

GENESIS THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

Author: Moses

Genesis doesn't say who wrote it.

It is included among books of Pentateuch credited to Moses

-by Jewish tradition

-by Old Testament

-by New Testament

Moses' authorship is never questioned in biblical records, nor in early historical writings.

It is directly related to the rest of the Pentateuch.

Exodus is based on it's history and takes up where Genesis leaves off.

Date: Date of writing the book--15th century B.C.

Mosaic authorship places the book in 15th C.

Date the events occurred--Creation to death of Joseph in 1804 B.C.

--Covers more than 2000 years of history.

Purpose and theme:

The book was NOT intended to provide the complete history of man from creation to Joseph.

There are too many holes in the story to accept that alternative.

Selection of material indicates that Moses wished to describe the major events that led up to the formation of Israel as a nation.

The story of Israel in Exodus and the rest of the Pentateuch leaves many unanswered questions:

Where did these people come from?

Why are they in Egypt?

Genesis, as "the book of beginnings" was written to answer some of these questions.

Genesis goes beyond the historical facts to explain Israel's birth and existence from God's perspective.

The purpose of God, as the Author of history and Sovereign of the universe, is brought into perspective as Israel's origins are described.

Genesis prepares the way to understand God's program for Israel throughout the Old Testament.

Organization: Three major patterns--

Each pattern adds something to our understanding of the book's content.

The author's use of "these are the generations of . . ." ("*this is the account of . . .*"), repeated 10 times:

2:4	5:1	6:9	10:1	11:10
11:27	25:12	25:19	36:1	37:2

The expression divides the book into 11 sections.

Some think the expression *introduces* a new section; others believe it *concludes* the preceding material.

First view considers 1:1-2:3 to be an introduction to the book.

Second view considers 37:2b-50:26 to be an appendix, sometimes called "The Joseph Narratives"

While there is some evidence for each alternative, several clear examples support the first.

Based on this organizational device, the book can be outlined: (See bottom of your diagram!)

"These are the generations of . . ."

Introduction: The beginning of the story	1:1-2:3
The story of the heavens and the earth	2:4-4:26
The story of Adam	5:1-6:8
The story of Noah	6:9-9:29
The story of Noah's sons	10:1-11:9
The story of Shem	11:10-26
The story of Terah	11:27-25:11
The story of Ishmael	25:12-18
The story of Isaac	25:19-35:29
The story of Esau	36:1-37:1
The story of Jacob	37:2-50:26

Each of these titles focuses our attention on the descendants of the person named.

The second method of organization recognizes the major change in God's dealings with man which divides the book into two logical sections:

God's dealings with all mankind	1-11
God's dealings with Abraham's family	12-50

While normally this division is placed between chapter 1-11 and 12-50, the transition begins earlier.

In 1:1-11:9, the author describes the major steps of God's dealing with all mankind. He condenses more than 2000 years of human history into 11 chapters!

In 11:10 a transition begins which concludes with God's call to Abraham, in order to establish a new race.

Abraham's descendants were to be separate from all other races.

Through this race a nation would be established that would form the basis of blessing for the entire world.

This story unfolds from 11:10-50:26

The third method of organization introduces subdivisions of the preceding two divisions.

Though oversimplified for popular presentation, it makes the contents easy to remember.

It is based on four major events and four major people.

I. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ALL MANKIND	1-11
(organized around)	
FOUR MAJOR EVENTS:	
1. Creation	1-2
2. Fall	3-4
3. Flood	5-9
4. Confusion	10-11

- II. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ABRAHAM'S FAMILY 12-50**
 (focuses on)
FOUR MAJOR PEOPLE:
- | | |
|------------|-------|
| 1. Abraham | 12-23 |
| 2. Isaac | 24-26 |
| 3. Jacob | 27-36 |
| 4. Joseph | 37-50 |
- (My outline is indirectly derived from this idea)

**GENESIS
 THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS**

I. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ALL MANKIND 1:1-11:26

A. THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSE 1:1-2:3

Moses begins by describing the preparation of the stage for drama he's about to narrate.

Before man could serve God in conformity to God's plan, he must have a place to live.

In contrast to contemporary stories about the earth's origin, filled with capricious, competing gods, Moses described how the One and Only sovereign, omniscient God spoke.

The authority of His spoken word created the world in which man was to live.

After an initial summary statement that God created the heavens and the earth (1:1), Moses proceeds to describe how God did it.

Although it isn't the author's purpose to introduce man in this chapter, he must include him along with the rest of God's creation.

Even though he mentions him briefly, he is obligated to point out some basic differences from the other creatures.

Of all the creatures God made, this one required special attention.

God has a special plan for him.

Only man was made in God's image.

He was to be God's special representative on the earth, to rule over all the other creatures God had made.

What lessons do we learn from this part of the story that should make a difference in our lives today?

B. THE BEGINNING OF HUMANITY 2:4-25

Having described the preparation of the stage for the drama of God's kingdom program, His rule upon the earth through His creation, Moses now goes back for a closer look at the creation of man.

He starts from the beginning again, only briefly referring to man's environment, in order to describe how God made man and, in a personal way, gave him life (4-7).

His home is described, giving the impression of a perfect, peaceful environment (8-14)

Man was given everything he needed to enjoy life as God's representative on earth.

Living in the midst of such a perfect environment, man had only one problem: there was nothing like him with which he could share his life.
Nothing conformed to what he was so he might enjoy companionship.
He was all alone (18)

Through the work God gave him, Adam observed the nature of each creature.
He came to realize that there was nothing else like him.
He was alone (19-20).

God solved the problem by creating woman as a suitable helper (21-23).

She was taken from him and made to be one with him.

