Genesis Questions
Interpretation, Significance, Application
Questions raised on the reading of sections of Wenham's and Fretheim's
Genesis Commentaries

Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,
11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20,
21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30,
31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40,
41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50

Genesis 1

1. If Genesis opens the Torah ("law"), what does that tell us about the nature
   of the Torah based on the contents of Genesis? Is the law to be
   understood as all commandments? What other elements are important
to the Torah?  (Wenham, 1:5)

2. How are Genesis 1:1-2 and Genesis 2:1-3 connected?  (Wenham, 1:5)

3. Wenham notes the number 7 seems to be significant in Genesis 1-2:3 not
   only in the day count but also "God" is mentioned 35 times, "earth"
   -21 times, "and it was so" seven times, etc. How significant are these
   statistics and what is their significance?  (Wenham, 1:6)

4. Does the phrase "This is the story of" or "This is the account of" usually
   begin or end a storyline (Gen. 2:4)? Where elsewhere is that phrase
   found in Genesis and what is its significance as a literary feature?
   (Wenham, 1:6)

5. What elements of structure do each of the days have in common?
   What is the significance of that structure?  [For example each day
   begins with a divine announcement: "And God said"]  (Wenham, 1:6)

6. Which days have a doubled divine announcement and a double approval
   formula? What is the possible significance of that? (Wenham, 1:6)
   (Gen. 1)

7. What correspondences do you see between days 1 and 3; 2 and 4; and 3
   and 6? How could you diagram these correspondences? What sense
do these correspondences leave with the reader (Gen. 1)?
   (Wenham, 1:7)
8. How do the days of Genesis move between the "two poles" of the heaven and earth? Where does the crossover take place? (Wenham, 1:7) (Gen. 1)

9. How is the seventh day set off from the other six days? How is it bonded to the beginning 1:1-2? What is an inclusio and how is it used in literature? (Wenham, 1:7)

10. What are the similarities and differences between the cosmology and creation account in Genesis 1 and the Enuma Elish (Babylonian ca. 1100 BC) and the Epic of Atrahasis (Mesopotamia, ca. 1600 BC)? What are the similarities and differences with the Egyptian "Teaching of King Merikare" (ca. 2200 B.C.)? (Wenham, 1:8f) (Gen. 1)

11. In what ways is Genesis 1 a polemic against the myths about the gods of the Ancient Near East? For example: in ANE man is an afterthought created to work and provide food for the gods; in Genesis 1 man is the goal and God provides him food. (cf. Hasel; Wenham, 1:9)

12. How is the creation described and utilized elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Ps. 8, 136, 148; Prov. 8:22-3; Isa. 45:18; and Job 38)? How do the accounts compare and contrast? How are the shaped by their difference contexts? (Wenham, 1:10)

13. What is the relationship of Gen. 1:1, 1:2 and 1:3? Is 1:1 a subordinate clause to the main clause in 1:2 or 1:3? Is 1:1 a title for 1:2-30? Is 1:1 the main clause describing the first action which is elaborated on in 1:2-30? How do the different translations indicate how they interpret the connection between 1:1 and 1:2 (cf. NIV/NASB/NLT and the NEB/NRSV/TEV)? What difference do these different approaches have on how the text is describing the creation of the world? (Wenham, 1:11f)

14. Who is the only subject of the verb "create" (bara) in the Old Testament? Does the fact that the word for create (bara) does not ever state the material God made things out of prove creation ex nihilo (out of nothing)? Cf. Ps 148:5; Prov. 8:22ff; Ps. 33:6. (Wenham, 1:14) (Gen. 1:1)

15. Why is the title Elohim for God used in Genesis 1 and not Yahweh (LORD)? (Wenham, 1:15)

16. How does the God of Genesis 1 who acts and speaks differ from a more abstract philosophically conceived God? (Wenham, 1:15)

17. How is God's relationship to the world founded and described in Genesis 1? How is God's sovereignty demonstrated? 

18. What major attribute of God is manifested in Genesis 1? 

19. "Heaven and earth" is a merismus using two words to describe a totality.
What are some merismus phrases we use in English? (Wenham, 1:15) (Gen. 1:1)

20. Should Genesis 1:2 be taken as "The Spirit of God," "the breath of God," "a divine wind" or "a mighty wind"? Compare which translations support which reading (NIV/NRSV/New English Bible/New American Bible/New Jerusalem Bible). What difference does it make? (Wenham, 1:16f)

21. How often does the phrase "And God said" occur in Genesis 1? What is the significance of the phrase in relation to the creation account? How is the speaking of things into being developed elsewhere in Scripture (Ps. 33:6; Jn. 1:1ff) (Wenham 1:17f)

22. What does the approval formula "and God saw it was good" imply about the person and character of God? (Wenham, 1:18) (Gen. 1)

23. What kinds of things did God "separate" in Genesis 1? What does that process have to do with the ordering of the cosmos? (Wenham, 1:18f)

24. In God's subsequent word after creating, he either names something or blesses it. What does that tell us about the character and work of God in relation to what has already been created (Gen. 1)? (Wenham, 1:19)

25. How long are the days of Genesis 1? How does what is described in Genesis 1 fit with scientific discoveries on the origin and evolution of the universe? Is the point of the author to give us a scientific description of creation? What is the emphasis and direction the original author is wanting to take his reader? What indications are there in Gen. 1 itself as to the length of the days beyond the diverse meanings of the word "day [yom]" itself?

26. Wenham says "The Bible-versus-science debate has, most regrettably, sidetracked readers of Gen. 1. Instead of reading the chapter as the triumphant affirmation of the power and wisdom of God and the wonder of his creation, we have been too often bogged down in attempting to squeeze Scripture into the mold of the latest scientific hypothesis or distorting scientific facts to fit a particular interpretation." Do you agree or disagree and why? (Wenham, 1:40)

26. How are the words used for the divine commands paralleled with the fulfillments (Gen. 1)? What does that reinforce? (Wenham, 1:20)

27. The third day of creation was different in what way? Creative activity often needs to be followed by what kind of activity? (Wenham, 1:20)

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28. Chaos to cosmos involves what two types of activities (Gen. 1:14ff)?

28. How did the Hebrews view the watery depths and oceans (Gen. 1:20ff)?
29. What are the implications of God making things each after their kind (Gen. 1)? What roles do ordering and separating play in the creation account? What are the moral implications of things being made after their own kind for modern biotech research on cloning and stem cell research (cf. Lev. 19:19; Deut 22:9-11). How is the question a complex one? (Wenham, 1:21)

30. Why was day four described in so much more detail that any of the other days but day six (cf. ANE [Ancient Near East]) (Gen. 1:14ff)? (Wenham, 1:21)

31. How do the functions of "divide", "rule" and "give light" pattern themselves in Genesis 1:14-18? (Wenham, 1:22)

32. From a Canaanite mythology perspective, why would the creation of the great sea creatures be mentioned using the word "create" (bara) for the first time since 1:1 (cf. also Jer 51:34; Isa. 27:1; 51:9; Ps 74:13; Job 7:12)? (Wenham, 1:24)

33. Besides creating and ordering, God also blesses in Gen. 1. Where does the notion of divine blessing show up in Genesis 1-12? In the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 12-50) who are the primary blessers there? (Wenham, 1:24) What role does the blessing of a father play in modern culture? Who blesses today?

34. Why does God say "Let us" make man in the plural instead of "let me" (Gen. 1:26)? [divine assembly, majesty, trinity, self-deliberation] (Wenham, 1:27) (cf. Job 38:4,7; Lk 2:13f)

35. What is meant by the terms "image" and "likeness"? How are they used elsewhere (Gen. 1:26)? (Wenham, 1:27) [distinct[natural/ supernatural faculties]; mental/spiritual qualities; physical resemblance; representative; capacity to relate]. How does man being made in God's image impact in our understanding of humankind in post-modern culture in such realms as human rights, euthanasia, cloning, the death penalty, love and war? What does this imply about our interfacing with animals and with intelligent machines? What implication does the image have in our relationship to God? Where else in Scripture is the importance of God's image in humankind developed?

36. When is the actual name "Adam" introduced in the different translations (cf. KJV, NRSV, TEV and NEB)? Why is there a problem determining when his name is first used? (Wenham, 1:32)

37. How is fruitfulness seen as a blessing throughout Genesis? How do the genealogies and patriarchal blessing fit into that? How does the
idea of multiplying and being fruitful fit with the global population explosion? Are we to be multiplying beyond our resources to sustain life? At what point does the blessing become a curse? (Wenham, 1:33)

38. What was Adam and Eve's initial relationship to the plant and animal kingdoms (Gen. 1)? How does that change after the fall? How does Noah's building a boat to preserve all the animals fit with modern environmental concerns and human responsibilities? (Wenham, 1:33)

39. In the Mesopotamian myths, man was created to get food for the gods, who supplies whom with food in Genesis 1? (Wenham, 1:33)

40. Why is Gen. 1:31 a bad place to break the chapter? Who originally broke the text there? How do 1:1 and 2:2-3 fit together? (Wenham, 1:34f)

41. While the term "Sabbath" is not used in Gen. 1-2 where else does this notion come up in the Pentateuchal materials? (Wenham, 1:36) What does the Sabbath have to teach post-modern culture? How should it be understood today? Does the New Testament negate or diminish its relevance? What does it mean to declare something "holy" in Scripture?

42. How is Genesis 1 a polemic against the polytheistic mythico-religious worldview of the ancient Near East? What are the points of contact and contrast? (Wenham, 1:37)

43. What does Genesis 1 tell us about the essential nature of God? How is God's relationship with humankind initiated already in Genesis 1? (Wenham, 1:37f)

44. How does Genesis 1 appear in the apostles creed? (Wenham, 1:39)

45. How is Genesis 1-3 foundational to the construction of biblical world views? Is the construction of biblical world views impacted as much by Genesis 12-50
46. What role does Gen. 2:4 play in the overall structure of the book of Genesis (cf. 6:9; 10:1; 11:27; 37:2; 5:1; 25:12)? How is that phrase translated by the different translations and commentators?

47. Genesis 2-3 may be broken into the following seven subunits:
   1) 2:5-17; 2) 2:18-25; 3) 3:1-5; 4) 3:6-8; 5) 3:9-13; 6) 3:14-21; 7) 3:22-24. Wenham suggests a palistrophic or mirror-image style (1:51). How are units 1 & 7; 2 & 6; 3 & 5 connected? How does unit 4 stand as the center? How would you diagram that out? What does such a literary construction say about the unity of the biblical text in contrast to a more fragmentary stitched together "sources" view?

48. What are the similarities and differences between the Genesis 2 account and the Sumerian flood story, Gilgamesh and Atrahasis epics? Compare and contrast the Adapa myth. (Wenham, 1:52) What symbols are shared between Genesis and the myths of the ancient Near East?

49. How does Gen. 2-3 impact how one looks at culture and the roots of the history of humankind? What roots are seen in those chapters that flower in the records of history? How does Gen. 2-3 contrast with the world view of post-modernism or secular humanism?

50. How does Genesis 2-3 describe the human's connection to the land? What does Adam's name mean and how does that play into a paronomasia? Did God/Adam speak Hebrew in the naming of Adam in Gen. 2? When did Hebrew as a language come into existence? What role does dust/clay play in the rest of the Bible? How will that land theme be developed in the rest of Genesis? Does this land theme connect with modern environmental concerns? (Wenham, 1:58f)

51. What modern philosophical schools emphasize that man is mere dust (Gen. 2)? (Wenham, 1:60) Which schools of thought emphasize humans having the divine breath?

52. What role does Eden play elsewhere in Scripture (Gen. 2)? What is Eden's connection with "the east"? What is its etymology and symbolism? Where was Eden? (Wenham, 1:61, 66)

53. What symbolic role do trees play in the ancient Near East and in the rest of Genesis and Bible (cf. Gen. 2, Proverbs)? (Wenham, 1:62)

54. What is meant in Gen. 2 by "knowledge of good and evil"
[consequences of obeying/disobeying, moral discernment, sexual knowledge, omniscience, human wisdom]. How does Ezek. 28 help with a solution? (Wenham, 1:63f)

55. What symbolic role do rivers play in Scripture (cf. Gen. 2; Ezek. 47; Rev. 22; Ps. 46:5)? What are the options for the Pishon and Gihon rivers? How are the geographical descriptions of the rivers like a genealogy? How does the reference to Ashur by the Tigris support the antiquity of the biblical account (pre-1400 BC)? (Wenham, 1:65f)

56. In Gen. 2:18, God says man needs a "helper". How is that term used elsewhere in Scripture? Is God himself ever called or viewed as a helper? What does that statement show about God's concern about human needs? Does the notion of "helper" mean woman was under the authority of the man?

