
Study Series: Genesis

Questions about Genesis 1.1—11.25

1. Why do you think the first three chapters of Genesis were written? What beliefs or perspectives are being passed on?
2. How does the Bible's description of creation fit with modern theories about how the world began? Do you see any conflicts between the two? Why or why not?
3. From the story in chapter 3, what would you say "sin" is? What effects of human sin do you see in the world today?
4. How would you answer Cain's question in 4.9?
5. The first eleven chapters of Genesis include a number of family lists (genealogies). Why do you think these lists are included?
6. Why did God send a flood to destroy the earth and its people? (6.4-7,11-13) Why was Noah chosen to build the boat? What promise did God make to Noah after the floodwaters went down? (8.21; 9.9-11) What do you make of the existence of a flood story in the writings of a number of ancient peoples?
7. Why did the people try to build the tower at Babel? (11.1-4) How did God respond to the tower building? Why? If God created human beings "to be like himself" (1.27), what was wrong with building a tower that got the people "closer" to God in the heavens?
8. What is your overall impression of the first eleven chapters of Genesis? How would you describe the purpose of Genesis so far?

Study Series: Genesis

Questions about Genesis 11.26—23.20

1. What are the three main promises God made to Abraham and his descendants? (12.1-3; 15.5-7; 17.1-8) What were Abraham and his descendants expected to do in order to hold up their part of the agreement with God? (17.9-14)
2. Who were Ishmael and Isaac? (16.1-16; 21.9-21) Why do you think Isaac was given a name similar to the word for laughter? (18.10-15; 21.1-7) Why is Isaac sometimes called “the child of the promise”?
3. How did God test Abraham? How did he hold up to the test, and what happened as a result of Abraham’s actions? (22.1-18) What might it be like to face such a test?
4. Why do you think the writer chose to focus on the story of Abraham right after finishing the accounts of the creation and the destruction of the flood?
5. See Romans 4.1-25; Hebrews 11.11-18; James 2.20-23. How do these New Testament writers interpret Abraham’s actions?

Study Series: Genesis

Questions about Genesis 24.1—36.43

1. According to the Abraham's servant, why was the servant successful in finding a wife for Isaac? (Gen 24, especially 24.42-48) What can we learn about faith from the story?
2. From the time they were in their mother's womb, Isaac's sons, Esau and Jacob, were rivals. What were the main reasons for this rivalry? (25.19-34) What role did Rebekah play in their rivalry? (27.1-41) Name instances where this rivalry was played out.
3. Why couldn't Isaac take back the blessing of the first-born that he mistakenly gave to Jacob? (27.30-33) In your opinion, do spoken promises have such power today? Why or why not?
4. What promise did Jacob receive at Bethel while he was dreaming? (28.10-15; see also 35.9-15) What did Jacob promise God in return? (28.20-22)
5. Who was Laban and how did he trick Jacob? (29.1-30) How did Jacob trick Laban in return? (30.25-43)
6. Jacob's name was changed to what? Where did this happen? (32.22-30; 35.9-11) Why is this important for the history of God's people, the descendants of Abraham?
7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement. "God's purposes are carried out by people who sometimes act in sneaky and dishonorable ways." Explain, using examples from Genesis.
8. These chapters show us much about personal, family, social, business, and religious life at the time of Abraham and Isaac. What strikes you as most different from our own life and culture? Do you think people lived "closer" to God then? Explain.

Study Series: Genesis

Questions about Genesis 37.1—50.26

1. Who was Joseph and what were his dreams? (37.19) How did Joseph's brothers react to his dreams? Why? What did they do to Joseph? (37.10-34)
2. What responsibilities did Potiphar give to Joseph at first? Why? (39.1-6) How did Joseph end up in jail, and how did this bad situation turn out for the best for Joseph? (39.7—41.57)
3. How was Joseph able to interpret the true meaning of dreams? (40.8; 41.15,16,28, 37-39)
4. What brought Joseph's brothers to Egypt? Describe their first meeting. What did Joseph tell them to do? (42.1-24)
5. When Joseph finally revealed who he was to his brothers, how did he explain their earlier evil action against him? (45.4-8; 50.20)
6. Compare Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim (48.1-19) to Isaac's earlier blessing of Jacob and his brother Esau (27.1-40). How were the situations similar? Explain how Joseph's sons each became an ancestor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, when Jacob (Israel) already had twelve sons of his own.
7. Compare Genesis 50.20 to Romans 8.28. How does God bring good results out of bad situations? What examples can you think of?
8. What is the overall message of the story of Joseph in the Bible?