

NEW ATLANTIS
(1626)
BY FRANCIS BACON

STUDY QUESTIONS

Edited by Gerard B. Wegemer

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Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* – Study Questions

INTRODUCTION (pages 1-4)

1. Upon what is our attention focused as we and the travelers are introduced to Bensalem?
2. What contrast is presented between paragraph one and the six that follow? What is the significance of Bensalem's name (which is Hebrew for "son of peace")?

PART 1: THE STRANGERS' HOUSE AND THE HISTORY OF BENSALEM (pages 5-21)

1. What characterizes the Strangers' House and how do the European strangers respond to it? What advice does the European leader give to his fellow travelers?
2. What are the most striking attributes of the Governor of the Strangers' House?
3. What is the first question asked by the strangers and how does the Governor receive that question?
4. What is your reaction to the Governor's answer? What do you find most surprising about this account?
5. What is the strangers' second question and why do you think the Governor says they "did well to ask pardon" for phrasing that question as they did?
6. Given the Governor's answer, what lessons does he want to impart about Bensalem? Why would he volunteer to give the information in his "digression" (19-20)?

7. How do the strangers react to the Governor's history?
8. Why do you think the Governor does not let the strangers kiss his tippet (21), yet the Father of Salomon's House does (31)?

PART 2: MARRIAGE LAWS AND CUSTOMS IN BENSALEM (21-29)

1. What effect is achieved by having the narrator and Joabin describe Bensalem's marriage laws and customs?
2. What does this society seem to value most highly, as seen in these laws and customs? How does it compare and contrast with the Utopian practices?

PART 3: ON THE HOUSE OF SALOMON (29-43)

1. What distinguishes this Father of the House of Salomon?
2. What is the subject of his private conference with the narrator?
3. What does this account reveal about life in Bensalem?

OVERALL

What is most valued in Bensalem by the rulers, the priests, and the people?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How does *New Atlantis* differ from More's *Utopia*? How do the objectives of each differ?

Would you prefer to live in Bensalem or in Utopia? Why?

In book three of *Gulliver's Travels*, what is Swift satirizing about Bacon's *New Atlantis*?