GENESIS

INTRODUCTION:

1. AUTHOR:
   Most likely Moses. There are problems with this but it appears that Moses arranged the content and the material. NT calls the Pentateuch, the "Books of Moses" in John 5:46, Luke 24:44.

2. DATES WRITTEN:
   Probably about 1400 BC.

3. DATES COVERED BY THE BOOK:
   From the Creation of the Universe (Date Unknown) to the entrance of the Family of Promise into Egypt by Jacob and his family, approximately 1800 BC.

4. NAME:
   Comes from a word that means "origin" or "beginnings".

OUTLINE:

1. THE BEGINNING OF THE HUMAN RACE. CH 1-11
   A. The beginning of the world. Ch 1
   B. The beginning of mankind. Ch 2
   C. The beginning of sin and redemption. Ch 3
   D. The beginning of the family. Ch 4:1-15
   E. The beginning of civilization. Ch 4:16-5:32
   F. The beginning again under Noah and the flood. Ch 6-9
   G. The beginning of the nations. Ch 10-11

2. THE BEGINNING OF THE CHOSEN PEOPLE. CH 12-50

   A. The Life of Abraham. Ch 12-23
   B. The Life of Isaac. Ch 24-26
   C. The Life of Jacob/Israel. Ch 27-36
   D. The Life of Joseph. Ch 37-50

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENESIS:

1. We see that God created everything. See John 1:1-3
2. We see that all men are descended from Adam. See Romans 5:12ff
3. We see that sin and death entered the world through Adam. Romans 5:12
4. We see that God promised a Deliverer. Genesis 3:15
5. Genesis explains the relationship of Israel to the world. See Galatians 3:14, Romans 9-11

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN READING GENESIS:

Look for the COVENANTS that God established with men. Some of these are: Adam (CH 3), Noah (CH 9), Abraham (CH 12) and renewed with each generation as with Isaac (CH 26), Jacob (CH 28 & 46).

Notes by PJW (2002)

GENESIS DEVOTIONAL NOTES

1 – Not only is God the one who V1 "created the heavens and the earth," he is involved in every stage. He said it and it happened just as he said. The other phrase that seems to dominate is, "and God saw that it was good." This occurs every day and also in the end after he created humans, V31 "it was very good." God created man in his image and then commanded them to V28 "fill the earth and subdue it…" Humans were created by God to fill the earth with the "image of God." What an awesome privilege and responsibility!

2 – This is the account of the specific creation of the man and the woman. First God prepared the garden. V5 "there was no man to work the ground." The Lord planted a garden, and it was there that he put the man. The two trees are introduced in a way that prepared for their role in chapter 3. God put the man in the garden to work it and to keep it. Note that the location of the garden is among four rivers including the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, modern day Iraq. The woman was created for the purpose of being V18 "a helper fit for him." The "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is the test tree. They are not to eat of it at all. It set a restriction on the created beings to separate them from the Creator, God.

3 – This is one of the foundational chapters to the entire Bible and its story. God gave the humans only one act they were not to do, eat from this one tree. They were tempted by a talking snake with lies and misleading ideas and they fell to it, disobeyed and sinned. The highlight of the chapter is the prophecy of the Deliverer in V15. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." This is the earliest prophecy of the Messiah and was fulfilled in Jesus. Notice that angels were set in place to prevent the humans V22 "lest he reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."

4 – Eve thought incorrectly that with the birth of her firstborn that he was "the man" who would fulfill God's promise. He turned out the opposite as in 1 John 3:12. "We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous."

5 – This chapter shows the devaluing of the image of God. It moves from the fact that when God created man he created him in his image or likeness. By the end of the chapter man is so sinful that he must be totally destroyed by the flood. That is the way we would all be except for the grace of God to us through his Son, Jesus. In Jesus that image and likeness is being restored and will be completely restored at the time of the resurrection. The other reference to Christ is that every person no matter how long they live eventually dies. Death is the opposite of what Christ brings us. He brings life, life eternal. Think of the rapture event of the NT as you read of Enoch who stood out because his account did not end as all the others. It says, V24 "and he was not for God took him." So in Christ, there are those who will not die but as 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says, "Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."

