

Bible Questions And Answers

'Question. What does rising from the dead mean?' (Mark 9:10).

Answer: It means living again in an immortal body after this mortal body dies (1 Corinthians 15:53). Reincarnation does not exist. We do not ever come back to earth. After we die we then wait for our judgement (Hebrews 9:27). Jesus was the first Person to ever to rise from the dead. 'Jesus has been raised from the dead. He became the Firstfruits of those who are dead. Since death came by man (Adam) the resurrection of the dead also came by Man (Jesus). As in Adam all people die so in Jesus all believers will be made alive (again) but each in his own order. Jesus the Firstfruits, then those who belong to Jesus will rise at His (second) coming' (1 Corinthians 15:20 to 23). Sometime in the future all humans will rise from the dead (Daniel 12:2). The righteous who accepted Jesus and were forgiven and who walked faithfully with God while they were on this earth will go to heaven and will be with the Lord forever. Only the work God gave them to do on earth will be judged and we will be rewarded accordingly (Revelation 20:12). People who deny Jesus, who turn away from God, mock Him, ignore what God has had written in the Bible will rise again but they will be judged according to their sin and will be sent to eternal damnation called the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20:13 to 15).

There are many questions about what is written in the Bible but before we ask any questions we need to look at the way life was in the time of question. Life has changed dramatically over the centuries. Even the apostles asked questions so it is good for us to ask questions about the Bible because that is how we learn. Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from and about Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:29 & 30).

Q: Where did Cain find his wife if there was only Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel and Seth?

A: Adam and Eve lived for hundreds of years and had many children although only those three sons were named in the Bible. 'Cain knew his wife, she conceived and gave birth to Enoch' (Genesis 4:17). What is not mentioned up to that point, are the dozens of children Adam and Eve had. Only later the Bible explains that fact. 'The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years and he became the father of many sons and daughters' (Genesis 5:4). Cain's wife could have been his younger sister or a niece. Incest was normal then as a necessity for the procreation of humanity but it was later prohibited in the Law of Moses (Leviticus 18:6 to 18). All of their children grew up and had many offspring. The human race multiplied rapidly so by the time Cain married, there could easily have been as many as 30,000 of Adam and Eve's descendants. Incest continued long after Noah's flood. Abraham married his half-sister Sarai/Sarah (Genesis 20:12). Isaac married his first cousin Rebekah (Genesis 24:15). Jacob married his two cousins Rachel and Leah (Genesis 28:2 & 5; 29:13 & 16). Moses' father Amram, married his Auntie Jochebed (Exodus 6:20).

Q: How did anything survive when there was no rain?

A: 'God had not caused rain to fall on the ground ... but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground' (Genesis 2:5 & 6). When God created the earth He made it to be a perfect environment so rain was not needed. The mist was obviously so heavy it gave the earth enough moisture to keep everything alive. Plus, the perfect environment meant the sun was never too hot. Heat waves as we know them never happened. Adam's disobedience and sin brought curses to the earth that eventually ruined that initial perfection. Before Noah's flood the earth was perfect but Adam's sin brought death to the earth. There was absolutely no death on earth until after Adam sinned. That was only about seven thousand years ago so it is impossible for dinosaurs or any fossil to be older than this. Only after Adam sinned, did people and animals begin to die. Because the earth's environment was perfect, people lived for hundreds of years, the birth rate was rapid, disease and the illnesses we have today were non-existent. Sin, violence and wickedness became rampant on the perfect earth so God destroyed the entire earth with the flood. The water covered the mountains so no air-breathing creatures survived (Genesis 7:19 to 23). Everything on dry land died but the sea creatures remained in the water and many survived. That was the time when there were mass extinctions of various types of animals including dinosaurs and mega fauna. Only eight people survived the worldwide deluge; Noah, his wife, their three sons and their three daughters-in-law. The only air-breathing animals to survive were those on the Ark. The largest animal species like dinosaurs, elephants and mammoths would have been very young and small when they entered the Ark. After the worldwide flood, the earth was no longer perfect. The earth itself shifted off its normal axis and weather patterns changed and some became extreme. Although Noah had two pairs of some species of animal and seven pairs of other types (Genesis 7:2 & 3), many would have died out. From Shem, Ham, Japheth and their wives, we have the earth's entire population. 'These three were the sons of Noah and from these three the whole earth was populated' (Genesis 9:19). 'God made from one blood every nation of mankind to dwell on all the surface of the earth' (Acts 17:26). From these three couples we have the three races on earth, white skinned Caucasians (from Shem), dark skinned Negroids (from Ham) and Asians (from Japheth). Since we are all related, we have no right to be racist. Every person on earth would be related to Noah and his unnamed wife

