

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy come from? Not one of them occurs in your Hebrew Bible. But the names were used, it would seem, first by the Greeks. They are titles which have been given to these books in the Septuagint and we have simply taken the Greek titles over into English. In the Hebrew Bible they have different names, but there is no reason to think of the Hebrew names of the books as being in any sense titles which were attached to them from the very beginning. There is no reference to them under those titles elsewhere in the Old Testament or in the New Testament, and the nature of the Hebrew names suggests very definitely that they are not titles. That is to say, the Hebrew practice in most of these books is simply to quote the first word of the book, and, of course, that is not a title when you just quote the first word. It rather shows the fact that when they quoted the first word they were recognizing that there was no given title, and were simply referring to the book in order to make it clear what they were referring to. This was a rather common custom among the Babylonians, the Greeks, and the Romans to refer to a book by quoting a few words from it, and that is true of the title you will find in your Hebrew Bible over the book of Genesis: **בְּרֵאשִׁית** “In the beginning—in the head.” It is simply the first word of the book of Genesis. Of course, “in the beginning” exactly describes what Genesis is. The Greek title means beginning (Genesis). If we only had this one book we might not be so sure that the Greek title was not just a translation of the Hebrew or that the Hebrew was not simply a title instead of a first word. When we come to the second book we find the distinction very clear.

When you come to the second book, you find that the Greeks have given it a title that is an apt description of what is contained in the book, “the coming out.” But the Hebrew title is simply the first word of the book, “and these are the names.” But what does that have to do with the book of Exodus? The answer is that it is simply quoting from the beginning of the book, “And these are the names” of the children of Israel who came down into Egypt, every man with his household came with Jacob, Reuben, Simon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, etc. It tells nothing about the book, but it is the Hebrew title and the fact of having such a title as that again suggests the idea of one unified book that has been divided into scrolls, and you simply name