* ch.2 p.365.

**Archelaus** (262-278 A.D.) refers to Deuteronomy 18:15 by Moses. *Disputation with Manes* ch.42 p.217

Victorinus of Petau (martyred 204 A.D.) alludes to Deuteronomy 32:8 as “the Law” *Commentary on the Apocalypse* from the Ninth Chapter 13,14 p.352.

**Methodius of Olympus and Patara** (270-311/312 A.D.) quotes from Deuteronomy 32:32,33 as by Moses. *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins* Discourse 5 p.327

**Lactantius** (c.303-c.325 A.D.) “Moses also says in Deuteronomy” and quotes Deuteronomy 28:66 in *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* ch.46 p.241

**After Nicea**, others who referred to Deuteronomy include:

**Eusebius of Caesarea** (318-339-340 A.D.)

**Aphrahat the Syrian** (337-345 A.D.)

**Hilary of Poitiers** (355-367/368 A.D.)

**Athanasius** (325-373 A.D.)

**Ephraem the Syrian** (350-378 A.D.)

**Basil of Cappadocia** (357-378/379 A.D.)

**Cyril of Jerusalem** (c.349-386 A.D.)

**Pacian of Barcelona** (342-379/392 A.D.) quotes Dt 13:6; 13:8-9 (Septuagint) as by “Moses” and “the Book of Deuteronomy” Letter 3 ch.17.1 p.58

**Didymus the Blind** (398 A.D.) quotes Dt 32:8 as in Deuteronomy. *Commentary on Zechariah* 11 p.272

***Syriac Book of Steps (Liber Graduum)*** (350-400 A.D.) quotes from Deuteronomy 27:24 as “said in the Law” Memra 22 ch.10 p.259. It also quotes from Deuteronomy 5:16-22; 6:4; and 32:15. It alludes to Deuteronomy 6:5; 19:14,21; 22:1; 32:4.

**Rufinus** (374-406 A.D.)

**John Chrysostom** (died 407 A.D.)

**Council of Carthage** (393-419 A.D.)

**Jerome** (373-420 A.D.) discusses the books of the Old Testament. He specifically discusses Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the Pentateuch, Job, Jesus son of Nave [Joshua], Judges, Ruth, Samuel Kings (2 books), twelve prophets, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,, Zechariah, Malachi, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Letter 53 ch.7-8 p.99-101.

The Pelagian **Theodore of Mopsuestia** (392-423/429 A.D.) refers to **Dt** 24:1-2. *Commentary on Malachi* ch.2 p.412. Refers to Dt 29:23. *Commentary on Hosea* ch.11 p.87

**Augustine of Hippo** (388-430 A.D)

**John Cassian** (419-430 A.D.)

**Theodoret of Cyrus** (423-458 A.D.).

**Q: In Dt, what are some of the translation differences between the Hebrew, the Greek Septuagint and other versions?**

A: Here are a few of them from the 959 verses in Deuteronomy. Except where noted the first phrase is the Masoretic text (MT) and the second the Septuagint (LXX).

**Dt 1:1** “Arabah” vs. “Red Sea” (One Septuagint manuscript, Targum, Vulgate)

**Dt 1:4** “in Edrei” vs. “and in Edrei” (Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

**Dt 1:8** “The Lord” vs. “I” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

Dt 2:5 “I will not give their land to you, even to a step of the sole of a foot, for I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.” vs. “I will not give you of their land even enough to set your foot upon, for I have given Mount Seir to the children of Esau as an inheritance.” (Septuagint)

Dt 2:8 and 10:6-7 are based on Num 20:17-18 and Num 33:31-38a in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Dt 2:37** “and all” vs. “even all / just as” (Septuagint, Targum)