we will call, Mrs Noah, and recent DNA studies have confirmed we all have one common ancestor. Some scientists say that common ancestor was a woman, some say it was a man. Both are correct. We all came from Noah and Mrs Noah. It was not until after Noah's flood when illness and disease increased and thus shortened the life span of humanity. Nothing ate meat before Noah's flood. Before the flood, all animals were herbivorous.

Q: Who was the grandfather of Jesus? Was he Heli or Jacob?

A: 'Jacob became the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary from whom was born Jesus the Messiah' (Matthew 1:16). 'Jesus was about thirty years old when He began to teach. He was the supposed Son of Joseph, the son of Heli' (Luke 3:23). To understand how both Jacob and Heli were named as the father of Joseph, we need to understand the culture of the day. A son-in-law or a daughter-in-law was accepted as the adult child of the parents-in-law. Heli was actually Mary's father, Joseph's father-in-law. Jacob was Joseph's natural father. Both men were descendents of David to make very sure Jesus could be called the Son of David, even though Joseph was the stepfather of Jesus, because as we all know, Jesus is the Son of God. 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God' (Mark 1:1).

Q: How did Judas really die? Did he hang himself or did he fall, causing a stomach wound that killed him?

A: Both actually. He hanged himself out of shame for betraying the Messiah (Matthew 27:5) then as a consequence of hanging himself, he fell from the tree, landed head first on the ground then his innards fell from his ruptured stomach (Acts 1:18).

Q: Why do Proverbs say not to answer a fool according to his foolishness then the next verse says to do so?

A: 'Do not answer a fool according to his folly lest you also be like him. Answer a fool according to his folly lest he be wise in his own eyes' (Proverbs 26:4 & 5). When we look at this from the Hebrew point of view, it reads, 'Do not answer a fool in the way of his folly or you will lower yourself to his level, but answer a fool (wisely) as his folly deserves so he will not think he is wise.' In other words, use the Lord's wisdom and common sense when answering a fool.

Q: Jesus said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is smaller than all seeds but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree so the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches" (Matthew 13:31 & 32).

A: Many people are confused and have stumbled over these verses referring to the mustard seed growing up to be the largest tree because there are many types of tree that are larger than the mustard tree. Jesus meant the tiniest of seeds, the mustard seed, grows into the largest of all herbs. There is no other herb (or condiment) plant that grows larger than the mustard tree, especially the black mustard plant (*Brassica nigra*) that grows in Israel to a great height, but its seeds are very tiny and grow in long black pods. The pods grow out from bright yellow edible flowers. The mustard tree is not actually the largest tree it is the largest herb-growing tree. We think of herbs being small plants but the mustard herb can grow huge. The seeds are tiny – and delicious to eat. Jesus used the reference to the tree to show us, if we have even the tiniest bit of faith – the size of a mustard seed, then our faith can grow so we can reap the rewards of something very big – like the tree. Jesus often used nature to give us an image or a mental picture to help us in our faith.

Q: Was Apostle Luke Jewish or a Gentile?

A: He was Jewish or at least had one Jewish parent. He was a well educated, well spoken, well written man who became a physician (Colossians 4:14). He wrote two very long letters that became the Book of Luke and the Book of Acts to inform Theophilus about the events surrounding the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus and the very Spiritual events that happened afterwards (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Luke was an eyewitness to most of these events (Luke 1:1 & 2), he was very busy spreading the Gospel and he ministered to Paul when he was in prison (2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24). Many people believe he was a Gentile but he spoke Hebrew, his knowledge of Judaism and his knowledge of the fulfilment of prophecies concerning the coming of Jesus and his commitment to 'his' people could only mean he was Jewish. Jesus had the twelve apostles but He also had seventy other Jewish disciples (Luke 10:1) plus many other disciples (Luke 7:11) to help with His ministry and since Luke was an eyewitness to the events during Jesus' ministry, that also shows he was Jewish. Remember, Jesus went only to the 'lost sheep' in Israel (Matthew 15:24). The apostles and disciples went to the Gentiles after Jesus died (Acts 11:18).

