

## The Book of Genesis

### Introduction

The title of this book is from the Greek Septuagint translation, meaning "origins." The Hebrew title is derived from the first phrase of the scroll: "In the Beginning."

There is a substantial amount of evidence proving that Moses authored the first five books (DEU 27:3; 31:9; JOS 8:31-35), a point even substantiated by Jesus when He said that Moses was the one who wrote the Law—the first division of the three part division of the Old Testament (LUK 24:27,44; JOH 1:17; 5:46; 7:19).

Since some of the material in this book predates the time Moses recorded it by more than 2500 years, either God directly gave Moses all of the information, or Moses used material which had been passed down for centuries and approved by God. The latter seems the most likely due to the differences in style found in the material. According to Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, p. 671, there was "nothing like uniformity of style till we come to the history of Joseph." The vast majority of the book seems to have been quoted from various family records:

1. generations of Adam (5:1-6:8)
2. generations of Noah (6:9-9:28)
3. generations of the sons of Noah (10:1-11:9)
4. generations of Shem (11:10-26)
5. generations of Terah (11:27-25:11)
6. generations of Ishmael (25:12-18)
7. generations of Issac (25:19-35:29)
8. generations of Esau (36:1-43)
9. generations of Jacob (37:2-50:26)

The creation account of chapter 1 appears to have a poetic framework, giving evidence that at least some of the material was passed along through songs and poems. There is even a historical record called "the generations of the heavens and earth" in 2:4-4:26, which supplements the previous account.

Archaeology has proven that writing existed before the Flood, and the Bible provides examples of records that were kept at an early time. NUM 21:14 mentions the "book of the wars of the LORD," and JOS 10:13 speaks of the "book of Jasher".

History in the Bible is different from ordinary history. Instead of focusing on military, political, social and economic forces, the events recorded are emphasized in their relationship to God's Plan and God's Law. Genesis begins with a universal history, but rapidly narrows down to the one chosen people. One by one, all others are eliminated from the record, leaving only the family of Jacob at the end of the book. The two major parts of the book are:

1. Chapters 1-11 which give a *general history* of man: describing how he came to be, how he became cut off from God and his hopeless state apart from God.
2. Chapters 12-50 which give a *specific history* of one man, Abraham, and his descendants: showing that God would rescue man from his hopeless situation through a process of grace by showing favor to select ones.