

# The Authorship of Genesis

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These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “**For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.”** (John 3:16–18). “**I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!**” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). **If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness** (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

**Preface:** It is almost accepted as dogma that Moses wrote the book of Genesis, but there is absolutely no proof of that. Moses is clearly referred to as the author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; but never of Genesis. I believe that the book of Genesis developed very organically, but under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit.

This study is taken from **Luke 3** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

## How we got the book of Genesis (a theory):

Judah is one of the 12 patriarchs, a son of Jacob. Although he is the 4<sup>th</sup> son born to Jacob, he became the royal line (normally, the primary and royal line and double portion would all belong to the firstborn son, who was Reuben). But Reuben, Simeon and Levi all disqualified themselves from being preeminent in one way or another.

Judah himself was a very flawed man; the incident of his consorting with prostitutes<sup>1</sup> is but one example of this.

The final portion of Genesis is devoted primarily to Joseph (Judah's much younger half-brother). There are many narratives at the end of Genesis where Joseph would be the only son of Jacob who knew all the details of those particular events. Private experiences and thoughts are recorded. Therefore,

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<sup>1</sup> Although we have only one instance where Joseph *believed* himself to be with a prostitute, Tamar, the woman who fooled him, apparently chose that approach according to Judah's predilections.

Joseph would be the logical person to recount said events (which is *most* of the final chapters of Genesis).

However, there is one chapter in Genesis known only by Judah; and there are bits and pieces of Genesis 40–50 that the 11 sons would have had firsthand knowledge of, but Joseph would not. Yet, the narrative is very well integrated, so that those with first hand knowledge change, but the narrative seamlessly progresses. In fact, this narrative in Genesis marks an important place in literature, establishing the 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient point of view (which makes up the bulk of our literature, movies and television).

I believe that the following things took place. Jacob's family would gather and give thanks to God and offer up sacrifices; and this was particularly important *after* they had moved to Egypt (a move that God allowed for). It is also important to note that, when Jacob died, his funeral was well-attended by his sons as well as by many Egyptians (this is a related piece of the puzzle).

Based upon this little evidence, this is how I see things as happening while Jacob's family was living in Egypt. Periodically, they would have celebrations to Y<sup>e</sup>howah (Jehovah). There would be animal sacrifices and a reading of the Scriptures, which would have been the book of Genesis and possibly the book of Job (which books were not written down at the time but memorized). As the patriarch of the family, Jacob would have recited the Scriptures down to his own life in history, and he would then tell about his life as well. This means that Jacob, like his father and grandfather before him, memorized most of the book of Genesis (that was their Scripture<sup>2</sup> at this time). They would have known Genesis word-for-word; although the book of Genesis had never been written down.

At some point, Jacob would stop speaking this book (from memory) and his eldest son, Reuben, would stand up and he would continue. Levi and Simeon may have stood up and told their brief story (which was quite ghastly); and Judah would tell about his background as well. All of these narratives are found in the book of Genesis; and it would have been logical for the person who experienced these events firsthand to be the person who stood up to say what happened. So, what we know as the first 38 chapters of Genesis would have been recited from memory by Jacob, Reuben, Simeon and/or Levi, and finally Judah.

Then, suddenly, we jump ahead in the brothers' order, going from Judah (son #4) to Joseph (son #11). Nearly all of Genesis, from chapter 39 to the end, is about Joseph. However, there are portions in the Joseph narrative that he was not a party to—that is, there are a few scenes in the final chapters of Genesis, which take place without Joseph being there. Therefore, Joseph had no direct knowledge of certain incidents which took place, which events are, nevertheless, seamlessly integrated into his own narrative. So, Joseph would tell about his life as a slave in Egypt and his rise to great authority; but when he came to one of those situations where he was not actually there, one of the older brothers (probably Reuben) would stand up and briefly tell what happened. These incidents are the interactions between the 11 sons and Jacob in Canaan, while Joseph is back in Egypt.<sup>3</sup>

What I am postulating here is, Jacob speaks, from memory, Genesis 1 down to his own life and he tells about his own life as well. All of that would have been memorized, word-for-word, by Jacob. It would have been the job of the patriarch of the family to know all of Genesis down to his own life. But, at some point in the Genesis narrative, things took place to which only Reuben, Simeon and Levi knew about

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<sup>2</sup> We do not know when the book of Job became a part of the Old Testament.

