

Genesis

Title

In the original Hebrew Old Testament, the Book of Genesis is called “bereshit” which means “in the beginning”. In the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, it is called “origins”. The Latinised form of the word “origins” is “Genesis”.

Author and Date of writing

From the mid 1700’s, various liberal academics claimed that the Book of Genesis was written by numerous authors over many centuries. But it is far more likely Genesis was written by Moses and possibly slightly edited by later prophets.

Refer to Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of Gleason Archer’s “A Survey of Old Testament Introduction”¹ and Arnold and Beyer’s “Encountering the Old Testament”² for comprehensive details on the Mosaic authorship and the date of writing of the Book of Genesis and for evidence the liberal claim about the authorship of Genesis was wrong.

Moses spoke to God on Mount Sinai (see Exodus Chapter 19) and frequently face to face at the Tabernacle (see Numbers 12:6-8). It is possible that at one or more of these times, God revealed to him the truth about the events recorded in Genesis.

The main teachings and events of the Book of Genesis

The Book of Genesis teaches us and records that:

1. Before creation existed, God existed (see Genesis 1:1). God is the most important Person.
2. God created all of the natural universe (see Genesis 1:1-25). Everything God created was originally good (see Genesis 1:9, 12, 18, 21, 25 and 31).
3. God is perfect, righteous and punishes the evil attitudes and behaviour of humans (see Genesis 3:1-19, 4:1-15, 6:1-7:24 and 18:17-19:29).
4. God created the human race (see Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:7). But even though God created humans, they are not the prime focus of the Bible.
5. God gave Adam and Eve a free-will. He did not create them as robots with no choice. Because they had free-will, they had power to choose evil.
6. Before the creation of humans, Satan had fallen into wickedness (see Genesis 3:1-5).
7. God has great plans for the human race (see Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:7-25).
8. God created marriage solely for heterosexual couples (see Genesis 2:18-24). God did not create humans to have homosexual marriages or be divorced or men to have more than one wife at the same time. In Matthew 19:5, Jesus linked Genesis 2:24 to God’s attitude to divorce.

¹ Gleason Archer, “A Survey of Old Testament Introduction”, Moody Press, Chicago, 1994, pages 89-147.

² Arnold and Beyer, “Encountering the Old Testament”, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1999, pages 68-75.

9. Satan tempted the first humans into not trusting God and disobeying Him (see Genesis 3:1-6).
10. Adam and Eve were not forced by Satan to sin. They willingly chose to listen to what he tempted them to do (see Genesis 3:1-6). Refer to Chapter "The Tragic Fall" for more details.
11. There were many terrible results of what the first humans did. Refer to Chapter "The Results of the Fall" for more information.
12. Genesis 3:12 reveals Adam blamed Eve and God for his sin. He did not blame himself. He did what many do today. They did not take responsibility for their own wrong actions. Note that even if I have been badly abused as a child by my parents, I am responsible before God if I sin now. I can't blame my parents for my sin, even though they will be held responsible before God if they don't repent of their sins (see Ezekiel 18:1-32).
13. Genesis 3:13 reveals that Eve blamed the Devil for her sin. She did not take her part of the blame. This is just as now some people infer that Satan and demons are so powerful that Christians cannot help but sin when he tempts them. This is contrary to 1 Corinthians 10:14.
14. In Genesis 3:14-19, God gave a *perfect counseling session* to Adam, Eve and Satan. He told them that they were *all partly to blame* for what happened and each needed to take their share of the responsibility.
15. In Genesis 3:15, God promised that Eve's offspring (Jesus) would bruise Satan's head. In this verse the word "*it*" which is referring to "your offspring", is a prophecy about Jesus and not Mary, His mother.
16. There was intermarriage within Adam's family in earlier times. But later in the time of Moses, God forbade this from occurring anymore (see Leviticus 18:6-19, 20:11-12, 20:14, 20:17 and 20:19-21).
17. In Noah's time, God reduced the maximum age that humans could live to about 120 years (see Genesis 6:3).
18. The Holy Spirit wrestled with human hearts even in Noah's time, trying to lead them to God (see Genesis 6:3).
19. By Noah's time, the human race became so violent and wicked that God punished them with death through an enormous flood (see Genesis 6:1-7 and 6:13-7:24). God saved only Noah and his close relatives (see Genesis 6:8-22 and 8:1-19).
20. God made a covenant with Noah, Noah's descendants and His creation (see Genesis 8:20-9:17). Refer to Chapter "God's Covenant Through Noah" for more details.
21. The Scriptures are honest because they reveal the sins of even great believers. For example, Noah became drunk once (see Genesis 9:20-21).
22. At the site of Babylon, many people decided to sin against God (see Genesis 11:1-4) by:
 - a) disobeying His command to scatter throughout all the Earth. Compare Genesis 11:4 to 9:7.
 - b) wanting to glorify and honour themselves (see Genesis 11:4).

