

Notes & Outlines

GENESIS

J. Vernon McGee

THE PENTATEUCH

The first five books of the Bible are called the Pentateuch. *Pentateuch* means “five books.” These books were written by Moses and are identified in Scripture as the Law. Although the Mosaic authorship has been questioned, it is affirmed by conservative scholars and confirmed by archaeology. Bible believers unanimously accept the Mosaic authorship (Deut. 31:9, 24, 26; Acts 7:37, 38).

GENESIS

“The Seed Plot of the Bible”

WRITER: Moses

NAME: Genesis

The name *Genesis* is taken from the Septuagint. The Septuagint (LXX) is a Greek translation made of the Old Testament in Alexandria at the order of Ptolemy Philadelphus about 285-247 B.C. Josephus tells us that this translation was made by 72 priests (hence its name) in 72 days. Six priests were from each of the 12 tribes. Christ and Paul quoted from this translation of the Old Testament. It is older than any of the Hebrew texts extant today.

Genesis is the book of beginnings and the families — the beginning of creation, man, woman, sabbath, marriage, family, work, sin, murder, sacrifice, races, languages, culture, civilization and redemption.

Genesis means “origin,” “source,” “birth.” The meaning closest to that of the original is “birth.” It is derived from the Greek verb *gennaō*, which means “to beget” or “give birth to.” Genesis is the book of beginnings and sources, but more particularly it is the book of births — this is often overlooked. It is the book of generations. According to this understanding of Genesis, it falls into two natural divisions:

1. Gen. 2:4 — The Book of the Birth of Heaven and the Earth (from Septuagint)
2. Gen. 5:1 — The Book of the Birth of Men

Simply stated, the Book of Genesis is the record of the “family tree” of the Jews. It is the genealogy of heaven, earth, and man. Even the new birth is suggested in Genesis 3:15, where is the first mention of a Redeemer.

OUTLINE (According to genealogies):

- Gen. 1:1 — 2:6 Book of generations of heavens and earth — divine poem of creation — God’s creative work
- Gen. 2:7 — 6:8 Book of generations of Adam (men, *anthropoi*) — Adam was created, but children born to him
- Gen. 6:9 — 9:29 Generations of Noah
- Gen. 10:1 — 11:9 Generations of sons of Noah
- Gen. 11:10-26 Generations of sons of Shem (Gentiles)
- Gen. 11:27 — 25:11 Generations of Terah
- Gen. 25:12-18 Generations of Ishmael
- Gen. 25:19 — 35:29 Generations of Isaac (why Abraham left out, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” cf. Gen. 21:12; Heb. 11:8, 9; Rom. 9:7)
- Gen. 36:1 — 37:1 Generations of Esau
- Gen. 37:2 — 50:26 Generations of Jacob (genealogy of rejected line given first, chosen line last, cf. 1 Cor. 15:46 for principle in giving genealogies)

KEY: Generations

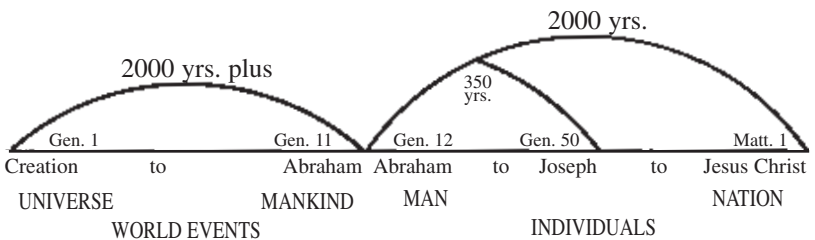
PURPOSE: To give us the families — Gen. 12:3; 22:18; 28:13, 14; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:6, 9, 16.

The first 11 chapters cover a minimum of 2000 years. It could easily be a thousand times longer. From chapter 12 to chapter 50 the time is 350 years. This should arrest our attention.

11 chapters cover 2000 years, plus.

39 chapters cover only 350 years.

