

The Authorship of Genesis

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

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 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.

At this point, most of the raw material on this topic has been placed here, culled out mostly from my study of the book of Genesis. At some point, I will need to come back to this and organize and edit it a bit better.

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Preface: It took me awhile to figure out the true author of Genesis. Conventional wisdom is, Moses wrote the book of Genesis at some point in time. Whether he received it audibly from God or he just started writing, I guess it depends upon who you talk to. Often, how Moses came to do this is not even discussed. Now, if Moses had memorized and wrote down the words of Genesis, I would accept that, as long as we understand him not to be the author but simply the secretary at this point. It is possible that Joshua did this; it is possible that someone prior to Moses came along and actually put the words to paper (papyrus). However, the actual

authors of the book of Genesis are many—there are 9 or 10—and none of them wrote anything down. They simply memorized what had come before, and then they added their own bit to the narrative. Joseph was, more or less, the final author of Genesis, but someone had to write about his death (we do not know who that was).

By the time I got to the end of Genesis, it became clear to me that Genesis was not written by Moses but by a succession of authors, many of whom were alive at the same time in Egypt.

The information below was culled from the study of Genesis.

There are several views on who actually wrote the book of Genesis. What appear to be the most popular view is, the book of Genesis existed in oral form, being passed down from generation to generation, as well as added to in each generation, and that Moses finally put these things in writing. Who the human author or authors of the book of Genesis is an interesting discussion, so let me give the basic theories below:

The authorship of Genesis is questioned, since it is one of the two oldest books of the Bible (Job is the other ancient book).

The Author of Genesis	
Author	Commentary
Moses	Most attribute this book to Moses, which he wrote down as a result of getting this from the <i>oral tradition</i> . That is, men throughout the centuries kept repeating these specific events, sometimes adding to this history, and Moses finally committed them to writing. Although the Bible indicates that Moses is the author of the next 4 books of the Bible, the authorship of Genesis is never specifically attributed to him.
A group effort	There is a weird theory out there which is taught in many seminaries, that there were several groups of people involved in the writing of the books of Moses: one guy who used the name <i>Jehovah</i> a lot; and another who used the name <i>God</i> (that is, <i>Elohim</i>) a lot. A group of men later took the writings of these two men and wove them together. Then a priest, many years later, edited the final version. Somehow, in this, there was another writer who apparently wrote Deuteronomy. I may have some of these details wrong, but the general notion is the same: this first 5 books of the Bible were a team effort, written over a period of several hundred years. The foundation for this approach is, certain <i>Biblical scholars</i> decided that writing did not exist during the time of Moses; therefore, there must be someone who wrote these things down later. Even though the basis for this theory has been shown by archeology to be false, the theory continues. I call this the JEPD theory. Essentially, this theory says that many of the statements in the Mosaic Law are just outright lies or stuff that someone just made up. It is unequivocally a false theory.
Someone else	Someone else wrote Genesis and Moses copied it down, doing some editing.

The Author of Genesis

Author	Commentary
Several successive authors	<p>This is my theory: I believe that several men recorded the history found in the book of Genesis. This was passed down either orally and/or in writing (although men could clearly write during the time of Moses—Ex. 17:14 34:1, 27—we do not know at which point men developed a written language. I think that there is a formula in Genesis, that when you see the phrase <i>and these are the generations of</i>, you are looking at a new author. I base my theory entirely on internal evidence and on how personal some verses are (for instance, Genesis 29:20 describes how Jacob felt in working for Rachel’s father in order to marry her: <i>So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her</i>). This is very personal and subjective, and words we would expect Jacob to write, but not words we would ascribe to any later author. This means that there could have been as many as 10 authors of the book of Genesis, some of them writing as little as a chapter or two. The primary reason that this approach is not considered by many is, we do not know when man decided to begin writing things down. As already mentioned, for a long time, some archeologists believed that Moses was incapable of writing because they could find no other writings from that time period or before (archeology has since shown that writing pre-dated Moses).</p>

Apart from the JEPD theory under *a group effort*, a false theory, Christians can certainly disagree as to the authorship of Genesis without breaking fellowship with one another.

I think that if we are alert in examining the book of Genesis, we are going to come across passages which imply that man had a written language (for instance, we may come across a treaty or a binding agreement).

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Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The book of Genesis begins with the creation of the earth, which is both majestic and very matter-of-fact. There is no fight between gods, with the creation of 11 monsters in order to carry out vengeance. No god feels a terrible pain in his stomach and vomits up the sun, stars and moon. There is no huge serpent whose movement along the ground creates the valleys and the rivers. A bear and a tiger do not wish to become human. No one is shooting arrows at the two suns. Now, that is not to say that there are not striking similarities between the various creation myths and the first few chapters of Genesis, but, very few people today would point to any other creation story and suggest that it is accurate and worthy of note.

There are aspects of the Genesis account of creation and restoration that people will scoff at. For instance, there is light before there is a discernable sun; God takes a rib from Adam and from it makes Eve. These same people who scoff will believe that matter suddenly appeared (the Big Bang theory¹) and that, in a mixture of some kind of goo, non-living matter became living matter, and that living matter evolved to what we see today. For instance, a fish washed up on shore, hung out on the beach for awhile, decided, *hey, I like it out here*; and, after millions of years, sprouted legs and a set of lungs, so that it could hang out on the beach rather than in the sea. At some point in time, one of those reptilian creatures looked at the air and said, *hell, I'd like to fly too*; and so, after millions of years, it sprouted

¹ Which theory is not anti-Biblical, if we understand that the cause of the creation of all matter is God.

wings, its body became a mass of feathers, and it flew. To the evolutionist, this makes perfect sense, because they always throw in the phrase *after millions of years*; because, if there is enough intervening time, *anything* can happen. Time is a magic wand to the evolutionist, and when you wave that magic wand, whatever you want to happen can happen. Often, it is this same evolutionist does not believe that man and animals can adapt to pollution in the air and water, but that is a whole different discussion.

In the book of Genesis, man begins in a perfect environment and man begins in a sinless state. Man is given only one way in which he may disobey God, and he chooses to disobey God, changing human history dramatically. God both judges man and offers him redemption in Genesis 3. Mankind's redemption involves child-bearing, something which apparently was not a part of perfect environment. Having personally witnessed on film 2 or 3 births and having changed a diaper in my past, child-bearing reasonably appears to me to fall outside the concept of perfect environment.

