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III. The Structure and Message of Genesis (For more, see DeRouchie, “The Blessing-Commission, the Promised Offspring, and the *Toledot* Structure of Genesis,” *JETS* 56.2 [2013]: 219–47).

A. The Organizational Function of the *Toledot* Formula. The structure of Genesis is best determined by an alignment of form and content features, only the latter of which are followed in most surveys of the issue. Recognizable are the 10(11) *toledot* (“generations”) cycles, five of which lack a connector (i.e., they are asyndetic) and five of which are fronted by a *waw* conjunction (“and”), suggesting that the latter are intentionally linked to the book’s sections that precede. The result is five distinct units in the book (i–v), and the most significant feature is that the Shem *toledot* is viewed not as a tag on the end of the primeval history but rather an intentionally placed genealogy pointing *forward* in the narrative to get us to Abraham.

Fig. 3.1. Genesis at a Glance

		<i>toledot Structure</i>	<i>Genre</i>	<i>Outline</i>
1		Preface. Biblical Worldview Foundations (1:1–2:3)		I. Preface— <i>God’s Blessing-Commission</i> (1:1–2:3): God Purposes That Humanity Rule His World as His Image Bearers II. <i>The Need for Blessing</i> (2:4–4:26): Humanity Rebels and God Curses the World Yet Promises a Curse-Overcoming Offspring III. <i>The Hope for Blessing</i> (5:1–50:26): God Preserves Humanity and Provides a Way for the World to Enjoy Kingdom Blessing A. <i>God Reaffirms Humanity’s Blessing-Commission</i> (5:1–11:9) 1. God Perpetuates Kingdom Hope from Adam to Noah in the Context of Threat (5:1–6:8) 2. God Protects the Promised Line and Restores Humanity’s Kingdom Purpose in the Context of Punishment (6:9–11:9) B. <i>God Declares How His Kingdom Blessing Will Reach the World</i> (11:10–50:26) 1. God Perpetuates Kingdom Hope from Shem to Terah and Elevates Abraham and His Offspring as the Agents for Brining Kingdom Blessing to the World (11:10–37:1) 2. God Preserves the Promised Line through Famine in Egypt and Develops Kingdom Hope for a Royal Deliverer from Judah (37:2–50:26)
2	i	These are the <i>toledot</i> of the H and E (2:4–4:26)	N (+GL/S)	
3A	ii	This is the book of the <i>toledot</i> of Adam (5:1–6:8)	GL (+N)	
	iii	These are the <i>toledot</i> of Noah (6:9–9:29) And these are the <i>toledot</i> of Noah’s Sons (10:1–11:9)	N GS (+N)	
3B	iv	These are the <i>toledot</i> of Shem (11:10–11:26) And these are the <i>toledot</i> of Terah (11:27–25:11) And these are the <i>toledot</i> of Ishmael (25:12–18) And these are the <i>toledot</i> of Isaac (25:19–35:29) And these are the <i>toledot</i> of Esau (36:1–8; 36:9–37:1)	GL N (+GS) GS N GS (+N+GS)	
		v	These are the <i>toledot</i> of Jacob (37:2–50:26)	
		KEY: N = Narrative; GL = Linear Genealogy; GS = Segmented Genealogy		
		Main Theme		
The means by which God’s blessing-commission of kingdom advancement will be fulfilled in a cursed and perverted world is through an ever-expanding God-oriented, hope-filled, mission-minded community, climaxing in a single king in the line of promise who will perfectly reflect, resemble, and represent God and who will definitively overcome all evil, thus restoring right order to God’s kingdom for the fame of his name.				

- B. The Parallel, Introductory Function of the Linear Genealogies.** Furthermore, a genealogical genre parallel between chs. 5 and 11 (the book’s only linear genealogies, both addressing the line-of-promise) sets up two major units post-fall. As such, after the theological introduction to the book (1:1–2:3), we have the Garden episode (1), which clarifies both how life should be and why life is wrong. The rest of the book then clarifies the sustained need for universal blessing and the preservation of creation through judgment (3A) and the divine provision for the universal blessing (3B). These major units are highlighted based on genre and content, whereas the individual section divisions and the units they fall under are distinguished by grammatical form (*and* vs. lack of it).
- C. The Main Theme:** The bulk of the literary weight in Genesis is given to the large unit from 11:10–37:1 that opens with the *toledot* of Shem and addresses the agency by which God’s global kingdom purposes will be realized. I summarize the main theme of the book as follows: *Despite mankind’s losing the blessing of eternally reigning over a very good world under God as his image bearers and spreading God’s heavenly kingdom to the ends of the earth, Yahweh will restore this blessing to all the nations when they place their faith in the victorious, royal seed of the woman, who will descend from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah and who will crush the serpent and claim all lands.*