**SDG Lesson #1**

**Genesis** **Introduction**

Genesis is the name of the first book of the Bible. It is actually the Greek title from the Septuagint, the early Greek translation of the Old Testament. Genesis means, “Origins” and follows the meaning of the Hebrew title, “B’Reyshith.” This Hebrew word means, “In the beginning.” Genesis is the first book of the Torah (Hebrew) or Pentateuch (Greek). These are the names for the first five books of the Bible. Torah means “teaching.” Pentateuch means “five-volumed.” They are also known as the books of Moses.

Historically, Moses has been considered to be the author of the first five books. This poses a bit of a problem for many secular scholars. Since the book of Genesis ends a little over three centuries before Moses, the question that is posed is, how did Moses get the material to write the book? The New Testament gives us an answer to this question.

1. What do the following passages have to say about how the Scriptures were written?

2nd Timothy 3:16 – The Holy Spirit inspired the Scripture writers.

1st Peter 1:10-11 – The Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, revealed the words to them.

2nd Peter 1:21- Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2. A simple clue to how this worked may be found in Genesis 5:1. Read this verse. Where did Moses get this information?

Moses identifies this chapter as, “The Book of Generations of Adam.” Obviously, someone had written this down, and Moses inserted it into Genesis.

Some secular theologians still believe that Genesis was actually written about 600 years before Christ. They contend that anonymous authors/editors took four different documents and put them together to make the entire Pentateuch (Greek for five scrolls or books) or Torah. They have tried to identify these documents by their use of the names of God and word choice. This is called the JEPD documents. J- refers to a document that identifies God with the name Yahweh (Jehovah). E- refers to a document that identifies God with the name Elohim. P- is the priestly document and the Deuteronomic (spoken words or commandments) document. While this sounds very impressive and technical it has two great hurdles to overcome.

3. Hurdle #1 – Read the following Old Testament passages. What do they say about the books of the Torah?

Joshua 8:31 – Joshua refers to the instructions for building an altar as being found in the Book of the Law of Moses.

1st Kings 2:3 – King David, on his death bed, instructed Solomon to keep the commandments that are written in the Law of Moses.

2nd Kings 14:6 – Amaziah is said to have followed what was written in the Book of the Law of Moses.

Ezra 6:18 – The returning exiles re-established the priestly and Levitical divisions in accordance with what was written in the Book of Moses.

Nehemiah 8:1 – Ezra read the Book of the Law of Moses to the people.

Nehemiah 13:1 – The Book of Moses was publicly read to the people at the dedication of the temple.

Daniel 9:11-13 – In Daniel’s prayer he refers to the people’s transgression against the Law of Moses which are written in the Law of Moses.

Malachi 4:4 – God spoke through Malachi and told the people to remember the Law of My servant Moses.

Summary of Hurdle #1 – Throughout the Old Testament the first book(s) and Law are attributed to Moses. Those who contend that it was put together about 600 years before Christ must answer the question, “What was the Book of the Law of Moses that was spoken of in the years prior to 600 B.C.?” If the prophets and God speaking through the prophets claim that this was written by Moses it is difficult to see the need to question it.

4. Hurdle #2 – What is the message found in each of the following New Testament passages? (Note- you may need to look at the context of the verse to understand what was being said.)

Matthew 8:4 – Jesus told the healed leper to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses had commanded.

Mark 12:26 – Jesus speaks of Exodus as the book of Moses when He confronted the Sadducees with the reality of life after death. God identified Himself as I am the God of Abraham... He is the God of the Living!

Luke 16:29 – In the parable of Lazarus and the rich man, Jesus says Abraham told the rich man that his brothers had Moses and the Prophets. This is a reference to first two of the three sections of the Hebrew Bible or Mikra/Tanakh.

Luke 24:27 & 44 – Jesus explained to His disciples that He had to fulfill the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms.

John 5:46-47- When confronted by the Jewish religious leaders Jesus told them that if they believed what Moses wrote, they would believe in Him.

John 7:22-23 – Jesus speaks of Moses giving them circumcision then notes it wasn’t from Moses but from their forefather, meaning, Abraham received it and Moses wrote about it.

5. Who was speaking in each of these verses? Jesus.

6. Who did He indicate He was quoting? Moses.

Summary of Hurdle #2 – If Jesus speaks about Moses writing these books, we better accept Jesus’ affirmation of Moses’ authorship. To even entertain the JEPD method is to question Christ and accept the thoughts of man/scholars instead of trusting His Words.

7. God back to Luke 24:44. How did Jesus describe the Old Testament? Jesus identified it as:

1) The Law of Moses

2) The Prophets

3) The Psalms

8. At the end of this lesson is a focus sheet title, “The Bible.” Where does the word/title come from?

It is from the Greek word Biblia which means, “books”.

9. What did the Hebrew people call their Bible (our Old Testament)? Why?

They called it the Mikra or Tanakh. Mikra means, “what is read.” To the Hebrew people it was the only thing worth reading. The name Tanakh is actually an acronym that helped them remember the three sections of the Old Testament: The Torah, The Prophet and The Writings.

The Book of Genesis is broken into two sections:

1. The prologue (chapters 1-11)
2. Patriarchal history (chapters 12-50)

10. Since Genesis means origins, what originated in the following verses?

Genesis 1:1-31 – The whole universe originated in the Creation account.

Genesis 1:26-28 – Mankind originated in the Creation account.

Genesis 2:21-25 – Marriage has its’ origins in Genesis.

Genesis 3:1-13 – Sin has its’ origins in Genesis. The Fall.

Genesis 3:15 – The promise of a Messiah has its’ origins in Genesis.

Genesis 3:17-19 – The idea of judgment and a penalty or wage of sin is introduced in Genesis.

Genesis 4:3-4 – The idea of making/giving an offering to God has its’ origins in Genesis.

Genesis 4:8 – Murder has its’ origins in Genesis.

Genesis 4:15 – The idea of vengeance is found in Genesis.

Genesis 7 - The concept of world judgment and salvation is introduced. The Flood.

Genesis 11:1-9 – The multiple languages and probably races of the world have their origin at the tower of Babel in Genesis. The Dispersion.

Genesis 12:1 – The call of Abraham as the father/patriarch of God’s people is introduced in Genesis.

Genesis 14:17-18 – Melchizedek, the first priest mentioned in the Bible, is found in Genesis.

Genesis 15 – The first Covenant is established in Genesis.

Genesis 17 – Circumcision is founded in Genesis. With it, the idea of being a part of God’s family/people is also introduced.

Genesis 18:22-33 – Abraham makes the first intercession for others.

Genesis 45-46 – The prelude to God’s deliverance of His people out of Egypt is given as Jacob/Israel takes his family to Egypt.

SUPER BONUS CHALLENGE QUESTION!!!!

What two distinctly Jewish words find their origin in Genesis? (See Luke 3:23-38; Genesis 12; Genesis 10:24-25 and Genesis 10:21)

Since Abraham is a descendent of Eber, his offspring came to be known as the “Hebrews” (offspring of Eber). Since Eber was a descendent of Shem they are also called “Semites” (people of Shem