In response, God gave them different languages so they could not understand each other (see Genesis 11:5-7). Also He scattered them around the Earth (see Genesis 11:8-9).

23. Abraham was raised as in a *pagan* family (see Joshua 24:2). But in totally unmerited grace and mercy God called Abraham to have a personal relationship with Him (see Genesis 12:1-3). God established this relationship to Abraham on the basis of a covenant. This covenant is called the Abraham Covenant. Refer to Chapter "God's Covenant with Abraham for more details.
24. Abraham responded to God's grace and mercy by *trusting* him and *obeying* Him (see Genesis 12:4, 15:6, 22:1-18, Romans 4:13-23, Hebrews 11:8-9 and James 2:21-23).
25. Abraham told half-lies about his wife Sarah which got them both into great trouble twice (see Genesis 12:10-20 and 20:1-18). But God in His great mercy miraculously got Abraham and Sarah twice out of the mess into which Abraham's half-lies had gotten them.
26. One of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant was that God would provide Abraham with a son (see Genesis 12:2, 13:15 and 15:1-5). But Abraham and Sarah tried to bring God's promise into reality by their own foolish means. They copied the pagan custom of the time of the wife giving her slave girl to Abraham so the slave could have a child supposedly for his mistress (see Genesis 16:1-3). This was an example of using a surrogate mother.
Sarah's slave girl named Hagar became pregnant and then despised Sarah (see Genesis 16:4). Later, Sarah pressured Abraham to send Hagar and her child away (see Genesis 21:8-14). God was gracious to this child even though it was not born in a way approved by Him (see Genesis 16:9-12 and 21:14-21).
27. God predicted that Hagar's son Ishmael would always be fighting with other people. Genesis 16:11-12: ***"And the Angel of the Lord said to her: 'Behold, you are with child, and you will bear a son. You shall call his name Ishmael. Because the Lord has heard your affliction. He shall be a wild man; his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.'"*** Ishmael was the ancestor of all Arabs. Arabic-speaking nations like Egypt and Lebanon are not Arabs. The Arabs have been constantly involved in wars throughout history.
28. Because of the great wickedness of the people of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, God destroyed them (see Genesis 18:16-19:29). These cities were full of homosexuals who preferred to rape men than to have sex with women (see Genesis 19:4-9). These males had sex with women and had children (see Genesis 19:4). But their priority was homosexuality. They were furious that Lot judged their desire to commit homosexual rape as wrong. Genesis 19:9 records: ***"And they said, 'Stand back!' Then they said, 'This one came in to sojourn, and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them.'"***
29. After waiting for 25 long years, God gave Abraham his son (see Genesis 21:1-7).
30. Lot was Abraham's nephew (see Genesis 12:5). Lot's daughters became so morally perverted by living in the city of Sodom that they wickedly got their father drunk and had sex with him (see Genesis 19:30-38). They did this so they could have children. Their sons grew into two nations which later fought many wars against the Israelites. These two nations were the Moabites and Ammonites (see Genesis 19:36-38).
31. God tested Abraham to see if Abraham would obey Him no matter what the cost. This test involved commanding Abraham to kill his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God (see Genesis 22:1-19). God never once intended to permit Abraham to actually kill Isaac (see Genesis

22:12). But because Abraham did not have the written Scriptures, he did not know that God hated all forms of human sacrifice.

