

QUESTION: Where did Cain get his wife?

ANSWER: By the time Cain ran away after killing Abel, a lot of time had passed since Adam and Eve first began having children. Cain would have married a sister, niece or grand-niece, most likely, although possibly even a great-grand-niece. Genesis 4:16 says he went into the land of Nod, east of Eden, so there must have been enough people living on the earth by then to populate a "land" and give it a name.

- **Genesis 4:2-3** "And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And **in process of time** it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord."
- **Genesis 1:28** "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it....'"

Notice how much time must have passed just in Genesis 4:2. Obviously, Abel didn't just pop out of Eve's womb and become a "keeper of sheep" overnight - he would have had to grow to adulthood. Then, in verse 3, it says "in the process of time," so we know that even more time has passed. How old Cain and Abel were when all this happened, is unknown, but we know that their brother Seth was born some time after the death of Abel, and Genesis 5:3 tells us that **Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born**. Cain, Abel, and Seth are the only children of Adam and Eve that are **named** in the Bible, but we know they had other "sons and daughters" (Gen. 5:4). Genesis 4:17 tells us that Cain had sex with his wife, and she conceived a son, but it doesn't tell us at what point of time in Cain's life he met and married her. God had given Adam and Eve a commandment to multiply and fill the earth, and their children would have begun multiplying, and THEIR children multiplying, until Cain would have had many women to choose from in selecting a wife.

A related question then is this: was it permissible to marry your sister or niece in the beginning? What about the laws of God against incest? The answer is that the laws of God against incest (having sex with a close relative) were not given until the time of Moses, over 2,000 years after Adam and Eve. Obviously, if God told Adam and Eve to multiply and fill the earth with people, He would not have told them to do something that was wrong. Even at the time of Abraham, it was okay to marry a sister, as Abraham himself married Sarah, his half-sister (Genesis 20:12). God created Adam and Eve in a perfect world, without sickness and disease. However, by the time of Moses, the effects of sin, the curse that came upon the whole earth, had produced so many diseases that it was not wise for people to intermarry and have children with any relatives closer than cousins. Nowadays, even marrying a cousin may cause problems, and produce children with hereditary diseases, although it is not forbidden.