



# A Study of the Book of GENESIS

Joe M. Easterling - Minister of Discipleship

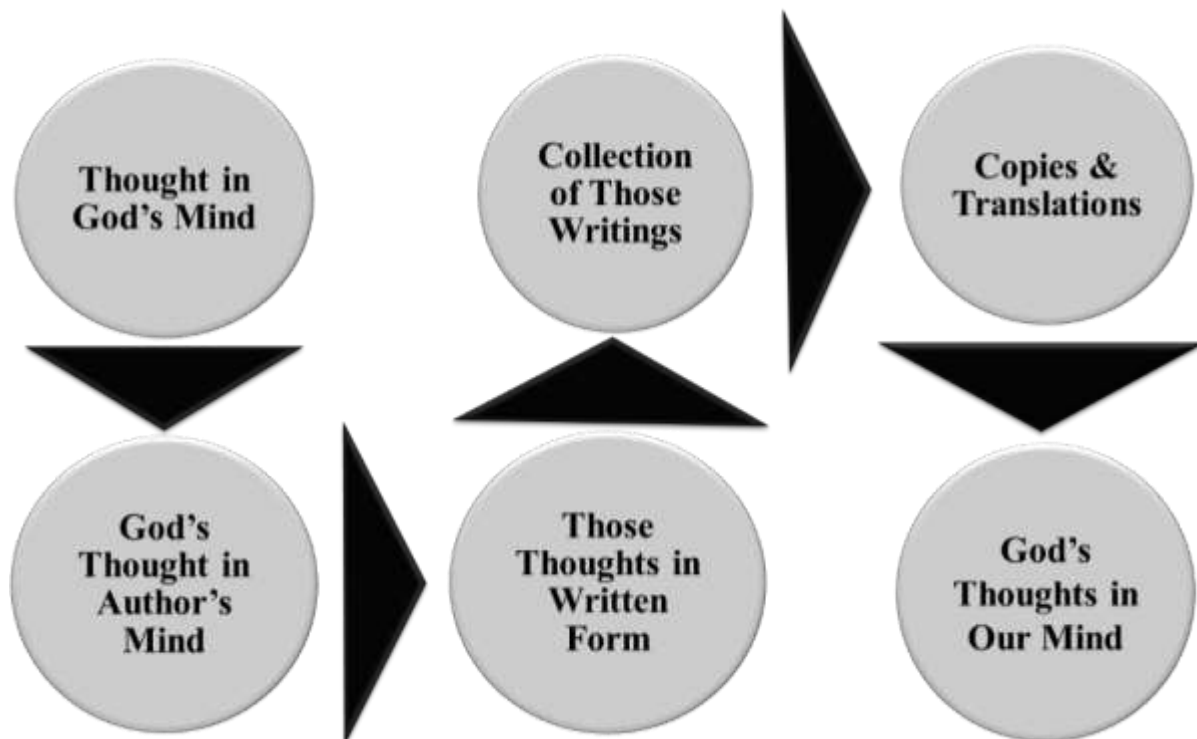
## WEEK ONE

### *Introduction: How Did We Get the Old Testament?*

**The Bible, starting with Genesis, is the primary method of God to make Himself known to the world. Since this is true, several questions arise for those who wish to understand the Old Testament:**

- How did we get the Bible we have today from what was written so long ago?
- Starting with Genesis, how do each of the OT books work together to tell the story of the Hebrew people, as well as present the message of Christ?
- How does the basic historical, cultural, and spiritual backdrop of Genesis add color and meaning to its story and message?
- How are the events and teachings of Genesis relevant and applicable to us today?

## The Bible from God to Man



**Step 1: From the Mind of \_\_\_\_\_ to the Mind of the \_\_\_\_\_**

◆ **Revelation** (*apokalupsis*; from *apo* – away from, and *kalupsis* – veil/covering):

The act of God putting on display who He \_\_\_ and what He \_\_\_\_\_.

➤ *Hebrews 1:1*

- What are some different ways in which God revealed Himself during the Old Testament?

**Step 2: From the Mind of the Author into \_\_\_\_\_**

- **Oral Tradition to Written Form**

- *Deuteronomy 6:4-5* –
- *Jeremiah 36:27-28* –
- *Habakkuk 2:2; Exodus 20* –

- **Writing Materials Used**

- **Papyrus:** Sheets of bark from a reed that grows along the Nile River
- **Parchment:** Sheep or goat skins
- **Vellum:** Calf skins

- **Plenary Verbal Inspiration**

➤ *2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21*

❖ *Plenary* means “\_\_\_\_\_” or “\_\_\_\_\_,” implying that God’s inspiration extends to all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation.

❖ *Verbal* refers to the \_\_\_\_\_ of Scripture. While there are times when biblical writers were commanded to write down the exact words of God, they were more typically allowed the freedom to express their own personalities as they wrote.

**Step 3: The \_\_\_\_\_ of Those Writings**

❖ **Canon:** *A straight rod or a ruler used as a test for straightness or a measurement of length. A rule, norm, standard. The collection of books recognized as uniquely inspired by God and authoritative.*

• **Criteria for Acceptance into the Old Testament Canon**

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_: It was written by a lawgiver, judge, prophet, priest, or king.
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_: Its teachings have a distinct quality of divine inspiration and authority identifiable to the Hebrews across all generations.
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_: It is consistent within its own teachings and with other writings already accepted as inspired.