Certainly the record slows down at chapter 12. Better stated, the first 11 chapters constitute an introduction to the remainder of the book and the Bible. This chart may prove helpful.



COMMENTS:

Abraham is more important to God than the universe. It is being only fair to an author to place the emphasis where he places it.

In the New Testament God indicates emphasis in the same way. The four Gospels record the main events in the life of Jesus Christ. Examine the following facts:

There are 89 chapters in the 4 Gospels:

4 chapters cover the first 30 years of His life,

85 chapters cover the last 3 years of His life,

27 chapters cover the last 8 days of His life.

Which is more important to the writers, judging from the space given to each — the first 30 years or the last 8 days? Four chapters cover the first 30 years and 27 chapters cover the last 8 days. When you turn to the Epistles, you discover why the emphasis is on the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4). These facts constitute the gospel; your salvation rests upon them. Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins, and that He was raised for your justification? This is essential.

One of the harshest and most frequently heard criticisms of the Bible concerns the creation account. It is pointed out that other nations of antiquity had such a story. This is true, but a comparison of the Genesis record with one of the best of a secular nation, the Babylonian tablets of creation, will show the superiority of the Genesis record. Here all is contrast:

Babylonian

Tablets begin with chaos

Heavenly bodies are gods

Polytheistic theology
(many gods)

Work of a craftsman

Characterized by puerility
and grotesqueness

Out of harmony with science

Bible

Bible begins with cosmos, perfection

Heavenly bodies are matter

Monotheistic truth (one God)

God spoke

Grand and solemn realities of the
Creator God who is holy and is a
Savior

In accord with science (many scien-
tists are believers)

OUTLINE:

I. Entrance of sin on earth, Chapters 1—11

A. CREATION, Chapters 1, 2

1. Heaven and Earth, 1:1
“Create” (bara) occurs only 3 times, vv. 1, 21, 27
2. Earth became waste and void, 1:2
3. Re-creation, 1:3 — 2:25
 - a. First Day — light, 1:3-5
 - b. Second Day — air spaces (firmament), 1:6-8
 - c. Third Day — dry land appears and plant life, 1:9-13
 - d. Fourth Day — sun, moon, stars appear, 1:14-19
 - e. Fifth Day — animal life (biology), 1:20-23
 - f. Sixth Day — fertility of creation and creation of man, 1:24-31
 - g. Seventh Day — sabbath, 2:1-3
 - h. Recapitulation of the creation of man, 2:4-25
(Law of recurrence)

B. FALL, Chapters 3, 4

1. Root of sin — doubting and disobeying God
2. Fruit of sin — *“Out of the heart proceed...murders...”*
(Matt. 15:19)

C. FLOOD, Chapters 5 — 9

1. Book of generations of Adam — through Seth — beginning of man’s history — obituary notices, 5
2. Antediluvian Civilization — cause of flood and construction of ark, 6
3. Judgment of flood, 7
4. Postdiluvian civilization — after the flood, 8
5. Postdiluvian life — new beginning, 9

D. TOWER of BABEL and confusion of tongues, Chapters 10, 11

1. Ethnology — sons of Noah, 10
2. Tower of Babel, 11
(Contrast to Day of Pentecost)

II. Preparation for the coming of the Redeemer of all mankind, Chapters 12 — 50

A. ABRAHAM (faith), Chapters 12 — 23

(Development of faith by 7 appearances of God)

1. God’s call and promise to Abram — his response by lapse of faith, 12
2. Abram returns to land from Egypt — separates from Lot

