

## THE DIVISIONS OF GENESIS<sup>1</sup>

Genesis is the first book of the Bible. It is an historical account of the first two and a half millennia of world and human history, commencing with Creation in 0 AM = 3977 BC and ending with the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt in 2513 AM = 1464 BC.

Genesis is divided into twelve segments, which I call chronicles because of their historical nature, by eleven *toledoths*, which are verses that contain the phrase "...the generations of...."

For many years, I regarded and taught that *toledoths* mark the ends of the chronicles - that they are like signatures. In this I was following the arguments of Henry Morris in his commentary on Genesis,<sup>2</sup> as well as the arguments of many others. I surmise that this view arose naturally because the first *toledoth* - "these are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (Genesis 2:4) - so neatly summarizes the chronicle that precedes it (Genesis 1:1-2:3), which I call the Creation Chronicle.

Despite the foregoing, I was never entirely comfortable with the idea that *toledoths* are signatures. First, viewing Genesis 2:4 as a signature makes no sense to me. The Creation Chronicle should be signed by God, because he is the only person who knows what happened before the first human was created. Second, in a number of cases, the so-called signature falls in the chapter following the chronicle and the final signature even falls in the next book (Exodus). Third, this last case does not use the phrase "...the generations of...." Fourth, regarding *toledoths* as signatures results in attributing lengthy and important chronicles to minor figures - e.g. attributing Genesis 11:27-25:11 to Ishmael rather than to Terah - which makes little sense to me.

Recently I encountered the idea that *toledoths* mark the beginnings of chronicles - that they are like titles. It was proposed by Jonathan D. Sarfati in his commentary on Genesis.<sup>3</sup> That makes sense to me. Moreover Sarfati persuaded me to follow him in giving the number zero to the Creation Chronicle because it lacks a *toledoth*. In its place is Genesis 1:1, which let us know that God created everything - seen and unseen.

Here are the twelve chronicles with my comments on them:

- ***Chronicle 0 - The Creation Chronicle*** - - It starts in Genesis 1:1 and ends in Genesis 2:3. It describes the entire Creation Week (0 AM = 3977 BC). It must have been dictated to Adam by God.
  
- ***Chronicle 1 - The generations of the heavens and the earth*** - It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 2:4 and ends in Genesis 4:26. It describes (a) the entire Edenic

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been revised to conform to my new understanding of the *toledoth* as a chronicle's title, which appears at its beginning, not a chronicle's signature, which appears at its conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Morris, Henry, The Genesis Record, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids MI, 1976.

<sup>3</sup> Sarfati, Jonathan D., The Genesis Account, Creation Book Publishers, Powder Springs GA.

- Era in 0 AM = 3977 BC and (b) the Antediluvian Era from its beginning in AM 0 = 3977 BC to Enos's birth in 235 AM = 3742 BC. It was probably written by Adam (0-930 AM = 3977-3047 BC).
- ***Chronicle 2 - The generations of Adam*** - It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 5:1 and ends in Genesis 6:8 – It describes the period from Enos's birth in 235 AM = 3742 BC to Noah at age 500 in 1556 AM = 2421 BC. It was probably written by Adam (0-930 AM = 3977-3047 BC).
  - ***Chronicle 3 - The generations of Noah*** - It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 6:9 and ends in Genesis 9:29 – It describes the period from Noah at age 500 in 1556 AM = 2421 BC to the ark's landfall in 1657 AM = 2320 BC, when (a) Noah offered a sacrifice to the Lord, (b) the Lord issued the Noahic Covenant, and (c) Noah prophesied concerning his sons and their descendents. It was probably written by Noah (1056-2006 AM = 2921-1971 BC).
  - ***Chronicle 4 - The generations of the Sons of Noah*** – It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 10:1 and ends in Genesis 11:9. It describes the period from the ark's landfall in 1657 AM = 2320 BC to the destruction of Babel and its tower c.1907 AM = 2070 BC. It was probably written by Noah (1056-2006 AM = 2921-1971 BC) or Shem (1558-2158 AM = 2419-1819 BC).<sup>4</sup>
  - ***Chronicle 5 - The generations of Shem*** - It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 11:10 and ends in Genesis 11:26 - It describes Shem's descendents from Arphaxad's birth in 1658 AM = 2319 BC to Terah at age 70 in 1948 AM = 2029 BC. It was probably written by Noah (1056-2006 AM = 2921-1971 BC) or Shem (1558-2058 AM = 2419-1819 BC).
  - ***Chronicle 6 - The generations of Terah*** – It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 11:27 and ends in Genesis 25:11. It describes the period from Terah at age 70 in 1948 AM = 2029 BC to Abraham's death in 2183 AM = 1794 BC. It was probably written by Isaac (2048-2288 AM = 1929-1689 BC).<sup>5</sup>
  - ***Chronicle 7 – The generations of Ishmael*** – It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 25:12 and ends in Genesis 25:18. It describes Ishmael's descendents from Ishmael's birth in 2094 AM = 1883 BC to Ishmael's death in 2231 AM = 1746 BC. It was probably written by one of Ishmael's sons.
  - ***Chronicle 8 - The generations of Isaac*** - - It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 25:19 and ends in Genesis 35:29. It describes the period from Isaac's birth in 2048 AM = 1929 BC to Jacob's death in 2315 AM = 1662 BC. It was probably

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<sup>4</sup> The period described by this chronicle contains an importance event, the Division of the Land into continents, which probably occurred in 1756 AM = 2221 BC, when Peleg was in his mother's womb.

<sup>5</sup> The period described by this chronicle contains an important event, the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, which probably occurred in 2107 AM = 1870 BC.

written by Jacob (2168-2315 AM = 1809-1662 BC) or Joseph (2259-2369 AM = 1718-1608 BC).

- ***Chronicle 9 – The generations of Esau*** “who is Edom” – It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 36:1 and ends in Genesis 36:8. It describes the period during which Esau moved his tribe from Canaan to Mount Seir in Edom sometime after Isaac’s death in 2288 AM = 1689 BC. It was probably written by Esau (b. 2168 AM = 1809 BC) or one of his descendents.
- ***Chronicle 10 – The generations of Esau*** as “the father of the Edomites” – It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 36:9 and ends in Genesis 37:1. It describes Esau’s descendents for several generations c. 2200-2300 AM = 1777-1677 BC. It was probably written by Esau (b. 2168 AM = 1809 BC) or one of his descendents.
- ***Chronicle 11 - The generations of Jacob*** - It starts with the *toledoth* in Genesis 37:2 and ends in Genesis 50:26. It describes the period from Joseph at age 17 in 2276 AM = 1701 BC to Joseph’s death in 2369 AM = 1608 BC. It was probably written by Joseph (2259-2369 AM = 1718-1608 BC) or one of his descendents.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The period described by this chronicle contains an important event, the First Trial of Job, which probably occurred in 2310 AM = 1667 BC.