Man's redemption also involves the killing of an innocent animal, and it is at this point when the Bible's subtlety becomes known. God clothes Adam and Eve with animal skins, which, quite obviously, involved the death of one or more animals (however, the Bible does not make a big deal out of this). From this point on, it will be clear that man must be redeemed by the death of an innocent; and in the Old Testament, this is illustrated with animals. The Bible tends not to clobber you over the head with its doctrines and precepts. The death of an animal is involved here, but no details are given. Later, their sons, Cain and Abel, will offer up sacrifices to God, and Cain will bring God vegetables that he has worked hard to grow and Abel will bring an animal which he kills as a sacrifice to God. Again, there is no heavy-handed approach; God respects the sacrifice of the animal but not the one of fresh produce. I mentioned progressive revelation. Adam and Eve are covered with animal skins, but no details are given beyond that. God respects the animal sacrifice of Abel, but the Bible does not say why. As we move further into the Bible, it is clear that God requires the sacrifice of an innocent lamb in order to pay for our sins, but we have to go all the way to the book of Hebrews to read, **Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness** [or, *release from bondage*] (Heb. 9:22b).

With each chapter of the Bible, we understand a little more and a little more; and finally, the idea of being redeemed by the blood of an innocent finds its fruition in the person of Jesus Christ, Who dies for our sins. The approach the Bible takes is subtle and progressive, but leading to a clear doctrine, with unmistakable clear roots.

What is amazing about Genesis is, it presents all of the seeds of the fundamentals of the faith; and that, throughout the Bible, these seeds grow until they become a full-blown doctrines. In a good novel, the first chapter sets the tone and lays the foundation for what is to come. The author of a good novel plants many seeds in the first chapter, primarily because he knows where he wants to take his novel. The same thing is true of the book of Genesis, even though the actually writing of this book is separated from the New Testament by at least 1500 years. It is as if the author of Genesis knows where all of this is going, and so he sets the foundation and the tone.

There are 3 male children which are mentioned in Genesis: Cain, Abel and Seth. Cain murders Abel, and what follows is a theme which resonates throughout the Bible: the fallen line (Cain's) and the line of redemption (Seth's).

There is a threadbare history which takes us to the time of Noah, who was born about 100 years after the death of Adam. Even though very little information is given about this time, man apparently genetically superior then than now, many of them living for nearly a millennium.

However, at the time of Noah, there is a corruption of mankind. Many theologians simply believe that man just became more and more degenerate until God finally decided that He needed to wipe most of mankind out. Others believe that there was an intermixing of angelic creation (the fallen angels) with man, and that, God allowed for that sort of corruption to take place. However, when all of mankind, apart from Noah and his family, became corrupted, God brought a great flood upon the earth, yet saved Noah and his family in an Ark (built by Noah) in which was a representative pairing of all the animals.

I should point out that, there are many cultures who have traditions similar to what we find in the Bible. Many cultures have stories of half-man/half-gods living on this earth; many cultures speak of a great flood; many speak of a creation event; and many confound these events as one. This could be what is occurring in Genesis 6, but, unlike mythology, it is a very subtle approach.

Because the narrative of Genesis is sometimes fantastic, some believe these stories to be allegorical rather than factual. I am not one of those. These are elements of doctrinal information which we are to gain from our understanding of the history presented in Genesis, but there is nothing in the Bible which suggests that these stories are simply fanciful imaginings. We have a large segment of our society that looks around and concludes that this is the way things have always been. Because they have never witnessed a miracle, they categorically state that a miracle cannot be true (the very same people, who have never witnessed any event approximating evolution believe in evolution). Since they have never seen an angel or a demon, they conclude that such things cannot exist. Some will take this further to proclaim that, since no one has seen a soul, that no one really has a soul, and all that is going on in our lives and rattling around in our heads are a combination of neurons randomly firing and a variety of chemicals sloshing around in our cerebral cortex. These same naturalists have fooled themselves into thinking that man is no different from animals and that our thinking, our norms and standards, and our emotions are nothing special. These are just chemical and electrical impulses and nothing else. Such people see God as simply a creation of human thought, which, strictly speaking, does not really exist.

I believe that, through human history, there have been different environments and relationships, although man, in his essence, has always been the same (with the exception of going from a perfect state to a fallen state of being).

After the flood in Noah's time, he and his family emerge from the Ark and begin civilization. There are several changes: God allows man to eat meat, life is shortened dramatically, and fermentation occurs.

The Bible throughout focuses on a particular line. In fact, this is a fascinating aspect of the Bible—it follows the line of Adam all the way to Jesus Christ. It is not all found in one place (apart from Luke 3), but this genealogy is found in several parts of the Bible.

The line which Genesis follows next in the book of Genesis is the line of Abram, who is later renamed Abraham. Today, he is known as the father of the Jewish race because he is the first Jew. God promises Abraham a son by his wife Sarai (later renamed Sarah). God makes additional promises to Abraham which are to be fulfilled through the line of this promised son. Abram, like all figures of the Bible, has some missteps, but he comes to age 100 and finally fathers his son Isaac by Sarah. After many years pass and this son, Isaac, grows to be a young man, and God tells Abram to sacrifice his son. This is one of the more unusual stories from the Bible because, throughout later portions of Israel's history, they will be told to slaughter various peoples who sacrifice their own children, and here is God telling Abraham to sacrifice the son whom he loves.

Many try to pass this off as God merely just seeing how far would Abraham go in his faithfulness to Him; but it should be clear that, what we find here is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins, told 2000 of years before the fact. If this sort of thing happened once or twice, we might easily pass it off as an interesting coincidence; but over and over and over again, throughout the Old Testament, we find what are known as *types* which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the *antitype*. A *type* is a person or an incident or something which stands out as being somewhat unusual—such as, God asking Abraham to sacrifice his son—and this type does not make a lot of sense until we get to the New Testament, where it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. I primarily study the Old Testament, and I find this to be a phenomenal thing. The person who studies about *types* becomes more and more convinced of the accuracy and the divinity of the Bible.

We follow Abraham's line through Isaac and then to Jacob, and Jacob is a man which gives a lot of believers pause. He has a twin brother and, by all accounts, his twin brother seems to be a much better person than Jacob. Jacob is self-centered and selfish, but, he has apparently believed in Jehovah Elohim and it is not as clear about his brother Esau. So the line is continued through Jacob.

Jacob has 12 sons who make up the patriarchs (fathers) of all Israel, by 2 wives and their 2 personal assistants (maids), and, again, we are struck by the fact that these guys are not nice, kind or religious. They sell their own brother, Joseph, into slavery, simply out of jealousy, as their father played favorites.

In all of this, God has a plan. God has chosen to keep this family alive, and their land is about to go into a drought. Joseph ends up in Egypt as a slave, but rises to a position of great power, and not only saves his family from starvation, but is reunited with them, as they all move to Egypt.

The history of the Bible in general and Genesis in particular is quite incomplete. Hundreds of years will pass with barely a word; important events will be left out. God has information which is important to pass along to us, but it is not the complete history of man nor is it the complete history of Israel.

We find a similar introductory statement (*These are the generations of...*) in Genesis 2:4 5:1 6:9 10:1, 32 11:10, 27 25:12, 19 36:1, 9 37:2. Pastor Robbie Dean calls these the *toledoth's*, because the Hebrew word here is: *tôwl^edôth* (תְּדוּלוֹת) [pronounced *tohl^e-DOHTH*], which means *generations, results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history*. Most of the time that we find this statement, what follows is a genealogy. It may be a long or a short genealogy. The use of this word also appear to be a marker throughout the book of Genesis, and it may even point to a new author each time, or a new source.