Q: Did the Centurion himself come to Jesus or did he send his friends?

A: 'A centurion came to Jesus asking Him, "Lord, my servant lies in the house paralysed and grievously tormented." Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof. Just say the word and my servant will be healed ... When Jesus heard that He marvelled and said, "Truly I tell you, I have not found so great a faith, not even in Israel." ... Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way. Let it be done for you as you have believed." His servant was healed in that same hour' (Matthew 8:5 to 13). 'A certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him was sick and at the point of

death. When he heard about Jesus, he sent to Him elders of the Jews, asking Him to come and save his servant. When they came to Jesus they begged Him earnestly ... Jesus went with them. When He was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him saying, "Lord do not trouble Yourself for I am not worthy for You to come under my roof and I do not think myself worthy to come to You but say the word and my servant will be healed." ... When Jesus heard these words He marvelled and said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel." Those friends who were sent returned to the house and found the servant who had been sick was now healed' (Luke 7:2 to 10). The centurion first sent Jewish elders to Jesus, then as Jesus neared the centurion's house, the centurion then send his friends to represent him on behalf of the ill servant. The Gentile centurion felt he was not worthy to meet the Jewish Messiah personally so that would explain why he did not approach Jesus Himself. Matthew's description of the story shows us a man who has the authority to delegate others to do his work, as though he himself was doing it. This entire story shows us, no matter who is ill or where they are, we can still ask for the Lord's healing without us having to be present.

Q: What happened to Enoch and Elijah?

A: 'Enoch lived three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God and he was not for God took him' (Genesis 5:23 & 24). This Enoch was not Cain's son but a righteous man from Seth's bloodline (Genesis 5:7 to 22). No flesh and blood can go to heaven so that means in the blink of an eye, Enoch was transformed from his mortal body into his immortal, eternal body. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God ... I tell you a mystery. We will not all die but we will all be changed in a moment, in the blink of an eye ... we will all be changed ... this mortal body will put on immortality' (1 Corinthians 15:50 to 53). The same thing happened to Elijah in front of Elisha who was clearly very startled. Elijah did not die but was taken straight to heaven. 'As Elijah and Elisha talked, behold a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared which parted them and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha saw it and cried out, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" Elisha saw Elijah no more' (2 Kings 2:11 & 12).

Q: Why do birds and some animals like whales, sing?

A: The song or sounds of animals would sometimes be for communication between themselves but sometimes their songs are to express joy. The Scriptures say all creation praises the Lord. 'The pastures are covered with flocks ... They shout for joy! They also sing' (Psalm 65:13). 'The birds of the sky nest by the waters, they sing among the branches' (Psalm 104:12). 'Praise Yah! ... Praise Him sun and moon! Praise Him all you shining stars! ... Praise God from the earth you great sea creatures ... Praise Him wild animals and all livestock, small creatures and flying birds. Let them praise the name of God for His name alone is exalted. His glory is above the earth and the heavens' (Psalm 148:3, 7, 10 & 13).

Q: Nothing is impossible for God so can He sin?

A: God is perfect so no, He cannot sin and He has no desire to sin (James 1:13). The verse that reads, 'With God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26), is referring to mankind. The whole Scripture in this context reads, 'Jesus said to His disciples, "Most certainly I say to you, a rich man will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven with great difficulty. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."' When the disciples heard it they were exceedingly astonished saying, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus answered, "With men this is impossible but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:23 to 26). Jesus was referring to salvation, saying it is impossible for anyone to save their soul with riches but with God, Spiritual salvation is possible. Jesus came to save our souls not our mortal bodies. There are people who believe they can be saved by giving a lot of money to their church. That concept is wrong. The only way of salvation is by accepting God's way and His way is through Jesus. 'Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"' (John 14:6). Jesus was born as a human baby and had the form of a man but He had no sin nature within Him making it possible to resist all temptation (1 Peter 2:22). God can do anything and He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3). For example, He chose to speak this world into existence. Humans cannot do that. God is holy, perfect and pure, He knows all things and is therefore unable to do wrong. Only Jesus, Who was without sin could save us from our sins. When Jesus was tortured before He was crucified then bled to death, our sins were all transferred onto His body, taking our eternal judgement on Himself to give us the chance of salvation.