It is possible that in later times, foolish sinful Israelites took this example of Abraham out of context and killed their own children as human sacrifices while believing that they were showing greater commitment to God than Abraham.

32. God's covenant promises to Abraham also related to the establishment of the nation of Israel. The Book of Genesis provides God's explanation of the existence and privileged position of the nation of Israel.
33. God miraculously provided a wife for Abraham's son Isaac (see Genesis 24:1-67). Isaac did not choose his own wife. Genesis 24:67 records: "...**he took Rebekah and she became his wife and he loved her...**" Isaac loved her *after* their marriage and not just romantically before marriage like many people do today.
34. Rebekah could not have children. So Isaac pleaded with God and as a result, Rebekah had two twin sons (see Genesis 25:21-26).
35. God told them that the descendants of the first son to be born Esau would serve his brother Jacob's descendants (see Genesis 25:23).
36. Isaac and Rebekah wrongly showed favouritism in their attitudes to their sons. Isaac favoured Esau and Rebekah favoured Jacob (see Genesis 25:28). These wrong attitudes caused many problems.
37. Jacob was a selfish wheeler and dealer. When his brother Esau asked for some food, Jacob said he would give Esau some only if Esau sold his birthright as the first son (see Genesis 25:29-34). Esau foolishly agreed to this. Hebrews 12:16 says that Esau was "**a profane person...who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.**"
Later God permitted Jacob's uncle Laban to trick and manipulate Jacob, teaching Jacob a lesson about his own sinful deceit and poor treatment of Esau (see Genesis 29:1-28).
38. Isaac copied the wrong behaviour of his father Abraham by getting his wife Rebekah to say she was his sister (see Genesis 26:7). Isaac did this because he was afraid of being killed by the Philistine men of Gerar (see Genesis 26:7 and 9).
39. Abraham was a *great man of faith* (see Romans 4:1-3, 4:16-23, Hebrews 11:8-9 and 11:17-19). But note Genesis 26:5 shows he was also a man of great obedience to God also. In this verse, God told Isaac: "**because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.**" Abraham did this prior to the Scriptures being written.
40. God greatly *prospered* Isaac as a fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises (see Genesis 26:12-14).
41. In Genesis 26:24, God appeared to Isaac and promised to fulfil the Abrahamic Covenant promises in Isaac's life: "**And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake.'**" This was a confirming of the Abrahamic Covenant.
42. The importance of the Abrahamic Covenant promises are mentioned later again in the Old Testament (see Exodus 3:15-16, 4:5, 6:8, Leviticus 26:42, Deuteronomy 6:10, 30:20, Joshua 24:2, 2 Kings 13:23, 2 Chronicles 20:7, Nehemiah 9:7-8 and Galatians 3:14-18).
43. Two other major emphases of the Book of Genesis are that:

- a) God wishes to personally guide His people
- b) In His supreme rule, God oversees and intervenes continually in the lives of His people.

There are many references to the above two things throughout the Book of Genesis.

Jacob

Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the grandson of Abraham and Sarah. He was born under the Abrahamic Covenant.

