

“Get it in writing.”

According to the Free Dictionary, the phrase “*get it in writing*” means “to have some detail, condition, agreement, etc., put into a printed or written document, typically in order to prove its existence at a later point in time.”

Things go wrong in business. Relationships sour. Conditions change. And when they do, and you must get lawyers involved, one of the first questions you’ll be asked is, “Did you get it in writing?” Without a written agreement, a judge or jury will have a hard time determining which version of events to believe in a “your word against theirs” scenario. A written contract ensures that all the terms of your agreement are documented. If a disagreement arises, there will be a document that the parties can refer to in order to get the relationship back on track. Get everything in writing! Everything. Even if it’s just on a napkin, get it in writing. Samuel Goldwyn said, ‘**Verbal contracts aren’t worth the paper they’re written on.**’

Galatians 3:15-18 – *Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that **the covenant** (Gen. 12:2-3), that was confirmed before of God in Christ, **the law**, which was four hundred and thirty years after (1876 – 430 = 1446 B.C.), cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but **God gave it to Abraham by promise.***

Genesis 15:3-6 – *And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. **And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.***

These words of Scripture did not come down to us orally for a thousand years before finally being written down. As Samuel Goldwyn would say, those words would not be worth the paper they’re written on! Thank God that these words came to us, from the beginning, through written sources, *pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times* (Psalm 12:6).

There are still adherents of Julius Wellhausen’s documentary hypothesis who say that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible), because **writing had not been invented in his day**. They say that the first five books of the Bible were, at first, handed down **orally**, which resulted in a compilation of selections from several different writers, composed at different places and times, long after Moses (the earliest dating back to the

Davidic monarchy of the tenth century B.C.). But the Bible states in many places that **Moses wrote**: Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27-28; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9; 31:24-27; John 5:46-47. Not surprisingly, Wellhausen never mentioned these verses. Since Wellhausen's time, there have been countless archaeological discoveries showing evidence of writing before Moses' time.

The Bible was written by 40 writers, over a span of 1500 years. It reads as a factual news account of real events, places, people, and dialogue. Archaeologists and historians have repeatedly confirmed its authenticity. The renowned Jewish archaeologist, Nelson Glueck, wrote: "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference."



Code of Hammurabi, the most complete and perfect extant collection of Babylonian laws, developed during the reign of Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.) of the 1st dynasty of Babylon. Displayed in the Louvre Museum, Paris.