<sup>3</sup> Insofar as we know, Joseph never returns to Canaan after being taken to Egypt as a slave.

(Jacob was not a party to these events). Therefore, those sons would stand up and speak. What I am suggesting that, while in Egypt, as a part of their Y<sup>e</sup>howah celebration, Jacob and many of his sons (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and Joseph) would speak (from memory) nearly all of the book of Genesis. This is speculation on my part, but it fits in very well with Jewish history and tradition.

What this speculation does is, it gives us a good explanation as to why the final 12 or so chapters of Genesis are so well-edited. A casual reader would not notice this about the end of Genesis. In fact, almost no commentator remarks on this, probably not even realizing it (in fact, because of the editing, most theologians think that Moses wrote the book of Genesis). Many intense students of the book of Genesis have never noticed and commented on the perfect editing of the final 10 chapters. The editing of these different narratives is actually quite remarkable and perfectly chronological. No one person could have stood up and talked about the final chapters of Genesis, because no one person was a part of every event that took place. In the early years in Egypt, much of the family would stand and present these events to their audience (which probably included many Egyptians).

This is my approach and theory of how the book of Genesis came about, and, insofar as I know, this is a unique perspective, as well as being the most accurate.<sup>4</sup> I am unaware of anyone laying out this particular theory, and offering up evidence as well.

For various members of Jacob's family to stand up at various times and pick up the narrative and to move it forward would result in the very well-edited version of Genesis which we enjoy today. The final 10–12 chapters would be spoken mostly by Joseph; however, there are sections integral to the narrative when he was not there. Therefore, Judah mostly likely stood up and filled in those gaps. Let me explain that in more detail:

Joseph, as the prime minister of Egypt, knew all about his own responsibilities; he recognized his brothers when they came to him (but he disguised his voice and he looked Egyptian). So, all of this narrative is logically known to Joseph first hand—including his feelings and his asides (which are a part of the Genesis narrative, suggesting that it came from Joseph directly). But, at some point, the sons of Jacob—sans Joseph—would leave Egypt and return to Canaan with the grain that they bought. Joseph is not there, so he has no firsthand knowledge of what happens along these trips to and from Egypt; nor does Joseph know what his brothers said to one another. When Joseph's brothers all arrive home and find that the silver they took to buy grain with was somehow placed back in their bags, that was very problematic for them and it is discussed at length in the book of Genesis. That information is integral to those chapters of Genesis and could not be left out. Joseph, of course, was not there for that.

Every one of the brothers (except for Joseph) knew about the things which took place *after* leaving Egypt; so one of them—probably Reuben or Judah—would stand up and take up the story from Egypt to Canaan. This is very artfully done in the book of Genesis, so we seem to be, as readers, hovering over the action taking place, able to hear the thoughts of Joseph at one point, but then also hearing the private conversations between Jacob and his sons which take place in Canaan. Although this appears to be 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscience which is taking place, it really is not. What is really taking place is, Joseph is telling the story from his point of view; and then Reuben (or Judah) picks up the story from there. When the sons all leave Egypt to return to Canaan, then someone from that caravan would speak. That would have been Reuben's point of view (actually, any of the 11 sons could have told this portion of the narrative).

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<sup>4</sup> In my opinion, of course.

I am very jazzed about this interpretation of how the book of Genesis organically came to be, with its strict chronological approach throughout the final 12 or so chapters.