- God then appears the third time to Abram, 13
3. First war — Abram delivers Lot; first priest — Abram blessed by Melchizedek, 14
 4. God reveals Himself more completely to Abram — reaffirms His promises, 15
 5. Unbelief of Sarai and Abram — birth of Ishmael, 16
 6. God makes covenant with Abraham (Abram becomes Abraham) — confirms promise to Abraham about a son, 17
 7. God reveals coming destruction of Sodom to Abraham — Abraham intercedes on behalf of inhabitants, 18
 8. Angels warn Lot — Lot leaves Sodom — God destroys cities of the plain, 19
 9. Abraham repeats sin at Gerar about relationship of Sarah, 20
 10. Birth of Isaac — Hagar and Ishmael cast out — Abraham at Beer-sheba, 21
 11. God commands Abraham to offer Isaac — restrains him — reconfirms covenant with Abraham, 22
 12. Death of Sarah — Abraham purchases Machpelah cave for burial place, 23

B. ISAAC (the beloved son), Chapters 24 — 26

(Choosing of a bride compares with Christ and the church)

1. Abraham sends servant for bride for Isaac — Rebekah returns with him — becomes Isaac's bride, 24
2. Death of Abraham — birth of Esau and Jacob (twins) to Isaac and Rebekah — Esau sells birthright to Jacob, 25
3. God confirms covenant to Isaac — Isaac misrepresents relationship with Rebekah — Isaac digs well in Gerar, 26

C. JACOB (“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth”),

Chapters 27 — 36

1. Jacob and Rebekah connive to get blessing intended for Esau, 27
2. Jacob leaves home — at Bethel God appears to him — confirms Abrahamic covenant, 28
3. Jacob arrives in Haran — meets Rachel and Uncle Laban — serves for Rachel — deceived into marrying Leah, 29
4. Birth of sons of Jacob — Jacob prepares to leave Laban — Jacob's bargain pays off, 30
5. Jacob flees from Haran — Laban overtakes him — Jacob and Laban make Mizpah covenant, 31

6. Crisis in life of Jacob: at Peniel a Man wrestles with him — Jacob's name changed to Israel, 32
7. Jacob meets Esau — Jacob journeys to Shalem, 33
8. Scandal in Jacob's family: Dinah defiled — brothers avenge by slaying men of Hamor, 34
9. Jacob returns to Bethel — Rachel dies at Bethlehem — Isaac dies at Hebron, 35
10. Family of Esau which becomes nation of Edom, 36

D. JOSEPH (suffering and glory), Chapters 37 — 50

1. Jacob dwells in Canaan — Joseph sold into slavery, 37
2. Sin and shame of Judah, 38
3. Humiliation in Egypt, 39, 40
 - a. Overseer in house of Potiphar — tempted then framed by wife of Potiphar — imprisoned, 39
 - b. Joseph in prison interprets dreams of baker and butler, 40
4. Exaltation in Egypt, 41 — 48
 - a. Joseph interprets dreams of Pharaoh — made overseer of Egypt — marries Asenath — birth of Manasseh and Ephraim, 41
 - b. Jacob sends 10 sons to Egypt for corn — audience with Joseph — leave Simeon as hostage — return home with corn and refunded money, 42
 - c. Jacob sends sons (Benjamin included) again to Egypt — entertained in Joseph's home (does not reveal his identity), 43
 - d. Joseph sends brothers home — arrested by steward — cup found in Benjamin's sack, — Judah pleads for Benjamin, 44
 - e. Joseph reveals identity — tender reunion with brothers — invites Jacob and all family to Egypt, 45
 - f. Jacob with family (70) move to Egypt — Jacob and Joseph reunited, 46
 - g. Jacob and brothers dwell in Goshen — presented to Pharaoh — famine forces Egyptians to sell land to Joseph for Pharaoh — Joseph swears he will bury Jacob in Canaan, 47
 - h. Jacob on deathbed blesses Joseph's sons, 48
5. Death and burial of Jacob and Joseph, 49, 50
 - a. Jacob gives deathbed blessing and prophecy for 12 sons, 49
 - b. Death and burial of Jacob in Canaan — death and burial of Joseph in Egypt, 50

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

- Barnhouse, Donald Grey. *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1973.
- Davis, John J. *Paradise to Prison: Studies in Genesis*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1975.
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- Wood, Leon J. *Genesis: A Study Guide Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1975.

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