

**Study Guide for sections of the
Commentary on Genesis, vols.
1 and 2, by John Calvin**

**Extra Reading for the course:
"The Pentateuch"**

ACADEMIC
PACKET

**RESOURCES FOR GROUPS
USING THE ACADEMIC PACKETS**



**Read John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis, volumes 1 and 2*
(Chapters 1-25 of Genesis)**

Review questions:

CHAPTER 1

1. What does Calvin say about the theory that the use of the plural noun Elohim clearly refers to the triune nature of God?
2. How does Calvin understand the meaning of the phrase "without form and void" (in Hebrew: tohu and bohu) in Genesis 1:2?
3. What is the significance of the fact that light and darkness preceded the creation of the sun and the moon, according to Calvin?
4. Does Calvin believe that the whole work of creation was completed in a moment?
5. How does Calvin understand the word "firmament" (in Hebrew: rakia) in Genesis 1:6?
6. What is Calvin's view of the meaning of the "image of God" in man?
7. What is Calvin's view of which aspects of man were affected by the Fall?

CHAPTER 2

1. According to Calvin, what does it mean that God "rested" on the seventh day?
2. How does Calvin interpret the statement in Genesis 2:7, that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"?
3. According to Calvin, what was the significance of forbidding man to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?
4. What did God say was "not good" after he had created man?
5. What is Calvin's understanding of the main reason God created woman?
6. How does Calvin understand the significance of the fact that God brought the woman to man?
7. What does Calvin believe is strictly prohibited by the statement: "They shall be one flesh."?

CHAPTER 3

1. How does Calvin explain the fact that the serpent was evil? Was he always evil? If not, how did he become evil?
2. According to Calvin, why would a good God permit Adam to be tempted?
3. Does Calvin believe that man sinned by his own free choice?
4. What was the consequence of Adam's eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?
5. What does Satan say will happen when they eat from the tree God has forbidden?

6. What important doctrine did Pelagius deny?
7. How does Calvin interpret the promise of Genesis 3:15?
8. After man was deceived by the serpent, what happened to the image of God in which man was formed, according to Calvin?
9. How did Adam and Eve's sin affect mankind, according to Calvin?
10. According to Calvin, why did God not allow Adam and Eve access to eat of the Tree of Life after the Fall?

CHAPTER 4

1. What did Cain bring as an offering to the Lord?
2. Why did God look with greater favor on Abel's offering, according to Calvin?
3. How does Calvin understand the statement: "At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord."?

CHAPTER 5

1. How does Calvin describe the nature of Seth, the son of Adam?
2. According to Calvin, what was taught by the fact that Enoch went to be with God without dying?

CHAPTER 6

1. How does God describe humanity in the sixth chapter of Genesis?
2. How are the thoughts of man described for us in the sixth chapter of Genesis?
3. How does Calvin understand the statement that God "repented" for making man on the earth?
4. According to Calvin, who were the "giants" (nephilim) mentioned in Genesis

CHAPTER 7

1. Noah found _____ in the eyes of the Lord.
2. What did God intend to destroy in the Great Flood, according to Genesis 7:4?
3. With what does Calvin compare the Ark of Noah?

CHAPTER 8

1. What command that was given to Adam is restated to Noah and his sons
2. What was the first thing Noah did after the flood subsided?
3. Why was Noah's sacrifice a sweet smell to God, according to Calvin?

CHAPTER 9

1. What was required as punishment for murder, according to Genesis 9:5-6?
2. What is stated about man's nature according to Genesis 9:6?

3. How does Calvin interpret the statement in Genesis 9:6 about the nature of man?
4. What does God promise to Noah that He will never do again?
5. What token of the covenant does God reveal to Noah?

CHAPTER 10

1. What is the importance of Genesis, chapter ten, according to Calvin?

CHAPTER 11

1. How many languages were there among the people when they first gathered at Babel?
2. What is the reason given by the people for building the city and tower that reached the heavens at Babel?
3. What did God do to the people after he stopped the building of the tower of Babel?
4. What does "Babel" mean?
5. What does the name "Ur" come from?
6. Does Calvin think that Abram was the first-born of Terah?

CHAPTER 12

1. What promises were made to Abram in Genesis 12:2-3?
2. According to Calvin, when God called Abram to leave Ur for Canaan, did he first spend time in Haran (or Charran) because he was doubting the promise of God?
3. What did Abram learn from the fact that he was not received kindly by the Canaanites, according to Calvin?
4. According to Calvin, was it wrong for Abram to build an altar after God appeared to him in Canaan?
5. After Abram arrived in Canaan, was he able to stay permanently in one place?
6. Why did Abram and Sarai go to Egypt?
7. What lie did Abram and Sarai tell to Pharaoh when they were in Egypt?
8. According to Calvin, what was Abram's motive for lying to Pharaoh about Sarai?

CHAPTER 13

1. Describe Abram's financial situation when he left Egypt to return to Canaan.
2. Why did Abram and Lot separate?
3. Why did Lot choose the plain of the Jordan when he separated from Abram?
4. When Ezekiel speaks of the men of Sodom, what sin does he point out as a reason for their destruction?
5. Calvin concludes, regarding the fact that Abram left Lot and again moved to another place, "Let us therefore walk through the world, as persons debarred from all _____, who have no other resource than the mirror of the word."

