The Book of Jubilees, probably written in the 2nd century B.C.E., is an account of the Biblical history of the world from creation to Moses. It is divided into periods ('Jubilees') of 49 years. For the most part the narrative follows the familiar account in Genesis, but with some additional details such as the names of Adam and Eve's daughters, and an active role for a demonic entity called 'Mastema'. The anonymous author had a preoccupation with calendar reform, and uses Jubilees as a platform for proposing a solar calendar of 364 days and 12 months; this would have been a radical departure from the Jewish Calendar, which is lunar-based. There are also a couple of messianic, apocalyptic passages, although quite a bit less than the Book of Enoch.

The only complete version of Jubilees is in Ethiopian, although large fragments in Greek, Latin and Syriac are also known. It is believed that it was originally written in Hebrew. If at times one gets the impression that you are reading a first draft of Genesis, you are in good company. R.H. Charles, the translator, a distinguished academic Biblical scholar, concluded that Jubilees was a version of the Pentateuch, written in Hebrew, parts of which later became incorporated into the earliest Greek version of the Jewish Bible, the Septuagint.

--John Bruno Hare, July 22, 2004

The Book of Jubilees

God's Revelation to Moses on Mount Sinai
God commands the Angel to write (i. 27-29).
The Angel dictates to Moses the Primæval History: the Creation of the World and Institution of the Sabbath (ii. 1-33)
Paradise and the Fall (iii. 1-35)
Cain and Abel (iv. 1-12)
The Patriarchs from Adam to Noah; Life of Enoch; Death of Adam and Gain (iv. 13-33).
The Fall of the Angels and their Punishment; the Deluge foretold (v. 1-20).
The Building of the Ark; the Flood (v. 21-32).
Noah's Sacrifice; God's Covenant with him. Instructions to Moses about eating of Blood, the Feast of Weeks, etc., and Division of the Year (vi. 1-38).
Noah offers Sacrifice; the Cursing of Canaan; Noah's Sons and Grandsons and their Cities. Noah's Admonitions (vii. 1-39).
Genealogy of the Descendants of Shem: Noah and his Sons divide the Earth (viii. 1-30).
Subdivision of the Three Portions amongst the Grandchildren: Oath taken by Noah's Sons (ix. 1-15)
Noah's Sons led astray by Evil Spirits; Noah's Prayer; Mastêmâ; Death of Noah (x. 1-17)
The Tower of Babel and the Confusion of Tongues (x. 18-27)
The Children of Noah enter their Districts Canaan seizes Palestine wrongfully; Madai receives Media (x. 28-36)
The History of the Patriarchs from Reu to Abraham; the Corruption of the Human Race (xi. 1-15)
Abram's Knowledge of God and wonderful Deeds (xi. 16-24)
Abram seeks to convert Terah from Idolatry; the Family of Terah. Abram burns the Idols. Death of Haran (xii. 1-14)
The Family of Terah in Haran; Abram's Experiences there; his Journey to Canaan (xii. 15-31)
Abram with Lot in Canaan and Egypt. Abram separates from Lot (xiii. 1-21)
The Campaign of Chedorlaomer (xiii. 22-29)
God's Covenant with Abram (xiv. 1-20)
The Birth of Ishmael (xiv. 21-24)
The Feast of First-fruits Circumcision instituted. The Promise of Isaac's Birth. Circumcision ordained for all Israel (xv. 1-34)
Angelic Visitation of Abraham in Hebron; Promise of Isaac's Birth repeated. The Destruction of Sodom and Lot's Deliverance (xvi. 1-9)
Abraham at Beersheba. Birth and Circumcision of Isaac. Institution of the Feast of Tabernacles (xvi. 10-31)
The Expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael (xvii. 1-14)
Mastêmâ proposes to God that Abraham shall be put to the Proof (xvi. 15-18)
The Sacrifice of Isaac: Abraham returns to Beersheba (xviii. 1-19)
The Death and Burial of Sarah (xix. 1-9)
Marriage of Isaac and second Marriage of Abraham; the Birth of Esau and Jacob (xix. 10-14).
Abraham loves Jacob and blesses him (xix. 15-31)
Abraham's Last Words to his Children and Grandchildren (xx. i-xxii)
The Dwelling-places of the Ishmaelites and of the Sons of Keturah (xx. 12-13)
Abraham's Last Words to Isaac (xx. 1-25)
Isaac, Ishmael and Jacob join in Festival with Abraham for the Last Time. Abraham's Prayer (xxii. 1-9)
Abraham's Last Words to and Blessings of Jacob (xxii. 10-30)
The Death and Burial of Abraham (xxiii. 1-8)
The decreasing Years and increasing Corruption of Mankind (xxiii. 9-17)
The Messianic Woes (xxiii. 18-25)
Renewed Study of the Law followed by a Renewal of Mankind. The Messianic Kingdom and the Blessedness of the Righteous (xxiii. 26-32)
Isaac at the Well of Vision: Esau sells his Birthright (xxiv. 1-7)
Isaac's Sojourn in Gerar and Dealings with Abimelech (xxiv. 8-27).
Isaac curses the Philistines (xxiv. 28-33)
Rebecca admonishes Jacob not to marry a Canaanitish Woman. Rebecca's Blessing (xxv. 1-23)
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Jacob induces Isaac to send Jacob to Mesopotamia. Jacob's Dream and View at Bethel (xxvii. 1-27)
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Jacob's Flight with his Family: his Covenant with Laban (xxix. 1-12)
Jacob, reconciled with Esau, dwells in Canaan and supports his Parents (xxix. 13-20)
Jacob's Journey to Bethel and Hebron. Isaac blesses Levi and Judah (xxx. 1-25)
Rebecca journeys with Jacob to Bethel (xxx. 26-32)
Levi's Dream at Bethel: he is appointed to the Priesthood. Jacob celebrates the Feast of Tabernacles and offers Tithes. The Institution of Tithes (xxxii. 1-15)
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The Wives of Jacob's Sons (xxxiv. 20-21)
Rebecca's Last Admonitions and Death (xxxv. 1-27)
Isaac's Last Words and Admonitions: his Death. The Death of Leah (xxxvi. 1-24)
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The Two Journeys of the Sons of Jacob to Egypt (xlii. 1-25)
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The Birth and Early Years of Moses (xlvii. 1-12)
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