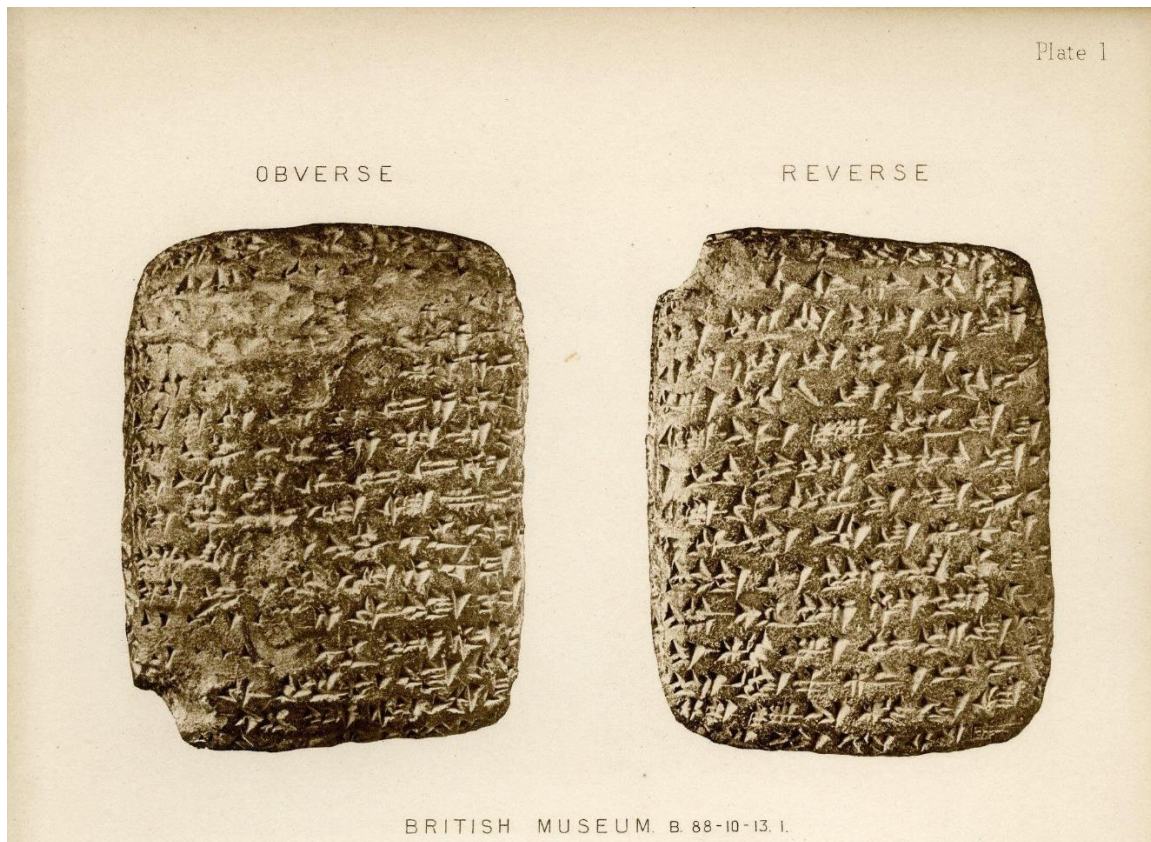


“As early as 2750 B.C. clay envelopes were used for private letters and contract tablets, and it became the practice to rewrite the contents of the tablet on the envelope, then to close it with a private seal. The owner could be assured that the contents had not been tampered with, if the seal remained intact. Should a dispute arise the tablet within was examined” (P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis*, 1936, p. 35).



An inscribed clay tablet in the author’s possession (ca. 2000 B.C. – the time of Abraham). Note the last line (under the blank space in tablet on the right) which forms the colophon. The colophon incorporates the title, the date of writing, and the name of the scribe or owner.

The Amarna Letters are a group of inscribed clay tablets discovered around 1887 at Amarna, a site in Egypt on the east bank of the Nile about 190 miles south of Cairo.



The tablets total almost 400 in number and are written in Akkadian. Most of these letters come from vassal cities in Syria-Palestine. They date to the 14th century B.C., primarily to the reigns of the Egyptian kings Amenhotep III (reigned circa 1382–1344 B.C.E.) and Amenhotep IV (reigned circa 1352–1336 B.C.).

The Amarna Letters from Jerusalem are of interest for several reasons, not the least of which is that they come from Jerusalem **a few centuries before King David would remove the Canaanite (Jebusite) population of Jerusalem** and make it his own capital (II Samuel 5). Also, the correspondence with a Jerusalem ruler in the 14th century provides evidence for occupation in the city in a period (Late Bronze Age II) for which there is little archaeological evidence. Among the most important things that these tablets demonstrate is that **there was a vibrant and sophisticated scribal apparatus in Jerusalem during the Late Bronze Age.**

Dr. Gleason Archer offers this summary of the twentieth-century scholarship's treatment of the Wellhausen hypothesis saying: "Almost every supporting pillar has been shaken and shattered by a generation of scholars who were brought up on the Graf-Wellhausen system and yet have found it inadequate to explain the data of the Pentateuch..."

“They have undermined the defenses and torn down the bastions which buttressed the documentary hypothesis, but they have gravitated quite definitely into an even more implausible position than that occupied by their predecessors...the Hebrews never got around to inscripturating the records of their faith until 500 B.C. or later. It requires a tremendous willingness to believe the unlikely for an investigator to come up with a conclusion like that” (Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 1977, p. 104).

Digging deeper

Genesis 1:1 – *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

Genesis 1:2 – *And the earth was without form, and void (there were no defining characteristics, and it showed no signs of life); and darkness was upon the face of the deep (the earth was cloaked in darkness, and completely covered with water). And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

- The Hebrew word for *deep* = Strong’s 8415; *thowm*; an abyss (as a surging mass of water), espec. the deep (the main sea or the subterranean water supply).

Genesis 1:3-5 is a description of the creation of light: *...and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.*

Genesis 1:6-8 is a description of the creation of the firmament: *...and God called the firmament Heaven.*

Genesis 1:9-10 – *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.*

- The earth was no longer “without form.” There were now mountains and valleys and other defining characteristics.