I believe that it will be worth our while to look ahead, gather up each time that we find the words, *these are the generations of*, and to see what follows:

“These are the generations of...”

Scripture	Immediate Context	What Follows
<p>Gen 2:4 <i>These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.</i></p>	<p>The environment into which Adam was brought; Adam's first day, including the building of the woman.</p>	<p>The fall of man, Cain and Abel, the genealogy of Cain, the birth of Seth.</p>

Because there is no time in the Hebrew tense system, one could reasonably argue that Genesis 2:4 looked backward to what God had created and restored in the previous 1½ chapters.

“These are the generations of...”

Scripture	Immediate Context	What Follows
<p>Gen 5:1 This is the book of the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.</p>	<p>The line of Adam through Seth down to Noah. This is a long genealogy (10 generations) in which lifespans are given.</p>	<p>The demonic corruption of man.</p>
<p>This is the only time that we have the words <i>the book of</i>. I submit to you that, at this point, information began to be written down.</p>		
<p>Gen 6:9 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his generation. Noah walked with God.</p>	<p>Noah and his immediate family living in world where mankind had been corrupted.</p>	<p>The flood and Noah's family after the flood.</p>
<p>Gen 10:1 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Sons were born to them after the flood.</p>	<p>The sons and grandsons of Japheth, Ham and Shem (who are the sons of Noah). This chapter gives us the early nations of the earth.</p>	<p>The Tower of Babel.</p>
<p>This is one of the few times a family list is concluded with a similar phrase. Gen 10:32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, in their nations, and from these the nations spread abroad on the earth after the flood. However, this conclusion also gives credence to the hypothesis that Genesis 2:4 also looked backward.</p>		
<p>Gen 11:10 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Shem. When Shem was 100 years old, he fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood.</p>	<p>The line of Shem down to Abraham. This is a long genealogy where lifespans are given.</p>	<p>The next genealogy.</p>
<p>Gen 11:27 Now these are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.</p>	<p>Terah, his sons (which include Abram) and Abram's wife Sarai.</p>	<p>The lives of Abram (Abraham) and Isaac, down to the death of Abraham, including God's promise to Abram, the conflict between Sarai and Hagar, Abram's nephew Lot, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the birth of Isaac, the offering of Isaac, the death of Sarah (Sarai), Isaac's wife, and Abraham's death.</p>

“These are the generations of...”

Scripture	Immediate Context	What Follows
<p>Although the two genealogies above seem to belong together, the second one leads into the great narrative of Abraham’s life, which is fairly extensive.</p>		
<p>Gen 25:12 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's servant, bore to Abraham.</p>	<p>The sons of Ishmael. This is a line which ends.</p>	<p>Nothing.</p>
<p>Gen 25:19 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham fathered Isaac</p>	<p>Isaac and his wife with twin sons to be born (Esau and Jacob).</p>	<p>Some of Isaac’s life; and much of Jacob’s life, including the treachery of his own sons.</p>
<p>Gen 36:1 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Esau (that is, Edom).</p>	<p>Esau’s wives and sons. This is a line which ends.</p>	<p>Nothing.</p>
<p>Gen 36:9 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.</p>	<p>Several generations of Esau are chronicled. This is a long genealogy. This is a line which ends.</p>	<p>Nothing.</p>
<p>The two genealogies above appear to fit together, and neither of them actually leads into any sort of a narrative. This is a literary way of indicating that these lines led nowhere; that is, these are lines of the unsaved (quite obviously the line of Esau continued, as we find the Edomites for thousands of years).</p>		
<p>Gen 37:2 These are the generations [results, proceedings, genealogies, course of history] of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father.</p>	<p>Joseph and the favoritism of his father and the jealousy of his brothers. The immediate context lists no specific family lines, and only Reuben and Judah are mentioned by name as Joseph’s brothers. The overall focus of the final 14 chapters of Genesis is Joseph on the one hand, and Jacob and Joseph’s brothers on the other.</p>	<p>We follow two parallel narratives: (1) Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers and his eventual life in Egypt; and (2) that of his father Jacob and his brothers. These two narratives will merge when Jacob’s family has to go to Egypt for additional food. Jacob’s family then moves to Egypt.</p>

Obviously, most of the time, this phrase (*These are the generations of...*) introduces either list of sons and sometimes grandsons; or it introduces a genealogical line. In most cases, this phrase marks the beginning of a new set of narratives.

You will note, at first, this phrase is not standardized, which we would expect from different authors. However, it quickly becomes standardized, which is something we would expect from subsequent authors.

Although the line of promise and the line of fallen men are both followed, only the line of promise (Adam to Noah to Shem to Abram to Jacob) leads anywhere. The line of fallen man always goes to an abrupt stop, and is never picked up again. This does not mean that the line dies out; it means that line *goes nowhere*; not continuing a line of unbelievers indicates that it is cut off, spiritually speaking.

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Before we carefully examine the authorship of Genesis, let me give you the false theories: (1) Moses wrote the book of Genesis or (2) 4 person or groups of people were involved in the authorship of the Pentateuch.

False Theories About the Authorship of Genesis

Moses is the Author:

From the NIV Study Bible: *Historically, Jews and Christians alike have held that Moses was the author/compiler of the first five books of the OT.*¹

The Open Bible writes: *Although Genesis does not directly name its author, and although Genesis ends some three centuries before Moses was born, the whole of Scripture and church history are unified in their adherence to the Mosaic authorship of Genesis...The early church openly held to the Mosaic authorship, as does the first-century Jewish historian Josephus. As would be expected, the Jerusalem Talmud supports Moses as author.*²

The NASB: *No man can claim to know with absolute assurance who wrote the Book of Genesis. Since Genesis is a necessary foundation for Exodus to Deuteronomy, and since the available evidence indicates that Moses wrote these four books, Moses is likely the author of Genesis itself. The New Testament evidence points in the same direction (cf. Especially John 5:46, 47 Luke 16:31 24:44).*³

The Pentateuch is a Compilation of Authors:

Liberal theologians, for the most part, came up with the idea that there are 4 influences on the final compilation of the Pentateuch: the Yawehist (J), who wrote the portions which primarily name God with the name Jehovah/Yaweh; the Elohimist (E), who usually speaks of God using the title *Elohim*; the Deuteronomist (D), who composed most of the book of Deuteronomy; and the Priest (s) (P) who wrote portions which favor the Levitical priesthood. Various editors in years to follow (R, for Redactor), intertwined these texts. This is called *Documentary Hypothesis* or the JEPD (JEDP) theory. The idea that there were several documents which were later woven together (long after the time of Moses) is a theory which is presented by scholars and intellectuals and is taught in many of our seminaries. Even the original source material is said to have been written long after the events actually occurred.

