

Cain's Wife

Then the LORD replied to him, "In that case, whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." And He placed a mark on Cain so that whoever found him would not kill him. Then Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain knew his wife intimately, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son. – Genesis 4:15-17 HCSB



¹For theology's sake, let's be very clear. Adam was the first man² and it was through him³ that the "yetzer", the inherent tendency to sin, came upon all humans.⁴ Adam was fabricated from the dust of the earth,⁵ not from pre-existing biological matter. Also, Eve was the first woman. She is described as "the mother of all the living."⁶ So it's pretty evident, biblically speaking, that all humans descend from a common ancestry that originated somewhere in north-east Africa.⁷ Not only is this doctrinally important to understand due to the issue of man's inherent sin and the necessity of a Messiah to save us, but even to deal with such issues as racism and bigotry.

However, it does raise the issue of incest. Since the Bible teaches that all humans came from this first couple, it implies that their first generation of children was necessarily sexually intimate in order to have a second generation.

We do not know for sure how long they were in the Garden before they fell, but they were not there long enough to have children. Remember God's first command to them was to "be fruitful and multiply" and having perfect bodies,⁸ there would have been no delay in the conception process. Not only was Cain the first one mentioned,⁹ but if they had children while in the Garden, it would have been unfair to those children to be kicked out for something they did not do. Besides, though Adam gave Eve her name because she was to become the mother of all living, it doesn't say he had sex with her until after the fall.¹⁰ So I think that Adam and Eve fell almost immediately, maybe even the very first day!

Though only Cain, Abel and Seth are named, Adam did have many other children.¹¹ Even before Seth was named, 130 years had passed,¹² allowing room for many children, each of which would have had their own children. The taboos against incest did not arise until much later, after genetic defects began to accumulate¹³ necessitating them.¹⁴ You also need to take into account that people married much younger back then, in most cases as young as 14, which might explain Cain's immature response and God's seeming lenience.¹⁵ Since Adam's perfect body and near perfect environment allowed him to live to be 930 years old, and due to the wonders of exponential growth, it's safe to say that Cain had lots of women to choose from.

¹ Illumination from a medieval French manuscript depicting Cain's murder of Abel

² 1 Corinthians 15:45

³ Romans 5:12

⁴ Romans 3:23

⁵ Genesis 2:7

⁶ Genesis 3:20

⁷ Genesis 2:8-14

⁸ Genesis 1:31

⁹ Genesis 4:1

¹⁰ Genesis 4:1

¹¹ Genesis 5:4

¹² Genesis 5:3

¹³ Romans 3:23; 6:23; 8:22

¹⁴ Leviticus 18-20

¹⁵ Genesis 4:13-15