Jacob was a mainly self-centred type of person. He treated God and others selfishly. For example, in his first encounter with God recorded in Genesis 28:10-22, Jacob promised that He would accept the Lord as his God only if God would be with him, protect him on his journey, give him food to eat and clothes to wear and enable him to return safely to his father Isaac's house. All these conditions were based on selfishness. Jacob's words here can hardly be regarded as indicators of a true conversion to God involving repentance and trusting faith in Him. Instead it was the beginning of God's calling of Jacob. God was so wonderfully gracious to Jacob because of His previous covenant with Abraham – the man of trusting faith. The Abrahamic Covenant involved God promising to bless Abraham's descendants greatly as Genesis 17:3-8 shows. God emphasised this covenant when He first appeared to Jacob, as Genesis 28:13-15 demonstrates: ***“And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: ‘I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.’”***

Also note how selfishly and disgracefully Jacob treated his brother Esau (see Genesis 25:29-34 and 27:1-40).

When returning to his father Isaac, Jacob sent a groveling message to his brother Esau. Jacob did this because of how terribly he had treated Esau before. This is typical of Jacob. He would fake a false humility and submission when it suited him in order to gain what He selfishly desired. In this case, he desired to prevent his own death. Genesis 32:3-5 records: ***“Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, ‘Speak thus to my lord Esau, “Thus your servant Jacob says: ‘I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.’””***

When Jacob was later told that Esau was coming out to meet him with 400 men, Jacob became greatly afraid. He thought that this meant Esau was going to fulfil his previous promise to kill him.

Genesis 32:7-21 also reveals Jacob's selfish heart. He sent his servants on ahead of himself in a number of groups thereby risking their lives. He put himself right at the back in the last group. He also tried to buy Esau's forgiveness and acceptance by sending him many gifts. Jacob also used gifts as *manipulative bribes* later in Genesis 43:11-12.

After his wonderful encounter with God in Genesis 32:22-31, Jacob changed to some extent. Proof of this is the fact he risked his own life by going to meet Esau ahead of his wives and children (see Genesis 33:1-11).

Jacob also selfishly showed favouritism to Joseph and Benjamin, his children by his favourite wife. Genesis 37:3-4 records: ***“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated and could not speak peaceably to him.”***

In Genesis 44:30, Judah refers to Jacob’s attitude to Benjamin: ***“Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad’s life.”***

Jacob was grateful to God to some extent for being so gracious and merciful to him (see Genesis 32:10, 33:5 and 33:11). Jacob learnt how to pray on the basis of God’s gracious promises (compare Genesis 32:12 to 28:13-15). Also Jacob was willing to obey God’s guidance at various times (see Genesis 35:1-6 and 46:1-7). But despite this, Jacob did not have the same level of trusting faith in God that his son Joseph had. This is evident when we examine their different responses to trouble. Jacob’s lack of faith and surrender to God is seen in the fact that despite God blessing and protecting him so much in spite of his own sins and associated, Jacob in Genesis 42:36 said ***“...Everything is against me!”*** Jacob said this after he had assumed that Joseph was dead and he thought he was in danger of losing his sons Simeon and Benjamin.

Joseph

Joseph had a deeper trust in God than his father Jacob. For example, Joseph never complained against God even though he suffered worse things than his father Jacob did. Joseph was wickedly sold into slavery by his own brothers, some of whom wanted originally to kill him (see Genesis 37:12-36). Joseph was also unjustly accused by his Egyptian master’s wife of trying to sexually molest her and was thrown into an horrendous prison as a result (see Genesis 39:6-20). This occurred partly as a result of him being faithful to God in refusing to have sex with her even though she continually offered this to him (see Genesis 39:6-12).

How would we have responded to being thrown into a terrible prison full of wicked dangerous criminals, disease and hardship because of our refusing to sin against God? Joseph not once complained against God, despite spending at least 2 years in gaol (see Genesis 41:1).

Genesis 50:19-20 records that instead of blaming God, Joseph had the following wonderful attitude: ***“Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.’”***

Joseph did not promote himself as a great prophet even though he was. When Pharaoh asked him to interpret Pharaoh’s dream, Joseph humbly replied in Genesis 41:16: ***“So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.’”***

Joseph did not try to bargain selfishly with God like Jacob did. Joseph also treated his brothers exceptionally well. This is even though they had caused him to suffer so terribly for many years. Genesis 45:1-8 records how he wept when he saw his brothers, showed great love towards them and expressed wonderful faith in God, despite his terrible trials: ***“Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, ‘Make***

everyone go out from me!’ So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it. Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph; does my father still live?’ But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. And Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Please come near to me.’ And they came near. And he said: ‘I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.’”