The author applies the lesson to marriage: the man and his wife were to stand alone before everything and everyone else.

This was God's design for the home.

What lessons should we learn for our lives today from this section of Genesis?

C. THE BEGINNING OF SIN 3:1-6:8

In spite of a perfect environment and the absence of the sin nature, when man's submission to God's authority was put to the test, he failed.

The serpent was an instrument in Satan's hands to cause Eve to question God.

– His truthfulness (1-4)

– His love (5)

1. Temptation to sin 3:1-5
2. Intrusion of sin 3:6
3. Consequences of sin 3:7-24
 - a. Guilt 7
 - b. Fear and broken fellowship 8-11
 - c. Blaming one another 12-13
 - d. Punishment 14-19
 - Work without fruit
 - Woman's role changed from man's companion to mother of his children
 - Embarrassment in nakedness and sexual relationships
 - Guilt
 - Contaminated environment
 - Death – both physical and spiritual
4. Culmination of sin 4:1-6:8
 - a. Two alternatives presented 4:1-5a
 - Cain's way vs. Abel's way
 - b. Man's way chosen by some 4:5b-24
 - Cain's descendants – accomplished great things but had no time for submission to His authority.
 - Their lifestyle was secular and humanistic
 - c. God's way chosen by others 4:25-5:32
 - In contrast to Cain's descendants, God gave Adam another son, Seth.
 - Beginning with Seth, men began to call themselves by Yahweh's name. **(4:26)**
 - They sought to submit to God's authority and identify themselves with Him.

d. Crossing of the ways 6:1-8

By Noah's time, the distinction between the two kinds of people begins to fade.
God's people began to view life from man's perspective. (6:5)

They were attracted by physical beauty of those who weren't God's people.
Intermarriage broke down the distinction between God's people and natural,
secular, pagan people.

The entire human race began to follow a perverted lifestyle.

Sin and rebellion grew until God described all man's thoughts as "*only evil all the time!*"

God decided to judge all mankind, and destroy what He had made.

He would take the only notable exception, Noah, and start over with him.

What lessons should we learn from this part of the story?

D. THE NEW BEGINNING WITH NOAH 6:9-11:26

God chose Noah, who followed Him, though he wasn't perfect.

God instructed him to prepare an ark, in order to save himself from the judgment which
would destroy the now-corrupt creation He had made.

Noah believed God and obeyed His instructions.

He was saved because of His faith in God and in His Word.

Through Noah and his descendants the nations developed.

While note was taken of their distribution, no explanation was given.

The event which caused them to scatter did not occur until some time later.

Thus, the author returns to explain the cause of the dispersion.

As men repopulated the earth, instead of submitting to God's authority and spreading
throughout the earth, man decided to stick together and develop the Great Society.

Rather than identify himself with God, he decided to make a name for himself. 11:4

From God's viewpoint that plan was rebellious.

His disobedience would lead to further degeneration and rebellion.

Thus God again intervened in history.

Man's plan was stopped by a permanent communications problem that still causes
lack of understanding between nations.

What should we learn about life from this passage?

II. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ABRAHAM'S FAMILY 11:27-50:26 Another New Beginning

A. ABRAHAM, THE CHOSEN ONE 11:27-25:11

Due to man's renewed disobedience, God once again selects from among men one
individual who will submit to His authority.

See how important submission to God's authority is!

Moses traces the transition from Noah to Abraham, showing how man's depravity has
shortened the length of human life.

Life is short because of man's sin, not because of God's plan.

Having described the foundation of the nations of the world, Moses narrows his view to
concentrate on one particular family.

God called Abraham, in the midst of the confusion of his times, to separate himself from
his own people, and to form a new people, the people of God. 12:1-3

By means of Abraham and his sons, God would demonstrate to rebellious humanity, and to all His creation, that there were among men those who would recognize His worth and submit voluntarily to His authority.

God's people would be a testimony to the rest of humanity and through them God's love and grace would be made known.

B. ISAAC, THE PROMISED SON 25:12-28:9

After describing Abraham's death, the author turns his attention to the two principal rivals among Abraham's sons:

Ishmael, Abraham's firstborn 25:12-18

- His descendants were organized into 12 tribes.
- Hostility characterized the relationship between Ishmael's descendants and those of his brother.

In this section, the basis for future conflict with neighboring tribes is introduced.

Even in the family of Isaac, the promised son, there is conflict!

- Rivalry between
 - Esau (humanistic attitudes again surface)
 - Jacob (who seeks God's will, through deceptive means, and has to learn to trust God to accomplish His own plans).
- God dealt with Isaac as He had with Abraham, confirming again His promise.

C. JACOB, THE BLESSED DECEIVER 28:10-37:2a

When Jacob leaves for Padan-Aram, the center of attention moves off Isaac (the weak-willed father) and follows Jacob.

The deceiver is converted into *the Blessed One*.

He was the one who had *struggled with God*, and been triumphant.

D. JOSEPH, THE MISTREATED DELIVERER 37:2b-50:26

The focus of Jacob's story shifts to Joseph, the favored son.

God uses the conflict between Joseph and his brothers *to protect the entire family and to move them to Egypt* where God will prepare them for life as a nation. **50:19-21**

As Genesis concludes, God's sovereign hand is evident on His people.

Israel is in Egypt – there God will protect them.

There God will use suffering . . .

- to purify His people
- to unify His people
- to prepare His people to become a great nation

With this backdrop in place, the author is ready to tell the story of THE BIRTH OF THE NATION. EXODUS describes that birth.

Think through each of these major sections of Genesis.

Write down one major lesson God wants YOU to learn from each part of the story.

What action should you take as a result of this study?