6 – God decided to destroy the world and all its inhabitants. He would start over with Noah and his family. They were to take animals, two of every kind and any food that they would eat into the ark with them. Clearly God's purpose here was to destroy all living beings, human and animal but to preserve this one family with which he will begin the human race over. V8 "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."

7 – God's purpose here was twofold. V7 "every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground." And he purposed to save two and two, male and female as well as Noah, his wife, his three sons and their three wives from the flood. V21-22 "And all flesh died that moved on the earth…and all mankind. Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died."

8 – After the flood every person and all flesh went out of the ark. The purpose was similar to after creation. V17 "that they may swarm on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth." Noah offered burnt offerings on the altar. The Lord responded with a promise. He also seems to recognize that V21 "the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth."

9 – The covenant established is, V11 "never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." The covenant sign would be a rainbow.V13 "I have set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

10 – It seems that the point of the genealogy in this chapter is to lead us to the truth that V32 states: "and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood."

11 – This is the story of the tower of Babel, named for the various tongues or languages that God created that sounded to others like "babble." This is the beginning of the city and nation of Babylon, current Iraq. God

commanded the people to scatter and fill the earth. Their disobedience is in V4, "lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." The genealogy is traced from Shem to Abraham. It is hard to understand the number of year references in the genealogies. In some way, they need to be accounted for in the dating of the age of the earth and the human population. Here two points are made regarding the beginning of Abraham's story. Sarai was barren and Terah headed for the land of Canaan but settled only part way there in Haran.

12 – God promised several blessings to Abraham. V2-3 "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." We are still talking about his name 4000 years later. God will bless those who bless him and God will curse those who curse him. God also promised him the land to which God led him. Abraham had faith but was not perfect. God had to intervene to preserve him and Sarah from his lie about his wife that she was his sister.

13 – The Lord and his promises to Abraham continue to dominate the story. He promised him all the land he could see in any direction. He promised that he would have descendants V15-16 "as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted."

14 – In spite of the story of the war and rescue, clearly the highlight of the chapter is the meeting between Abraham, the one blessed by God, and Melchizedek, V18 the "priest of God Most High." It was Melchizedek who blessed Abraham and it was Abraham who paid a tenth to the priest. ESV translates "Creator of heaven and earth" as "Possessor of heaven and earth" in V19 and 22. It is an interesting difference. Is it because God is Creator that he can also be called "Possessor"? Or is this an alternate rendering of the Hebrew word that is also legitimate?

15 – There are two statements that God makes that include a purpose in them. The first is in V7, which says, "I am the Lord who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess." The reason God brought Abraham out of Ur was to give him this land. The second is in V16. "And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." The purpose of God was to be delayed. There was something about why he delayed that seems to indicate that his purpose in the delay was possibly to allow more time for repentance. However, knowing that they will not repent, he still has plans for the land with Abraham. The highlight of the chapter though without question is V6. "And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness." This verse is cited by Paul in Romans 4 and Galatians 3 as well as James in 2:23.

16 – See V13 where Hagar says of God, "You are a God of seeing." This is a failed attempt to fulfill God's promise in a way that is not God's way. Here the consequences continue to haunt Abraham's descendants to this day as the descendants of Ishmael, the Arabs haunt the descendants of Isaac, the people of Israel.

17 – There are three main advances in this story in this chapter. In the early part, the covenant sign of circumcision is introduced. V10 "Every male among you will be circumcised." Next God identified that Abraham's son or the heir would be born through Sarah and his name would be Isaac. V16 "I will bless her and moreover I will give you a son by her." That son is identified in V19 as Isaac. God promised, "I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him."

18 – The next stage in the story is that the birth is announced as taking place in one year. V10 "The Lord said, 'I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son.'" Even though Sarah laughed at this, the event of God's promise would still occur. This shows that it does not depend on faith for God to do it but on God's promise. Then Abraham interceded with God. John White's book, "Daring to Draw Near" is right in that the issue to Abraham is the character of God. Will God destroy the righteous, thinking of his nephew Lot, along with the wicked? When he is satisfied that God will do what is right, he concluded the question time. Also there is a purpose statement in this chapter. V19 "For I have chosen him that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

19 – Here the angels sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah rescue Lot and his family before the judgment. Again it is God's will that prevails. V16 "But he lingered. So the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city."

