

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 3

1 PRAYER

Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2 WORSHIP (20 minutes) *[CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD]* GOD IS GREAT AND POWERFUL

Definition.

What is "worship"? Worship is:

- *an attitude* of awe, adoration, submission and dedication to God,
- *expressed* in various kinds of prayer and the way we live every day (lifestyle).

In order to worship God, we need to get to know "the God of the Bible".

During every worship time we will learn one characteristic (attribute) of God for which we worship him.

Meditation.

Worship is to stand in awe towards who God is.

Theme: God is great and powerful.

Read the Bible passages and the explanation or explain it in your own words.

Read Job 38:4-5 (earth), 38:8-11 (sea), 38:31-33 (constellations); Isaiah 40:12 (measuring), 25-26 (the starry host).

God challenges people to try and fathom his greatness and power! There is nothing on earth that can be compared with God's greatness. The Himalayan Mountains and Pacific Ocean are too small. There is nothing in the solar system that can be compared to God's greatness. Even the sun is too small. Then to what can people compare the greatness and power of God? People do not know anything big enough to compare to God. And so all people are silent.

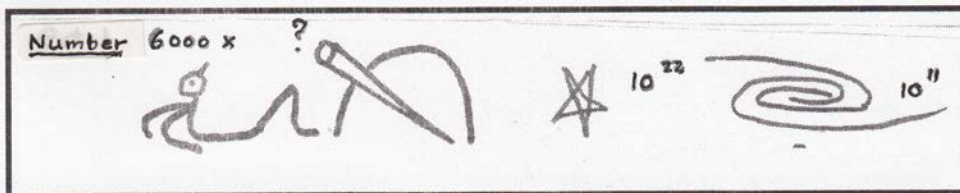
Then God invites people to look up at the stars and consider who made the stars. The stars are a continual reminder of the greatness and power of God. Try to imagine the following facts:

1. The number of the stars.¹

On a clear and dark night, your eyes can see about six thousand stars without a telescope. Most of these stars are from our own galaxy, called the Milky Way. The Milky Way has about 100 thousand million stars (100 000 000 000) (11 zero's)

Making use of the largest telescopes astronomers estimate that in the universe there are about 10 thousand million billion stars (10 000 000 000 000 000 000 000) (22 zero's) and about 100 thousand million galaxies (100 000 000 000) (11 zero's).

It is possible that some stars have not yet been discovered, because since creation their light has not yet reached the earth! The numbers of stars in the universe are so vast that no one can count them in his lifetime.



2. The distances to the stars.

The only star in our solar system is called "the sun". The sun is 150 million kilometres (150 000 000) from the earth. Just how far is that? If you could travel by a modern aeroplane to the sun at a speed of 1 000 km per hour, then it would still take you 17 years to reach the sun.

The distances of the stars in the universe are so immense that scientists use "light-years" to measure the distances. Light is the fastest thing man knows. Light travels at a speed of nearly 300 000 kilometres per second. That equals 7½ times around the earth in 1 second. One light-year is equal to the distance light travels in one year and that equals a distance of 9.454 billion kilometres (9 454 000 000 000) or more than 1 million years flying by modern aeroplane!

¹ British million is 6 zero's, billion is 12 zero's, trillion is 18 zero's. American million is 6 zero's, billion is 9 zero's, trillion is 12 zero's.

The moon is one and one-third light-seconds away. The planet Mars is five light-minutes away. The sun is eight light-minutes away. The planet Pluto is five light-hours away. But the closest star to the solar system is 4.3 light-years away! Flying by modern aeroplane to this star would take you more than 4½ million years!

Our galaxy, called the Milky Way has a diameter of 120 000 light-years. The nearest other galaxy, which is called Spiral Nebula N-1, also contains billions of stars and is over one million light-years away! Astronomers estimate the furthest measured distance in the universe to be 17 thousand million (17 000 000 000) light-years, give or take two to three thousand million light-years. Man will never comprehend the universe, let alone conquer it!

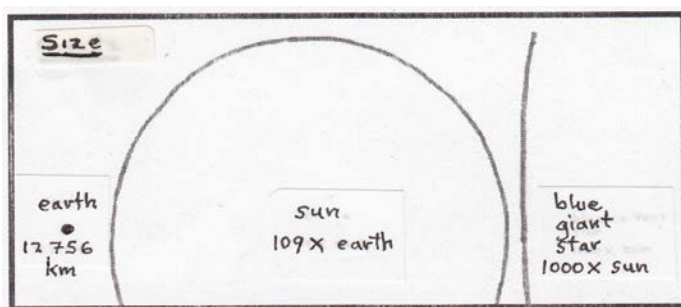


3. The sizes of the stars.

Our planet, “the earth”, has a diameter of 12 756 kilometres. The diameter of the sun is 109 times that of the earth. But there are stars that have a diameter of 100 times and even 1 000 times the diameter of the sun!

The size of these super giant stars is so huge that a part of our solar system, namely the sun as well as the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars could easily rotate inside one of them.