Isaiah 45:18 – *For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, **he formed it to be inhabited:** I am the Lord; and there is none else.*

Genesis 1:11-13 is a description of the action of filling the “void:” *And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind....*

- In filling the void, the creation of man would be God’s greatest achievement, being crowned with honor and glory:

Psalm 8:3-9 – *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!*

Genesis 1:26-27 – *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

- Before God rested (ceased) from all His work He had made, He had one last thing to accomplish – He would communicate with man (them):

Genesis 1:28-31 – *And God blessed them, and **God said unto them**, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (they were able to understand the spoken word). **And God said**, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

Turning ahead now to Genesis 2:15-24 will help to make a point.

Genesis 2:15-24 – *And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh*

of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

- Notice that the events described in Genesis 2:15-24 take place *before* God rested (ceased) from all His work He had made, a description of which is mentioned earlier in Genesis 2:1-3: *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*
- Why is there a description of God still working found after a description of God resting (ceasing) from all His work? The answer is that there are two eyewitness descriptions here, from two different perspectives – As will be shown, one from the Lord God (Gen.1:1-2:4a), and one from Adam (Gen.2:4b-5:1a).

Genesis 2:4 – *These are **the generations of the heavens and of the earth** when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.*

- The Septuagint renders this verse: *This is **the book of the generation of heaven and earth**, when they were made, in the day in which the Lord God made the heaven and the earth.*

Genesis 5:1-2 – *This is **the book of the generations of Adam**. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.*

- *book*; Strong's #5612 – *ciphrah*; writing; from #5608 – *capbar*; to score with a mark, to inscribe.
- The Hebrew word 'toledot' in Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures, 1901 ----- F. pl. **(1) generations**, families, races, Nu. 1:20, seqq. ----- --- according to their races, Gen. 10:32; 25:13; Exod. 6:16. Hence ----- --- genealogy, pedigree, Gen. 5:1. As a very large portion of the most ancient Oriental history consists of genealogies, it means – **(2) history, properly of families. Gen. 6:9, ----- "this is the history of Noah." Gen. 37:2; and thus also applied to the origin of other things. Gen. 2:4, "this is the origin of the heaven and earth."** (*Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, Translated by Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, 1901, p. 859a).
- I will suggest that Gen. 2:4 and 5:1 be placed under category #2 (history, properly of families.) thus, "the book of the history of Adam," with less focus on the genealogy, pedigree aspect.

“The second tablet or series of tablets extends from the latter part of the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis to chapter 5:2 and contains an account of the beginning of man upon the earth, the Garden of Eden, the Fall, and the murder of Abel. ...The one person who knew all the facts, about the Fall, is stated to be the source from which the account came. This second tablet takes the story up to the birth of the sons of Lamech. Soon after this Adam died; the concluding words of the tablet are, ‘This is the book of the origins of Adam.’” (P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis*, 1946, pp. 73-74).

In 1913, Edouard Naville wrote, “The review of the facts has led us to conclude that the Pentateuch and the earlier writings of the Old Testament were originally written in Babylonian cuneiform. Therefore, they were written not in books, but on tablets. ...We can easily separate the first four: the creation of heaven and earth, the creation of mankind, the generations of men as far as Noah, and the deluge.”

“The first begins with an indication of time: in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth; then the writer relates the work of the six days, after which God rested. ...The tablet ended with these words: (ii.4) ‘These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were created.’ It is evidently an error to consider these words as the title of the next narrative – we should say, of the next tablet- which does not speak either of the creation of the heaven or that of the earth. Some critics, e.g. Kautz and Socin, and others, have very correctly considered these words as the end of the first narrative. This seems also to be the interpretation of the LXX., who translate: **** “This is the *book* of the generation of heaven and earth when they were created.” A book ended there, or as we should say, a tablet” (Edouard Naville, *Archaeology of The Old Testament Was The Old Testament Written In Hebrew?* 1913, p. 30, 32).

- If Naville was right about the words, “these are the generations of,” coming at the end of each eyewitness’s account, it would indicate that the entire book of Genesis could have been comprised of tablets which were written or owned by an eyewitness to the events described therein.