20 – There are a number of ways in which God had to preserve people in order for his will to be accomplished and his promise to be fulfilled. Abraham lied about his wife to protect himself and put Abimelech in jeopardy. God protected him. God said to Abimelech, V6 "It was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her."

21 – There are three stories in this chapter. In the first, Isaac, the son of the promise was born. V3 "Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore him, Isaac." In the next story, Ishmael was sent away but God promised to care for him. He grew up and took an Egyptian wife. Then in the third story, Abraham established a covenant with Abimelech. V33 "Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God."

22 – God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, "his only son," Isaac, whom he loved. This phrase is repeated several times. The other phrase that seems to be significant is the phrase, "God will provide for himself." See V8 and 14. ESV includes in the margin that it could also be, "The Lord will see," or "On the mount of the Lord he will be seen." Is this a different original text or is this a different way of translating the same Hebrew word? Either way it is a great picture of the provision of God for our sin through the sacrifice of his Son Jesus. We sinned and were to die. God provided a substitute who died in our place. This is a significant and common theme in the Bible. See Genesis 3 where the animals died instead of Adam and Eve. See 2 Samuel 12 where David's son with Bathsheba died instead of David dying. See Isaiah 53 where the Lord laid on "him the iniquity of us all." We did the sinning. Jesus did the dying for our sins. See 2 Corinthians 5:21. Incidentally this is the same mountain in Genesis 22 as the one where Jesus died. Note also that God renewed almost all the promises that he had made to Abraham in V15-18.

23 – This is the account of the first piece of property in the Promised Land that Abraham came to possess. God promised him all of it, and this first part he even has to pay for. It was for a tomb for his wife Sarah who was buried there.

24 – Note in this chapter the atmosphere of the Lord that surrounded and accompanied everything that happens. It is the Lord who blessed Abraham V1. The Lord is the basis of the covenant with the servant V3. The Lord will go before the servant in his task V7. The servant prayed to the Lord about the events V12. The Lord led the servant to the house of a relative of Abraham V27. The Lord dominated the conversation by the servant to Rebekah's family V35-49. Both Laban and his family submitted to the Lord since, V50 "the thing has come from the Lord." It seems in this way that it is most clear that God is watching over this line from which comes Messiah. May the Lord so dominate our thinking in our lives!

25 – This chapter advances the story in three ways. Abraham had several more sons with a second wife but these are clearly separated from Isaac. Abraham died and was buried on his property. Isaac had two sons after 20 years of marriage. Clearly God's choice is involved. The younger, Jacob, is chosen by God over the older, Esau. Esau confirmed this choice later when he sold his birthright for a bowl of soup. See Romans 9:12.

26 – In this chapter God passed on the blessing of Abraham to Isaac. V6 "And in your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws." Isaac is the generation in between two great generations, of Abraham and Jacob. See also V24, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake."

27 – Here the humans act as if the fulfillment of God's promise is up to them. Rebekah and Jacob scheme and lie to deceive Isaac into blessing Jacob over Esau when God already announced that he would bless Jacob. V41 "Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him." Does what they do actually achieve God's purpose or would he have done it anyway? This is the line of Jesus. They needed a Savior just like we do.

28 – In this chapter God passed on the promises that he had made to Abraham and Isaac to Jacob. God appeared to him and he responded with worship and commitment back to God. Notice the lying, deceit and manipulation on the part of these people. The ancestors of Jesus needed the Savior that he was to be. Also God renewed the promised covenant with the next generation after Abraham and Isaac, with Jacob.

29 – The deception that Jacob pulled on his father to obtain the blessing was pulled on him as Laban gave him Leah as his wife after he served seven years for Rachel. Then he got Rachel as his wife also. This family continues to need the Savior that Jesus will be.

30 – The sons of Israel are born. Leah has six sons. Her maid has one. Rachel's maid has one and Rachel has Joseph. Jacob's family continues to be a family that is in need of a Savior. They deceive, bribe, and cheat their way to many sons and much prosperity in flocks.