57. In Gen. 2:19 Adam names the animals? What role do names and naming play in the stories in Genesis? (Wenham, 1:68)

58. What is learned about male/female relationships from the description of Eve's being "built" in Gen. 2:21-25? How is repetition, poetic parallelism and word play used in Adam's enthusiasm for his partner? What other births have name word plays in Genesis? Why is poetry used instead of straight narrative? How does the marriage relationship restructure other closest of relationships? In what aspects does "oneness" play itself out in the marriage relationship (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, kinship and economic, etc.)? (Wenham, 1:70)
59. In Gen. 3:1 the serpent is said to be crafty or shrewd. How is this term ambiguous? Is the serpent identified with Satan in Genesis 3? What ancient Near Eastern imagery was brought up by snake imagery? What role does a snake play in the Gilgamesh epic? In Levitical terms was the snake viewed as an unclean or clean animal (Lev. 11)? Does it initially contain any of the anti-God imagery of Job 26:13 or Isa. 27:1? (Wenham, 1:72)

60. How were the serpent's words in Gen. 3:4f vindicated? What does that tell us about the insidious nature of how evil moves? Does the serpent/Satan speak the truth? What does the serpent's approach tell us about the art of seduction? (Wenham, 73f)

61. How did Adam and Eve understand the notion of death in Gen. 3? Was there plant and animal death while Adam and Eve were still in the garden? Is it possible as Wright suggests that Adam/Eve would have experienced death even if they had not eaten of the tree? What do you think of that (Biblica 1996)? What are the different aspects of death and how do they play out in the stories in Gen. 3-6 and following? (Wenham, 1:74f)

62. What literary palistrophic (ABCDCBA) pattern is seen in description of the seduction of Eve (Gen. 3:6-7)? How does 3:8-10 link back to chapter 2? How are guilt and nakedness related in the story? (Wenham, 1:75f)

63. God in Gen. 3:8 is portrayed as walking in the garden. When elsewhere is Scripture does God "walk"? How do walking, presence and relationship intertwine? "Walking" is used for portraying what types of activities? (Wenham, 1:76)

64. What role does God's question "Where are you?" play in the Gen. 3:9 narrative and elsewhere (cf. Gen. 4:9; Isa 33:18; 36:19; Ps 42:4, 11)? How does it function with God's omniscience? What are different ways rhetorical questions are used? (Wenham, 1:77) How is this discovery motif continued in God's questioning of Adam (Gen. 3:11)?

65. How do Adam and Eve readily confess their sinful actions but try to deny their culpability (Gen. 3:12ff)? How is that similar move made in modern times? (Wenham, 1:89)

66. What role did cursing play in the ancient Near East and in the rest of Scripture (Num. 22:6; Deut. 27:15ff) and in Genesis (cf. 3:14)? (Wenham, 1:78) What was eating dust a symbol of (cf. Mic. 7:17; Isa. 49:23)?
67. Is the curse on the serpent (Gen. 3:15) an etiology on why women hate snakes? Does the serpent stand for sin, death and the power of evil so that the curse here is broader than a mere etiology referring to the continual struggle between good and evil and humankind's ultimate triumph? Does the serpent stand for Satan? How early did that identification happen? How is this passage interpreted in the New Testament (Rom. 16:20; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 12)? Is there a fuller sense that develops later in the history of redemption? Were Justin (ca. A.D. 160) and the early church fathers right in taking this passage as the "Protoevangelium" (first gospel) in applying it to Christ and Satan? (Wenham, 1:80f)

68. What is the "woman's desire for her husband" (Gen. 3:16)? Is female subordination a part of the curse? Is her desire what subjects her to exploitation? Is her desire a desire to dominate her husband? Is the rule of the man part of the curse? Should the curse be accepted or resisted? Does the verbal parallel with Gen. 4:7 help us understand Gen. 3:16? What role does this verse play in the dialogue with modern feminism? Does this verse tell us what roles of women were effected by the curse? Is Vogels right when he says what kills the relationship is the desire to possess, to keep, to hold, to dominate, or to crush the other? How do each of these play out in male/female relationships? (Biblica, 1996) (Wenham, 1:80f)

69. What play is made with "eating" in the curse of Adam (Gen. 3)? What roles of the man were effected by the curse (food-producer)? Was work a curse because of the fall (cf. 2:15)? How is the futility of work a curse? How is such futility seen in our post-modern culture? Was death part of the curse? Was there death before the fall? How does Gen. 3:19 relate to Gen. 2:7? Where elsewhere in Scripture is man's going to the dust seen? How does the notion of death impact individuals and society (fear, grief, hope, alienation, futility, etc.)? (Wenham, 1:83)

70. What play is seen in the naming of Eve right after Adam was cursed (Gen. 3:22)? What does that reveal about how Adam looked at Eve after the fall? (Wenham, 1:84)

71. How is God's provision of clothes another indication of God's tender provision for human need (Gen. 3:21)? How does the idea of needing clothing when approaching God come up in the tabernacle descriptions both in the use of tunics and in covering one's nakedness (vid. Exodus)? (Wenham, 1:84)

72. Could and did humans eat of the tree of life prior to being expelled from
the garden (Gen. 3:22ff)? Did the tree of life magically give life? Cherubim guard the way to the tree of life. Where elsewhere in Scripture are cherubim seen and what roles do they play in those contexts (cf. Ex. 25:18ff; 26:31; 1 Kgs 6:29)? Was the flaming sword the first laser sword? In what way did they die on the day they ate the fruit? (Wenham, 1:85f)

73. How is that connection between sin and consequence seen elsewhere in Scripture (esp. wisdom lit., covenants, Deut 28. and prophets)? How is that connection denied and marginalized in post-modern culture on an individual, societal and even political spheres? How did Adam/Eve's sin impact the whole human race (Rom 5:12)? Where does the Bible place the blame for pain, suffering and alienation and how and in what directions do we try to shift that blame? (Wenham, 1:90)
74. What struggles are seen in Genesis between an older and young brother in relation to divine favor or blessing (Gen. 4:3ff)? What other battles of favored and unfavored sons takes place in Genesis and elsewhere in the Old Testament? Where else in Genesis is the "hostile brother" motif? (Wenham, 1:97f)

75. How does God use rhetorical questions with Cain (Gen. 4:9ff) and how does that compare with how he used them in Gen. 3:9ff? What other parallels are there between Gen. 3 with Adam and Eve and Gen. 4 the Cain and Able story? What contrasts are seen in Gen. 3 and 4? What is fratricide? (Wenham, 1:99f)

76. What euphemism occurs in Gen. 4:1? What other topics does the Bible use euphemisms to talk about? How do we use them today? (Wenham, 1:100)


78. How does the meaning of Abel's name foreshadow what will happen (Gen. 4:1; cf. Eccl. 1:2)? (Wenham, 1:102)

79. Why was Cain's offering rejected and Abel's accepted (Gen. 4:5)? [shepherds/gardeners; animal/gain; inscrutable; faith [Heb 11:4]; choicest firstlings versus normal 2 Sam 24:24] (Wenham, 1:104)

80. What is God's relationship to blood in Gen. 4:10 and elsewhere in Scripture (cf. Lev. 17:11)? Why do people cry out to God? Who are some biblical examples of people that cried out to God when facing death or the shedding of their blood? In what other passages is there a personalization of blood in Scripture (Rev. 6:9f; Lk. 18:7f; Isa. 5:7; Exod. 20:13; 1 Kgs. 21; Num. 35, etc.) (Wenham, 1:107, 117)

81. When it says the one hurting Cain would be punished sevenfold is that a hyperbole? How and when are hyperbole's used? What might the number seven mean in this text (Gen. 4:15)? (Wenham, 1:109)

82. Who founded the first cities in the biblical text (Gen. 4:14, 17) and how do cities arise in the ancient Near Eastern materials (cf. Adapa, Eridu and the seven apkallus)? What is the point of Genesis linking nomadism and urbanization, music and metalworking to Cain's genealogy? How is Cain condemned to wander yet he is the first city builder? How are cities viewed in the biblical narrative? How do cities function in post-modern times? (Wenham, 1:110f)

83. How is Lamech like his father Cain? What father-son parallels in
character and activity are seen in Genesis? Does that fit modern phenomena? Why/why not? (Wenham, 1:112)

84. In the song of Lamech how is Hebrew poetic parallelism seen between the lines (Gen. 4)? Did Lamech know Hebrew and did he understand Hebrew poetry? How was this poem written? What progression is seen in the narrative between Adam, Cain and Lamech as sinners? How does Cain's evil play out elsewhere in Scripture (Jude 11; 1 Jn 3:11ff)? (Wenham, 1:114, 117)

85. Seth is born and named as a simple paronomasia (Gen. 4)? What is that and how often does it occur in the naming of people and places in Genesis and elsewhere? What do people's names mean today? Are nick-names more accurate? (Wenham, 1:115)

86. How does the Sumerian flood story parallel the genealogies of Cain (nomadism, city-building and institution of public worship; Gen. 4)? How does the Sumerian flood story parallel the long lives of the people of Gen. 5? The last person in the Sumerian flood story list as in Genesis is a survivor of the flood (Ziusudra/Noah). What differences are there between the king lists and the genealogies of Genesis (length of life [Sumerian 50x longer])? How does cultural "progress" impact religious and moral categories? (Wenham, 1:124)
87. Gen. 5:1 is the first mention of written sources standing behind the Genesis account. Where else in Scripture does it talk about books outside of the Scripture but yet existent during those times (Josh. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18 etc.)? How do such works fit with the notion of Scripture being divinely inspired? (Wenham, 1:126)

88. How was Enoch special? How does Enoch relate to the extra-canonical book of Enoch? How does Enoch fit with the ancient sage Utuabzu "who ascended to heaven" (Cf. also Adapa, Aeneas, Heracles) (Wenham, 1:128)

89. Which other fathers besides Noah father 3 sons in Genesis? (Wenham, 1:129)

90. How are the long life spans of the Genesis 5 genealogy explained? How do the ages different between the Hebrew Masoretic text, the Greek Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch? For example, the MT has the flood coming in 1656 after Adam, the Samaritan Pent. 1307 and the LXX in 2242. Which text tradition is right? (Wenham, 1:130-33; see Wenham's chart on p. 131 for the differences) How does this all fit with the Sumerian king list which totals 241,200 years instead of the 4004 BC of the biblical text? No matter how long they lived what is the point?
91. Who were the sons of the God that married the daughters of men (Gen. 6)? (Wenham, 1:137ff). See difficult questions. How does Scripture view crossbreeding of kinds? (Wenham, 1:146f) (cf. Sir. 16:7; Wis. 14:6; Bar. 3:26ff; 2 Pet 2:4 to see how the ancients looked at this passage.)

92. How does the story of Noah compare and contrast to the Gilgamesh and Atrahasis epic (Gen. 6)? (Wenham, 1:138)

93. Who were the Nephilim in Genesis 6:4 (cf. Num 13:33; Ezek. 32:20-28)? (Wenham, 1:143)

94. What kind of commentary is Gen. 6:5 on the character and nature of humankind? What are the religious, political, sociological, psychological and ethical implications of this verse? How does this verse fit with Romans 1-3; Ps. 51; Jer. 17:9f? Is total depravity an appropriate way to look at humankind? Is it the only way important theological aspect of humanity? Is "total" a theologically accurate modifier given that man was and is made in the image of God (cf. Ps. 8)? What role does a healthy tension play in this discussion? How does one balance these two important aspects or ways of describing humankind found in Genesis? (Wenham, 1:144)

95. Gen. 6:6 says God repented or was sorry? Is it possible for God to change his mind (cf. 1 Sam. 15:11; Jer. 18:10; Ex. 32:12, 14; 2 Sam 24:16; Amos 7:3, 6) without being capricious (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29)? If God can't change his mind what does that imply about prayer? Is God's thinking fossilized and static or dynamic and creative? Is Gen. 6:6 a mere anthropomorphism? Is this theological point the point of the Gen. 6:6 passage? Why do certain theological systems have trouble with this verse and dismiss it or explain it away? What is the significance of saying that God had regrets and sorrow? How does God experience sorrow and what is its connection/disconnection with human sorrow? Are there tears in heaven? (Wenham, 1:144; Fretheim, 395)

96. Does the following structure of B. W. Anderson for the flood story work?

   Transitional intro (6:9-10)
   1) Violence in creation (6:11-12)
   2) First divine speech: resolve to destroy (6:13-22)
   3) Second divine speech: "enter ark" (7:1-10)
   4) Beginning the flood (7:11-16)
5) The rising flood (7:17-24)

6) God remembers Noah

How would you finish the structure coming back out?