“...There is nothing whatever in Genesis, or elsewhere, which asserts an oral transmission. It would seem that it was not possible until the results of the past few years’ excavations had become known, to read such a verse as chapter V. 1, ‘This is the book (tablets) of ...’ as though it could mean precisely what it says. This oral transmission theory originated at a time when men were unacquainted with the facts concerning the early development of writing. ...Moses did not use a collection of stories which had descended to him by word of mouth, for he himself informs us at the end of the various narratives and genealogies, who had written or owned them. These, commencing at the dawn of history, accumulated as Noah, Noah’s sons, Terah, Isaac and Jacob, added their tablets.”

“How did these tablets get into the hands of Moses? They contain records from the creation of man to his own time. We have seen that the tablets of Creation were extant in the time of Noah, and we find that the record of the Garden and the Fall (to which Moses added a geographical description) had been written by his time. These would descend to Noah, for we notice that in his own tablet (ch. v. 29) he makes a reference, (chapter iii. 17), to the first tablet. Noah added the genealogical list contained in chapter v. ...Noah also adds a short statement regarding the corruption existing in the world in his day. His sons, we are informed in Genesis, wrote the account of the Flood, while Shem wrote the genealogical list which now occupies chapter x, and also the brief description of the building of the Tower of Babel. Thus, we see how Noah, possessing the tablets relating to The Creation and The Fall, would pass these on to Shem, together with his own tablet, and as Shem already had the tablets relating to the Flood, these, including his own (Genesis x, and the Tower of Babel), would naturally pass down to Abraham, with the genealogical tablet written by his father Terah, thus to him were committed these ancient ‘oracles of God’ – now Genesis I to xi. 27” (P. J. Wiseman, *New Discoveries in Babylonia About Genesis*, 1953, pp. 82-83).

“Being Jewish, Moses would have had access to the family records of his ancestors (cf. Gen. 5:1; 10:1; 25:19; etc.) which were no doubt brought down to Egypt by Jacob (Gen. 46). ...We can conclude that Moses, using the family records which had been passed on to him, compiled the Book of Genesis. ...Moses could have copied his material from such records just as Hezekiah’s men copied from Solomon’s writings to complete the Book of Proverbs (cf. Prov. 25:1)” (Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, 1978, pp. 37-38).

- Moses’ added a geographical description in Adam’s tablet (Genesis 2:10-14).
- In Genesis 5:29, Noah’s refers to Adam’s tablet (Genesis 3:17).
- These “family records” would have been eventually compiled by Moses, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, probably during the Exodus (ca. 1450 B.C.) and should be considered historically reliable.
- When Moses presented the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel, he was reciting what the Lord had written on tablets (Exodus 31:18; 32:15-19; 34:28). The tablets were placed within the ark. Consider the possibility that Moses compiled the first chapter of Genesis in the same way – communicating what had been previously written on tablets.

According to the Bible, when Adam was created, he had the ability to understand God and speak to God. According to Genesis 5:1, he also had the ability to read and write. In this sense, you could say that Adam hit the ground running! What is the first thing that Adam would have read? The answer is Genesis 1:1-2:4, which ends (in the Septuagint version) with its title, “This is the book of the generation of heaven and earth, when they were made.... This, then, begs the question, who wrote the tablet that Adam would read and Moses later would copy?

Answer: The Eyewitness. The Eyewitness to all of creation!

John 1:1-3 – ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.***

- It is possible that the entire first chapter of the Book of Genesis (1:1-2:4) contains a record of what God said unto them. The prophet Isaiah hints at this early revelation to mankind:

Isaiah 40:21-22 – *Have ye not known? have ye not heard? **hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?** It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.*

Genesis 2:3-4 – *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens...*

- God does not here rest, as if he were weary, but ceased from the creation of all things he purposed to make.

Isaiah 40:28 – *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

When we finally enter into God's rest, we, like God, will cease from our own works.