31 – What a mess the story is in this chapter. Yet God did all this to arrange for the family of his Son. Jacob left his family to find the wife. This chapter recounts how Jacob returned to his family and more importantly to the land of his family. This is the land where Messiah will be born and live.

32 – What a great spirit Jacob shows in V10. "I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps." Is there a contrasting parallel between the wrestling match here between Jacob and God and the time Jesus spent in the Garden of Gethsemane praying? Jacob resists God's will and God wrestles with him to take away all that he relies on so that he will accept or receive God's blessing. Jesus by contrast seeks out God's will and knowing it, only seeks confirmation that this is the only way God's will can be carried out. He submits to God's will all the way and at all times.

33 – Jacob and Esau finally met and in the grace of God, the heart of Esau had been changed to receive and embrace Jacob. On the other hand, it still seems that Jacob has not been changed in that he still lied to Esau. Oh how we all need the Savior Jesus. Nevertheless, it is very significant that in V18 it says, "And Jacob came safely (or peacefully) to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city." Jacob was home in the land God promised, at least until he went to Egypt with Joseph.

34 – This chapter has rape, deceit, murder and lack of forgiveness. This is the family of the Messiah. They needed a Savior, just like we do. It is encouraging that when God tells his story, he does not cover over the sin and failures. That makes it more like the real life we live.

35 – In this chapter, God met with Jacob. He renewed the promises of the covenant with him. It seems that this is a reminder of God's faithfulness that he has brought Jacob this far after he had made the promises to him when he fled from Esau. Note that God came to meet with Jacob. Ultimately Jesus comes to meet with all humans to bring us God's promises of the covenant. There is more need for the Savior here in that Reuben sleeps with his father's concubine thus forfeiting his rights as firstborn. Judah eventually is named firstborn in inheritance even though he was fourth. Simeon and Levi forfeited their rights by their vengeance on their sister's behalf. Also his favorite wife Rachel and his father Isaac died. Rachel died giving birth to Jacob's twelfth son, Benjamin.

36 – This chapter is the story of Edom and his descendants. It is interesting that while the descendants of Esau are not the chosen line, there is this extensive list of his descendants. How great in detail is our God even with those who are not in the line of the Messiah. It is also a reminder of missions that God cares for all peoples and nations.

37 – This is such a great story just as stories go. The brothers hated Joseph and planned to kill him. God would use all this to rescue them but what he used to preserve Joseph was actually their greed. They decided to profit from him and by selling him as a slave instead of killing him. There may be several pictures of Jesus seen in the life of Joseph. Joseph brought a bad report on his brothers to his father. Jesus, by visiting earth, could return to his Father with the report that all humans are sinners in rebellion against the Father. His brothers hated him. In John 1:11 Jesus came to his own, meaning those who belonged to him, but they did not receive him. In Joseph's case, V18 tells that they conspired to put him to death, just as with Jesus. Just as Joseph, Jesus went down to Egypt for a period of his life. Just as Joseph, Jesus was sold for some pieces of silver.

38 – Skipping ahead, we know that it is from the tribe of Judah that Jesus is descended. This chapter relates the story of the beginning of the tribe of Judah. It was not righteous. This is another example of the family of the Savior needing the Savior like the rest of us. See Matthew 1:3 that shows that this is the line of Jesus the Messiah.

39 – There are two key elements in this chapter that seem to contradict each other. Joseph was a slave in his master's house and then he was thrown in prison unjustly even though he faced temptation and chose what is right. The other element that seems to contradict this is that "the Lord was with Joseph". That phrase appears four times in verses 2, 3, 21, and 23. The presence of the Lord in our lives and even doing what is right do not guarantee an easy time or a time free from troubles. God had a greater purpose for Joseph and this was the way he chose to accomplish it. Joseph is a picture of Jesus. Joseph lives in total righteousness even as his master's wife tries to seduce him. He speaks against her advances and then when called for, actually physically "fled" from her presence. In spite of doing right, he was accused of wrong and put in prison for it. As with Jesus, the Lord was always with him and whatever he did was blessed and was successful. Every temptation is an opportunity to do what is right.