Use a palistrophic method (ABCBA) (Wenham, 1:156)

97. Is there any historical or scientific evidence to corroborate the flood story (Gen. 6)?

98. How is Noah's relationship with God described (Gen. 6:9f)?
   What does the phrase "walk with God" mean and where have we seen that before? (Fretheim, 390)

99. In Genesis 6:11-22, how is the corruption of the land described?
   What is the connection between human morality and the inanimate physical world? Does human evil transcend the boundaries of humankind (e.g. animals)? (Fretheim, 390)

100. How has the word "hamas" which is used to describe the violence on the earth (Gen. 6:11) come into modern parlance? What was the extent of violence and how does that impact the extent of the flood? (Fretheim, 390)

101. How do the dimensions of the biblical ark compare to the dimensions of the ark in the Gilgamesh epic (Gen. 6:15f)? How were the constructions of the ark similar or dissimilar? (Fretheim, 391)

102. How does the promise of the covenant in Gen. 6:18 help Noah in the face of the pending situation? (Fretheim, 391)

103. When God announces the destruction of the Israelites to Moses, how does he regularly respond? How does that differ with Noah's response (Gen. 6)? How do both of their responses embrace obedience? (Fretheim, 391)

104. How do you harmonize the description of taking animals two by two in Gen. 6:19f and the taking of seven of clean animals in Gen. 7:2f? How would Noah have known which animals were clean and unclean without the book of Leviticus which specifies these categories? Does clean/unclean refer to the sacrificial or dietary laws? (Fretheim, 391)
105. How do Gen. 7:4 and 10 work together? What point does that make about God's word and promise?

106. In the chronology of the flood, how does the following pattern play out in the narrative of Genesis 7:4-8:12: 7, 40, 150, 40, 7? What does such a pattern imply about God's control of the flood chaos? How does the time limit of the flood contrast with the lack of spatial limit of the flood highlighting God's grace? (Fretheim, 392)
107. How is God's remembering the turning point in the flood narrative (Gen. 8:1)? How is his remembering connected to the anticipated covenant? What does it mean for God to remember? (Fretheim, 392)

108. The divine wind reverses the chaotic flood (Gen. 8:1) which is reminiscent of the divine wind in what part of Gen. 1? (Fretheim, 392)

109. How does the order in which the birds are sent out of the ark compare with the other ancient Near Eastern sources (Gilgamesh et al.)? (Fretheim, 392)

110. How is God's reception of Noah's sacrifice in Genesis 8:21 different than the gods reception of the post-flood sacrifice in the Gilgamesh epic? (Fretheim, 393). What does that say about the differences between the nature of sacrifice in Israel and elsewhere?

111. How is one to view the relationship of Genesis 1-9 to the ancient Near Eastern epics? Is it appropriate to see Genesis as a polemic against other religions or is it better to appreciate that Israel took significant historical and even theological understandings from cultures outside of Israel as Fretheim suggests? Fretheim says Israel borrowed much of its thinking about beginnings. To what extent is this true and not true? (Fretheim, 395)

112. When in Gen. 8:21 God reverses the curse does this apply just to no more floods, no additional curses on the ground or does it reflect back on the Gen. 3 curse on the ground saying that that curse would be mitigated? How is Noah's relationship with God mediated through God's new relationship with creation? (Fretheim, 393)

113. How are the words of Gen. 6:5 and 8:21 similar? How do these two similar passages play a totally different role in the narrative? Did the flood change the interior nature of humankind? What did change? How is the evil inclination of humankind seen on an individual and societal level today? What attempts are made to downplay, ignore or escape this type of evaluation on a personal and societal level? (Fretheim, 393)

114. What does 8:22 mean in relation to the cosmos/chaos struggle? The embracing of chaos functioned in at least two ways in the story so far, now the bounds of chaos are being limited which may allow what to flourish given the context of Gen. 8:21ff? Was the water of the flood a punishing agent or a cleansing agent? How did the water uncreate the creation? How does the "recreation" post-flood
differ from the original creation thereby avoiding a future Gen. 6:6f
type re-evaluation? What elements of continuity are there between the
original creation and the post-flood re-creation? How is it [are we]
the same yet different? (Fretheim, 394)
115. How does the notion of the remnant play a role in God's dealing with humankind in the flood? How does the flood balance judgment and grace? What role does the flood story and flood imagery play in the descriptions of future judgments of God following periods of human moral chaos (Mat 24:37ff; Isa. 24:27)? How does the flood fit into apocalyptic modes of thinking (2 Pet 3:6f)?

116. Fretheim says the "flood should never be used as a type or illustration of divine judgment. The flood has a unique character, frozen in place by the divine promise never to do this again." Is this an adequate way of looking at the flood's message to later generations or politically corrected to suit the modern palate? What nuances is Fretheim overlooking? How does Fretheim's approach fit with a post-modern view of God and contrast with the biblical descriptions of God? (Fretheim, 394f)

117. How are the images of God developed in the flood story (Gen. 6-9)? (God of sorrow/regret, judge but doesn't want to, destroyer/savior, justice/mercy, fixed character/open to new ways of doing things; setting up moral paradigms/promises never to do it again, beginning/ beginning again ... etc.) How does the flood story recharacterize God's relationship with the world? The "tortured relation between a grieved God and a resistant world" results ultimately in real changes in which side(s) of the relationship? Does human evil cause God to limit himself and his responses (cf. Philp. 2)? What does such a response say about the essential nature of God? (Fretheim, 396)

118. God says no more floods to restrain evil? What means will he employ to restrain evil and guide the way back to Eden? How will societies be responsible for the restraining of evil? (Fretheim, 396)

119. What are the ecological implications of the flood (Gen. 9)? How are human and animal lives and destinies connected? (Fretheim, 396)?

120. Where elsewhere in Scripture is God's deliverance through watery dangers seen (Gen. 9)? (cf. Ex. 14f; Jonah, Mk 4:35ff; Rev. 12:15, etc.) (Fretheim, 397)

121. In Genesis 9, how do the roles of God as blesser and God as promiser merge? Is Noah a new Adam? How are things very different post-flood? How was the relationship between man and animals changed? Does Gen. 9 support the death penalty? How does the promissory nature of the covenant engender hope, expectation, assurance and comfort? (Fretheim, 398f).
122. Does the bow come into existence in Gen. 9 or is it that its significance and meaning change? How is this sign of the covenant different than most that would follow (cf. Ex. 12:13; Jer. 31:35)? Who does this sign remind? If God gives himself such "reminders" what does that say about our need for concrete signs that enrich our existence tying us to the past, present and future? How was the bow viewed in the ancient Near East (Ps. 7:12f; 18:14; 144:6; Hab. 3:9ff)? How does God transform that meaning from war to peace, hope and restraint in the midst of judgment? Is God's remembering a merely mental activity? How does God permanently restrain his power in light of human evil at this point? (Fretheim, 399f, 402)

123. Fretheim objects to the saying "God gave Noah the rainbow sign --no more water--the fire next time" (Gen. 9; cf. 2 Pet. 3:17) saying such a perspective violates the text. Is his perspective valid given the statement in 2 Peter? How is one to think about the possibility of future judgments of this magnitude and God's promise given here? (Fretheim, 401)

124. What are the ecological implications of the promise of Gen. 9 and the bow? What are God's promises to the non-human part of his creation? (Fretheim, 401)

125. What was Ham's illicit act in Gen. 9:18ff? Why is Canaan, Ham's son, cursed? Why does Noah call Ham his youngest when apparently he is the second born son? Is there a connection between the curse on Canaan and the Canaanite conflict that develops in the book of Joshua? (Fretheim, 404)

126. Does the slavery curse of Noah have anything to do with the enslavement of Africans (Gen. 9)? Why is that totally illegitimate? How does the OT and NT relate to the institution of slavery? How does the terminology of slavery come to play as part of the religion of Scripture? (Fretheim, 405)

127. How does Noah's nakedness tie back to Gen. 3? What is one of the roles and responsibilities in relation to covering his father's nakedness (Gen. 9)? How was nakedness viewed elsewhere in Scripture? (Fretheim, 405)

128. How are the sons and the resultant curse/blessings from Noah typological, ethnological and etiological to what follows (Gen. 9:18ff)? What is the connection between an individual and his family or group? How is this corporate way of looking at things outside the orbit of our American individual-centric worldview? (Fretheim, 403)
129. How does Noah's taking of the divine blessing (grapes) actually be used to become an evil (Gen. 9)? How are God's blessings and promises used in evil ways? (Fretheim, 403)
130. The Genesis 10 genealogy is the fourth toledot "this is the account of" section which gives eponymous information where the father of a nation is sited. Which of these father-nations connections are significant in Israel's later history? Can these father-nation links be corroborated historically? Can ch. 10 be seen as a gradual fulfillment of the "be fruitful and multiply" commission (Gen. 1:28; 9:1,7)? (Fretheim, 408)
131. How is the relationship of ch. 11 (Babel) related to the earlier chapters which already mention the division of languages (10:5, 20, 31) and the spreading out (10:5, 32) and scattering (9:19; 10:18) as well as Babel itself (10:10)? Is the relationship between the chapters chronological, interwoven or is ch. 11 a flashback? (Fretheim, 410)

132. What other times of history does the centralization, building and scattering motifs of Gen. 11's Tower of Babel occur in history? Are there apocalyptic parallels? How does centralization and unification of humankind interface with the worship of God? In what ways does evil manifest itself beyond the individual level when such centralization and homogenization occurs culturally? How does corporate, national or social sin function? Can such centralization and homogenization also effect the worlds of philosophical and theological systems? Is there one monolithic/monobrick-ic Christian worldview?

133. How is such centralization and unity synched with John Lenon's song "Imagine"? What is the dark sides to unity or for that matter diversity? What are their ideal aspects? What happens when one looses the tension and dialogue between them? How is unity a complex reality as Brueggeman says? (Fretheim, 413).

134. Why was the tower built with bricks instead of stones? Why did Mesopotamian ziggurats not use stone (cf. Egypt, Canaan)? Can the tower of Babel be related to Mesopotamian ziggurats in terms of construction and religious function? What contrasts are there? What is the connection between building a building and making a name for oneself? What divine plans does the centralization stand in opposition to? (Fretheim, 411f)

135. How do the words and fears of the inhabitants of Babel become their judgment (Gen. 11:4, 9)? (Fretheim, 412)

136. Gen. 11:5 says God "came down" to see what they were doing with the tower. What is the significance of that? What does that imply about where heaven is? What does "coming down" symbolize? What do you think of Fretheim's definition "Heaven is that place within the created world where God's presence remains uncontested." Is it possible heaven is in the "here" similar to what is seen in the movie the Matrix where two realities exist side by side and intertwined? What are the implications? What does "Babel" mean? (Fretheim, 412f)
137. Gen. 11 has the story and family of Abraham, the chosen, embedded in the community of the world and not in isolation. What does that imply? (Fretheim, 416)
138. Genesis may be broken into two histories: primeval and patriarchal at Genesis 12. How are these two sections connected? How does Abraham's family play a role in reclaiming creation from chaos (God's promissory relationship, partial fulfillments, blessings/curses, faith, obedience and hope responses to the promise; the significance of hang time between the promise and fulfillment; roles of sons, brothers, and land? (Fretheim, 417ff).

139. What role do the doublings play in bonding and developing the Abraham narrative (Genealogies: 12/25; Endangering of Sarah 12/20; Lot stories 13f/18f; Covenant 15/17; Hagar and Ishmael 16/21; Birth of Isaac 18/21; Abimelech 20/21; Test stories 12/22; Land stories 13/23)? (Fretheim, 420) Does doubling imply what critics suggest the JEPD theory which uses doubling as evidence of multiple authorship sources with bad editorial seaming?

