

## INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

### Message #1

### Various Texts

Genesis is a book that answers the big questions of life : Who am I? What am I? Why am I? It does not answer these questions according to the humanistic reasoning and speculations of men, but according to the Divine Revelation of Almighty God.

**QUESTION #1** – What does “Genesis” mean?

The basic meaning of the word “genesis” is beginning of origins. In Genesis, the first word of the Hebrew text is “bereshith” which means “in beginning.” All of our English titles for the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) come from the Greek translation (Septuagint) of the Hebrew text. The Greek word which is translated “Genesis” (γενεσις) is a word which means generation, lineage or origin (G. Abbott Smith, p. 90).

**QUESTION #2** – What are some of the beginnings that are found in the book of Genesis?

**(Heading #1)** - The practical beginnings of Genesis.

- A. The beginning of the world . 1:1-19
- B. The beginning of animal life. 1:20-25
- C. The beginning of human life. 1:26-27
- D. The beginning of sin . 3:1-6
- E. The beginning of salvation . 3:21
- F. The beginning of human history. 4:1-2
- G. The beginning of false religion. 4:3-7
- H. The beginning of nationalities . 11:1-9
- I. The beginning of Israel . 12:1-3

**(Heading #2)** - The grammatical beginnings of Genesis.

There are at least eleven very distinct exegetical, grammatical break points in the book of Genesis and ten of those break points use the key Hebrew word “toledoth” which means generations, families, races.

- A. Creation 1:1-2:3  
Purpose is to show the good, sovereign creative work of God
- B. The generations (toledoth) of the heavens and earth . 2:4-4:26  
Purpose is to demonstrate what went wrong with God’s good creation
- C. The generations (toledoth) of Adam . 5:1-6:8  
Purpose is to show that the majority of humanity became so corrupt they were destroyed
- D. The generations (toledoth) of Noah . 6:9-9:29  
Purpose to demonstrate the Grace of God in blessing humanity again
- E. The generations (toledoth) of Shem , Ham , and Japheth . 10:1-11:9  
Purpose to establish that man has a continual movement toward ruin

- F. The generations (toledoth) of Shem . 11:10-26  
Purpose to begin to establish a line of Divine blessing on the earth
- G. The generations (toledoth) of Terah . 11:27 - 25:11  
Purpose to establish the line of Abraham, the line of Divine blessing
- H. The generations (toledoth) of Ishmael . 25:12-18  
Purpose to establish what became of those not in the line of Divine blessing
- I. The generations (toledoth) of Isaac . 25:19-35:29  
Purpose to unfold some of the Divine blessings to God's special lineage
- J. The generations (toledoth) of Esau , the father of Edom. 36:1-8; 36:9 - 37:1  
Purpose to establish what became of the line who should have received Divine blessings
- K. The generations (toledoth) of Jacob . 37:2-50:26  
Purpose to establish Israel's tribes and move to Egypt

The "toledoth" section presents the historical development from the historical ancestor. Dr. Ross said this could be translated "this is what became of \_\_\_\_\_."

### QUESTION #3 – Who wrote Genesis?

When all is studied on this subject it may be quite dogmatically stated that God, by power of the Holy Spirit, used Moses to write Genesis. Four reasons for concluding this:

**(Reason #1)** - All ancient tradition says Moses wrote Genesis.

Ancient Jewish synagogues, New Testament writers, church fathers and most commentators conclude Moses wrote Genesis.

In A.D. 1753, Jean Astruc was the first to say that because of the different names used for God found in Genesis he did not believe the book was written by one author. About 124 years later (A.D. 1877) Julius Wellhausen picked up on this in what is now called the J, P, E, D, theory also known as the Documentary Hypothesis. Wellhausen divided Genesis and said it was written by four authors: 1) The "J" author uses the name Jehovah and wrote about 850 B.C.; 2) The "E" author uses the name Elohim and wrote about 750 B.C.; 3) The "D" author wrote about 621 B.C. and is called the "D" author because of his supposed connection to Deuteronomy; 4) The "P" author who wrote about 570 B.C., who is called the "P" author because of his supposed connection to the priesthood and priestly worship.

In spite of all of his argumentation, what cannot be overlooked is that those who lived the closest to the document **unanimously** conclude it was written by Moses.

**(Reason #2)** - Statements connected to Jesus Christ suggest Moses wrote Genesis.

- 1) **Luke 24:27** - Christ began to explain things about Himself beginning with Moses and there are definite clear references to Jesus Christ in Genesis (**i.e. Genesis 3:15**).
- 2) **Luke 24:44** - Christ named a section of O.T. the "law of Moses" and this was clearly understood by Jews to refer to the first five books of the O.T. - the Pentateuch.
- 3) **John 7:22** - Moses is said to have been the one who instituted circumcision. According to **Genesis 17:12**, it was Abraham who actually instituted it. What this means is that Moses was the one who first recorded the information concerning the right of Circumcision. **Acts 15:1** refers to the same thing.

(Reason #3) - Statements of Scripture suggest Moses wrote Genesis.

- 1) **Joshua 1:7-8** - God challenges Joshua to do all that Moses had said and had written. It would seem if there had been other writers of the first five books, God would have also included them in the challenge.
- 2) **Acts 15:1** - Circumcision is connected to Moses and is instituted in **Genesis 17:9-14**
- 3) **Acts 26:22** - Paul says Moses testified of Christ's sufferings - **Genesis 3:15**
- 4) **Acts 28:23** - Paul makes a distinction between the writings of Moses and the prophets and gives instruction regarding Jesus Christ from these writings.

It is safe to conclude that Moses wrote Genesis.

(Reason #4) - Statements of Moses' background suggest he wrote Genesis.

**Acts 7:22** most definitely establishes that Moses was a brilliant man. He would have been God's logical choice to write Genesis.

**QUESTION #4** – When did Moses write Genesis?

The actual date of writing Genesis will, as Dr. Howard Voss said, "...never be known. Most conservative scholars suggest the time period as being 1500 B.C. to 1400 B.C.

**QUESTION #5** – Why did Moses write Genesis?

Moses originally wrote Genesis for the children of Israel and there were two central themes that Moses and God specifically wanted Israel to know:

- 1) The Sovereignty of God in all His creative acts and providential works.  
God is a majestic creator who takes full credit for creating things inanimate and animate.
- 2) The selection of the nation Israel - a theme which dominates the book (**Genesis 12-50**).

According to **Acts 17:24-26** God made every one of us. We were all made in the image of God and we all have fallen far short of God's image. Genesis is a book that will challenge us to believe God and obey God for that is the key to His blessings.