Given the great mourning which took place when Jacob died—a mourning which extended to the Egyptians—I would also propose that these *services* (if you will) were not just attended by the ever-growing family of Judah but also by many Egyptians as well, who were on positive signals at that time towards the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

When the entire family of Judah moved to Egypt, they were very warmly received; and I believe that this also indicates widespread positive volition towards the God of Abraham among the Egyptian people. Remember, God's message has to go out to any place where there is positive volition. If there is a person interested in the True Creator, then God cannot simply ignore that person. He must bring His good news to them. The evidence that the Egyptians received the Hebrew people warmly is (1) their relationship with Joseph; (2) God brought the Hebrew family of Jacob to Egypt (which suggests blessing by association); and (3) the great mourning which took place in Egypt when Jacob died. All of this suggests close interaction between the family of Jacob and some of the people of Egypt, despite the fact that the family of Jacob were more or less segregated by area from the Egyptian people (except for Joseph, who was Egypt's prime minister).

Again, portions of this are conjecture, but I believe that there were many times when Jacob stood up and spoke the Word of God (that is, the first two-thirds of Genesis); and this would be followed by 5 of his sons standing up and telling what happened next. Because their words *were* the Words of God (the very same words which we study today), they moved the people of Egypt who were on positive signals and also attended. Egyptians would hear these words and believe the God of Genesis, and become saved by believing in the Revealed God of Genesis. I suspect that there may be even millions of Egyptians in heaven because of this.

Although some of what I have presented is conjecture, I believe that this perfectly explains how the book of Genesis was written (so, actually, it was not written, but memorized and repeated many times each year; and passed down to the next generation orally). At some point, this book was written down (we do not know by who, but it could have been Moses). Whoever wrote it down, did not simply allow the Spirit of God to move his hands and fingers; he wrote down what he had memorized after hearing these words so many times in his life.

This understanding of the origins of the book of Genesis are fully congruent with the following things:

1. This would easily explain the preservation of the book of Genesis over hundreds of years, going back to a time before writing existed.
  - 1) I would suggest to you that there was a lengthy period of time when writing was not really required. That is, people heard and remembered everything that they heard and saw.
  - 2) All contracts could have been done on a handshake deal prior to Abraham, because people simply lived for a very, very long time.
2. Most of the book of Genesis is biography; so it is most logical that those lives we find in Genesis are the ones who recorded this history.
3. This theory would explain the perfect editing of Genesis 39–50.

4. This approach would explain the great sadness felt by the Egyptians when Jacob died (recall that Jacob, for the most part, was not a very loveable person). Somehow, Jacob became close to the Egyptian people in order for them to react as they did to the death of Jacob.
  - 1) If Egyptians heard the Word of God spoken by Jacob (and by his sons), they would have been very well-disposed towards that family.
  - 2) A loss in that family would be taken very personally by Egyptians who heard these men speak the words of God.
  - 3) You may personally understand the importance and comfort gained from hearing the Word of God taught. If you understand that, then Jacob speaking these words to Egyptians would have endeared him to the Egyptians (despite his flaws).<sup>5</sup>
5. The traditions of the synagogue, which are not specifically laid out in Scripture, have various men standing up and reading the Scriptures of God. This is not done like the typical church service, where the pastor-teacher teaches from the Word of God. This would be mostly local people who would come and read the existing Scriptures. This tradition had to come from somewhere. If the family of Jacob regularly worshiped God by standing and speaking aloud *The History of Man and God* (a tradition which probably predates Jacob), then the traditions and function of the synagogue would have naturally grown out of this.
  - 1) Readings from the synagogue would have been directly from the Scriptures.
  - 2) One man would read the Scriptures, sit down, and another man would read them, picking up where the first man left off.
  - 3) If the Scriptures were preserved as I have suggested, then we would have precedence for this long-lived tradition.

**Topics**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

## Addendum

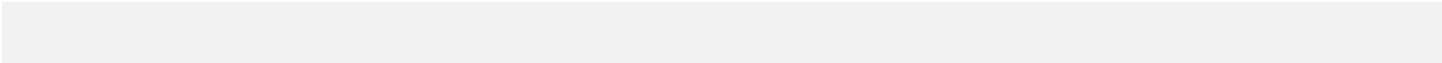
### The Abbreviated Doctrine of

**Chapter Outline**

**Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines**

### Bibliography

<sup>5</sup> Let me suggest that R. B. Thieme, Jr. is an excellent example of this.



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