

NOTES AND QUESTIONS ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS

CHAPTERS 5-11 - MULTIPLICATION, SUBTRACTION AND A NEW BEGINNING

Just as chapters one and two reveal the character and work of God, so chapters three and four show the character and techniques of the Devil, and the nature and behaviour of our first ancestors. The serpent is Satan.(Rev.12:9) His approach to Eve is first to cast doubt on God's word, 'Has God said...?',(3:1) then to deny God's word, 'You surely shall not die.'(3:3) and finally to offer a credible alternative, 'You will be like God...' (3:5) He used the same technique with Jesus.(Matt.4, Luke 4). He uses the same technique on us.

Temptation was attractive because the fruit was, 'good for food',(3:6) it appealed to an appetite, 'a delight to the eyes', it looked good, and 'desirable to make one wise', it appealed to man's pride. It is still attractive for the same reasons, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life'.(I Jn.2:16)

Adam and Eve immediately became self-conscious; they hid from God. They were self-sufficient; they covered themselves with fig leaves. They were self-justifying; they blamed each other or the Devil. We have done the same ever since. Note the word 'I' coming 4 times in 3:10, self in the centre of the mind, the emotions and the will.

There were immediate and long term consequences. For the Devil the effect was humiliation and eventually his defeat by Jesus Christ on the cross.(3:15) For the woman the effect was pain in childbirth and male domination.(3:16) For the man the effect was hard, frustrating labour and eventual death just as God had warned.(3:19)

At the same time as God was spelling out the effects of man's failure, God was already outlining His solution. He promised the cross in 3:15, illustrated it in 3:21 with the animal skins, and provided the first altar to foreshadow it in 3:24.

Chapter four tells of the first murder, the reasons for it and the simple choice before man. Abel showed faith in action by coming to God, God's way.(Heb.11:4) Cain showed religion in action by trying to come to God his way. When God refused to accept his best, he showed that he was a son of Adam, self-conscious, self-sufficient, and self-justifying – and a murderer.

Seven generations later Cain's descendant showed the same behaviour for the same reasons. But other people were already 'calling on the name of the Lord'.(4:26)

So far we have seen God's superb and loving plan for His universe and for man in chapters one and two, and the tragic choice by man in chapter three to be independent of God with its consequence in chapters 3 and 4. Already God was providing the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. In one sense the rest of the Bible is simply an expansion of these opening events. The purpose of salvation is to restore the original plan. Faith in Christ is the attitude that lets God do this.

Chapter five spans over 1600 years of man's history. Given such ideal conditions and long lives, families may have been very large and therefore a population of millions reached in quite a short time. This chapter gives us only a few clues to what that world was like. From our point of view what really matters is what was happening spiritually.

Review your previous section titles to see how further understanding has developed your thinking. My suggestion for this next portion is that we divide it chapter by chapter, that is 5,6,7,8,9,10,11. Please as always read it thoroughly several times before you start on the questions

Section 1 – chap.5

Q.1 What conclusion can we draw from comparing 1:26 and 5:3? How can we extend that understanding to the generations that followed? Imagining that we had lived in those days, what would have been the spiritual choices open to us?

Q.2 What was the secret of Enoch's walk with God?(Heb.11:5,6; Jude 14) Enoch means 'teacher'. Was he? If so what did he teach? Why did God not allow him to die naturally? What does his life teach us?

Q.3 The name Noah means 'rest'. Did he? In what way might his father's understanding of rest when he named him have been different from God's? How are we as Christians to rest?(Matt.11:28,29; Heb:4:1)

Section 2 – chap.6

Q.4 What comparisons can we draw between the time of Noah before the flood, the present time and the time before Christ returns?(Lk.17:26,27; II Pet.3:3-8) How could Noah 'find favour in the eyes of the Lord' in those days, in the light of Rom.5:12?

Q.5 What were the dimensions of the ark? What do you think of the design of the ark? What does the ark picture to us?(I Pet.3:18-22) What else did Noah do apart from building a family yacht? With what result?(II Pet.2:5)

Section 3 – chap.7

Q.6 How long did the flood last? How extensive was it? What would have been the practical problems facing Noah in running his floating zoo? How did he overcome them?(Heb.11:7)

Section 4 – chap.8

Q.7 How was Noah's discovery of and beginning in the new world after the flood comparable to the start of our new life in Christ? What was the role of the dove?(Lk.3:22)

Section 5 – chap.9

Q.8 Compare God's commands to Noah after the flood with His first commands to man in Genesis 1. Has He given us the same instructions? How could a great man of God get drunk? Why should Ham not have seen his father naked? What basis for modesty does this story suggest to us?

Section 6 – chap.10

Q.9 What is the point of genealogies? What information does this chapter give us about the origin of tribes and nations that enter into Israel's history in later years? What can we infer about Nimrod's relationship with God?

Section 7 – chap.11

Q.10 What was wrong with building a 'tower whose top will reach into heaven'? Who else in the Bible made the same kind of mistake? How do we do the same? How do we today suffer from breakdowns in communication? How did God reverse this process in the New Testament? How does He promise to do this for the Christian?(Zeph.3:9; Acts 2:1-11; Eph.2:11-22)

Q.11 What damaging practical effect would people speaking many languages have on a complex urban civilisation? How does this story provide a good explanation for the dispersal of the human race worldwide?