This theory contradicts common sense, what the Bible says about itself, and what Jesus says about the Mosaic authorship. So, if you hold to this theory (if you have heard about it before), many scholars will agree with you, but Jesus does not and the Bible does not.

I do not want to spend any serious time with a false theory of authorship, but if you believe this, or if

False Theories About the Authorship of Genesis

you are intrigued by this notion, let me recommend Josh McDowell, *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, ©1975 by Campus Crusade for Christ, pp. 117–292. I am quite sure that this has been reprinted in other compilations which McDowell has put together more recently. McDowell very methodically destroys this false view of authorship.

¹ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 2.

² *The Open Bible*; the New Living Translation; Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, TN; ©1996, p. 1.

³ *New American Standard Bible, Study Edition*; A. J. Holman Company, ©1975 by The Lockman Foundation, p. 2.

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[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

After writing most of this lesson, I did an internet search on what people seem to believe today on the authorship of Genesis. Much to my pleasant surprise, many people have taken the view that Genesis was originally written by several authors, and that Genesis pretty much existed in its completed form by the time of Moses or that Moses may possibly have been the final editor of these documents.

Who Wrote Genesis—from the Internet

Author	Abbreviated Opinion of Website on Authorship of Genesis
Answers in Genesis	they dismantle the JEDP theory, and they take a position sort of halfway between the Mosaic authorship of Genesis and multiple historical authors of Genesis. I have a chart listing the possible authors of the book of Genesis (which would have been written in the mid to late 1990's). There is a very similar chart on this page.
Biblical Hermeneutics	This is a mishmash of ideas and opinions, not necessarily from scholars, but some from people who just had a thought and decided to share it (like the guy who thinks Genesis was written during the exile). However, on this page we have the interesting thought <i>P.J. Wiseman posits the theory that the 'toledoth' indicates authors who were eyewitnesses to the events mentioned in Genesis. This is based on the pattern of writing found on ancient Babylonian tablets predating Abraham where the word translated 'generations of' is used to indicate the ownership or authorship of the clay tablet.</i> ² This is essentially what I believe, but with some modifications.
Lay evangelism	Teaches that Moses is the author of Genesis.
Russell Grigg	Documentary Hypothesis is false; Moses probably compiled the book of Genesis from existing records. This short piece covers the JEDP theory in more depth than I do; and his opinion of the possible Mosaic authorship of Genesis is not far from mine (I certainly allow for the possibility that Moses compiled Genesis from existing documents; however, I lean more towards Genesis to already existing in completed form by the time Moses comes along).
Dr. David Livingston	Moses wrote the book of Genesis, possibly from a direct dictation from God on Mount Sinai.

² From <http://hermeneutics.stackexchange.com/questions/1255/was-moses-the-probable-author-of-genesis> accessed January 14, 2013.

Who Wrote Genesis—from the Internet

Author	Abbreviated Opinion of Website on Authorship of Genesis
Peter Salemi	Salemi appears to build upon the 1936 work of P. J. Wiseman, which attributes authorship of Genesis to several eyewitnesses.
Don Stewart	Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, with some slight wiggle room when it comes to Genesis.
Wikipedia	As one would expect, the weirdest and most liberal theories of the authorship of Genesis are offered up, almost uncritically. The day that I checked, ³ Mosaic authorship or the <i>toledoth theory</i> were not even mentioned. This being Wikipedia, that could change tomorrow.

Hundreds of articles can be found on this subject. These are just a representative few.

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I am of the opinion that the original narratives were written (or, more likely, memorized) by the people who experienced them. For many years, I thought was mostly alone in this theory, but the internet has revealed a number of people who believe roughly the same thing. What I have not seen is the theory proven from the Scriptures.

Moses is clearly called the author of the books of the Pentateuch other than Genesis. Moses is called the author of the book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31 2Kings 14:6. Moses is called the author of Leviticus in Ezra 6:18. The Old Testament is referred to as *Moses and the Prophets* in Luke 16:29, 31 and as *the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms* in Luke 24:44. Jesus told His audience that they do not really believe Moses' writings because they do not believe Jesus' words (John 5:45–47). Furthermore, Moses is called by Jesus the author of Exodus (Mark 7:10 12:26 John 6:32), the author of Leviticus (Matt. 8:4 Mark 1:44 Luke 2:22 5:14), the author of Numbers (John 3:14) and the author of Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7–8 22:24 Mark 7:10 12:19)—or, at the very least, his authorship is clearly implied in these passages (in each of those passages, a quote from that book is attributed to Moses).

Interestingly enough, Jesus spoke on several occasions about marriage, and referred back to Adam and Eve, but did not reference Moses as the author on those occasions. In fact, this is how it went down:

Matt. 19:3 (Literal Translation of the Holy Bible) **And the Pharisees came near to Him, tempting Him, and saying to Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every reason?**

As occurred on many occasions, the pharisees came to our Lord and attempted to trap Him. The idea was to put Him into a theological hole from which he could not dig Himself.

Matt. 19:4 **But answering, He said to them, Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning "created them male and female"?**

Jesus quotes from Genesis 1:27, but does not cite Moses as the author.

³ From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Genesis accessed January 14, 2013.

Matt. 19:5 **And He said, "For this reason a man shall leave father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."**

Jesus cites Genesis 2:24, and the reference is to God speaking. Moses could be called the author here by our Lord, but he is not.

Matt. 19:6 **So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate.**

God, not Moses, speaks of a husband being joined soulfully and physically, and what God has joined, man is not to separate with divorce laws.

Matt. 19:7 **They said to Him, Why then did Moses command to "give a bill of divorce," "and to put her away"?**

Here the pharisees quote Deut. 24:1 and attribute this to Moses (which is proper, as Moses was teaching).

Matt. 19:8 **He said to them, In view of your hardheartedness, Moses allowed you to put away your wives. But from the beginning it was not so.**

Jesus agrees that Moses said this, but that was not God's original intention, for men and women to marry and divorce. This is well and proper, to say that Moses said this, because Deuteronomy is Moses speaking in several sermons to the generation of promise.

Matt. 19:9 **And I say to you, Whoever shall put away his wife, if not for fornication, and shall marry another, that one commits adultery. And the one who marries her who was put away commits adultery.**

And Jesus has given the only reason to allow a divorce by Moses: fornication.

So, you notice in this passage that Jesus very carefully attributes to some portions of the Pentateuch to Moses, but not that which came out of Genesis.

We have a similarly parsing of authorship in John 7:19–24:

John 7:19 [Jesus is speaking] **"Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet not one of you does the Law? Why do you desire to kill Me?"**

The Law, which begins in Exodus and is concluded in Deuteronomy, is given to the Jews by Moses. God spoke the Law to him (which Moses very carefully isolates from his own writing of narrative in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers); but Deuteronomy is several sermons by Moses to the people of Israel in the final days outside the Land of Promise.