CHAPTER 14

1. What happened to Lot while the kings of the region around Sodom were at war?
2. What favor did Abram do for Lot while the kings of the region around Sodom were at war?
3. Who was Melchizedek?
4. According to Calvin, from what city was Melchizedek?
5. What did Abram give to Melchizedek?
6. According to Calvin, in what ways does Melchizedek represent Christ?
7. According to Calvin what is indicated by the fact that Melchizedek blessed Abram?
8. Did Abram accept any gifts from the king of Sodom for himself?

CHAPTER 15

1. What does God promise Abram in Genesis 15:1?
2. Calvin says, "whereas the defense of God is greater than all dangers, so _____ triumphs over fear."
3. In Genesis 15:2-3, what concern did Abram present to God?
4. In Genesis 15:5, God promises Abram that his descendants will be as numerous as _____.
5. In Genesis 15:6, we read that Abram believed the Lord, and God counted it to him for _____.
6. Calvin says, "Therefore, we do not say that Abram was justified because he laid hold on a single word, respecting the offspring to be brought forth, but because he embraced God as his _____."
7. What theological point does Paul make in Romans 4:4, based on Genesis 15:6?
8. Calvin says regarding the ceremony in Genesis 15, "In commanding the slaughtered animals to be cut in parts, it is probable that he followed the ancient rite in _____."
9. According to Calvin, what does the ceremony of the cut animals in Genesis 15 teach about God's children?
10. In the vision in Genesis 15, does God reveal to Abram that his people will inherit the land immediately?
11. In the vision in Genesis 15, does God reveal to Abram that he will die soon?
12. According to Calvin, what is symbolized in Genesis 15 by the burning lamp (or torch) that passes between the divided animals?

CHAPTER 16

1. According to Calvin, why did Sarai suggest to Abram that he have a child with her maid, Hagar?
2. What does Calvin say about polygamy at the time of Abram?
3. According to Calvin, was Abram's faith wavering when he accepted Sarai's suggestion to have a child with Hagar?
4. How did Hagar's attitude toward Sarai change when she became pregnant with a child of Abram?
5. What did the angel tell Hagar to do after she had fled from Sarai (Genesis 16)?
6. What practical application does Calvin make from the angel's message to Hagar (Genesis 16)?
7. What name was to be given to the son of Hagar and Abram?
8. How does the angel describe Hagar and Abram's future son?

CHAPTER 17

1. In what sense was Abram to become "Abraham," father of many nations?
2. Are all those who are naturally born into the covenant as descendants of Abraham elected to eternal life?
3. What ceremony did God establish as a symbol of the covenant with Abraham?
4. What does Calvin assert regarding whether female children were partakers of the sign of circumcision that was applied to the male children?
5. What two spiritual truths were symbolized by circumcision, according to Calvin?
6. Who was supposed to be circumcised?
7. What is the meaning of Sarai's new name "Sarah"?
8. According to Calvin, why did Abraham laugh when God repeated the promises of the covenant to him and gave Sarai her new name "Sarah" (Genesis 17)?
9. What was to be the name of the promised son of Abraham and Sarah?
10. Did God also promise to bless Ishmael and make his descendants into a great nation?

CHAPTER 18

1. According to Calvin, were the three men who visited Abraham, as recorded in Genesis 18, angels?
2. According to Calvin, why did Sarah laugh when she heard the Lord tell Abraham that she would have a child within a year?
3. How did Abraham respond when he realized that Sodom was going to be destroyed?

CHAPTER 19

1. When the two angels went to Sodom (Genesis 19), how did Lot try to protect them from the evil intentions of the men of the city?
2. How did the two angels defend themselves from the evil men of Sodom (Genesis 19)?
3. What happened to Lot when God rained sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah?
4. What happened to Lot's wife when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah?
5. According to Calvin, why was Lot's wife punished so severely?
6. What happened to Lot after the destruction of Sodom?
7. What sin did Lot's daughters commit after the destruction of Sodom?

CHAPTER 20

1. What did Abraham tell Abimelech about Sarah when they were in Gerar? (Genesis 20)
2. In what sense does Calvin think Sarah was Abraham's "sister"?
3. When Abimelech found out that Sarah was Abraham's wife, did he send her away and keep his possessions?
4. What did Abraham pray for Abimelech, and how did God respond?

CHAPTER 21

1. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?
2. After Isaac was born, what did Sarah ask Abraham to do with Hagar and Ishmael, and what did God tell Abraham to do in response?
3. What happened to Ishmael in the wilderness? Did he die before marrying and having children?
4. What kind of agreement did Abraham make with Abimelech?

CHAPTER 22

1. In what sense did God "tempt" Abraham in Genesis 22?
2. Why was it especially difficult for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac?
3. According to Calvin, why did God make Abraham take a journey before sacrificing Isaac? What did Abraham learn on the way?
4. When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, what did God do?

CHAPTER 23

1. What was the first piece of land that Abraham purchased in Canaan?
2. What price did Ephron ask Abraham to pay for his land?

CHAPTER 24

1. What did Abraham make his servant swear regarding where he would find a wife for Isaac?
2. Did Abraham agree that Isaac should leave Canaan and go live in Abraham's original land if necessary, in order to marry a wife from Abraham's family?
3. What relation did Rebekah have with Abraham?
4. Does Calvin believe that the method that Abraham's servant used to pray for a wife for Isaac was correct?
5. Was Rebekah reluctant to leave her family and go to be Isaac's wife?
6. What did Rebekah do when she first saw Isaac?

CHAPTER 25

1. What does Calvin say about when Abraham probably married Keturah?
2. How old was Abraham when he died?
3. Where was Abraham buried?
4. What phrase does the Bible use to explain what happened to Abraham after he died?