THE GENESIS TABLETS

Archaeology is a relatively new science, the benefits of which have not been available to us until about the last hundred and fifty years or so. But we now have the distinct advantage of incorporating tangible evidence along with the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our efforts to clearly understand Scripture. Air-commodore P. J. Wiseman became familiar with ancient Babylonian tablets and noticed similarities in literary form to that of the book of Genesis. His "Tablet Theory" caught the attention of more than a few Bible scholars. Professor R. K. Harrison wrote:

"An important step towards an understanding of the manner in which Genesis was compiled in the light of the ancient Babylonian 'life-situation' was made in 1936 by P. J. Wiseman. A British air-commodore of decidedly antiquarian bent, Wiseman examined the literary forms of ancient

Babylonian tablets with a view to solving the literary problem of the origin of Genesis. From the existence of colophons, catch-lines, scribal dating, and other devices of antiquity familiar to the Assyriologist, Wiseman argued towards the presence of similar phenomena in the bulk of Genesis. He interpreted the enigmatic phrase 'these are the generations of' as in fact constituting a colophon in the text, and pointing to the preceding verses as a complete unit which in cuneiform would have constituted a tablet. He further adduced the presence in the early Genesis narratives of such Babylonian literary mechanisms as scribal attempts at dating, the linking of passages in series, specific titles of sections, and the use of catch-lines."

"Wiseman's theory postulated documentary sources for Genesis although of a completely different nature from those suggested by the adherents of the Graf-Welhausen school. He stressed the strictly Mesopotamian nature of much of the source-material which he had uncovered, and suggested that it had been combined with the Joseph narratives to form the book of Genesis, presumably under the direct influence of Moses. His approach had the distinct advantage of relating the ancient Mesopotamian life-situation, unlike the attempts of the Graf-Welhausen school, and showed that the methods of writing and compilation employed in Genesis were in essential harmony with the processes current among the scribes of ancient Babylonia."

"Accordingly, the present writer feels justified in following Wiseman in the assertion that Genesis contains in the first thirty-six chapters a series of tablets whose contents were linked together to form a roughly chronological account of primeval and patriarchal life written from the standpoint of a Mesopotamian cultural milieu" (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1969, pp. 63, 64, 548).

THE ELEVEN TABLETS

The generations of the heavens and of the earth (Septuagint – This is **the book of the generation of heaven and earth** – The story of creation (ending at Genesis 2:4a). The Chalcolithic Period – Late 5th - Early 4th millennium.

The book of the generations of Adam – Early man and his fall (beginning at Genesis 2:4b – ending at Genesis 5:1). The Chalcolithic Period – 4th millennium.

The generations of Noah – The wickedness of man (ending at Genesis 6:9). The Chalcolithic Period – 4th millennium and The Early Bronze I and II – 3100 -2650 B.C.

The generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth – The flood (ending at Genesis 10:1). The Early Bronze III and IV – 2650 – 2200 B.C.

The generations of Shem – The tower of Babel and the people scattered (ending at Genesis 11:10). The Early Bronze IV and The Middle Bronze I – 2350 – 1950 B.C.

The generations of Terah – Family line from Shem to Abram (ending at Genesis 11:27). The Middle Bronze I and II A – 2250 – 1730 B.C.

The generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son – From the birth of Abram to his burial by Isaac and Ishmael (ending at Genesis 25:12). The Middle Bronze II A-B-C – 2000 – 1550 B.C.

The generations of Isaac, Abraham's son – From the birth of Abram to his burial by Isaac and Ishmael (ending at Genesis 25:19). The Middle Bronze II A-B-C – 2000 – 1550 B.C.

The generations of Esau – From the birth of Esau and Jacob to the burial of Isaac (ending at Genesis 36:1) The Middle Bronze II A-B-C – 2000 – 1550 B.C.

The generations of Esau – From the birth of Esau and Jacob to the burial of Isaac (ending at Genesis 36:9) The Middle Bronze II A-B-C – 2000 – 1550 B.C.

The generations of Jacob – From the birth of Esau and Jacob to the burial of Isaac (ending at Genesis 37:2) The Middle Bronze II A-B-C – 2000 – 1550 B.C.

Remember, at the start of this presentation, we learned that the phrase “*get it in writing*” means “to have some detail, condition, agreement, etc., put into a printed or written document, typically in order to prove its existence at a later point in time.”

As has been shown, the words that we read in the Bible were handed down **in writing** from the very beginning; words that we can depend on throughout all eternity.

Galatians 3:26-29 – *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs **according to the promise.***

Romans 4:20-25 – *He (Abraham) staggered not at **the promise of God** through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, **what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.** Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; **But for us also**, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

I Thessalonians 5:9-11 – ***For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.** Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.*

All scripture is given by inspiration of God... (II Timothy 3:16); and, yes, we did “get it in writing.”