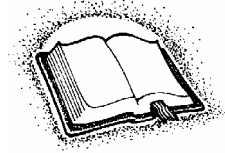


# Unlocking the Bible (5)



## GENESIS: Beginnings

Having looked at the introduction to God at the beginning of the Bible and seen the structure of the Old Testament, we now come to look at each book in turn, beginning with Genesis.

### Beginnings

Indeed Genesis is the book of beginnings: that is what the name means. It is the beginning of the **world**, as God meant it to be – a pleasant environment and fulfilling occupation for mankind.

But, it also records the **beginning of sin**, with Adam's disobedience and all the awful consequences of that fatal rebellion.

It also recounts the **beginning of society** and the various attempts, such as Babel, to construct a united community but which came to nothing except confusion

It is also the **beginning of God's redemptive action**, seen first in Noah and the building of the ark - an instrument of buoyancy when the rest of the world was doomed - and then in Abraham's call to leave his old life and begin a new one in a land that God would lead him to.

### Developments

The major part of the book (chapters 12 – 50) is then taken up with the working out of that purpose through the response and obedience of the those key Old Testament men known as the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph.

Each of these has significance; and together they teach us something about how God works to bring about His purpose in a world that otherwise excludes Him.

**Abraham** responded to the call, and became *disconnected* from his immediate environment but *connected* to God and His purpose.

**Isaac** was a link person- faithful, diligent, consistent. He kept the connection.

**Jacob** – as his name suggests –was a 'deceiver' and yet was transformed by the grace of God. His name was changed to Israel to reflect this transformation. His family – the children of Israel – are the people of God in the OT.

They were far from perfect and soon demonstrated jealousy towards their brother.

**Joseph** was despised, rejected, and sold to Egypt. Yet, God raised him up and he became the instrument for rescuing the nation in time of famine. He showed that God can bring "*triumph out of disaster*". It was he who was able to say: "*You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good*"

What can we glean from this book?

One thing is clear, God is redemptive. To experience that we need to respond to His call. That means disconnecting from our old life and connecting with God. It takes time and in that process we discover "*ourselves as we are*" or, like Paul says, "*wretched man that I am*".

But the answer lies in the provision of a Saviour. Joseph reminds us of Jesus, rejected of men but He became the Saviour. He has the secret of deliverance.

So, Genesis is not only the beginning of failure but also the starting point for regeneration.

Next time we will see another illustration of that regeneration when we look at Moses, who took on the role of a deliverer from Egypt, as we cover the book of Exodus.