What type of person are we? Are we like Jacob or Joseph?

Jacob’s conversion to God

It is difficult to pinpoint exactly when Jacob turned from being a self-centred religious person with a nominal faith in God to being someone who had a real saving faith in Him. His conversion possibly happened when he wrestled God in Genesis 32:22-31. Or it may have occurred later in Genesis 35:1-4 when God appeared to Jacob and gave him some commands and in response Jacob obeyed God’s instructions and also commanded all of his household to abandon their foreign gods and to purify themselves: *“Then God said to Jacob, ‘Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.’ And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, ‘Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone.’ So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem.”*

The above turning from idolatry and the sins associated with such pagan religion may have been *repentance in his heart* and the *post-conversion outward fruits of repentance* or both. In Acts 26:20, Paul distinguishes between repentance, which occurs at the point of our conversion or turning in our hearts from our known sins to God, and the post-conversion *“works befitting repentance”*. In Matthew 3:8, John the Baptist told religious but unsaved Pharisees and Sadducees that they needed to exhibit the fruits of heart repentance: *“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.”*

In Genesis 32:22-31 and 35:1-4, Jacob did not merit eternal salvation through his repentance, obedience to God or other good actions. But he did on one of these or another occasion experience sincere repentance in his heart and began to have saving faith in God.

Prior to his conversion to God, Jacob lived under the blessings of the wonderful gracious Abrahamic Covenant. God prospered Jacob during that earlier period even though he was only a self-centred hypocritical type of religious person. God blessed Jacob in this way because of His unconditional promises to the descendants of Abraham and Isaac under the Abrahamic Covenant.

If Jacob had died, however, prior to his conversion to God, God would have sent him to hell.

The millions of unconverted “Jacobs” throughout church history

Similarly, today and throughout church history, many children have had parents who have sincerely turned to God from their known sins and have been saved by God’s grace through faith. These children have been sanctified or made holy by God in one sense through having at least one saved believing parent. In 1 Corinthians 7:14, Paul refers to this: **“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.”**

But even though God sanctifies these children in a certain way, they are not eternally saved unless they turn to God by his grace from their known sins and begin to have real faith in Him.

Just because their parents or grandparents were saved believers living under the gracious Abrahamic and/or New Covenants, many have mistakenly assumed they were eternally saved by God also.

These millions of unconverted “Jacobs” or second, third or fourth generation unsaved churchgoers have continually throughout the centuries led the churches into accepting various false amended versions of the gospel and various unbiblical wicked teachings and practices.

The results were different from her confession

One common idea is that God will give believers whatever they confess regardless of His specific will about this matter. But note in Genesis 30:1, Rachel confessed to Jacob: **“...Give me children or I’ll die.”** But note instead of dying by not having children, the opposite happened. Rachel died giving birth to her second child (see Genesis 35:16-20).

Different types of natural prosperity

The Books of Genesis, Numbers and Deuteronomy record that God can prosper His people naturally in different ways. Two of the main ways He does this are:

1. giving them an abundance of food, material possessions and victory in war against their enemies (see Genesis 14:1-17, 24:1, 24:34-35, 26:13-14 and 30:27-43)
2. providing for our needs in much less abundant and in basic ways during times of testing, difficulty and hardship. For example, Deuteronomy 2:7 records: **“For the Lord your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your trudging through this great wilderness. These forty years the Lord your God has been with you; you have lacked nothing.”**

But note God’s definition of **“you have lacked nothing.”** Meant Him providing the Israelites with manna, quail and water in times of hardship and lack (see Numbers 11:6-9, 11:31-32 and 20:1-13). As we see in Numbers 11:4-6, God did not provide His people with all of the special foods in the wilderness which they had been used to in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 8:2-5 also records: *“And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So he humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that a man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. So you should know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, so the Lord your God chastens you.”*

Similarly Genesis 39:3 and 39:21-23 records God prospered Joseph while he was a slave and later when he was in a horrible Egyptian gaol.