40 – Joseph is one who was in the worst of circumstances who still trusted God to work all together for His good. Joseph served wherever he was just as Jesus did. He interpreted these dreams having no idea what God had in store for him. Jesus served all mankind by dying on the cross for our sins. The key verse for the chapter is Joseph's comment in V8, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me." He gives the credit for his ability to interpret to God.

41 – The key verse in advancing the story is V57. "Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth." This is what brought Jacob's family to Egypt. That was God's purpose all along. Note Joseph's explanation about the dreams Pharaoh had. V25 and 28 say, "God has revealed to

Pharaoh what he is about to do." Joseph is a picture of Jesus in that he continues to serve wherever he is, whether in Potiphar's house or the prison or Pharaoh's throne. It is recognized that "the Spirit of God" is in him. Another parallel is that Joseph began serving at thirty years of age.

42 – Joseph's childhood dream was fulfilled as his brothers came before him and bowed down (V6, 9). Joseph seems to test his brothers, more about their attitude toward their father and brother than about the past. The last time the brothers were faced with a decision that they knew would hurt their father by killing Joseph, they did not care. This time they care and do all to protect Benjamin because of their father.

43-44 – Joseph had them prove their love for their father by his actions. He set them up by placing his cup in their sack along with the grain and their money. This gave him an excuse to send them to prison. Think of how much power Joseph had to be able to do this. Think how God arranged all these events in the world to accomplish his purposes. Judah pleaded with Joseph, though not knowing it is him, on behalf of his father and his brother Benjamin. He offered himself in exchange for Benjamin so that his father would not die.

45 – How great is the mercy of God and his sovereign plan that just as the brothers were afraid that they were about to lose one of their brothers, either Judah or Benjamin, they gained back their brother Joseph as he revealed himself to them. Joseph is a picture of Jesus in his perspective. He knew that God sent him on ahead to Egypt to preserve the family of Jacob during the time of the famine. He was not angry with his brothers because he understood the purposes of God. Is this not one of the greatest stories that has ever happened and been told? God carried out his plans completely. V5 "God sent me before you to preserve life." V7-8 "And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt."

46 – While all this was going on, God knew Joseph was alive but allowed Jacob to live and think that he was dead. God promises to always work out that which is best for us but he does not promise to always tell us during the time what that way is that he is working. Joseph was able to rescue his entire family, 70 people in all. This accomplished God's plan and pictures Jesus' salvation of his entire family.

47 – Joseph settled his family in the best of the land of Egypt. It is significant that as great as Pharaoh was, V7 Jacob blessed him meaning that he is considered greater than Pharaoh, for the greater always blesses the lesser. (See Hebrews 7:7.) Joseph was so wise in his administration of the resources of the land of Egypt that all the people give up their livestock and land and put themselves as slaves to Pharaoh and yet were happy about it. What a picture of grace that when we realize we deserve nothing, we gladly serve God with all we are because we owe him so much more than if we gave him everything.

48 – In this chapter Jacob passed on his blessing to Joseph and his sons. Just as God chose him over his older brother Esau, Jacob chose the younger, Ephraim over the older brother Manasseh. While these were both great tribes in the history of Israel, neither was chosen as part of the remnant that included only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

49 – Jacob recounted the reasons why Judah's tribe is chosen as the tribe of the Messiah even though he is fourth in the birth order. Reuben had defiled his father's bed (35:22). Simeon and Levi had been overzealous in their violence and revenge (Ch34). Judah was chosen and became the ancestor of the Messiah/Savior. It is a wonder and warning that one behavior incident had implications that lasted well over 2000 years. Jacob died. Note his hope in God that he wanted to be buried in the land God promised to his family. Lord, make our lives be lived only for you in every moment from now on. We know that we cannot change any aspect of the past except to ask your forgiveness and seek to learn more of your grace and kindness and seek to represent that to others.

50 – It may be that the key element in this chapter is V12 that Jacob was buried in faith in the tomb he carved out in the land God promised. V20 seems to be a picture of Jesus. It says, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today." Jesus reflected this when he died on the cross as Peter picks up in Acts 4:27-28. "For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." This entire book is filled with examples of the need for the Savior that is promised through this line of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah.