

1. GENESIS SERIES: An Introduction to Genesis

Before we begin our study of Genesis, let me suggest that during the course of time between this study and the next that you read the entire book of Genesis. Be sure to read it at least once, but if you have the opportunity, a second reading of the book will also be helpful.

As we work our way through Genesis it will be useful to read through the study prior to attempting to answer any questions in it and prior to looking up any of the references. Once read through I suggest going through the study again (perhaps in your next study session), but this time looking up the references and answering the questions. Once you have done this, a further study session could be used for doing research into the Individual Discovery questions that are asked at the end of each study as a way for preparing for the next study in the series.

Of course you may choose to use the study notes any way you wish, yet the above suggestions seem to me to be the way to use these studies for the greatest profit. A further suggestion for maximum profit in the use of these studies would be to use them in a group situation in the format suggested above. If you are unable to study with the benefit of a small group, perhaps you might like to make use of the Blog site available at <http://pbstudies.wordpress.com/>.

INTRODUCTION

Genesis is part of a larger work known as the '*Pentateuch*.' The word Pentateuch comes from a Greek word meaning a '*five scrolls*' or '*five-volumed book*.' Other names for the Pentateuch are '*Torah*' or '*Law*,' as we find it referred to in the New Testament (Mt 5:17; Lk 16:17; Acts 7:53; 1 Cor 9:8).

As the name of the book suggests, Genesis is a book of beginnings. The word '*Genesis*' is from a Greek word for '*beginning, source or origin*,' and was used in the Septuagint Greek version of the Old Testament as the title of the book of Genesis. The Hebrew title of the book comes from the first phrase of chapter 1, '*In the beginning*.'

We see in Genesis the beginnings of the world, the beginnings of humanity, the beginnings of marriage, the beginnings of sin on earth, the beginnings of judgment, the beginnings of salvation, the beginnings of the nations, the beginnings of the nation of Israel and the

beginnings of the church. These are but a few of the major beginnings in Genesis; there are of course other beginnings, as a reader of Genesis will find.

QUESTION: List other important '*beginnings*' that you have found in the book of Genesis.

It should be noted of course that Genesis presents a beginning that is far different to that of so-called modern science. The creation account here presented is in contrast to that of the modern theories of evolution. More on these conflicting views will follow as part of the next study.

AUTHOR AND DATE OF GENESIS

In most modern-day books the author will usually attach his/her name to the front of the work. Even in many of the Biblical books this is so. Yet here in Genesis there is no clear claiming of authorship and this is true of the entire Pentateuch.

Who is the author of Genesis and the Pentateuch? This is a question which too many Bible believing Christians is easily answered, yet over the past few centuries the traditional answer (Moses) has been widely rejected, with various theories put forward in its place. Of these theories little will be said in these studies, for the author is convinced of the Mosaic authorship and rejects wholeheartedly the assertions of hypercriticism and liberalism. What remains will be to bring forward the evidence of Mosaic authorship, which has been hidden away by these unbiblical scholars.

Genesis cannot be divorced from the other books of '*The Law*,' for it forms part of that work known as the '*Pentateuch*.' The first five books of the Old Testament make up the Pentateuch, a work that is generally ascribed to Moses. Throughout Scripture Moses is referred to as the author of this joint 5-book work.

It is clear from the gospel accounts that the Lord Jesus Christ regarded Moses as the author of the Pentateuch and therefore by implication Genesis (Jn 5:46). This is an important point that should not be lightly overlooked.

'And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself ... And He said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me (Lk 24: 27,44)."'

QUESTION: Why should the example of Jesus be not lightly overlooked in the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch? Explain your answer.

Internal evidence within the Pentateuch itself also points to Moses as its human author (Ex 17:14; 24:3-7; 34:27ff; Num 33:1,2; Deut 31:9-11,22). This is evidence that must be heard in this discussion of the authorship of the Pentateuch and of Genesis in particular.

‘And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: For I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven (Exodus 17:14).’

The other human writers of the Old Testament were convinced that Moses was the human author of the Pentateuch as is obvious through many passages of Scripture (Josh 1:7,8; 8:31,32; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 21:8; Ezra 6:18; Neh 13:1; Dan 9:11-13; Mal 4:4). Various passages throughout the Old Testament Scriptures refer to the Pentateuch as the ‘*book of Moses*’ or the ‘*law of Moses*.’

‘And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses, for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses (Ezra 6:18).’

As has been suggested earlier, the New Testament also attributes the Pentateuch to the hand of Moses (Mk 12:26; Lk 2:22; 16:29; 24:27; Jn 5:46,47; 7:19,23; Acts 3:22; 13:39; Rom 10:5). The New Testament refers to the Pentateuch in such terms as ‘*Moses*’ and ‘*Moses and the prophets*.’

These various testimonies and witnesses seem to me to make it abundantly clear that the Bible itself is certain of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The evidence is already becoming overwhelming.

Within the Pentateuch there is clear internal evidence of Mosaic authorship (or at least of someone from that time being the author). This evidence when added to the evidence so far produced from the rest of Scripture brings a solid case forward for a Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Eyewitness accounts of events more-or-less removes any doubts about the date of the Pentateuch, for it must have been written close to the time that these events occurred (Ex 15:27; Num 11:7,8). The author is someone who knows something of the Egyptian culture, as a reading of Genesis will make clear.

QUESTION: What internal evidence can you highlight that points towards Moses as the author of the Pentateuch or at least of someone writing from his period? Please note that this question will be more easily answered with a reading of the entire Pentateuch, as Moses was not actually alive during the history recorded in Genesis.

Obviously Moses was not present when all the events recorded took place, yet he was none-the-less the Spirit inspired writer of the book of Genesis and the entire Pentateuch. Prehistory to the time of the Exodus was passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. In recording his work he may have used various oral and other materials in the composition of the early chapters of Genesis, yet it remains equally true that he wrote as

one under the inspiration of God (2 Tim 3:16,17; 2 Pet 1:20,21). When this divine aspect of Biblical authorship is acknowledged and remembered, some of the difficulties associated with the writing of the Scriptures can easily be accounted for.

QUESTION: How can the principle in the last sentence above be helpful for understanding the authorship of Scripture?

OUTLINE OF GENESIS

There are two clear divisions in the book of Genesis. The first can be called the Primeval History or Primeval Prologue, being a record of the period from creation to the calling of Abraham. The second division is a record of Patriarchal History, being a record of the period from the calling of Abraham to the Egyptian bondage.

The book of Genesis can be further divided or outlined through the use of the *'toledoth'* formula (*'And this is the generation of...'*). Toledoth is the Hebrew word for generations or descendants and seems to be the natural and intended points of division in Genesis. The term appears at Genesis 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:10, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1 and 37:2. The term seems to indicate something of an introduction to a new section within the book, providing a summary of the ground that is to be covered within it.

It should also be noted (as becomes obvious when reading Genesis) that family lines not associated with the chosen nation of Israel are dealt with, and quickly so, before the elect history and line is introduced and documented.

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

For this study there are no questions. However, it is recommended that you actually read through the entire book of Genesis prior to undertaking the next study.

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