

**Dr. Jack L. Arnold**

**Lesson 1**  
**Introduction to Genesis**

**I. THE AUTHOR**

A. It is generally acknowledged by conservative scholars of the Bible that Moses is the writer of the Pentateuch or the Law (first five books of the Bible). Although the Mosaic authorship has been questioned by liberals, it is affirmed by conservative scholars and confirmed by archaeology. Bible believers accept the Mosaic authorship Deut. 31:9,24,26; Acts 7:37-38). POINT: The problem comes in that nowhere in Genesis is it stated that Moses is the author.

B. At the turn of the 20th century, many liberals held that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because writing was not used by the primitive Jews. This has long been refuted by archeology, which has proven conclusively that writing was basic to the well-developed cultures of that day.

**II. THE MEANING OF GENESIS**

A. The Hebrew title for the book is taken from the words *bereshith* ("In the beginning"). The title "Genesis" comes from the Septuagint (LXX), which is the Greek translation of the original Hebrew. "Genesis" means origin, source and birth. It may be concluded, then, that Genesis is the book of beginnings, origins, sources and genealogies (birth).

B. God revealed to men in written form the beginning of creation, man, woman, sin, Sabbath, marriage, family, labor, civilization, culture, murder, sacrifice, races, languages and redemption. NOTE: One might ask, "How is it that Moses could have all this knowledge? After all he was but a human." Moses wrote in the 15th century B.C. and all of Genesis occurred before he lived. The answer is that God revealed much of this material directly to Moses, but Moses also had many sources, oral and written, that gave him information. Archer says,

While material which the author used for the composition of this book doubtless came to him from five to six centuries before his time, prior to Jacob's migration into Egypt, nevertheless Moses seems to have served as a Spirit—guided compiler and interpreter of the preexistent material which had come to him from his forebears in oral and written form. (Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*)

**III. THE PURPOSE**

A. The purpose for writing is that the Israelites could have an accurate record of their own national origin in Abraham and God's covenantal dealing with him and his seed. It was necessary, therefore, to trace the generations from Adam to Abraham and then from Abraham on.

B. It is interesting to note that the first 11 chapters cover a minimum of 2000 years. It could easily be hundred times longer. From chapter 12 to chapter 50, the time is 350 years. It is important to place the emphasis where God puts it. W.H. Griffith Thomas states,

It must be evident from these simple facts that there was no intention of writing a universal history of man, but only of recording the development of the Divine will and purpose for and through Abraham. It is his-story written with a special purpose. The book might easily have begun with Abraham if the purpose had been to record the ordinary history of an ordinary people, but charged with God's purposes for the whole of mankind, it was necessary to show--at least in brief form--the connection between the progenitor of the human race and Abraham, in whom and in whose descendents the Divine purpose was to be realized (*Genesis: A Devotional Commentary*).

**IV. THE PLAN**

A. The first 11 chapters deal with some historic events that shaped the course of mankind (original creation, the Fall, the flood and the Tower of Babel). The rest of the book deals with important individuals (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph).

B. Perhaps the key to understanding the plan of the book is in the word generations. This occurs ten times.

1. Generations of the Heaven and the Earth (2:4-4:26).
2. Generations of Adam (5:1-6:8)
3. Generations of Noah (6:9-9:29).
4. Generations of Shem (9:10-26).
5. Generations of the Sons of Noah 10:1-11:9).
6. Generations of Terah (11:27-15:11).
7. Generations of Ishmael (15:12-18).
8. Generations of Isaac (15:19-35:29).
9. Generations of Esau (36:1-37:1).
10. Generations of Jacob (37:2-50:26).

#### V. THE CONCEPT OF GOD

A. Introduction. Genesis is the book of beginnings but it is also a great book on the person of God and His dealings with men. Leave God out of Genesis (as many do) and it is nothing more than a compilation of human records and of no real spiritual value,

B. God in Creation. Genesis tells man that God is the author of creation; that the universe is not self-originated but is a result of the Creator's handiwork,

C. God in History. From the dawn of human history, God has been behind it all. History apart from God is meaningless. The Bible is the oldest known book in the world. No student of history can afford to overlook the instructive and fascinating record contained in the first book of the Bible.

D. God in Providence. Genesis, more than any other book in the world, shows that God has control of all things. From the time that man was created, God's providence is seen watching over him, warning him, checking him, overruling his mistakes, and, in spite of his willfulness, carrying out the Divine purpose

E. God in Redemption. The God of redemption was at work from Adam to all the chosen seed, Genesis has well been summed up in three words--generation, degeneration, regeneration,

F. God in Human Life. This book tells of how God is with those that love Him. It is God revealing Himself to men and men responding to this revelation by faith-obedience. We see how God guides, warns, encourages and cheers His own. POINT: This is why the Apostle Paul writes, "***Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning***" *Rom. 15:4*).

#### VI. SPIRITUAL LESSONS

A. Major Events: Four basic questions of mankind are answered

1. Creation: How did the universe begin?
2. Fall: Why does a good God permit suffering?
3. Flood: Will God Judge the world?
4. Tower of Babel: Why do people differ as to races and languages?

B. Individuals

1. Adam: Object of grace.
2. Noah: The chosen one.
3. Abraham: Man of faith.
4. Isaac: The beloved son.
5. Jacob: The chosen and chastened son.
6. Joseph: The suffering and glorified one.