If the earth’s diameter were represented by 1 millimetre, then by comparison the diameter of the sun would be 11 centimetres and the diameter of the biggest star would be 110 metres!



4. The greatness and power of God.

We can study the stars in the universe by means of the greatest telescopes. But WHO created the stars, which are the biggest things in the universe? The Bible says that GOD created all the stars, controls the movement of all the stars and even gives each star a name! “God says, “It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hand stretched out the heavens I marshalled their starry hosts” (Isaiah 45:12).

If man cannot even fathom the number, distances and sizes of the stars, how can he fathom the Creator of the stars? The existence of the wonderful stars point to the existence and greatness of a wonderful God!

Worship.

Take turns to worship God (in one or two sentences) in his characteristic as Worship God in his characteristic of being great and powerful.

3	SHARING (20 minutes)	[QUIET TIMES] MATTHEW 8:1 – 11:24
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Take turns and **share (or read)** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Matthew 8:1 – 11:24).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

4	TEACHING (70 minutes)	[GOSPEL]. CONCEPTS OF THE GOSPEL – PART 1 ²
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When we share the gospel with people, we must be able to explain the words we use. Help people to understand the concepts of “sin”, “death” and “judgement”, “why Jesus Christ is the only way to God the Father” and the meaning of “faith in Jesus Christ”.

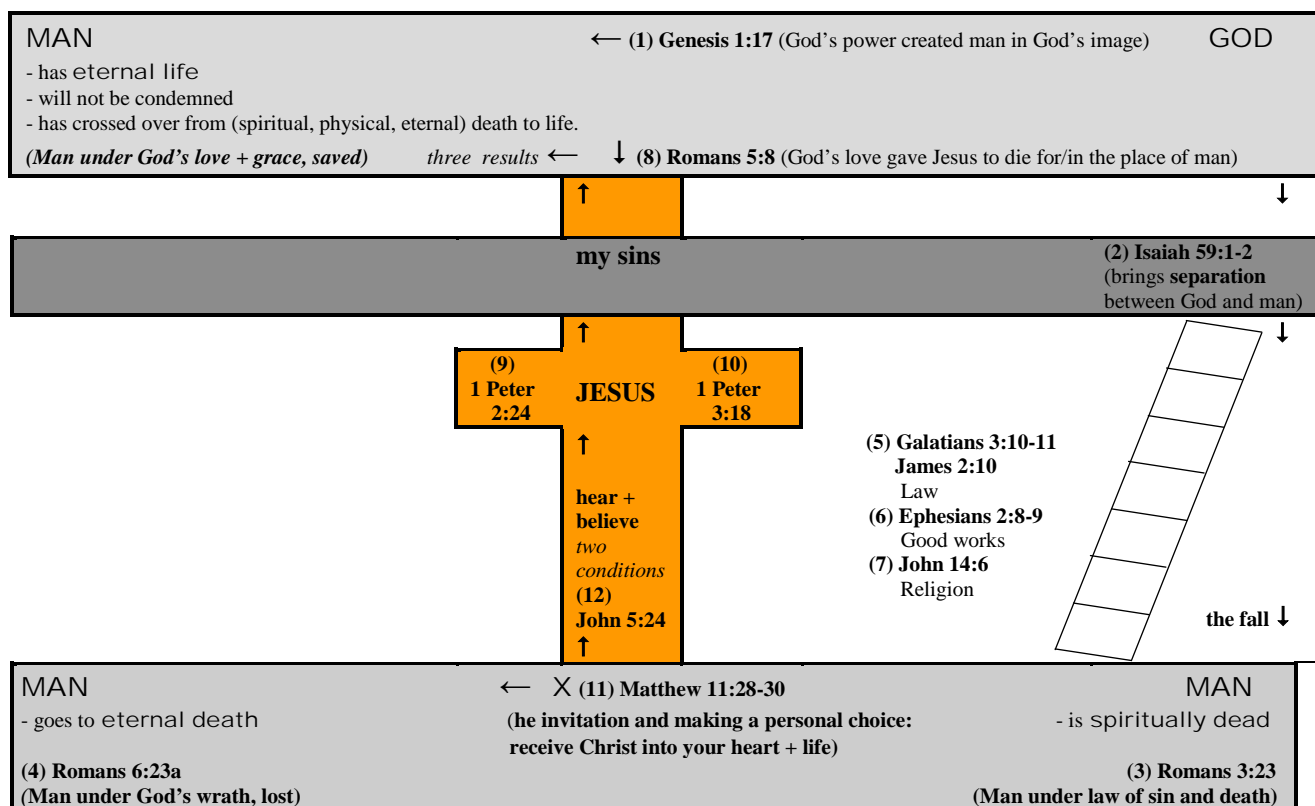
² See manual 3 lesson 27 for two more concepts of the gospel

A. THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL

The “gospel” means the good news about God’s greatest gift to people. The message of the gospel may be presented in various ways, by proclamation, by singing, by acting and by pictures or illustrations (See below).

Draw the illustration as you explain the message of the gospel to someone else.