**Dt 3:9 and Dt 4:48** “Sion” vs. “Siryon” (Septuagint) vs. “Sirion” (Syriac)

**Dt 3:12** “by the Arnon Gorge” vs. “on the rim of the Arnon Gorge”

**Dt 5:5** “word” vs. “words” (Dead Sea Scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, Targum)

**Dt 5:15** “Remember” (MT) vs. “And you shall remember” (Dead Sea Scrolls) (The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls p.112)

Dt 5:15 “Sabbath day” (MT, SP, LXX) vs. “Sabbath day to hallow it. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them and rested the seventh day; so the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.” (Dead sea scroll 4QDt41) (The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls p.112)

Dt 5:21 is immediately followed by Dt 27:2-7 in the Samaritan Pentateuch. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.937)

**Dt 8:4** “blisters” vs. “callouses” (Septuagint)

**Dt 9:24** “I have known” vs. “he has known” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

**Dt 9:28** “Lest the land” vs. “Lest the people of the land” (Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Dt 10:13** “Lord” vs. “Lord your God” (Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac)

**Dt 11:13** “my commandments” vs. “every commandment” (Septuagint)

**Dt 11:14** “I” vs. “he” (Samaritan Pentateuch, some Septuagint, Vulgate, a mezuzah quotation from the Dead Sea Scrolls)

**Dt 11:30** “oaks or terebinths” vs. “oak” (Septuagint, Syriac)

Dt 11:30 “Moriah” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “Moriah, opposite of Shechem” (Samaritan Pentateuch. See The Anchor Bible Dictionary vol.5 p.938)

Dt 12:5 “place where the LORD your God will choose” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “place where the LORD has chosen” (Samaritan Pentateuch)

Dt 12:14 “at the place the LORD will choose” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “at the place the LORD has chosen” (Samaritan Pentateuch. The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls p.95.)

**Dt 12:28** “command you” vs. “command you today” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac) (NRSV footnote says “today” is in the Greek, but Brenton’s Septuagint version does not show this.)

**Dt 13:6** “your mother’s son” vs. “your father’s son or your mother’s son” (Samaritan, Septuagint, Targum) (There is no change in meaning in this context)

**Dt 14:13** “black kite” vs. “black kite vulture/falcon” in the Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, and some Hebrew manuscripts.

**Dt 15:2** “exact it of his neighbor and his brother” (MT, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “exact it of his neighbor” (Septuagint) vs. “exact it” (4QDeut( c ))

**Dt 18:15,18-19** “…a prophet from among you, of your brothers. One like me – you shall listen to him… I shall raise up a prophet to them from among their brothers, like you; and I will put My words in his mouth: and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. And it shall be, whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it at his hand.” (Masoretic text) vs. “…a prophet of your brothers, like me; him shall you (plural) hear… I raise up to you a prophet of your brothers, like you; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them as I shall command him. And whatever words that prophet shall speak in my name, I will take vengeance on him.” (Septuagint) vs. “…a prophet like me from your brothers. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.” (Qumran 4QTest, Acts 3:22-23) (The Expositor’s Bible Commentary vol.9 p.299-300)

**Dt 18:19** “required it of him” (MT) vs. “take vengeance on him” (LXX, Eusebius of Caesarea)

**Dt 20:8** “officers” (MT, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint) vs. “judges” (4QDeut(k2)) The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible p.174

**Dt 20:8** “lest the heart of his brothers faint” (MT, Targum) vs. “lest he make his brother’s heart faint” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

**Dt 20:19** “man is the tree of the field” vs. “Are the trees of the field people” (one letter difference)

**Dt 23:2** “assembly of YHWH, even to the tenth generation shall none of his enter into the assembly of YHWH.” vs. “assembly of the Lord”

Dt 25:11 “his private parts” vs. “his flesh” (Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Dt 26:3** “declare today the Lord your God” vs. “declare today the Lord my God” (Septuagint)

Dt 27:4 “Mount Ebal” (MT, Septuagint) vs. “Mount Gerizim” (Samaritan Pentateuch and Old Latin/Italic) [The Samaritans likely changed this to improve their claim that Gerizim, not Jerusalem, was the mountain where they should worship.]

