



## **Concept of a Book: Whose Idea Was It to Create a Book?**

Have you ever wondered who first had the idea to write a book? This question was one of the biggest reasons I chose to write this book. Tracking down the first author of the first book in history would be hard to do, wouldn't it? Where would we even begin to look for this evidence?

Naturally, due to the explosion of useful knowledge on the internet, I found myself searching on this exact question. What I found was a mythologized account of a historical figure, Gilgamesh, who ruled the Sumerian city-state of Uruk sometime between 2500 and 2700 BC. This written story is called the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.<sup>1</sup> The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is believed to be the oldest book in the history of the world.

What does recorded history show us regarding books? Historians tell us that the Sumerians were the first humans to have a record of the first known books, which were from around 2400–2200 BC.<sup>2</sup> Secular scholars also attribute written symbols to the time of the Egyptians and the invention of hieroglyphs.<sup>3</sup> Many of these scholars say hieroglyphs were the building blocks to our modern writing, language, and communication.<sup>4</sup> This is such a

broad topic that it will need to be examined further; I will explain more in chapter 2.

So whose idea was it to create a book? Before I answer this question, I would like to remind you of a book's purpose. Imagine you walk into the Library of Congress, one of the largest libraries in the world.<sup>5</sup> As you pass through its historic wooden doors, you are greeted by literally thousands of books, stacked row upon row—fiction, nonfiction, history, poetry, biographies, autobiographies, instructions, and so forth. Numerous books have been written over the course of human existence, and the subject matter covers a wide spectrum of topics. There is a book for just about any subject. No matter what the topic is, books are designed to help the reader understand the author's idea. The aim of an author may be to convey a certain experience or even a life lesson that he or she wants the reader to imagine, feel, or understand.

When one examines the time frame of one's life, a common thread weaves one's worldview together. Everything that builds your worldview is made up of your core values, beliefs, understanding of truth, and where you place your faith, along with what you place faith in, and it all comes from books. It's undeniable that books have shaped your thinking and play a major role in persuading you to adopt a certain worldview.

## **A UNIQUE FORMULA**

You might not have given any thought to who is the first person to invent the concept of a book. Thinking about the sea of humanity and the many brilliant minds that have walked this earth in all of human history leaves a person bewildered and not knowing where to even begin to find an answer to this question.

My attempt to answer this question will not be an

exhaustive search of the many different civilizations or diverse ethnic backgrounds of the people who existed in ancient history. I will briefly examine the beginnings of how the concept of a book originated and where, based on my own research. Since this book targets the validity of the Holy Bible, I want to answer the question asked in the title of this chapter: Whose idea was it to create a book? Was it the authors who contributed to the Bible? Was it found on a cave wall? I want to know the answer—but where do we begin to look? As stated above, I will examine in more detail the questions of the secular scholars and their interpretations of hieroglyphs and how language and writing originated, but first, I want to examine the origin of the Bible.

Since the Bible is the topic in question and much controversy surrounds it, the first book of the Bible, Genesis, is where I began my search. As I perused the first chapter of Genesis, I looked for any references to God writing or having someone write something, but I couldn't come up with anything of the sort. I moved on to chapter 2, but there wasn't anything there either. It wasn't until I came to the fifth chapter of Genesis that I found a statement that grabbed my attention. Genesis 5:1 reads, "This is the book of the generations of Adam." To my knowledge, this is the very first time in the English translation of the Bible where the word *book* is mentioned.

This sentence intrigued me. Not only does it mention the concept of a book, but it also mentions a book in correlation with the very first human who was created by God. It is a common understanding among many biblical scholars that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, better known as the first five books of the Hebrew Old Testament,<sup>6</sup> or commonly called the Torah. Can we question this statement in Genesis 5:1, or should we merely assume that the statement is an author signing off on the genealogical order? Many questions arise from this statement in Genesis 5:1.

In fact, there is much controversy regarding who the author of the Pentateuch was, and biblical scholars have put together a hypothesis on it. (I will discuss the theory of what is called the *documentary hypothesis* in chapter 2.)<sup>7</sup> There has been some controversy over the clause, “now these are the generations of,” and how it could relate to the fact that separate authors contributed to the book of Genesis. Regardless of whether Moses is the only contributing author to Genesis, we must examine a different phrase: “This is the book of the generations of Adam.”