John 7:20 [Some in] the crowd answered and said, **"You have a demon [that is, you are nuts]. Who seeks to kill You?"**

People in the crowd are making fun of Jesus here. They claim that Jesus must have a demon to make Him think that they want to kill Him (despite the fact that this was in their hearts).

John 7:21 Jesus answered, saying to them, “I did one work, and you all marvel [at it].

Jesus healed on the Sabbath. They could not stop talking about it and trying to determine if it violated the Sabbath.

John 7:22 Because of this, Moses has given you circumcision; (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on a Sabbath, you circumcise a man.

They circumcise on the Sabbath, and they do not consider that a work. But notice how carefully Jesus speaks of Moses—**circumcision is not of Moses but it is of the fathers**. The fathers (also called the patriarchs) are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (and perhaps Jacob’s sons). So, circumcision did not originally come from Moses, but from the fathers. If you will recall when we studied circumcision, God told Abraham to be circumcised, along with all of his household prior to the conception of Isaac. Later, God told Abraham to circumcise Isaac. So, if you want to be a stickler, this came from God, and not from man. However, Jesus tells them “**Not that circumcision is of Moses, but it is of the fathers.**” So we are referring not that God told Abraham to be circumcised but that this was *recorded* (in some fashion) by the fathers originally (and not by Moses). My contention is, this was recorded in their memory and passed down.

So there is no misunderstanding this point, Jesus could have said, “Not that circumcision is of Moses; it came from God” (or, “It was given to Abraham by God”). Jesus says, instead, “**It is of the fathers;**” who are the patriarchs. So He refers here back to authorship not to the ultimate source (the same is true many times when Moses is cited, even when Moses is quoting the Revealed Lord). In other words, Jesus is attributing the *recording* of the tradition of circumcision to the *patriarchs*.

John 7:23 If a man receives circumcision on a Sabbath, that the **Law of Moses** is not broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man whole and healthy on a Sabbath?”

Note the reference to the *Law of Moses*; Moses wrote down the Law as given to him by God, but the Law was commonly called the *Law of Moses* because he wrote it down and taught it to the Jews. So, again, we are not speaking of the ultimate origin, Who is God, but to the one who recorded this information—the patriarchs and not Moses in v. 22 and Moses in v. 23. Jesus did not have to speak so carefully if Moses wrote Genesis, even if God simply dictated Genesis to Moses (as God dictated much of the middle Pentateuch books to Moses). But if Moses was not the original author of Genesis, then Jesus could not attribute the recording of the first circumcision to Moses.

I realize that this is splitting hairs, but in two situations, where Jesus could have easily spoken of Moses as the source for the information in Genesis, He clearly did not. However, elsewhere, where God dictated portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers to Moses, Jesus still referred to the human author, Moses as the source. The One carefully splitting hairs is, in truth, the Lord.

Similarly the Apostles referred to Moses as author of the Law (Acts 13:39 15:5 28:23 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 9:19 10:28), of Exodus (Rom. 9:15—where God is said to have spoken to Moses 2Cor. 3:13–15), of Leviticus (Rom. 10:5 Heb. 9:19), of Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22 7:37 Rom. 10:19 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 10:28 12:21); and Moses is associated with the book of Numbers in Heb. 3:2, 5. However, when given the chance to call him the author of Genesis, the Apostles did not in Acts 3:25 7:1–16 Rom. 4:1–3, 9–23 9:6–12⁴ 1Cor. 6:16 Gal. 3:5–9, 15–18 4:22–26 Eph. 5:31 Heb. 6:13–15 7:1–6 11:8–21

⁴ But Moses is mentioned in v. 15 in association with a quotation from Exodus.

James 2:21–23 1Peter 3:5–6.⁵ In most of those passages, a direct reference to Genesis often reads something along the lines of: **And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham: "All the nations will be blessed" "in you."** (Gal 3:8 quoting from Genesis 12:3; LTHB). When the source for Genesis is mentioned, it is always *it stands written or the Scripture says*; in every instance referring back to Genesis, it is never, *and Moses wrote* or *and Moses commanded (said)*.

There are two verses in Genesis that are so personal, that only the person who was there would have written these lines (actually, there are many more than just these). When Jacob, Abraham's grandson, is speaking of working for his uncle in order to secure the hand of Rachel, the woman he loved, he had to work for 7 years. Genesis 29:20 (ESV) reads: **So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. But to him, it seemed only like a day.** This is written by a man who loved Rachel, not by someone who recorded this hundreds of years later from reading historical documents. This is a man who looked back, remembered how strongly he felt about her, how much he thought about her; and how every day that he worked, his mind was on Rachel. So those 7 years just zoomed by. Jacob would have said or written that; anyone coming along a few hundred years later would not.

There are incidents with Joseph, Abraham's great grandson (and Rachel's son) where his feelings are described when he meets his full brother Benjamin again after many years, and how he teared up to meet Benjamin (Genesis 43:16–34). These things were not written by some dispassionate historian hundreds of years later; but they were recorded by the men who actually experienced these things.

So, in my opinion, if Moses assembled or edited together the manuscripts of Genesis, he may have simply added a few extra phrases like, *and Ben-Ammi became the father of the sons of Ammon today*. Or, someone in a later generation, like Joseph, memorized the words of Genesis, as they were given to him, and he (or someone else) added the phrase, **He is the father of the Ammonites to this day**. It is possible that the books of Genesis and Job were passed along to Moses verbally—perhaps even by his mother or his sister.

One more thing: it is clear that the people of Moses, the Exodus generation, knew God and knew about God. When suffering under the slave masters of Egypt, they called out to God. This suggests some familiarity with their personal history and Abraham's interaction with God. If you personally are in some terrible, hopeless jam, then, most likely, you are going to call out to God for help. This does not come from out of the blue; you have to have a reason that you turn toward God. You might say, "Well, I'm saved and the Bible says God loves me." You have reasons, based upon what you know about the Bible, why you can turn to God for help. The Exodus generation, who were under terrible slavery to the Egyptians, called out to God for help. This had to be based upon something. They will not just call out to God without believing that He will answer if they did not know something about Him. I would suggest that the basis of their faith in God was based upon the book of Genesis. I am not saying that they knew this book well, but that they knew enough to call out to the God of Abraham (Ex. 2:23–24), with Whom they had a relationship both by faith and by birth.

In any case, Genesis (And possibly Job) would have certainly been an end to whatever oral transmission there was, because in the 4 books of the Pentateuch, Moses will be told on several occasions to write things down (Ex. 17:14 34:1, 27). This information would have to be disseminated to an entire nation.

⁵ There are even more passage which refer back to quotations from Genesis, and not a single one is ever attributed to Moses.