As the different books were confirmed as Scripture, the Hebrew scribes placed them into three main categories, known as the TaNaK:

- Torah –
- Nebi'im –
- Ketubim –

| <b>TORAH</b><br><i>(Law of Moses)</i> | <b>PROPHETS</b> | <b>WRITINGS</b> |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Genesis                               | Joshua          | Psalms          |
| Exodus                                | Judges          | Job             |
| Leviticus                             | Samuel          | Proverbs        |
| Numbers                               | Kings           | Ruth            |
| Deuteronomy                           | Isaiah          | Song of Songs   |
|                                       | Jeremiah        | Ecclesiastes    |
|                                       | Ezekiel         | Lamentations    |
|                                       | The Twelve      | Esther          |
|                                       |                 | Daniel          |
|                                       |                 | Ezra-Nehemiah   |
|                                       |                 | Chronicles      |

• **The Old Testament Apocrypha**

A collection of fourteen books composed by pious Jewish writers between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100 and are contained in the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew OT), but were not included as Jewish and Protestant Christian Scriptures.

- **The Hebrew Scriptures were the Bible of Jesus and the Apostles**

The NT writers directly quote from all but \_\_\_\_\_ of the OT books, and all of the OT books are at least alluded to.

The phrases “Moses and the prophets” or the “law and prophets” are used throughout the NT to identify the OT scripture (*Luke 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 26:22; 28:23; Romans 3:21*).

Jesus also affirmed the OT as God’s Word, even declaring that faith in it is essential to salvation! (*Matthew 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Luke 16:16, 27-30; 24:44*)

**Step 4: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ Throughout the Years**

- **Old Testament Scribes:**

- **The Septuagint (LXX):** The Septuagint is the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It was translated in 250-100 BC by Jewish scholars. The word “Septuagint” means seventy and refers to the tradition that 70 or 72 men translated it. Perhaps most important, the Septuagint is the primary translation used by Jews during the first century.

❖ **IMPORTANT NOTE:** *There are \_\_\_\_\_ longer any existing \_\_\_\_\_ writings of any book of the Bible. What’s more, there are alarmingly \_\_\_\_\_ ancient copies of the Old Testament Scriptures!*

- **Why Do We Have So Few Copies of the Old Testament?**

- Jewish manuscripts were made on animal skins, which would not last near as long as literature written on clay tablets.
- The Jews were conquered and exiled many times, making it quite difficult to preserve the manuscripts which they had. The preserved manuscripts that we do have come from outside of the land of Palestine.
- Manuscripts that contained an error or were aged beyond use were destroyed.

- **The Masoretic Text:** Before the 1950s, the earliest complete copy of the Hebrew Old Testament was made about AD 900, which is 1300 years after the OT Scriptures had been completed. This is known as the Masoretic text. The Masoretes (literally, *transmitters*) were a group of Hebrew scholars that followed the ancient Hebrew Scribes as the caretakers of the Old Testament Hebrew text between 500 and 1000 AD.
- **The Dead Sea Scrolls:** Between March 1947 and 1956, caves around the Dead Sea were thoroughly explored, and what was found was thought to be a hidden library of the Essenes, a Jewish religious sect that had broken away from the traditional Jewish religion. To date, more than 40,000 fragments of books have been found, from which 500 books have been reconstructed. Among these books are multiple portions of every writing of the OT (except for Esther) dating as early as 400 BC.

When copies of one book from the Masoretic Text (AD 900) are compared with copies of the same book from the Dead Sea Scrolls (400 BC)—a timespan of up to 1300 years—scholars (both religious and non-religious), have concluded that there is less than 5% difference, and most estimate the difference being less than 1%!

- **How Is the Old Testament Put Together?**

Both the typical modern division and the Hebrew division of the OT contain the exact same books, no more, no less. However, they are divided and organized differently.

### The Order of the OT

The traditional number of books contained in the Hebrew Scripture is twenty-four. They organized the books according to their literary character (\_\_\_\_\_). Largely following the TaNak, the modern Hebrew Bible divides the books into four divisions: Torah (Law of Moses), Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, and Writings.

### The (Protestant) Order of the OT

In most modern Bibles, the books of the Old Testament are divided into five sections based on their style of writing: the Law (Pentateuch), History, Wisdom/Poetry, Major Prophets and Minor Prophets. Within each genre, the books are either arranged in chronological order of their events (Law, History) or in the order of largest to smallest writing (Major & Minor Prophets), or a mixture of both (Wisdom/Poetry).

***Step 5: God's \_\_\_\_\_ in Our \_\_\_\_\_***

1) **1 Corinthians 2:9-16** –

2) **2 Timothy 3:16** –

## ARRANGEMENT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

| <b>Hebrew Scriptures</b> |                                  | <b>(Protestant) Christian Bible</b> |              |                |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Genesis                  | <b>TORAH</b><br>(Law of Moses)   |                                     | (Pentateuch) |                |
| Exodus                   |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Leviticus                |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Numbers                  |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Deuteronomy              |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Joshua                   | <b>FORMER</b><br><b>PROPHETS</b> |                                     | (The Twelve) |                |
| Judges                   |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Samuel                   |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Kings                    |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Isaiah                   | <b>LATTER</b><br><b>PROPHETS</b> |                                     |              |                |
| Jeremiah                 |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Ezekiel                  |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| The Twelve               |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Psalms                   | <b>WRITINGS</b>                  |                                     |              | (The Writings) |
| Job                      |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Proverbs                 |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Ruth                     |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Song of Songs            |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Ecclesiastes             |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Lamentations             |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Esther                   |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Daniel                   |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Ezra-Nehemiah            |                                  |                                     |              |                |
| Chronicles               |                                  |                                     |              |                |