Whoever put Genesis together—whether it was Moses (as we are inclined to think) or someone in the time of David and Solomon or the time of Josiah or the time of Ezra—the book clearly has one outstanding compositional feature: It is organized around eleven sections with each section beginning with “this is the account of ...,” a device known as a “toledoth formula.” The first of these formulas comes in Genesis 2:4, which says, “This is the account [toledoth] of the heavens and earth when they were created.” The other ten are connected to individuals—Adam, Noah, and Shem. This suggests that either a compiler used these formulas to indicate the documents that served as his sources, or the author used them to organize his material. Since there is no reason to doubt that some of the material of Genesis was in written form even prior to the time of Moses, we would view someone like Moses as doing mostly the work of a divinely inspired editor rather than the work of an author<sup>8</sup>

This suggests that whoever was compiling this book was using this formula to create an introduction to the

work of different contributors and that these clauses signal one author signing off to the next. While this is merely speculation on my part, it could indicate that whoever authored the first five books of the Bible may have had access to other ancient documents. There is not adequate information or solid evidence that there could be separate authors in Genesis, but I agree with the majority of the textual critics that Genesis had contributing authors. However, it is most probable that Moses was the final author under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God. As a point of notation, Jesus affirms Moses's writings from the Pentateuch in the New Testament (see John 5:45-47).

If you're wondering why I brought this information into consideration, it's that it is unique to the book of Genesis to mention "the book of the generations of Adam." Is it out of the question that God instructed Adam to keep a record of the beginning of creation and his lineage of his family? Obviously, we cannot completely rule out that as a possibility.

Moses could have received information, by divine revelation from God, about what happened at the beginning of creation. While this could be a great possibility—and many Bible scholars hold this view—could Moses have had access to verbal or even written traditions that traced back to Adam? It might be possible that Moses had access to the book of the generations of Adam, if such a document with written language was passed down through the generations of time. Lineages and personal writings and possessions could have been passed down from Adam, even unto Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph (who was known to be blessed with great wisdom and political rule) and on to the time of Moses.

With a history of tradition and scribes who would meticulously preserve the writings and familial records of the Hebrew nation, their patriarchs, and kings that governed their people, it would be most fitting to the

structure of the Hebrew language and written text to have a detailed record of each generation, from Adam up until Moses. Consequently, here is where the struggle to find such evidence lies. How do we reconcile this thought to modern archeology and the findings of the documents that have been found in history?

Without knowing for sure who the author or authors were who contributed to Genesis, other than the traditional view of Moses as the most recognized author, no one can say with complete confidence that there were multiple contributions to the book of Genesis. Furthermore, we definitely can observe these similar genealogical endings (or a signing off of one author to the next) and that there was a purpose that they were written in such a distinct manner—and that’s important. Could it merely be a signing off of each patriarch and his family significance? My examination leads me to believe that it could. It sure could be the case, but it is definitely unique to the very first [toledoth] sentence that mentions, “This is the book of the generations of Adam.”

For the sake of argument, let’s speculate that this reference to the book of the generations of Adam may be the very first book in human history. And while there may not be a satisfying answer to this question that is uncoverable to us, I do believe that we can still conclude who is responsible for the invention of the very first book.

## **DOES ANYONE IN HISTORY HAVE THIS CLAIM TO FAME?**

What does history teach us about books? Many people have written books and shared their life experiences. In fact, people have been drawn to the comfort of written words through the corridors of time. Has anyone claimed to have been the very first author of a written work? It

also begs the question of what compels anyone to write something down for others to experience. Even when we look at ancient artifacts and written documents that have been unearthed, it leaves us in the present, flooded with a myriad of questions as to why they are the way they are. We ask the questions: who, how, what, when, where, and why? However, we are usually left with the question *why?*—and many more *why* questions follow. Why did anyone ever write anything down, either on a rock, on a tree, on the ground, or on a piece of parchment? It brings us back to the original question: whose idea was it to write a book?

I believe I have discovered the answer to this question—but I have so much more to explain before I unpack the explanation. There is a main idea that I trust you'll understand as I take you on this journey to examine the findings I stumbled upon.

What we will experience together in the next nine chapters I believe will rock your worldview. I believe that you'll never be the same after you examine the evidence to how we can trust the Bible when it was written by men. Many people want to know the truth of this question, although others don't want to know. Which are you? Do you want to know who wrote the Bible? Do you want to know who the very first person was to write a book? We will examine these questions, but questions are dangerous because they have answers. There is an answer to the question, "Whose idea was it to write a book?" I must warn you in advance that you may not want to accept the answer. I believe, however, that you will be forced to change your current view because of the answer I will give. I honestly believe that you will be left at a crossroads and given a choice for which way to turn for the rest of your life ... and eternity.

Are you ready to discover the answer? Follow me to chapter 2, and let's find out!