

Outline of Genesis

The book of Genesis is the book of beginnings. The first word in Genesis is the Hebrew בְּרֵאשִׁית (b^eray'sheet), which means "in the beginning."

The word Pentateuch means "5 scrolls" and refers to the five books of Moses, each originally on its own scroll. These books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Genesis was written by Moses, as was the rest of the Pentateuch. There are both internal and external arguments for this statement.

First, some of the internal arguments:

- 1) The Pentateuch mentions Mosaic authorship: Exodus 17:14; Deuteronomy 31:9, 24.
- 2) The author seems to be an eyewitness. Moses was certainly that.

Second, here are some of the external arguments:

- 1) Traditionally the five books have always been taken together by Jews and Christians to be written by Moses.
- 2) Other OT books affirm that Moses wrote the Pentateuch: Joshua 1:7, Dan. 9:11-13.
- 3) Moses was certainly qualified to write the books: Acts 7:22.
- 4) The NT affirms Moses wrote it: John 5:45-47, 7:22-23, Acts 3:22, Rom. 10:5.
- 5) Certainly the impression is left with the reader of the Bible is that Moses wrote all of the Pentateuch.

The key term in outlining the book is "history" or "generations." It occurs 13 times in the book and marks 10 major divisions. The outline below reflects these divisions by using the word "History" in each outline point. The three "extra" references to the word "generations" are marked.

I. Creation	1:1-2:3	
II. History of Creation through the Fall and Cain and Abel	2:4-4:26	
III. History of Adam's family through the spread of evil	5:1-6:8	
IV. History of Noah through the flood	6:9-9:29	
V. History of Noah's Sons, Table of Nations, Tower of Babel	10:1-11:9	see 10:32
VI. History of Shem's family to Terah.....	11:10-11:26	
VII. History of Terah's family through Abraham.....	11:27-25:11	
VIII. History of Ishmael's family	25:12-18	see 25:13
IX. History of Isaac's family, account of Jacob	25:19-35:29	
X. History of Esau's family, the Edomites	36:1-37:1	see 36:8
XI. History of Jacob's family, Joseph, travel to Egypt	37:2-50:26	

Notes

- We can compute that there were 1656 years between creation and the flood (try it sometime!). Methusaleh died in the year of the flood. Thus, a vast amount of time is summarized within the first few chapters of the Bible.
- We can date the birth of Abraham to be about 2166 B.C.

- Note that a main purpose of Genesis is to inform us as to the origin, purpose, and destiny of the people of Israel.
- Note the emphasis on “blessing” in the book: 1:22, 1:28, 2:3, 5:2, 9:1, 12:2 -3, 14:19-20, 17:16, 17:20, 18:18, 22:17-18, 24:1 (27, 31, 35, 48, 60), 25:11, 26:3-4, 26:12, 26:24, 26:29, 27:4 (7, 10, 12, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29-38, 41), 28:1 (3, 4, 6, 14), 30:13, 27, 30, 31:55, 32:26, 29, 35:9, 39:5, 47:7, 10, 48:3 (9, 15, 16, 20), 49:25, 49:28.
- Note the emphasis on “cursing” in the book: 3:14, 3:17, 4:11, 5:29, 8:21, 9:25, 12:3, 27:12-13, 27:29, 49:7.