Q: If the earth is only about seven thousands years old, what was God doing before He created our universe?

A: God is the beginning and the end of everything (Revelation 22:13). He has always existed. God created all things including our concept of time, which was created as part of our universe and God exists way outside of our finite time. However, when we read some of the verses in the Bible we can see God was busy creating Spiritual, not earthly beings long before He created earth and mankind. Seraphim, Cherubim and angels are all Spiritual beings that live outside of our universe. They have immortal bodies, not bodies of flesh and blood. There are also animal-like creatures we do not have on earth. 'The armies (of angels) which are in heaven followed Jesus on white horses clothed in white, pure, fine linen' (Revelation 19:14). Those

armies of angels rode horses in heaven. 'The first creature was like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like a man and the fourth was like a flying eagle' (Revelation 4:7). There are animal-like creatures in heaven Apostle John was trying to describe, likening them to the animals he was familiar with, like horses and eagles. There are other creatures we are not familiar with, like the cherubim having wheels instead of legs or four faces (Ezekiel 1:1 to 28) and these, 'The four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within' (Revelation 4:8). They are very exciting creatures and the righteous who are faithful to God right to the end are the ones who will be blessed when we see these wonderful creations in heaven.

Q: Will people become angels when we are in heaven?

A: No. Angels are an entirely different creation. Angels were created with immortal bodies, people were created with mortal bodies. Only after the death of our mortal body can we receive an immortal body. Holy angels who live in heaven will always be angels; humans who live righteously on earth and end up in heaven will always be the redeemed race of human people. Holy angels are God's messengers sent to help righteous people in our time of need (Psalm 91:11 & 12). During the building of the early church, holy angels were actively involved and helped the apostles enormously, as we can read in several places throughout the New Testament. Those holy angels were very much like people. Some people invited holy angels to have dinner with them without knowing they had invited holy angels, not people (Hebrews 13:2). God had already decided to create mankind long before He actually began creating the earth for us to dwell or 'before the foundation of the earth' (Hebrews 1:10). All mankind were created to enjoy a relationship with God but sadly, most people will never experience the love of God because they choose to turn away from Him. 'God chose us in Jesus before the foundation of the world, (before the earth was created) so we would be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus to Himself according to the good pleasure of His desire, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He freely bestowed favour on us in the Beloved, in Whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of His grace' (Ephesians 1:4 to 7). 'Worthy are You our Lord and God the Holy One, to receive the glory, the honour and the power, for You created all things and because of Your desire they exist and were created' (Revelation 4:11).

Q: We know God hears our prayers, but does He listen to our conversations?

A: Yes, He listens to everything we say and more than that, He has everything we say recorded in His judgement books. 'Those who feared the Lord spoke one with another and God listened and heard, and a book of memory was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and who honoured His name' (Malachi 3:16). Those books are records for the righteous people who honour God with what they say and they will be rewarded on Judgement Day for their faithfulness to Him. God also listens to conversations wicked people say about Him and those conversations are also recorded so those ungodly people will be judged according to what they say. Jesus said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man speaks out of his good treasure and brings out (speaks about) good things. The evil man speaks out of his evil treasure and brings out (speaks about) evil things. I tell you, men (and women) will have to give an account on Judgement Day for every idle word they speak. By your own words you will be justified and by your own words you will be condemned" (Matthew 12:34 to 37). 'A fool's mouth is his own destruction and his lips are a snare to his soul' (Proverbs 18:7). 'The one who brings gossip betrays a confidence but the one who is of a trustworthy Spirit is one who keeps a secret' (Proverbs 11:13). 'The words of a gossip are like dainty morsels; they go down into a person's innermost parts' (Proverbs 18:8). 'Some people learn to be idle (lazy), going about from house to house. Not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not' (1 Timothy 5:13). 'What enters into the mouth (food) does not defile the person, but what proceeds out of the mouth (what they say) is what defiles the person' (Matthew 15:11). 'Look carefully lest there be any one who falls short of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness spring up and trouble you and many could be defiled by it' (Hebrews 12:15).

Q: Which commandment is the greatest of all?

A: The greatest commandment is, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One. You will love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. The second commandment is this, 'You will love your neighbour as much as you love yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these ... God is One, and there is none other but He. Love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, with all the strength and love your neighbour as yourself, is more important than all offerings and sacrifices' (Mark 12:28 to 33).

Amen and God bless you.

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