This is a summary of points taken out of an [Introduction to Genesis \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Moses is NOT the Author of Genesis

1. Throughout most of the book of Genesis, we follow one patriarch; we see through the eyes of one patriarch. From Genesis 12 and forward, most of this book is written from the view of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Joseph. The change from one man's viewpoint to the viewpoint of his son is generally quite clear, even though they each present themselves in the 3rd person (which is not unusual, even in an autobiographical work).
2. Historically, Moses is understood to have written Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
 - 1) Moses is called the author of the book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31 2Kings 14:6.
 - 2) Moses is called the author of Leviticus in Ezra 6:18.
3. Jesus acknowledges that Moses is the author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
 - 1) The Old Testament is referred to as *Moses and the Prophets* in Luke 16:29, 31 and as *the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms* in Luke 24:44.
 - 2) Jesus told His audience that they do not really believe Moses' writings because they do not believe Jesus' words (John 5:45–47).
 - 3) Furthermore, Moses is called by Jesus the author of Exodus (Mark 7:10 12:26 John 6:32), the author of Leviticus (Matt. 8:4 Mark 1:44 Luke 2:22 5:14), the author of Numbers (John 3:14) and the author of Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7–8 22:24 Mark 7:10 12:19)—or, at the very least, his authorship is clearly implied in these passages (in each of those passages, a quote from that book is attributed to Moses).
4. Jesus never speaks of Moses as writing Genesis.
 - 1) Jesus speaks of God creating man as male and female (quoting Genesis 1:27), but he never cites Moses as the author. Matt. 19:3–9.
 - 2) Jesus explains that circumcision came through the patriarchs and not through Moses. So, aspects of the Mosaic Law actually preceded Moses and did not come from him (John 7:20–23). If Moses wrote Genesis, this parsing of history would have made less sense. John 7:22–23 **Then Moses gave you the rite of circumcision -- not that it had its origin with Moses but with your earlier forefathers [= the patriarchs] -- and you circumcise a male child even on the Sabbath. Well, if a male child undergoes circumcision on the Sabbath, to keep the law of Moses from being broken, are you angry with me for making a man perfectly well on the Sabbath?** Jesus' point is, they circumcise children on the Sabbath, so how can they complain about Him doing good works on the Sabbath? However, as an aside, He also states that circumcision predated Moses and comes from the patriarchs. Jesus could have said, "Did not Moses tell you that the patriarchs began circumcision?" But, He did not say that because Moses did not tell us that (that is, Moses did not author Genesis).
5. Similarly the Apostles referred to Moses as author of the Law (Acts 13:39 15:5 28:23 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 9:19 10:28), of Exodus (Rom. 9:15—where God is said to have spoken to Moses 2Cor. 3:13–15), of Leviticus (Rom. 10:5 Heb. 9:19), of Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22 7:37 Rom. 10:19 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 10:28 12:21); and Moses is associated with the book of Numbers in Heb. 3:2, 5. However, when given the chance to call him the author of Genesis, the Apostles did not in Acts 3:25 7:1–16 Rom. 4:1–3, 9–23 9:6–12 (Moses is, however, mentioned in association with Exodus in v. 15) 1Cor. 6:16 Gal. 3:5–9, 15–18 4:22–26 Eph. 5:31 Heb. 6:13–15 7:1–6 11:8–21 James 2:21–23 1Peter 3:5–6.
6. In most of those passages, a direct reference to Genesis often reads something along the lines of: **And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham: "All the nations will be blessed" "in you."** (Gal 3:8 quoting from Genesis 12:3;

Moses is NOT the Author of Genesis

Green's literal translation). When the source for Genesis is mentioned, it is always *it stands written* or *the Scripture says*; in every instance referring back to Genesis, it is never, *and Moses wrote* or *and Moses commanded* (*said*).

7. Verses that we have studied are intensely personal (such as Genesis 29:20) and make sense if recorded by the person who experienced this (in this case, Jacob), but would have had no place in an historical narrative prepared by some author 400 years later.
8. There are even glosses found in the book of Genesis which are more appropriate to having been added 20, 50 or 100 years later; but not 400 years later. Genesis 19:38 **The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.** (ESV). *Giving birth to the son* fits in with the narrative; calling this baby the father of the Ammonites would have been added many years later—but not necessarily 400 years later.
9. If Moses were the author of Genesis, there would have been problems with the timing. The Jews at the beginning of the book of Exodus are calling upon their God to deliver them. Now, if Moses wrote the book of Genesis, how do the Jewish slaves know about their God?

At one time, I thought I was the only person who saw the book of Genesis as having been written mostly by the patriarchs, but, because of the internet, it has become clear that quite a number of commentators believe the same thing. Answers in Genesis, while disputing the JPED theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch, also list the various **authors of Genesis** (about $\frac{3}{4}$ ^{ths} of the way down).

Other examples and a chart of the authorship of Genesis can be found in the **Introduction to Genesis**.

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Genesis 37:2 These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, a son of seventeen years, came tending the flock with his brothers. And he was a youth with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought to his father an evil report of them.

At this point, we leave the narrative of Jacob and begin the narrative of Joseph, Jacob's son by Rachel.

The writing style changes in this way: (1) the material is better organized; the author (Joseph) seems to be very aware of using chiasmi to record his own history); and (2) there is more detail to be found. There are minor points of detail that, if left out, would give us a slightly different understanding of the passage (such as, vv. 15–17, 23, 25, 28). I have indicated that, in previous chapters, there are a bevy of details which are unaccounted for, and leave some narratives wanting (for instance, who informed Jacob and his sons of the rape of Dinah?). The narratives of Joseph are much more carefully recorded and more detail-oriented. There are fewer gaps. Joseph seems to be better at preserving the unity, flow and detail of a narrative. He gives us a much more complete picture of what is going on. Also, when there is an interlude of time, Joseph often takes note of that in the text.

Many good commentators have believed that Moses is the author of Genesis, but that opens up a whole set of questions. Does he change his writing style from time to time? What was his source material? Did Moses just make this stuff up? Did God dictate these things to Moses? What sense does it make for Moses to, with each generation, completely change up his writing style? The history of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and of Joseph are all recorded using different writing styles. And we have God speaking to Moses throughout Exodus, and that is a very different style from these writing styles found in Genesis.

My point being, Moses did not just sit down and write Genesis; nor was it dictated to him. At most, he committed the oral traditions of Genesis *to paper*.

The people of Israel, in Egypt prior to the exodus, seem to clearly have a sense of history and understanding, to some degree, of their history and their relationship with God, before Moses wrote anything at all. Now, how did they know anything, if Moses is to be credited with writing the book of Genesis and Moses is not yet on the scene as an authoritative figure from God? There are several things found in the first chapters of Exodus which suggest some general understanding among the children of Abraham (and even among the people of Egypt) of the history presented in Genesis. The people of Egypt did not know all of Genesis—that is clear—but they did seem to know some historical things about the Jews who lived among them.

Let me submit to you that the Israelites in Egypt had preserved the book of Genesis and possibly the book of Job. This does not mean that they wrote it down, but that it had been passed along from generation to generation, probably orally. Each new generation of patriarchs would add some additional information to the narrative and pass it along to the next generation. This would account for the different writing styles.