140. What disruptions in Abraham's family precede the divine call in Gen. 12:1? (Fretheim, 422)

141. Is Abram's call exclusive election restricting God's focus to one family rather than the world or as Fretheim says "initially exclusive move for the sake of a maximally inclusive end" i.e. "Election serves mission"? (Fretheim, 424)

142. What role do altars, trees and stones play in the patriarchal narratives in terms of worship and marking special points of contact between God and the patriarchs (Gen. 12)? (Fretheim, 424)

143. How is the theme of blessing developed in the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 12)? How are the patriarchs mediators of God's blessings on all the families of the world? How does the notion of blessing work with the promise as central ideas spun through the Abrahamic narrative? How does the "already" but "not yet" aspect of promise/fulfillment play itself out in the patriarchal narratives? What roles will "blocks" and "waits" [not yets] to the promise have in the narrative? (Fretheim, 425)

144. How does Abraham's pilgrimage and journey become a paradigm for the pilgrimage and journey of all believers (Gen. 12)? How is the Christian life seen as journey different from the Christian life reckoned as states or levels of theological knowing? (Fretheim, 426)

145. How is the Abrahamic story universalized and transformed by the New Testament writers (Gen. 12)? (vid. Dr. Wilson's, Our Father Abraham) (Cf. Rom 4, Gal. 3-4; Heb. 11). (Fretheim, 420)
146. How are the three stories of wife-as-sister similar and different (Gen. 12, 20; 26)?

147. Whenever there was a famine in Canaan where did people naturally go? Besides Abraham in Gen. 12:10, where are some other examples of this "flight to Egypt" motif? (Fretheim, 427)

148. Does pharaoh consummate the marriage with Sarah (Fretheim says: yes) (Gen. 12)? How does this story contrast with the same story with Abimelech? Where else in Scripture do we see a murder is arranged so the wife can be taken? Does that ever happen today? Abraham becomes rich at the expense of his family? How does this move function in our culture? How does God deliver Sarah? When will we see other plagues on Egypt? Is Abram in this narrative to be seen as cowardly, lacking integrity and self-serving? Is he to be sympathized with as valuing life above honor and trapped in a bad situation rescued by God? Does gender effect one's interpretation here? What is the overall point of the story? Is everything the patriarch did to be seen as prescriptive or is it often descriptive--just telling what he did without moralizing whether it was right or wrong? How does one tell what is morally normative and what is merely historical fact?

149. What parallels may be seen between Abraham's trip to Egypt (Gen. 12) and the Exodus account of the nation [famine, ruse, riches, conflict with Pharaoh, plagues, etc.] How are the story patterns different? What is the link between the person and prefiguring the nation? Why is Sarah voiceless? Who does Pharaoh blame? (Fretheim, 429)

150. What roles do famines play in the biblical narratives (Gen. 12)? What are their causes, solutions and transforming impact on the people within their orbit? How is it Abram is in the promised land and there is a famine? When there are famines in the promised land how does Abraham scramble? How do we? What types of things today function as famines did back then? (Fretheim, 430)
151. How is the story of Gen. 13 bracketed by itinerary accounts (13:1,18)? How is 13:1 a hinge verse? (Fretheim, 432)

152. How does the quarrel in and over the promised land give way to promise development in Gen. 13? What implications does this narrative provide for the land and Abram's prosperity? Where else are quarreling over land and wells seen in the Genesis narrative? How does this story fit with the "strife among brothers" motif that is found in Genesis? By offering Lot the choice of land does Abraham put the promise into jeopardy? (Fretheim, 432f, 435)

153. How do God's blessings create difficulties sometimes? (Gen. 13 Abram's prosperity and Lot conflict) (Fretheim, 435)

154. How does Lot fit into the lack of a son and the leaving of family sequences? What factors effect Lots choice of the land by Sodom? Why is the land of Sodom likened to Eden and Egypt (13:10)? Is there any going back to Eden at this point? Was Eden still known at this time? How is Sodom not like Eden? How will this new environment shape Lot's life? Does place and location shape life, choices and destinies? (Fretheim, 434)

155. How is ecological disaster related to wickedness linking the creation accounts (Gen. 3, 6) with this theme about Lot and Sodom (13:13)? (Fretheim, 435)
156. How does the story of Abram's rescue of Lot link him to the later history of Israel as a victorious leader delivering the people almost like the judges would later (Gen. 14)? How does this military story not fit with many of the other stories about Abraham? How is Abraham's military alliance with the inhabitants of the land very different that the conquest relationship to the Canaanites with Joshua? How does ch. 14 link Abraham to a more universal context of being a blessing to the nations? Abram as deliverer a new role for him? (Fretheim, 438)

157. Abraham is identified as a Hebrew in Gen. 14:13. What did that designation mean at this time? If Abram had 318 servants born in his house, how large was his household at this time? How is Dan mentioned here when the city of Dan was not so named until the book of Judges (18:29 before that called Laish) over at least 500 years later? (Fretheim, 438; Wenham, 1:314)

158. How does Abram's response to the King of Sodom (Gen. 14) contrast with his response to Melchizedek? How are these two king's agendas different? Should a deliverer enrich himself from those who have been delivered? What characteristics in Abram does this show? (Fretheim, 442)

159. Where is Melchizedek found elsewhere in Scripture (Ps. 110:4 and Hebrews 5-7)? Where is Melchizedek from? Is that significant? What do priests do that Melchizedek does here Abram? Does Abram recognize Melchizedek as serving the same God? How does Melchizedek's blessing tie into Abram's being blessed in the covenantal sense? (Fretheim, 439, 442)

160. How would Gen. 14 fit with David's later making Jerusalem his capital and centering Israel's priesthood there? What was the name of the line of priests in the dvidic dynasty (2 Sam. 8:17)? It is derived from the same root as Melchizedek. Does the Abram story prefigure and echo later Israelite history? (Fretheim, 439)
161. What similar pattern is seen in Gen. 15:1-6 and 7-21? (Fretheim, 444)
162. The word of the LORD comes to Abram in a vision. How is that like what happens with the prophets (Gen. 15:1f)? What elements are common in a theophany? (Fretheim, 444)
163. How did people come to know God in the Old Testament? What role did faith play (Gen. 15:6f)? What is the nature and object of Abram's faith at this point in the narrative? How does God's promise enable Abram's faith? Were people saved by works in the OT? In what context is Abraham's faith manifest? What role do his questions play in relation to his faith? How do our questions and faith interplay? (Fretheim, 448)
164. God identifies himself as the God that brought Abram out of Ur (Gen. 15). How is that similar to how he will identify himself later to the Israelites? How does this fit God as "God of the journey" as opposed "God of the fixed state"? How does the role of exile and sojournering fit believers of all ages? (Fretheim, 445)
165. In what ways does God use rite and ritual in Gen. 15? Is Abraham familiar with those forms? What is the meaning of the rite of the divided animal in terms of the promise/covenant? How does God use cultural patterns to communicate and establish religious meaning? Does this rite fit the pattern of Jer 34:18ff of self-imprecation? Can God self-imprecate? (Fretheim, 446, 449)
166. How does the reference to the sins of the Amorites help explain the delay between the promise and the fulfillment (Gen. 15:13ff)? What does that 400 delay say about the connection of sin and judgment or act and consequence? (Fretheim, 449)
167. Does Israel ever occupy the full boundaries promised in Gen. 15:18? (Fretheim, 447)
168. Fretheim sees Gen. 12-15 as paralleling Israel's history going down into Egypt to David's kingship and the covenant with Abraham paralleling the covenant with David? Is that parallel legitimate? Where does it fit and where does it break down? (Fretheim, 447)
170. With God's promise of a seed and Sarai being barren, how does Sarai move to a solution to resolve the difficulty (Gen. 16)? How does Sarai interpret her barrenness theologically (Gen. 16:2) and how is that dangerous? Does she really know what God is doing in regard to her barrenness? When do we interpret our history theologically in ways that may lead into bigger difficulties? Is Sarah right in trying to help fulfill the divine promise or should she just have waited with no effort? How do you interpret God's involvement in your life? Have you ever participated with God in an activity resolving a crisis? (Fretheim, 454)

171. Since the practice of having a child from a handmaid was common practice in the ancient Near East, is Fretheim correct what he assesses Abram's family as "a highly dysfunctional family system"? How and on what basis is such a judgment made? Does the dysfunction come afterwards with the jealousy and harsh reaction of Sarah toward Hagar (Gen. 16)? Is it possible even that might be a healthy response? Is jealousy always bad? Does a particular problem allow one to imply a whole system is dysfunctional? Can one quickly render judgment on a whole family system based on the record of a few incidents? Is it not arrogant to apply modern standards without allowing for cultural differences? (Fretheim, 451f)

172. How does God's focus stay on Hagar after the birth of Ishmael (Gen. 16)? Does God try to right Abram's wrongs? Why would he do that? How does Hagar manifest her faith in God in the name of her son and place name Lahai-Roi? Where does Hagar the Egyptian encounter God? Does Hagar receive God's promise too? Where will Israel after leaving Egypt encounter God? Where do you encounter God? (Fretheim, 452, 454)

173. How do oppressed people identify with Hagar? (Fretheim, 452, 454)

174. Does Israel ever have conflict with the Ishmaelites (Gen. 16)? Fretheim says no, is that correct? How does this discussion play into the Arab-Israeli conflict? (Fretheim, 455)

175. While the Protestant tradition emphasizes listening to a speaking God, Hagar and Israel talk of a seeing God (Gen. 16:13; Ex. 2:25; 3:7) to whom they respond. How are these two traditions to be balanced? What are the legitimate and illegitimate factors of each? How does word and sight different in the Protestant and Catholic traditions? (Fretheim, 455)
176. How is the covenant as described in Gen. 17 similar and different from chapter 15? What development is seen? (Fretheim, 457)

177. How does Gen. 17 fit a theophanic narrative style (divine appearance, self-identification, word to the recipient, response of the recipient)? (Fretheim, 458)

178. What is the significance of Abram's name change to Abraham (Gen. 17)? What is the significance of Sarai's name change to Sarah? What role does name changing or naming play in the biblical narrative of places, divine names and human names? What new name of his own does God reveal in Gen. 17? Should God's name "God Almighty" better be understood as "God of the mountains" as Fretheim suggests? (Fretheim, 459)

179. How is circumcision (Gen. 17) as a sign of the covenant, different from the rainbow as a sign of the covenant (Gen. 9)? Was circumcision practised outside of Israel in the ancient Near East? If it was practiced in other contexts what is God doing with it here? What signs bond communities together? What does circumcision of the heart come to mean (Jer. 4:4; 9:25)? What are the links between circumcision and baptism (Col. 2:11ff)? Does circumcision allow for outsider participation in the community? (Fretheim, 459f)

180. What is the meaning of Abraham's laughter (Gen. 17)? How does laughter fit with the birth of Isaac? (Fretheim, 459)

181. Does the word "everlasting" mean that the covenant is unconditional (Gen. 17) or is conditionality a pre-understanding built into the covenant structure? (Fretheim, 460f)
182. Where else in Scripture are the themes of hospitality to a divine stranger messengers and birth announcement seen (Gen. 18; cf. 2 Kgs 4)? What are the components that demonstrate Abraham's hospitality? What does the reader know about the identity of the visitors that Abraham does not (cf. Heb. 13:2; Mat 25:43)? How does that further heighten Abraham's response to them? How will Abraham's hospitality be contrasted with the reception the divine messengers get at Sodom? What role does hospitality play in American culture with its isolation between individuals and even having to warn children about strangers? (Fretheim, 462f)

183. How is the question in Gen. 18:13 to be understood (rebuke, critical exploratory, focusing, opening the conversation)? Sarah's incredulousness at the divine announcement of a child is paralleled by the response of what other women when a similar announcement was made? How do women struggle for children in their relationship with God in Scripture? (Fretheim, 463f)

184. How is Sarah's laughter to be understood (Gen. 18)? What role does questioning the divine play in faith development? Is it ever wrong? Is it ever right? Do Abraham, Moses, David, and Jeremiah ever question God? Was Sarah's response improper? What about when Abraham laughed? Is it possible the two laughers were different in terms of their motivation and meaning? (Fretheim, 465)

185. How does the response "Is there anything to hard for the LORD?" (Gen. 18:14) fit here and in your life? How does one's response to this question shape one's worldview and how one journeys? What does this question state about God? In what ways do questions function beyond a simple request for information? How does God and his promise function as an agent of hope to those beyond hope? (Fretheim, 464f)

186. How does Gen. 18:16ff narrate the inside of the mind of God? What does it say about Abraham's relationship with God? What reasons does God give for letting Abraham into the discussion? Does Abraham, the father of nations, need to be aware of the national handling of issues of justice and injustice? (Fretheim, 468)

187. When does the issue of the righteous being destroyed with the wicked come up in Israel's history and literature (Gen. 18)? (Fretheim, 467)

188. Does Gen. 18:19 indicate that the promises are conditional? How are the promises and righteousness are transmitted?
189. God describes the situation to Abraham as a judicial inquiry into the state of Sodom. Is this just a rhetorical device or does divine knowing actually depend on the inquiry to find out as the text says? What types of theologies have trouble with or down play such human-like statements by the divine? How does one tell when the biblical text actually is telling us something about how the divine mind works or not? In what ways is this dialogue with the divine almost like two friends discussing an important decision? Do both sides contribute or is it predetermined and one sided? How do Abraham's questions reveal the nature of the relationship? If God is just playing with Abraham, does the story and relationship have any integrity? Is there a pedagogical situation behind this (cf. 18:19)?