Dt 28:30 changes “grabbed his private parts” (*sgl*) to “grabbed his flesh” (*yshbn*) (Samaritan Pentateuch)

**Dt 28:11** “cattle … ground” (MT, some Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “g[round, … c[attle]” (4QDeut( c ), some Septuagint)

**Dt 29:10** “your leaders, your tribes, your elders” vs. “the heads of your tribes, your elders” (Septuagint according to Brenton) vs. “your tribes, your elders” (Syriac, Greek according to the NRSV footnote)

**Dt 29:11** “your children, your wives” (MT) vs. “your wives and your children” (Septuagint) vs. “your children, and [your] w[ives” (1QDeut(b) )The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible p.186

**Dt 30:9** “cattle … ground” (MT) vs. “ground … cattle” (4Deut(b), Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint) The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible p.187

**Dt 30:11** “far away” (MT) vs. “far away from you” (4QDeut(b), Septuagint) The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible p.187

**Dt 30:16** “that I am commanding” vs. “If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding” (Septuagint)

**Dt 30:28** “to us and our children” has special dots over it.

**Dt 31:1** “went and spoke” vs. “had finished speaking all” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 31:7** “You will go” vs. “You will bring” (Some Masoretic text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate)

Dt 32:6 “he repented” vs. “he forgave” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938)

**Dt 32:8** “He set up the bounds of the peoples, according to the number of the children/sons of Israel” (MT) vs. “he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God” (Septuagint, Dead Sea Scrolls, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Novatian, Victorinus of Petau) vs. “sons of God” (Dead Sea scroll 4Q37, Symmachus, Latin) vs. “sons of Adam” (KJV)

**Dt 32:10** “found him” vs. “sustained him” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:13** “he ate” vs. “fed him with” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac)

**Dt 32:15** “Jeshurun” vs. “Jacob ate his fill; Jeshurun” (Dead Sea scrolls, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:19** “saw it” vs. “saw it and was jealous” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** “nations” vs. “Heavens” (Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44, Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** (absent) (MT) vs. “Let all God’s angels worship him.” (Septuagint, Hebrews 1:6, and Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q), John Chrysostom (died 407 A.D.) *Homilies on Hebrews* Homily 4 no.2 p.382-383)

**Dt 32:43** “servants” vs. “children” (Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** (absent) vs. “he will repay those who hate him” (Dead Sea scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), Septuagint)

**Dt 32:43** “cleans his land his people” vs. “cleans the land for his people” Dead Sea Scroll 4Q44 (=4QDeut(q)), Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate)

**Dt 32:44** “Hoshea” (MT) vs. “Joshua” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate) Hosea was Joshua’s name prior to Moses renaming him.

**Dt 33:2** “upon/to them” vs. “upon/to us” (Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

Dt 33:2 “He came from Ribebot-kodesh” vs. “with him were myriads of holy ones” (Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

**Dt 33:8** “your Thummim” vs. “Give to Levi your Thummim” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint)

**Dt 33:12** “will dwell securely upon him” (MT) vs. “will dwell securely” (Samaritan Pentateuch) vs. “upon God” (Septuagint, Dead Sea scroll 4Q35)

**Dt 33:17** “His firstborn bull” vs. “a firstborn bull” (Dead Sea scrolls, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate)

Dt 34:10 “there arose not again a prophet like Moses in Israel vs. “there will not arise again” (Samaritan Pentateuch) (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5 p.938)

Bibliography for this question: The Hebrew translation is from Jay P. Green’s *Literal Translation* and the Septuagint rendering is from Sir Lancelot C.L. Brenton’s translation of *The Septuagint : Greek and English*. (Some Greek translations were from various Bible footnotes too.) *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, *General Introduction to the Bible*, *Mystery and Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* p.151-152, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* vol.5, and the footnotes in the NASB, NIV, NKJV, and NRSV Bibles also were used.

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