At some point, this was all written down. Moses clearly writes things down, as we find in Exodus; and God orders Moses to write some things down. Therefore, the Jews had to have a written language which Moses used (it is even possible that Moses developed the written language for Jewish people).

This is all speculation. We simply do not know at what point Jews began to write things down; we do not know at what point they had a written language. There are passages in Genesis and Exodus which clearly suggest that the Egyptians had a written language at this time and that they wrote a lot of stuff down. And, we know at the time of Moses, the Jews had a written language as well.

There is also evidence that some contracts in the era of Genesis were oral contracts (such as, the purchase of the grave site property by Abraham). A great many witnesses to this contract were required, which suggests that a written deed of trust was not filed with the community records department, but that the terms of the contract were worked out and agreed to before a number of witnesses.

Now, did Moses write the final copy of the book of Genesis? Possibly. Was it already in existence during the time of Moses (either in written or oral form)? Almost certainly. At best, Moses is the final editor, but I personally doubt even that, given the various writing styles found throughout Genesis and preserved in the book that we are now studying. The history recorded by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and by Joseph, all present 4 distinct writing styles. Isaac is mostly concerned with major events: births and deaths and marriages. Jacob writes a flowing narrative, but leaves many important informational points out (for instance, how did the family of Jacob find out that Dinah had been raped? Why did only two brothers kill the family of Hamor, when all of them seemed to be in on the plot?). Abraham wrote episodically.

On the other hand, Joseph's writing is very detail-oriented and very organized, using chiasmi organization throughout. We will have very few questions as to why did this or that happen, when reading Joseph. He does not leave great narrative gaps, as his father Jacob did.

Abraham and Isaac focus in on specific events, while leaving wide gaps of time out of the narrative (most of Abraham's writings appear to center around his interaction with God). None of the patriarchs appear to be writing just a personal biography, although Joseph comes quite close in that regard.

Jacob was as sneaky in the early part of his life, as Joseph is honorable throughout most of his life.

The writing of Genesis 1–11 also has a possible set of styles (the flood narrative, for instance, is extremely well-organized and chiasmic).

Genesis 37:2 These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, a son of seventeen years, came tending the flock with his brothers. And he was a youth with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought to his father an evil report of them.

This is the final time in Genesis that we have the word *tôwl°dôth* (תּוֹלְדוֹת), because Joseph will be the final author of the book of Genesis.

Tôwl°dôth (תּוֹלְדוֹת) [pronounced *tohI°-DOTH*] means, *generations, results, proceedings, genealogies, history, course of history; origin; families; races*. Strong's #8435 BDB #410. *Tôwl°dôth* often suggests a new author, a new focus and often a genealogical reference. If the book of Genesis was written or even edited by the same person, we might expect there always to be, for instance, a genealogy, every time that this word is use—but there isn't. This lack of consistency would suggest different authors. The lack of consistency would suggest that there were variant stories and traditions pulled together by the repetition of these words from generation to generation. The way that this word is used throughout Genesis suggests that one author stopped writing and another author “picked up the pen” and continued recording his own history.

What was repeated verbally may have been known as, “The History of God and Man.”

The very wording of v. 2 suggests a different perspective. We have been introduced to Bilhah and Zilpah in previous chapters as the personal maids of Leah and Rachel. Although we know how these maids were used by their mistresses to produce offspring that the mistresses would lay claim to, Joseph would not know them in that way. At best, this is ancient history to him (as their involvement with his father predates his birth). From his vantage point, Joseph would have seen these maids as Jacob's (his father's) wives. Rachel's personal maid would have probably raised Joseph. Joseph may know about his history; but, at the same time, he has personal history, which is how he grew up. His personal history would certainly affect his perspective.

We know that there are problems with the sons of Leah. It is not a great leap to imagine that there are problems with the other sons of Jacob as well. As has been discussed in a previous chapter, the Bible never presents polygamy as just another kind of marriage, or as a relationship just as valid as monogamy. Even though the people of that era would have accepted polygamy (remember, Laban allowed Jacob to marry both of his daughters); there are always serious problems associated with the children of a polygamous marriage. This provides us a wonderful illustration of human viewpoint versus divine viewpoint.

From human viewpoint, we might think that, the more adults involved in raising children, the better off the children would be. Jacob has 13+ children. Would not the average person think, because he has 4 wives/mistresses, that these children can be better attended to? But that is human viewpoint. The key to raising children is the relationship between the husband and wife. As a child, I could never play one parent against the other, because they presented a united front. I had no clue that things between them went on behind the scenes with regards to raising us boys. So, we boys received what I believed to be a very consistent upbringing, which was the result of two adults discussing how to deal with us.

With Jacob and company, this is quite different. Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are all different women, and they each will have their own ideas about raising their children; and they would each have their own ideas about which values to stress. It is much more difficult for Jacob to formulate 4 game plans for 4 sets of children, based upon his interaction with each of the mothers. As a result, there can be no consistency in the way that these children are raised. Every parent has heard the words, "But Tommy's mother lets him do that!" How much more difficult when that refrain concerns someone from your own family? Also, we have no idea how the personal maids dealt with the children. Were they the primary caretakers of all the children?

Let me give you a specific example: Reuben is the oldest son, and therefore, should have more responsibility and more leadership skills taught to him. If it were up to Jacob and Leah, this would have been agreed to and this is how Reuben would have been raised. But, the other 3 women do not want their first sons in any way second to Reuben. As a result, Reuben was aware of his leadership position, but he never fully embraced this position, because he would have had women over him (the other 3 mothers) who would have undercut his youthful authority). Therefore, there will be situations with Reuben and his younger brothers where Reuben needed to lead and to be decisive, but he was not. I offer this as a possible explanation; we do not know much about the interaction of the different mothers with the different children.

Divine viewpoint would be, one husband and one wife would better raise 13+ children than one husband + 4 wives. A chain of command and a consistency of training would be better than 3 additional women, all of whom had vested interests in the way their own sons were being raised.

This is even more of an issue in King David's family, who sired a number of sons by his first set of wives (David had about 10 wives and 10 mistresses). None of his first sons had David's character or his love of God. When David focused in on one wife (Bathsheba) and their 4 sons, they turned out better.

A New Theory of the Authorship of Genesis: Another theory of authorship has occurred to me during this study of Genesis, and I have alluded to it in previous lessons. As we have read, the brothers were told by Joseph who he really is; and the entire family moved to Egypt. They would all live in Egypt; and they will have children and grandchildren—born both in Canaan and in Egypt.

Their history and their relationship with God are very important, and these things would have been taught to their children and grandchildren. One of the brothers—perhaps it would be Judah—at a gathering, at a sacrifice, would describe what happened to them at the beginning of the great famine in Canaan. "We were all hungry, and our father, Jacob said to us, "Why are you all sitting around looking at each other? I understand that there is grain in Egypt." And Judah would also describe the events leading to them entering into Egypt and coming face to face with Joseph. "We did not know that this was our long, lost brother Joseph, whom we had sold into slavery..."

