

Summary of Genesis

Generations of ...	Ref (vv, yrs: verses per year)	Star	Structure and Theme
Prologue	1:1 (34, 1 week: 850 vpy)	God	Alternation: 1) God created X; 2) It was good. Principle of divine blessing ("covenant of creation," 1:28-30, called a "covenant" in 6:18; 9:9ff)
Heaven and Earth	2:4 (72, 130: 0.5 vpy)	God, Adam, Eve, Satan	Satan contradicted God's warning of death. Adam and Eve disbelieve, break God's law, and are alienated from God. Two chiasms, both with sin at the center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3, around 3:6-7 • 4, around 4:8
Adam	5:1 (40, 1428, 0.03 vpy)	(geneology)	"...and he died." God's warning was true.
Noah	6:9 (89,100, 0.9 vpy)	Noah	Chiasm around 8:1, "God remembered Noah": Sin brings judgment (the Flood: "the earth was filled with violence," "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth") God graciously chooses a people for himself ("Noah found grace," 6:8) God faithfully delivers his elect (8:1 "God remembered Noah")
Sons of Noah	10:1 (41)	(geneology, Babel)	The race is scattered throughout the world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10:1-32, results ("families, tongues, lands, nations") • 11:1-9, cause (blasphemous tower) and means (confusion of tongues)
Shem	11:10 (17, 430, 0.04 vpy)	(geneology)	
Terah	11:27 (377, 65, 5.8 vpy)	Abraham	God makes a covenant with Abraham. Focus on Land. Balanced chiasm (12-16, 17-25), based on themes of 12:1-4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testing journey "go" • Defense "he that curses you" • Blessing to other nations • Land and Seed
Ishmael	25:12 (7)	(geneology)	Ishmael's land is Sinai and Arabia.
Isaac	25:19 (364, 128, 2.8 vpy)	Jacob	Chiasm centered around birth of sons in 29:31-30:24. Focus on Seed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Births (25, 35) • Relations with pagans (26, 34) • Alienation/reconciliation with Esau (27, 33) • Meeting with God (28, 32) • Life in Haran, bargaining with Laban (29-30, 30-31)
Esau	36:1 (44)	(geneology)	Esau's land is Mt. Seir, east of the Arabah and south of the Dead Sea.
Jacob	37:2 (448, 93, 4.8 vpy)	Joseph	Focus on Blessing. Frame: alienation from (37) and reconciliation with (50:14-26) brothers. Two main blocks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast in character: Judah (38) vs. Joseph (39-41), both with heirs. • Three cycles bringing Jacob and family to Egypt (42-50:13), each ending with return to Canaan.

Generations of Terah, 11: 27-25:11

Genealogy with women	11:27-30	22:20-24	24:1-25:6
Death related to Canaan	11:31-32, Terah Canaan, 31	23, Sarah Canaan, 2, 19	25:7-11, Abraham (Mamre, v.9)
A. Testing journey with command and promise "Go ..."	12:1-9, From Haran to Canaan Canaan, 5,6 1 "said," 7 "appeared and said"		22:1-19, Offering of Isaac 1 "said"
B. Sojourning; denying Sarah "He that curses you..."	12:10-13:1, Egypt	20, Land of the Philistines	
C. Contending for Lot "Be thou a blessing" "All nations blessed"	13:2-14:16, Kings of the North Military Rescue Canaan, 13:7,12 13:14 "said"	18:16-19:38, Fall of Sodom Intercession 18:20, "said"	
D. Relations with Local Kings "He that blesses you..."	14:17-24, Melchizedek of Salem; King of Sodom		21:22-34, Abimelech of Gerar (binding on heirs)
E. Covenant blessings (Land and Seed)	15 Canaan, 21 1 "vision"	17:1-18:15 Canaan, 17:8 17:1 "appeared, said"; 18:1, "appeared"	
F. Conception, Birth, Exile of a son "Great nation"	16 Canaan, 3		21:1-21 12, "said"

Generations of Jacob, 37-50

37, Joseph alienated from his brothers			
38-41, Contrast in Character			
38, Judah Three moral failings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marriage to Canaanite, v.2• Deceptive promise to Tamar, v.11• Liason with cultic prostitute, vv.18,21 Birth of Pharez and Zarah, vv.29-30		39-41, Joseph Three-fold promotion through trusting the Lord <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potiphar's house, 39:2,3• Prison, 39:21-23• Pharaoh, 41:16, 38-41 Birth of Ephraim and Manasseh, 41:50-52	
42-50:14, Migration to Egypt: Three Cycles			
	42	43-45	46-50
Preparation	1-4, Jacob sends sons	43:1-14, Judah persuades Jacob	46:1-29
Interaction with Joseph	6-26, Accusation	43:16-45:24, Test and Unveiling	46:28-47:10, Reunion
Joseph's Bounty	25, returns money	44:16-24	47:11-27
Return to Canaan	27-38	45:25-28	47:28-50:13
50:14-26, Joseph reconciled with his brothers			

Summary Sentence: After man, the pinnacle of God's good creation, sinned against God and was separated from him, God chose a remnant, delivered them from judgment, defended them from evil, developed them in godliness, and determined to bless them.

The Law of Proportion in Genesis

The plot below shows the extent of each section of Genesis from two perspectives: how much time elapses (vertical axis) and how much space in the book the author devotes to it (horizontal axis). The Generations of Heaven and Earth, Ishmael, and Esau are too small to be visible at this scale, and the Generations of the Sons of Noah and of Shem are combined into a single box.

One way that an author focuses attention on an episode is by slowing down the action. In this display, tall thin boxes indicate very rapid advance of action, while wide ones show where the action is slow and thus where the author wants us to pay attention.