190. Abraham seems to be bartering for 50 righteous in the city. But if there are none righteous (Rom. 3) then what is the sense of this dialogue? Are there indeed some righteous in the city? What is meant here by the term "righteous"? Are there many facets of righteousness or is it that simply there are none righteous and that's it?

191. What is the nature and function of Abraham's question "Will not the judge of all the earth do right (mishpat)?" Isn't that a good question seeing God said Abraham would have to teach his own family what was right and just (18:19)?

192. The reward-punishment, act-consequence or simple retribution formulas are shown not to be adequate for accounting for reality since their judgment may not come because of the presence of the righteous. When are such delays seen in history and how do the godly respond (cf. wisdom literature and lament Psalms; prophets)? In this world how are the destiny of the righteous and wicked often tied together (Gen. 18)? Does this passage show the need for a "critical mass" of righteous people as Fretheim suggests?
193. How are the stories of Abraham's meeting of the divine visitors in Gen. 18 similar and different with Lot's meeting of the divine visitors in Gen. 19?

194. Is inhospitality the real issue of why Sodom was destroyed as the certain post-modern communities are pushing (Gen. 19)? If inhospitality is the issue of righteousness/unrighteousness here then why is Lot spared when his hospitality to his own daughters is so brutally and abusively lacking? Why are modern interpreters so hesitant and apologetic of linking Gen. 19 with the issue of homosexuality? How has politically correct talk impacted and restricted proper biblical interpretation and limited free speech and free inquiry? How is homosexuality viewed in both the OT and NT? Is it just a cultural thing or a significant transcendent moral issues involved? Are there other sins that are also attached to the men of Sodom elsewhere in Scripture (Ezk. 38; Mat. 10:14f, esp. Jude 7)? (Fretheim, 474)

195. How do ecological disasters mediate God's judgment at Sodom (Gen. 19)? How are human behavior and ecological results linked? Does human sin impact the cosmos? Is this issue ever raised in environmental discussions? Does God cause environmental damage in his judgments? What does that tell us? (Fretheim, 475, 477)

196. In Gen. 19:27ff, what did Abraham find out about the nature of intercession? Is a person always able to successfully intercede with God? Did God not, in fact, spare Lot as Abraham was hoping although he did not say it directly? (Fretheim, 475)

197. How is there irony in the story of Lot with his daughters? (Gen. 19:30ff)? How does it illustrate the old proverb "you reap what you sow"? Is what the daughters of Lot did viewed as negative in the text (cf. Gen. 38:26)? What ethnological features does the story have (Moab, Ammon)? The Moabite line will play into what book of the OT and ultimately into whose genealogy? How does that give hope that even out of abuse good may come without excusing what was done? (Fretheim, 475f)

198. What is the issue of theodicy and how does it play into Abraham's discussion with God over the fate of Sodom (Gen. 18f)? Where else do we see this theme in Scripture? Is the solution a simple pietistic leap of faith? (Fretheim, 477)

199. How does the corporate nature of sin and punishment come into play in
the story of Sodom (Gen. 19)? How does this corporate nature of sin play into recent discussions about terrorism and nations that support terrorism? Children are killed in wars how does this factor into things? Do innocents ever suffer because of the wickedness of others? When has that happened personally/nationally? Why are ten righteous in the city enough to spare it but one not? How does one recognize the situation when there are too few righteous to turn the situation? (Fretheim, 478)
200. What are the similarities and differences between the three wife-as-sister narratives (Gen. 12, 20, 26)? Is it true that Abraham has learned nothing in Gen. 20 as Fretheim says or, is the story to looked at in a different way indicating that we as interpreters have learned nothing from Gen. 12 and are perhaps missing something? How are wives and sisters categorized separately in most cultures? (Kunin, Journ of Prog Judaism, 1994) (Fretheim, 481)

201. How is Abimelech's question in 20:4 similar to Abraham's in Gen. 18:25? How have the roles been turned? (Fretheim, 482)

202. Why if Abimelech's intentions were not evil do consequences flow into his kingdom (Gen. 20:17)? Do consequences follow from evil acts regardless of intentions or are intentions always determinative? (Fretheim, 482)

203. In Gen. 20:7, God calls Abraham a prophet, how does Abraham's role as intercessor fit into the role of the prophet? How effectual are Abraham's prayers? Does God act according to the prayers of his people or only according to his own plans and purposes? (Fretheim, 484)

204. How does this outsider, Abimelech, lead Abraham to a confession of his own faults (Gen. 20)? How is Abraham's confession mixed with bogus justifications? Have you ever seen confession and justification mixed? How are some of Abraham's lines of justification ironic? (Fretheim, 484)

205. How is Abraham failing to be a blessing to the nations? Is he not the catalyst for a curse to Abimelech? (Fretheim, 482f)

206. In the Abimelech story how is God seen as interacting with those outside the orbit of Abraham and Israel (Gen. 20; cf. Mat. 8;10)? Should people of faith listen to outsiders? (Fretheim, 483)

207. Does God hold people back from sinning (Gen. 20)? If he does, why not everyone? Who is responsible for sinning then? Does Abimelech's response play into the equation in any way? When a sin is forgiven does that wipe out all consequences for that sin? Do consequences have a life of their own sometimes beyond the reach of forgiveness? A drunk kills someone and if forgiven, is the person (consequences of the sin) brought back? What does that say about the nature and relationship of forgiveness and consequences? (Fretheim, 484)
208. How is Isaac's name transformed in Gen. 21 as compared to the initial situation (Gen. 17:21)? What are the different types and meanings of laughter? In what sense is Gen. 21 and the birth of Isaac, the climax of the Abraham story and the fulfillment of God's promise? (Fretheim, 485f)

209. In what sense do we see God's involvement in the birth of children today (Gen. 21)? (Fretheim, 486) Do parents also impact that process (genetics, aids babies, etc.)?

210. How is the Hagar story in Gen. 21:8ff similar and dissimilar to Gen. 16? Ishmael mocks/laughs at Isaac which upsets Sarah. How is that a play on words? Why does God side with Sarah who seems overly harsh and oppressive against Abraham who is more moderate? Does God always side with the oppressed? (Fretheim, 488)

211. How does Hagar's wandering in the wilderness parallel Israel's journey in Exodus (Gen. 21)? Where do Isaac and Ishmael meet up again in the narrative (vid. Gen. 25)? (Fretheim, 489)

212. How does Gen. 21 with the loss of Ishmael set up Abraham's experience of the sacrifice of Isaac in Gen. 22?

213. Fretheim quotes Phyllis Trible in regard to Hagar: "Most especially, all sorts of rejected women find their stories in her. She is the faithful maid exploited, the black woman used by the male and abused by the female of the ruling class, the surrogate mother, the resident alien without legal recourse, the other woman, ... the pregnant young woman alone, the expelled wife, the divorced mother with child, the shopping bag lady carrying bread and water, the homeless woman, ... the welfare mother, and the self-effacing female whose own identity shrinks in service to others." Fretheim asks: How does the Christian community respond to these Hagars of our world? Why is this an important reader response to the text of Gen. 21? Are such readings valid? (Fretheim, 490)

214. How does Paul pick up on the Hagar/Sarah story (Gen. 21; Gal. 4:21ff)? (Fretheim, 490)

215. How does the Abimelech story bind the stories of Abraham and Isaac together (Gen. 21:22ff; 26:33)? Why is the site of Beersheba significant and what is its meaning? How do Abraham and Isaac relate to inhabitants of the land? How are they a blessing to them? Does Abraham make covenants with the inhabitants of the land? How will that means of operation work or not work in the time when
Joshua enters the land? Is Abraham a peacemaker? (Fretheim, 492)

216. How can Abimelech be a Philistine when the Philistines were to have settled in Palestine around 1200 BC? Is it an anachronism or what are other ways of solving this difficulty? (Fretheim, 492)
217. How is the Akedah, story of Abraham offering Isaac (Gen. 22), similar to the requirement God would have on the firstborn of Israel (Ex. 22:29) and his providing a redemption for the firstborn (Ex. 13:13; 34:20) (Fretheim, 494)

218. How is the testing of Abraham in Gen. 22 heightened by its juxtaposition with Gen. 21 and the loss of Ishmael? (Fretheim, 495)

219. What connections may be drawn between the call of Abram in Gen. 12:1-4 and his test in Genesis 22? (Fretheim, 495)

220. What is Abraham's response when God tells him to offer up Isaac (Gen. 22)? Why are there no objections as in the Sodom story (Gen. 18:23ff) or any emotional response as there were for Ishmael (21:11)? (Fretheim, 495)

221. How does the Gen. 22 testing of Abraham structure itself around the statements "your son, your only son" and "Here am I"? (Fretheim, 495)

222. What is significant about Abraham's offering Isaac on the mountain called Moriah? How does the narrative highlight that place? (Fretheim, 496)

223. How is Abraham's faith manifested in the story of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22)? How is it seen elsewhere in Scripture (Heb. 11:17ff)? How are faith and trust linked here? How does Isaac's relationship with his father mirror Abraham's trust of God? What does Isaac's question illicit in the story? Promise/fulfillment is a big motif in the Abrahamic narrative. How does Abraham handle the fulfillment in relationship to his trust of God? Can divine fulfillments be problems for faith as the tendency will be to grab the fulfillment rather than continue to trust God? When have you wrestled with that? (Fretheim, 496f)

224. Is the test of Abraham a game for God? In what senses is the powerful statement "Now I know that you fear God..." (Gen. 22:12) challenging to our static or flat view of God's omniscience? Fretheim says the story was not to teach Abraham not to be attached to Isaac or to trust God more or learn some lesson but to confirm a fact that Abraham does fear God. How does shifting the focus away from the test being pedagogical make it more difficult on our preconceived notions of God? Who actually learns in the story? What does the text itself say? (Fretheim, 497)
225. Is God a detached observer of the story of the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22)? How would this story bond God and Abraham together as friends--Abraham being called the friend of God? When would God himself see such a sacrifice of an only son on Moriah? Is God showing Abraham his own greatest struggle? (Fretheim, 497)

226. How does the sacrifice of Isaac shake Abraham's view of God as promiser and fulfiller? How does it break the notions of God being predictable, comfortable and fitting into certain norms of expected behavior and logically prescribed theological boxes? (Fretheim, 498)

227. While Fretheim sees the story of the sacrifice of Isaac as a metaphor of Israel's experience as God's firstborn (vid. Egypt; Isa. 53) in not taking it further does he miss a major insight? How is this story a metaphor of something even greater than Israel's history? (Fretheim, 498f)

228. Abraham concludes the narrative of the sacrificing of Isaac by announcing the place name "The LORD will provide." What is it that Abraham was seeing as being provided by God (Gen. 22:14)?

229. What do you think of Alice Miller's statements that the Gen. 22 sacrifice of Isaac may have contributed to an atmosphere of child abuse? Is this valid? Is Isaac dehumanized and made into an object? What do you think of her approach to this story from a post-modern perspective where victimization, abuse and oppression seem to be the only lenses life and story can be viewed through? Do such perspectives help enlighten the text or violate it at points? Are all interpretative perspectives valid? What criterion can be used to sort out which ones are valid and which are not? (Fretheim, 499)

230. Does the unconditionality of the covenant make faith irrelevant (cf. Gen. 22)? What happens to faith when the promise is fulfilled (a son is born)? How does the testing of Abraham answer this question? (Fretheim, 500)
231. An inclusio is a way of binding a story together by having the start and finish be similar. How does Gen. 23 use an inclusio to bond this story into an unit? (Fretheim, 503)

232. Abraham buys the cave of Macpelah off the Hittites but the Hittite empire centering in Turkey did not extend into Canaan. How do we work with that difficulty historically? (Cf. Gen. 10:15; 28:1; Jdg 1:10 etc.) (Fretheim, 503)

233. How is the bartering for the cave in Gen. 23 different than what we would have expected? Is Ephron's effort to "give" the cave and field to Abraham an act of generosity? How is the purchase of the cave of Machpelah to be seen in light of the promise of the land? Is it a fulfillment? How does the cave play itself out in the burials of later patriarchs? (Fretheim, 504)
234. How does the story about Isaac and Rebekah fit the traditional: man meets woman at well and marries her motif (Gen. 24)? Where elsewhere in Scripture is such a story seen? What twists does this story add? Is it possible the test (watering the camels) was not for divination or a character-test but as Schein suggests a fabrication divine omen of approval so that the marriage proposal would be accepted? (Tradition, 1997) (Fretheim, 509)

235. In the story of Isaac meeting Rebekah why does the text twice mention Isaac is not to return to Haran (Gen. 24)? (Fretheim, 510)

236. How does the story of Rebekah guard her right of refusal? How does that show that human response counts in Genesis not just the angel going before the servant? Does what humans do matter in the biblical account? Do they have actual choices? Do those choices actually shape the future? How do human choices participate with divine purposes? Does the notion of divine providence necessitate a determined future? How does the story of the finding of Rebekah highlight divine providence? Have you ever experienced the movements of divine providence in recognizable ways? How does God work in the ordinary events of everyday life? (Fretheim, 510).

237. In Gen. 24, what role does the servant's rehearsals play in furthering the story? How is the retelling of the same story re-shaped by the context in which it is told? Does this provide us a pattern with how the biblical story should be retold in a post-modern context? How is the term "master" used and then shifted toward the end of the story? (Fretheim, 512)

238. What was the servant's prayer life like in Gen. 24 as he seeks a wife for Isaac? (Fretheim, 513)

239. From the story of Isaac marrying Rebekah, what is learned about the nature of conjugal love (Gen. 24)? (Fretheim, 513)
240. How is the situation with Keturah and Abraham somewhat of a surprise in the narrative (Gen. 25)? Who will the Midianites become in the Exodus account (cf. Ex. 2-3)? (Gen. 25) (Fretheim, 515)

241. What does "being gathered to his people" (Gen. 25) refer to (grave, post-burial practices, view of the afterlife, etc.)? How do the genealogies in Gen. 25 function to show Abraham as the father of many nations? Does the promise extend beyond the boundaries of Israel via this genealogical list? (Fretheim, 515)

242. How is the story of Jacob/Israel the story of every contemporary Israelite (Gen. 25-36)? As a founding father of the nation how does the narrative not white-wash personal and familial problems? How does that argue for the document's historicity? (Fretheim, 516)

243. How does the divine blessing make its way into and out of the episodes of Jacob's life (parents, brothers, in fields, animals, children, and even those he works for)? (Fretheim, 517)

244. How does God speak in the stories of Jacob (Gen. 25-36; command, promise, name, advise, etc.)? How do these speeches shape and direct the flow of the Jacob stories? (Fretheim, 517)

245. How does the region of conflict shift from the Abrahamic conflict between parents over barrenness and childbearing and the Jacob stories where the conflict centers on sibling rivalry? (Gen. 25-36) (Fretheim, 517)

246. Fretheim labels Jacob's family conflict as indicative of a dysfunctional family, do you agree? Fretheim and post-modern interpreters seem quick to judge using psycho/sociological labels are they as quick to evaluate based on moral categories especially when applied to modern situations? Why is that ironic? (Gen. 25-36) (Fretheim, 518)

247. Fretheim thinks the Jacob stories "should not be seen as the actualization of a predetermined fate." Do you agree or disagree with that statement and why? Is the choice and either/or choice or could it be a both/and? What problems arise when one side or the other of this tension is dismissed? (Fretheim, 518)

248. How does the Jacob-Esau birth narrative set the stage for later familial conflicts? (Gen. 25:19ff) (Fretheim, 520)

249. How does prayer impact the birth of Jacob-Esau (Gen. 25)? How does God react differently to the prayer of Isaac and the prayer of Rebekah? How is the story of Rebekah's barrenness similar and different than Sarah's? (Fretheim, 520f)
250. How are the rights of the primogeniture shuffled in the birth of Jacob and Esau? How are the names of Jacob and Esau/Seir/Edom plays on word meanings? (Fretheim, 521)

251. How does the conflict at the birth of Jacob and Esau foreshadow the conflict between the two nations Israel/Edom? How is the conflict between Israel and Edom seen throughout Israel's history? How is the characterization of the differences in demeanor and interests typical of parents observations of their children (Gen. 25:27f)? What other birth narratives in Scripture hint of an individual's future destiny? (Fretheim, 521)

252. What is the birthright (Gen. 25:29ff)? How do Jacob and Esau value the birthright differently? How do those values shape the future? How do Jacob and Esau look at the present and the future differently? (Fretheim, 522)

253. Does the divine word concerning Jacob and Esau's destinies determine everything in the story and negate human involvement and choices? Does Rebekah think so? Is it wrong to help participate in fulfilling the divine promises or is it better to stand back and just let God do it? Is this second method docetic (Gen. 25:19ff)? Did the divine announcement of blessing on Jacob predispose Rebekah in his favor? What about Isaac? Are God's choices grounded in human character and behavior? (Fretheim, 523)

254. Was Jacob right to force Esau to sell his birthright because he lacked food? Is it right to say Esau valued food while Jacob valued spiritual things like the birthright? Must one be careful not to use election as a means of exclusion and for exalting oneself over others? (Fretheim, 524)
255. Why does God not allow Isaac to go to Egypt during a famine as Abraham had (Gen. 26)? What does that say about divine direction for each individual situations versus universal rules that blanket and generalize to fit all similar situations? How does one discern the normative and universal with the historically unique and particular? (Fretheim, 527)

256. In the three incidents of wife-she's-my-sister stories (Gen. 12, 20; 26) what kinds of concerns follow those stories? (Fretheim, 527)

257. How is Isaac's return to Beersheba a "typical theophanic narrative" as Fretheim says? What are its major elements that are found in other divine encounter stories (Gen. 26)? How will Beersheba be a cultic center of worship later in Israel's history? (Fretheim, 528)

258. What is the relationship of obedience to the promise (Gen. 26)? Does Isaac receive the promise because he is obedient or because his father was obedient? Did Abraham originally receive the promise because of his obedience? Is it possible for a community to receive the benefits of a promise based on the obedience of a former generation? How is the promise transmitted intergenerationally? Have you ever seen something like that happen in our times? (Fretheim, 529)

259. What does God's statement regarding Abraham's keeping of "my commands, my decrees and my laws" mean (Gen. 26:5)? How does that relate to the laws given at Sinai? Does the law actually not begin at Sinai but begin development at the moment of creation, flood and onwards as Fretheim has suggested? (Fretheim, 529f)

260. How do Abimelech and outsiders announce the fulfillment of divine promises in Gen. 26?
261. What roles do the senses play in the story of the deception of Isaac in Gen. 27 (seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, hearing)? How does Isaac use his available senses to test his suspicions and confirm truth? Which senses does he trust the most? Does Isaac ever address the deceptive Jacob as "Esau"? (Fretheim, 535f)

262. How do the birthright and blessing differ (Gen. 27)? How is the father as "blesses" one role of the father that is needed in modern times? How may fathers shape the future of their children? Did a father have more than one blessing? Could he bless multiple children? Where is the blessing of each child seen in Genesis? (Fretheim, 534)

263. How does the blessing in Gen. 28:1ff function with the blessing Isaac gives Jacob in 27:27ff? (Fretheim, 537)

264. Is the story of Jacob's deception of Isaac (Gen. 27) to be understood as a cheating deceiver chosen by God in spite of his character which gives hope to all, that God's election is not based on character? Is such a negative view of Jacob and large theological implications warranted? How should Jacob's and Rebekah's actions be evaluated (concern for the divine promise, dislike of Esau, self-interest)? Does Isaac's vulnerability count for anything? Why does one never hear of the victimization and abuse of fathers? Does the divine promise make it okay? How do the consequences tell on Jacob? (Fretheim, 537f)

265. Is a blessing able to be retracted? Does the blessing, like a curse, once spoken have a life of its own as the power of the word takes over? Does the communal meal ritual lock the blessing in? How does blessing shape history in Genesis and today? (Gen. 27) (Fretheim, 539)

266. Does Jacob's being blessed result in a trouble-free life (Gen. 27)? (Fretheim, 539)
267. How do the two Bethel stories parallel each other (Gen. 28; 35)? (Fretheim, 519)
268. As Jacob leaves his family fleeing from Esau how and when does God meet him (Gen. 28)? Does God often meet people at their moments of vulnerability? (Fretheim, 541)
269. How does Jacob's meeting of God at this place change the meaning of the place, Bethel (Gen. 28)? How does God change even the stones of that place? How does the divine encounter transform the normal into the religious? How will Bethel function later in Israel's religious history? Have you been to Bethel? Can Bethel be used to describe an adolescent encounter with God for themselves rather than tacitly acquiescing to the religion of their family? How is religion communicated transgenerationally today? (Fretheim, 541)
270. Is it Jacob's ladder or a stairway or ramp connecting heaven and earth that Jacob sees (Gen. 28)? How is the structure similar to the ziggurats of Mesopotamia which had the dwelling of the gods at the top and the structure which was considered a microcosm of the world with the priests approaching the gods at the top? How is the biblical story different? Do the angels communicate with Jacob or does God speak directly? Does the stairway indicate the connection of heaven and earth as not remote and distant or open and present? (Fretheim, 541)
271. How does the situation at Bethel confirm Jacob's blessing and birthright (Gen. 28)? What concrete and external markers does Jacob use to establish his divine encounter at Bethel? How does the visual and tactile play in the religious experience here? After an intense religious experience is it appropriate to mark that experience with public external markers or rituals? How important is place in worship? Does John 4:21 negate the significance of place? (Fretheim, 542)
272. How does Jacob own his religion at Bethel (Gen. 28)? How do you understand Bruggemann's statement "the world is a place of such meetings"? How would such dreams be viewed today? What kinds of shapes does that experience take today? (Fretheim, 543)
273. How do the themes of transcendence, presence and access converge in the story of Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28)? (Fretheim, 543)
274. How does Jacob's vow function in relation to God's promises (Gen. 28)? Is Jacob himself now making a promise and will have to
become a promise keeper? How does that smack against his normal character as seen in Genesis so far? (Fretheim, 544)
Genesis 29

275. In the novella or short story of Gen. 29-31 how can the episodes of this narrative be seen as an ABCBC chiastic structure? What lies at the heart of this narrative (births)? (Fretheim, 552)

276. How is Jacob's meeting of Rachel at the well resulting in marriage similar to other such well/meeting/marriage stories (Gen. 29)? What role do stones play in the Jacob narrative? What is the significance of Jacob rolling the stone away from the mouth of the well? (Fretheim, 552)

277. What role does love play in the story of Jacob and Rachel? How do the complications further highlight the love between them (Gen. 29)? (Fretheim, 553)

278. How does irony play into the situation with Jacob, Laban and Leah? How does the right of the firstborn haunt Jacob in his marriage? How does the trickster being tricked illustrate the lex talionis (eye for eye) principle (Gen. 29)? (Fretheim, 553)
279. How does Leah's story make itself known in the narrative? Who does God side with in the Rachel/Leah competition? How does God side with the oppressed? Does the story of Jacob with two/four wives provide an argument in favor of polygamy? How does one move from descriptive narrative to normative and prescriptive types of principles (Gen. 30)? (Fretheim, 553)

280. How do the meanings of the names of Jacob's sons and daughter play into and further develop the storyline of the narrative (Gen. 30)? How is the role of God recognized in the birth of the children? How is God a responder to human need in these birth announcements? How does the conflict between Rachel/Leah parallel other familiar conflicts (Sarah/Hagar, Jacob/Esau) and prefigure others (Joseph/brothers)? (Fretheim, 554f)

281. How does the story of the mandrakes highlight the conflictedness of Jacob's family life (Gen. 30)? How does the bartering for a night with Jacob reveal how Jacob's wives view him? (Fretheim, 555)

282. What ancient belief does Jacob's breeding sheep with striped rods in front of them reveal? How is Jacob's plan of breeding the strong ones similar to genetic engineering (Gen. 30)? (Fretheim, 556)
283. How do Rachel and Leah see their leaving of their father Laban? (Gen. 31) How are dreams used by God to protect his chosen from those who are outside? Where else does a similar protective dream happen in Genesis? (Fretheim, 557)

284. How does Rachel's stealing and hiding the family gods show her victory over her father's abuse (Gen. 31)? What does the "Fear of Isaac" divine epithet mean in this context? How does the Mizpah benediction play into Laban's overstated role as father? (Fretheim, 557)

285. How was the covenant between Jacob and Laban made? What symbols and rituals occur (Gen. 31)? (Fretheim, 558)

286. How did the family marriages change after Jacob's return from Haran? Is there ever a return to Haran as a place of marriage and home (Gen. 31)? (Fretheim, 558)

287. What does the depth of intrafamily conflict and deception suggest about the historicity and preservation of the biblical text (Gen. 31)? How are the patriarchs portrayed? (Fretheim, 558)

288. What role does humor play in the Genesis narrative (cf. Gen. 31:33ff)? (Fretheim, 559)

289. How do the main characters in the Laban/Jacob cycle respond to the voice of God (Gen. 30f)? (Fretheim, 559)

290. How do women play the role as mediators of divine blessing in the Jacob stories? How do the women voice their dissent to the men that had dominated their lives (Gen. 29ff)? How is their faith voiced in the birth of their children? (Fretheim, 559)

291. How does the family conflict and deception in the Jacob stories provide encouragement on how God works in conflicted situations today (Gen. 29ff)? Does God only use perfect people? How does blessing function with failure? (Fretheim, 559)

292. How can the stories of Jacob leaving Laban be paralleled with Moses leading the people out of Egypt (Gen. 31)? Are the parallels very striking? How are the two events different? (Fretheim, 560)

293. How do the roles of oppressor and oppressed oscillate throughout the Jacob cycles (Gen. 29ff)? (Fretheim, 560)
294. What two facings or encounters dominate Gen. 32-33? How is the word "face" significant in a couple contexts in Gen. 32? Do God's commands and promises lessen the need for divine encounter? (Fretheim, 562)

295. How does Jacob use master/servant language in his encountering of Esau (Gen. 32-33)? Does that indicate Jacob is reversing his reception of the blessing earlier? (Fretheim, 563)

296. How is Jacob's prayer (Gen. 32:9-12) like a Psalm of lament (1) invocation; 2) recollection of God's command, 3) confession of unworthiness, 4) request for deliverance and 5) claiming of divine promises? (Fretheim, 563)

297. How does Jacob's divine encounter interrupt the flow of Gen. 32-33? How do divine encounters mark the beginning, middle and end of Jacob's journey? How are the divine encounters similar and unique? How is Jacob changed by each encounter? (Fretheim, 563, 565)

298. How is Jacob's encounter with God at Peniel in Gen. 32 mirrored by his encounter with Esau in Gen. 33 (face, struggling, etc)? What echoes between the two texts can be heard? How does God use the nature of anticipated difficulty itself in the process of answering Jacob's prayer? (Fretheim, 565, 573f exc!)

299. What did Jacob's wrestling with God indicate about the human side of the encounter? Does Jacob have power with God? How can Jacob see God's face and live (cf. Ex. 33:20; Num. 12:8; Jud. 13:22)? What is the significance of Jacob's name change in this divine wrestling narrative? What does Jacob's name change imply about God? How is Jacob's encounter with God precisely at the point of vulnerability? How does God bind himself to Jacob at that point? How is an embodied God identified with man in the Gen. 32 encounter? (Fretheim, 565ff)

300. What is behind Jacob's request for God's name? How is that similar to Moses' request in Exod. 3? How does God respond to Jacob's question? What does that say of God's name/character? How does one hang onto God? (Fretheim, 566)

301. How does the dietary rule reinforce and transmit the encounter to succeeding generations? How is religious memory inculcated into the Israelite religion? Was Jacob's struggle only internal? Was God just playing games with Jacob or was there an actual struggle (what does the text say?)? (Fretheim, 567)
302. How are the stories of Abraham's testing (Gen. 22) and Jacob's wrestling (Gen. 32) similar? How do such stories show the means of spiritual formation? Was Jacob profoundly changed in his character after the wrestling? What does this say about God's active engagement with us? How does God engage our struggles? (Fretheim, 568)
303. What verbal and non-verbal indications are there that when Jacob meets Esau he takes the servant role (Gen. 33)? What does Esau's response reveal about Esau's reception of Jacob? (Fretheim, 572)

304. How is one to view Jacob's saying he cannot travel back to Seir with Esau? Does Jacob revert to deception with his reconciled brother once again or is something else going on? Are Jacob and Esau truly reconciled after their meeting? (Fretheim, 573)

305. How will relationship between Israel and Esau's descendants, the Edomites, fare over the years (cf. Obadiah, Ps. 137; etc.)? How is the reconciliation of brothers possible? (Fretheim, 573)
306. How does the story of the rape of Dinah connect with the themes of Genesis (family conflict, marriage to outsiders, circumcision, deception, etc. Gen. 34)? How are the Canaanites presented in this story? What other stories focus on Shechem? In the NT what happens near Shechem (Jn. 4)? (Fretheim, 576)

307. How does the narrative portray Shechem in a positive light in the midst of the violent story (Gen. 34)? How are outsiders portrayed? How did Shechem's offer have Dinah's best interest at heart? How do the relationships between fathers fit with the roles between sons? How does Shechem's offer go beyond the situation with Dinah? Had Shechem's offer been taken would that have changed things in redemptive history later on? Does Shechem's behavior fit the scientifically documented behavior of a rapist (not lust but anger and power) is it possible this narrative is not about rape but about pre-marital sex as Gruber has suggested? (Beth Mikra, 1999) (Fretheim, 576f)

308. How do Jacob's sons use deception and religion to take vengeance (Gen. 34)? How is the meaning of circumcision distorted? How is religion used today to destroy outsiders? (Fretheim, 577)

309. When and how does "overkill" vengeance take place in societies and how does lex talionis (eye for eye) mitigate that (Gen. 34)? If someone you loved was raped how would you respond? How does violence beget violence in modern times? Is violence ever a justified response? (Fretheim, 578f)

310. How does Dinah suffer both rape from an outsider and violation from her own brothers (Gen. 34)? How has she, as a victim, been silenced? (Fretheim, 580)

311. How does the story of the rape of Dinah fit with the promise to be a blessing to the nations (Gen. 34)? Is this another failure of the chosen family? (Fretheim, 580)
312. How are the stories of Jacob's return journey and Abraham's journey from Haran to the Negev similar (Gen. 35)? (Fretheim, 584)

313. How is Jacob's return to Bethel a paradigm for true worship in Israel (Gen. 35)? Why do they give him the rings in their ears? What does Jacob's family putting away their gods imply about the content of their religion and commitment to God? How does Brueggeman's statement "The new community is found by renunciation, renaming, reclothing, and finally, receiving a promise" manifest itself in Gen. 35 and Jacob's return to Bethel? (Fretheim, 584f; Brueggeman, 283)

314. How do all the previous theophanies converge in Jacob's return to Bethel (Gen. 35)? What echoes from the other encounters reoccur in Jacob's encounter at Bethel? (Fretheim, 585)

315. Reuben sleeps with his father's concubine (Gen. 35). How is that a political move that is seen elsewhere in Scripture (2 Sam. 3, 12, 16)? How does that effect Reuben's firstborn status later (Gen. 49)? (Fretheim, 585)
316. How does the Edomite king list fit with the time of Moses (Gen. 36)? Does it go beyond that time? How does the Edomite genealogy foreshadow Israel's own development from individual to family to tribe to nation? Why is it significant in the historiography of Israel that it contains such a large section narrating the history of non-chosen peoples? What is the connection of the Horites to Seir and to Edom? How will Edom's later history intersect with Israel's later history? (Fretheim, 590)
317. How does the narrative of Gen. 37-50 differ from the stories of Gen. 12-36? What elements from a "wisdom literature" perspective may be seen in the Joseph stories? How are the earlier stories more focused on geographical movements and the Joseph stories more around personal and royal settings? How does Gen. 37-50 move from the individual to the nation of Israel? How does family history merge into national history? (Fretheim, 592f)

318. How does Gen. 37-50 provide the setting for the book of Exodus? How is Pharaoh portrayed in Gen. 37-50 in contrast to Exodus 1-15)? (Fretheim, 592f)

319. How does God work out his purposes in Gen. 37-50 behind the scenes How is that different than how God was portrayed in Gen. 12-36? How do God's communicational methods shift from Gen. 12-36 to 37-50? (Fretheim, 594)

320. How is the beginning of the Joseph story similar to the beginning of the Jacob story (inept father, parental deception, chosen/not chosen, sibling rivalry) (Gen. 37)? (Fretheim, 598)

321. Where did Joseph's coat of many colors go to in the KJV/NIV (Gen. 37)? How do the following play out in Jacob's family system: young/old; concealed realms of discourse, rivalry, betrayal, selected gifts, shunning, conflict, violence, social hierarchy? (Fretheim, 598)

322. How does the scene change to Shechem/Dothan allow the brothers to operate outside the father's realm of control and protection (Gen. 37)? (Fretheim, 599)

323. Does the brothers selling Joseph to the Midianites and then the mention of the Ishmaelites mean there were two traditions seamed together into a single narrative by a later editor (Gen. 37)? What other explanations can be given? (Fretheim, 599)

324. How does Jacob grieve for Joseph? What is the function of these externalized symbols of grief? How do people grieve today (Gen. 37)? Why do Christians feel so uncomfortable with grieving? (Fretheim, 600)

325. How does our psychoanalytic view of dreams today differ from the way they understood dreams in those days? What role does dreams play in the Joseph narrative? What function did dreams play in that society? Why would God use dreams to communicate? (Fretheim, 601)

326. How does the Joseph narrative balance divine providence and human
actions? How does the narrative stay out of a one-sided divine
determinism and also a purely humanistic perspective? (Fretheim,
601)
327. How does the Judah/Tamar story (Gen. 38) break into the Joseph narrative? How do the common themes of non-recognition of someone known, deception, reversal, and Judah as foil for Joseph play out in the two stories? (Fretheim, 604)

328. Why did Onan refuse to have children for his brother? What Genesis motif does that refusal continue? What role does the outsider Canaanite play in the story? (Gen. 38) How are Onan's and Judah's responses to Tamar similar? What is heroic about Tamar's plan to fulfill the law outside the law? Why did Tamar take such risks? (Fretheim, 604f)

329. What would Judah's staff, signet and cord be like in today's culture (Gen. 38)? How do people get someone's identity today (vid. movie The Net)? How is Judah's reaction to Tamar's pregnancy ironic? (Fretheim, 605)

330. How does the birth of Perez and Zerah echo another birth in Genesis (Gen. 38)? How does this story focus on the plight of women in the Ancient Near East? How did women respond in such situations? (Fretheim, 606)

331. What role does Tamar play in the birth of Christ (Mat. 1)? Why is this divine irony? How does God use "outsiders" to accomplish his purposes of election? (Fretheim, 606)
332. How does Joseph see his relationship to Potiphar's wife? How do power and sexuality interface in the conflict (Gen. 39)? How does Joseph see the relationship between this sexual act and his relationship with Potiphar and moreover his relationship to God? How does this situation with Potiphar's wife fit with the admonitions of wisdom in Prov. 5 and 7? How is Joseph a model of handling one's conflicted sexuality today? (Fretheim, 610f)

333. How does God appear in this narrative (Gen. 39)? How do the Egyptians perceive God's presence with Joseph? On what basis do the Egyptians make theological statements? How does God's presence assert itself in situations of human abandonment? How is Joseph fulfilling the promise of being a blessing to the nations? (Fretheim, 610f)

334. What other modern stories and movies have the innocent victim, outcast without power or prestige through great struggle becoming a person of position and power (Gen. 39; hint: Cinderella)? Why do such stories intrigue us? How does the story of Joseph fit with many of the situations and themes of David's life? Why does Fretheim relate many of the Genesis stories as echoed in David's life? (Fretheim, 612)
335. How does Joseph bring God into the picture when in prison with the two officials of Pharaoh (Gen. 40)? How did God use these two Egyptian officials to help resolve the problem Joseph, his chosen one, was facing?

336. How do the 3 dual dream sequences tie the Joseph narrative together? How are dreams connected to the future? Does that still happen? Does this similar and dissimilar to psychoanalytic dream interpretation techniques in any way [future/history, etc.]? Besides God, what are other sources of dreams cited in the Bible (Eccl. 5:7; Deut. 13; Jer. 23)? (Fretheim, 614f)

337. How does the description of "having one's head lifted" play in the two dreams of the Pharaoh's officials and also in the normal role in those coming into Pharaoh's court (Gen. 40)?

338. How does the time element play in the dreams of the officials and then later with Joseph having to wait of two years to be remembered? What does waiting do when a person is in an oppressed situation? What impact can such waiting have on one's faith development? (Fretheim, 615)

339. How does Joseph verbalize his own perception of his situation for the cupbearer in prison (Gen. 40)? While God is with Joseph does Joseph still need and seek human help? How is Joseph's lament like the latter lament of Israel enslaved in Egypt and the lament psalms? (Fretheim, 616)
340. How does the change of scene in Gen. 41 foreshadow Joseph's own shift of situation? What other stories follow the pattern of a person of low status solving a difficult problem and being moved to high status? Why is the prison to palace motif so strong? How does the human act of remembering turn the story? (Fretheim, 620)

341. How does Pharaoh perceive dreams that he is troubled by them (Gen. 41)? How do the literal and allegorical elements of Pharaoh's dream blend into the interpretation? How does Joseph go beyond a mere interpretation of the dream to a solution? How does that help his situation? While the dreams reveal God's future plans how does Joseph's plan show the impact of human response? How do humans help shape the given future (7 years famine, etc.)? What is God's connection to Pharaoh in the narrative? (Fretheim, 621)

342. What role does the changing of clothes play in Gen. 41? What were the symbols of status in Egypt? (Fretheim, 622). Is Joseph's marrying an Egyptian wife viewed negatively in the text? How is Joseph's marrying an Egyptian to be contrasted with conquest commands not to marry foreigners? How is the openness and tolerance here contrasted with conquest intolerance of the inhabitants of the land? Why the difference?

343. How do the names of Joseph's children reflect his life story (Gen. 41)? How is forgetfulness of the past a freeing gift from God sometimes? (Fretheim, 622)

344. How are prophetic and wisdom traditions blended into the Joseph story (Gen. 41)? What characteristics does Joseph manifest? (Fretheim, 622f)

345. How is God shown to work in economic and governmental spheres outside of Israel in Joseph's move from prison to palace (Gen. 41)? How does Joseph, the chosen one, become a blessing to other nations? What attracts the "outsiders" to contact with God's chosen (cf. Deut. 4:6)? (Fretheim, 623)

346. Is Joseph's use of power seen as his brothers come to Egypt for food in Gen. 41 to be viewed positively or negatively? (Fretheim, 627)
347. Where have we seen the meeting of estranged brothers before (Gen. 42)? How is Joseph meeting very different than previous "meetings"? How does Joseph's brothers' language and non-verbal responses to him fulfill Joseph's earlier dreams? (Fretheim, 628)

348. How does Joseph tease their common story out of his brothers so healing can begin (Gen. 42)? Why would they claim in their defense of not being spies that they are the sons of one man? How does that defense open up the story? (Fretheim, 628)

349. What does Joseph's harassment bring out in his brothers (Gen. 42)? How does their confession of guilt connect several stories together? Why would Joseph's brothers connect their present plight with what they did to Joseph (sowing/reaping)? How does Reuben's "I told you so" speech further the narrative? How does Joseph's response manifest his heart toward his guilt-laden brothers? (Fretheim, 628)

350. What things in the brothers' trip to Egypt create a feeling of helplessness in them (Gen. 42)? (Fretheim, 629)

351. Why did Joseph test his brothers (revenge, facade for the Egyptians, determine if they had changed, preserve his family alive, or desire to see Benjamin, etc.)(Gen. 42)? What does Joseph's weeping indicate about his motives? (Fretheim, 630)

352. The second journey of Joseph's brothers to Egypt is looked on by some as a "doubling journey" which suggests to them multiple sources poorly seamed together by an editor (Gen. 42). What do you think about such doubling in Genesis? (Fretheim, 633)

353. When there is a famine in Canaan where do the people traditionally go to get food and help (Gen. 42)? Why? (Fretheim, 633)
354. When Judah argues with Jacob about the need to return to Egypt he raises the issue of them being viewed as "honest men" (Gen. 43). How does that play into the greater storyline? (Fretheim, 633f)

355. Why is so much of the story in Gen. 43 mediated through the steward rather than Joseph facing his brothers directly after Benjamin is brought? What theological statements does the steward make? (Fretheim, 634)

356. How does Joseph work the revelation of his identity in peek-a-boo fashion (Gen. 43)? Why does he not reveal himself sooner?
357. Joseph's silver cup was said to be used for divination. Does Joseph practice divination or is this a ruse (Gen. 44)? (Fretheim, 639)

358. How do the brothers' cries of innocence parallel Joseph's own? How do the brothers defend Benjamin in a way they had not with Joseph (Gen. 44)? How does Judah's self-sacrificial attitude toward Benjamin show the brothers have moved to a different level of relationship with younger, favored brothers? Is the brothers' concern at this point for Benjamin or for the suffering of their father (or their own culpability before their father)?

359. How do good and evil play between Gen. 44:5f and Gen. 50:20? What is God's role in uncovering guilt (44:16)? How does Joseph participate in that unmasking? (Fretheim, 640)
360. Gen. 45 is parallel to Gen. 50:15-21. How does that later passage show that the reconciliation with Joseph's brothers was not completed in Gen. 45? How does the "father" (Jacob) play differently in these two passages? Is the issue of accountability and penalty ever addressed earlier? How does the guilt/penalty issue pop up in Gen. 50? In Gen. 45 whenever Joseph refers to God as subject/actor who is the object? How does the master/servant language still show itself in Gen. 45? (Fretheim, 643)

361. How does Joseph identify himself to his brothers (Gen. 45)? (Fretheim, 644)

362. In Gen. 45:3ff, how is the past reinterpreted in light of the present? How does that work in your developing understanding of your own journey from then to now? How are past pains and crises given new light with the new contexts that come over time? How does God work in famines? By giving a divine perspective how does that free his brothers from expressing sorrow, regret, guilt, shame and confession of what they did? Is the reconciliation full without those components of repentance? If the selling of Joseph was God's plan are the brothers culpable? What is the relation of the divine and human intentions in these stories (cf. 50:20)? How do the divine and human participate together to form one story? (Fretheim, 644)
363. What is Pharaoh's response to Joseph's family (Gen. 45)? What good qualities does Pharaoh manifest as a ruler? (Fretheim, 645)

364. How is Gen. 46:1ff a return to a format more similar to Gen. 12-35 than the chs. 37-45? What does it mean to say Gen. 46 is more episodic and itinerary driven? What role does Beersheba play in the development of Israel's religious history? (Fretheim, 652)

365. How does Joseph shed his official role when he greets his father (Gen. 46)? Jacob reunites with Joseph alive and Jacob now says he can die. What things prepare a person for the acceptance of the coming of death? (Fretheim, 653)
366. How does Jacob's life illustrate Fretheim's point that being a recipient of God's blessing does not mean a trouble-free life (Gen. 47)? How does that play out today? How does the shape of Jacob's journey converge with the goals of God's promises? (Fretheim, 653)

367. How does Joseph become a means of blessing for Pharaoh (Gen. 47)? How does Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh fit into the promise of Israel being a blessing to the nations? How is the shift from family to nation/people beginning to take shape? (Fretheim, 654)

368. How does Joseph's enslaving of the Egyptian people foreshadow the enslaving of Israel (Gen. 47)? (Fretheim, 655)

369. How do the stories of exclusion in Gen. 37-38 find their reversal in the uniting of the family in Gen. 48-50? How are Judah (major tribe in the south) and Joseph's sons (Ephraim/Manasseh--major tribes in the north) highlighted? What are the indicators of the movement from family to tribe (Fretheim, 656)

370. Why did Jacob make such a big deal over being buried in Canaan (Gen. 47)? How is the oath/covenant procedure used in Jacob's getting his sons to promise to return his body to Machpelah? (Fretheim, 659)
371. What is going on with Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's two sons and Jacob (Gen. 48)? How were adoptions done in the Ancient Near East? Why would Jacob want to adopt Joseph's sons? (Fretheim, 659)

372. What is ironic about Jacob's crossing his hands and blessing Ephraim as the firstborn (Gen. 48)? How does the history of Ephraim show its becoming a dominant tribe in the northern kingdom of Israel? Functionally with Levi receiving no land inheritance the inclusion of Ephraim and Manasseh returns the tribal number to what? Who gets a double portion in the inheritance rituals? (Fretheim, 660)

373. What is the father's role of being a blesser (Gen. 48)? Does it still function that way today? How does Jacob's blessing converge with God's blessing? Are deathbed statements from a father valued today? (Fretheim, 660)

374. The phrase translated "ridge of land" (Gen. 48:22) plays on the term "shekem" which also plays on the place "Shechem". How does this play make its way from the history of the patriarchs into the future of Ephraim (Gen. 33:18ff; Josh. 24:32, etc.)? (Fretheim, 660)

375. How does this description of blessing show a way of thinking of the movements of history in terms of "underlying family structures" rather than as simple events (Gen. 48)? (Fretheim, 661; cf. Westermann)

376. What images does Jacob use for describing the God-human interaction in Gen. 48:15f? How does this blessing draw together the themes of the book of Genesis? (Fretheim, 661)
377. What parallels can be drawn between Gen. 49 and Deut. 33? (Fretheim, 664)
378. Gen. 49 is an ancient poem. What poetic elements are seen in it? How is imagery used, poetic features of parallelism, aphorisms and oracular pronouncements? (Fretheim, 664)
379. An inclusio caps the beginning and end of a literary unit. What inclusio is used to draw Gen. 48-49 as a unit (Cf. Gedn. 47:28; 49:33)? (Fretheim, 664)
380. How do the future and history interact in the poem of Jacob's last words? How does Gen. 49 show Israel's non-spin or politically corrected telling of history in a "warts and all" approach? How does Jacob move from an understanding of his son's character to a determination of their future? How do character and future connect? How is this description of the future not apocalyptic? (Fretheim, 665, 667)
381. How does the future of Levi and Simeon differ (Gen. 49:5ff; Cf. Deut. 33)? (Fretheim, 665)
382. Who has the longest sections in the Jacob last words poem? How is Judah portrayed and what is meant by in 49:10 "until Shiloh comes"? When will Judah become royal in Israel's history? Do the statements made to Judah have messianic overtones or are they merely a reference to a monarchy situation? (Fretheim, 665)
383. How do many of Jacob's last words fit with the tribal settlement of each tribe (vid. Joshua/Judges)? How are the blessings on Joseph linked to the patriarchal blessings? (Fretheim, 665)
384. How do the last words of Jacob pull much of the book of Genesis together? (Fretheim, 667)
385. What metaphors of plants and animals are used (Gen. 49)? How are the connections between animals and human character manifest (cf. Prov. 6:6; 30:18ff)? (Fretheim, 667)
386. How does Jacob's mummification fit an Egyptian setting? What do we learn about ancient burial practices from Gen. 50? How are the Egyptians portrayed in this burial scene? Will this relationship with the Egyptians dramatically change in Exodus? Which is to be the norm for how outside nations are to be treated by the Israelites Genesis or Exodus? (Fretheim, 669f)

387. After a parent die how do the relationships between siblings have to be renegotiated (Gen. 50; vid. Ted Williams' death)? How do the brothers play off their father's request? How does the brothers' "servant" language reflect their fears? How does guilt linger even after forgiveness? How is reconciliation shaped? How does Joseph allay their fears? How does Joseph's speech transcend their guilt and give them a new perspective on their own personal and shared histories? (Fretheim, 671)

388. What does Gen. 50 show us about how God works in a world full of evil? How does God's goodness link Gen. 50 and Gen. 1 and show God's overarching creational purposes?

389. Does Gen. 50:20 indicate a plan of God that is worked solely by itself or does it participate and interact with the plans of humans? Are humans automatons or active agents involved in shaping the future? How does Gen. 50:20 parallel Rom. 8:28f? (Fretheim, 672)

390. How does the story of Joseph show the moral order of things? How do time and events stream that order in the direction of God's persistent purposes? (Fretheim, 673)

391. How does the epilogue (Gen. 50:22ff) link to the next book and stage of Israel's development? (Fretheim, 674)