And then Joseph picks up the narrative at that point, saying, "But I knew who they were. I knew that these are my 10 brothers who had come from Canaan to buy grain. After looking them over, I said to them, "You are spies coming into my land to spy it out!" " Joseph would continue with the narrative of the brothers all being in Egypt, and how he first put them all in jail; then decided to keep 9 in jail and sent one man back; and finally decided, to send 9 men back and keep just one man in jail.

At that point, Judah would take up the narrative again, and tell the sons and grandsons of his brothers, about their trip home and the discovery of the silver, etc. Anytime that all the brothers gathered together

in one place, all of them having sons and grandsons; and they would worship Y^ehowah, their God. At such a time, their history would have been very important to them, given that God called Abraham and He spoke to Isaac and to Jacob as well.

This sort of understanding does not require anyone to gather up disparate narratives and weave them together at a later day; each man simply recalls what happened to him as it happened. As the point of view goes from the brothers to Joseph, Joseph picks up the narrative; as the point of view returns to the brothers, exclusive of Joseph; then Judah picks up the narrative. Their sons and grandsons would hear this on many occasions, and it would come across to them as a singular narrative, despite there being 2 or more people telling them what happened.

Jacob most certainly had memorized and would begin all of this by reciting the first 36 chapters of Genesis, which each patriarch had done during the time that he was a spiritual leader for his people. As chapters were added, the next patriarch would have more to say.

So, in telling their sons and grandson about their history and how they had come to Egypt, several brothers (I would guess Judah and Joseph, primarily⁶) would tell different parts of the narrative, but in chronological order—so they would trade off—Judah would speak, then Joseph, then Judah, then Joseph. Judah would talk about the periods of time where it was just him and 9 or 10 of his brothers in Canaan or in between Canaan and Egypt; and Joseph would speak about the historical events which took place while the brothers are all in Egypt. As these events were recalled, along with the more ancient Scriptures, they would be remembered and repeated by their children and then grandchildren in future generations.

At some point, this narrative would have changed into the 3rd person. Perhaps, with the next generation, sons of Joseph and Judah would speak of Judah and Joseph in the 3rd person. Each generation would repeat what had been added to the narrative. By the time Jacob and Joseph both die, we have the completed 50 chapters of Genesis, some unknown person being chosen to speak of the details of Joseph's death and his specific directions for the disposition of his body (which we will study in the future).

As I have stated on many occasions, I do not believe that Moses wrote the book of Genesis (he may have been the first to commit it to writing, but none of it would have been original with him); but the patriarchs themselves recorded the events of their lives, and each man added additional chapters to this narrative which I like to call "The History of God and Man." (that is, the *book of Genesis*). By *recording the events of their lives*, I simply mean that they recited what happened to them, which text eventually became standardized so that the next generation could hear in the same way and learn it.

From time to time (perhaps every month), this narrative (or portions of the narrative) would be repeated (or, perhaps each week, with their sacrifice, a portion of Genesis would be given from memory). At some point, the text would become standardized, so that it is easy for the children and grandchildren to learn and memorize (I also believe that the mental capacity of the men in that era was superior to our mental capacity, so that the average person could memorize and retain the entire narrative of Genesis⁷).

⁶ I believe that Leah would have spoken to her children being born; as well as to the other children of Jacob who were born.

⁷ I recall struggling to memorize the preamble to the constitution.

When Judah and Joseph first presented the history of how they all came to live in Egypt, the narrative may have been more free form, some of it given in the 1st person, sometimes with more and sometimes with fewer details. However, at some point, it would become clear to that generation that they have added their own chapters of life to the book of Genesis, so that they would standardize the text, so that successive generations can hear and learn it. By standardize it, I mean that when it comes to their turn of telling their story, they soon begin to tell it in the same way each time, so that their children and grandchildren can hear and more easily memorize their family history.

For the people of Israel to know and memorize their personal history, along with the intersection of God’s Person in some events, there is no need that they understand these words to be God’s Words. The development of this text I believe would have been quite organic—a preservation of who they were and their origins and their interactions with God. After all, God established the Jewish race.

This understanding also easily explains glosses. A particular place may have an ancient name; that name may be changed over the years; but we sometimes find the more recent name used during the time that the ancient name would have been more appropriate. So, when the name *Luz* is used, there may have been some blank stares. The person reciting the text might then say, *which place we call Bethel today*. At some point in time, in some passages, the person reciting the text (from memory) might eventually just say, *Bethel*.

It would be clear to them that the words spoken by God to Moses were *inspired*, as it were (they had no technical definition for *inspiration* as we do today). Eventually, the rest of the narrative became to be understood to be the Word of God as well—perhaps by the time that Moses speaks the book of Deuteronomy.

I don’t know if this theory of the authorship of Genesis has ever been presented before, but it is simple, organic and it fits in well with long-standing Jewish customs.

By the words *human authors*, I do not mean to imply that any of these men actual wrote anything down. This would have been carried on as an oral tradition from generation to generation, with the patriarch of that generation reading everything that takes us to his section.

The Original Human Authors of Genesis	
Portion of Genesis	Original Author
Genesis 1–4	Adam
Genesis 5–9	Noah (except for the last couple verses)
Genesis 10–23	Abraham (much of Genesis 10 & 11 came from historic and genealogical records or from the oral tradition passed on generation after generation)
Genesis 24–26	Isaac
Genesis 27–35	Jacob
Genesis 34	Simeon or Levi

Genesis 35	Jacob
Genesis 36	Esau, or from records provided by Esau
Genesis 37	Joseph, Reuben or possibly Judah
Genesis 38	Judah
Genesis 39–50	Joseph (except for the final couple verses and possibly verses relating to Canaan and the trips to and from Canaan)
These final 3 sections were possibly all written by Joseph, based upon his own experiences and based upon discussions that he had with his brothers and father.	

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This helps to explain one big psychological change that appears to take place in Jacob. Our study of him has revealed him to be a rather surly, self-centered jerk. Let he will become beloved in Egypt, to the point where many Egyptians mourn his passing when it comes. Now, how does a man like Jacob become popular in Egypt?

Often, he and his sons stand up and recite the oral tradition, which we know as Genesis. We do not know how often that they did this, but it was enough to cause many Egyptians of this generation to believe in the God of Abraham.

The eldest patriarch would have done most of the reciting, so this would have fallen on the shoulders of Jacob. So, when it came time for this book to be read (it was read aloud from memory; it was not written down), Jacob would speak the words of Genesis 1–35 (from time to time, he may have had help from one of his sons, as the patriarch who remains after Jacob would be handling much of the reading, as Jacob did).

As a result of these public readings, many Egyptians believed in the God of Abraham and many of these Egyptians came to love Jacob, as he spoke the words of truth. People can be absolute bastards, but if their gift leads them to read and exegete the Word of God, our opinions might be radically changed. I believe that this is what happened to Jacob in Egypt.

Addendum

The Abbreviated Doctrine of

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