The Bible’s balanced teaching on financial and material prosperity

There are numerous examples in the Bible of God prospering people, who have faith in Him, with money and material blessings. One false modern view, however, teaches that God only prospers people with such natural blessings if they have faith in Him and obey Him in certain ways.

But note there are many examples in the Bible of God directly or indirectly prospering with money and material blessing those who did not have faith in Him and who did not turn from their known sins.

Here are two examples in the Book of Genesis:

1. God prospered the people of Sodom and Gomorrah with plenty of food even though they were proud, wicked and would not help the poor and needy. Ezekiel 16:49-50 records: *“Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty and committed abomination before Me; therefore I took away as I saw fit.”*
2. He also prospered Esau with material possessions and animals, just like He did to Jacob. Genesis 36:6-7 records: *“Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock.”* This is even though Hebrews 12:16 states Esau was a profane person. God materially prospered Esau because Esau was a descendant of Abraham and Isaac and was therefore to a certain extent under the gracious promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Other examples of God financially and materially prospering people with no faith in Him and who did not turn from their known sins are found in 1 Samuel 25:2-3, 1 Kings 20:5, Psalm 10:1-11, 37:7, 49:16-18, 73:1-16, Jeremiah 12:1-2, 22:18-23, 44: 15-23, Lamentations 1:5, Habakkuk 1:2-4, 1:12-17, Matthew 5:45, Luke 6:35, Acts 14:17 and 19:25.

Having a Biblically balanced view of the Abrahamic Covenant

Also note that Rachel's early death reveals that even God's gracious promises about blessings and prosperity to His people do not guarantee they will not also suffer some great hardships or even tragedies. The sufferings of Joseph (see Genesis 37:12-40:23), the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah (see Genesis 34:1-2) and the people of Israel in Egypt all occurred under the wonderful grace, mercy and promised blessings and prosperity of the Abrahamic Covenant.

I heard many modern preachers only refer to the wealth, material and spiritual blessings which Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and their families experienced under the wonderful Abrahamic Covenant. But they never teach about the above trials, problems and great difficulties which these same people experiences. We need to preach about both the blessings and the trials and problems to be Biblically sound.

If we do not preach about all these various aspects, we are committing the sin of *subtracting* or *taking away* from the Word of God. Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32 warns us of this very serious sin. We must preach the whole counsel of God's will. In Acts 20:27, Paul revealed that he did not share only half of God's Word: ***“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”***

God's brilliant plans for the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Genesis 15:13-16 records that God told Abraham that his descendants would become strangers in another land, would be the slaves of the people of that land for four hundred years and then God would deliver them from their bondage to that nation: ***“Then He said to Abram: ‘Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.’”***

Genesis Chapters 39-50 reveal that the descendants of Abraham did go to Egypt. God sovereignly used the wicked decisions of Joseph's brothers and Ishmaelite slave-traders to get Joseph to Egypt (see Genesis 37:12-36). God sent a famine on the land of Canaan to pressure Jacob to take all of his family to Egypt (see Genesis 41:1-45:28). Genesis 46:1-4 records God told Jacob to take his family to Egypt: ***“So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, ‘Jacob, Jacob!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.’”***

Joseph knew that God had promised to bring the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob out of the land of Egypt into the Promised Land. Genesis 50:24 records: ***“And Joseph said to his brethren, ‘I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.’”*** This prepares us for the Exodus, one of the most amazing events in history – the freeing of millions of slaves and the conquest by the God-empowered slaves of the land promised originally to Abraham.