Group leader. Help the students to learn to do this. The illustration contains only 12 Bible verses. Practise this illustration until you can present it by heart.



(1) God's creation of man

(1) Genesis 1:27. In the beginning God created the first man and woman in his own image. This means that they knew God and related to him in love. They were sinless and possessed eternal life. God tested their obedience (Genesis 2:15-17), but they disobeyed and failed the test. They fell into sin. So God drove them out of Paradise (the garden on earth) and barred them from the tree of life (Genesis 3:24).

(2) Man's fall into sin

(2) Isaiah 59:1-2. Sin separates man from God, but also separates the holy God from sinful man. That is why God does not listen to their prayers or saves them. Adam is the representative of all fallen human beings. All Adam's descendants share in his sinful nature and consequent death (Romans 5:12,17-19).

(3) Romans 3:23. All people have sinned and fall short of God's holy character and presence.

(4) Romans 6:23a. All natural people are now under the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2-3); are under God's wrath (Romans 1:18; John 3:36); are completely lost and on their way to eternal death (hell) (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

(3) Man's attempt to save himself

But people think that they can save themselves. They believe that they can climb up to God by one of the following ways:

(5) Galatians 3:10-11 and James 2:10. Some people believe that God would justify (save) them when they try to keep the law. But the Bible says that no one keeps the law and no one is able to keep the law (Romans 8:7-8)!

(6) Ephesians 2:8-9. Some people believe that God would justify (save) them when they do good works. But the Bible says that no one will be able to boast in God's presence. People can only be saved by God's grace and faith.

(7) John 14:6. Other people believe that practising a religion would justify them. But Jesus Christ says: "I am the Way. No one comes to the Father but by me." No religion deals with the real problem: sin. Therefore, God's holiness and righteousness must and will punish people with eternal death unless they are saved by Jesus Christ.

(4) God's initiative to save man

(8) Romans 5:8. God's love makes the only way of salvation possible. Without abandoning his divine nature, God takes on the human nature and becomes a man in Jesus Christ. He not only enters his creation and human history to dwell among the lost people on earth, but dies for their sins in their place (John 1:1,14,18; Philippians 2:5-8). His love gives himself as a perfect sacrifice of atonement for sins on the cross.

(9) 1 Peter 2:24. Why did Jesus Christ have to die? By dying on the cross, Jesus Christ removes God's holy and righteous anger against our sin away from us and puts it on himself.

(10) 1 Peter 3:18. By dying on the cross, Jesus Christ removes the consequences of our sins and reconciles us to God. Jesus Christ is the 'bridge' or way back to God.

(5) Christ's invitation and man must make a choice

(11) Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus says: "Come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." It is man's responsibility to make a response.

(6) The problem (sin) and the consequences (separation) are permanently removed

(12) **John 5:24.** Jesus says: “Whoever hears my word (message) and believes him who sent me, has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.” There are two conditions and three results. Every person who hears the gospel must make a personal choice or decision: to believe in the God who revealed himself in Jesus Christ or to remain independent from Christ and continue on to eternal death (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). For every believer there are three results: he immediately possesses eternal life; he will never be condemned (doomed) to hell; and he has already crossed over from the way of eternal death to the way of eternal life. He has eternal life, is spiritually alive and will be resurrected from the dead. Jesus promises that no one will be able to snatch him out of his hand (John 10:28)!

(7) Summary message

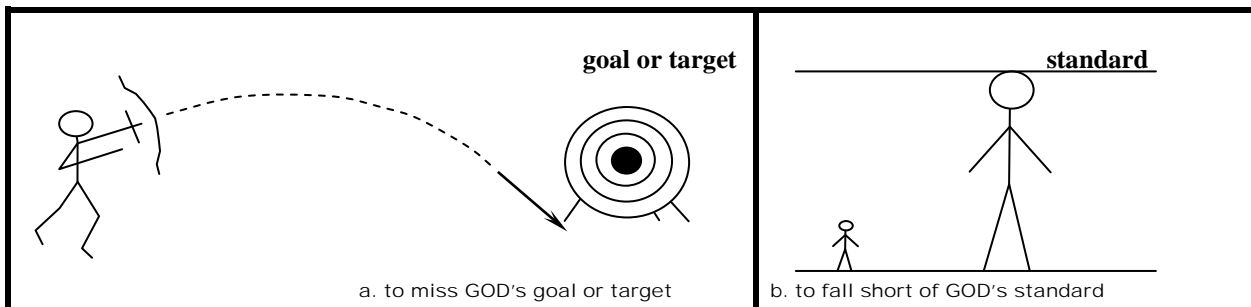
John 3:16. The Bible concludes: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

B. THE MEANING OF THE WORD “SIN” IN THE BIBLE

The gospel says, “All have *sinned* and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Teach. Psalm 51:1-4 in the original language uses three words for ‘sin’: (1) transgressions (Hebrew: pesha) and (2) iniquity (Hebrew: awon) and (3) sin (Hebrew: chata’at).

1. The meaning of the word “sin”.



(1) Sin means to miss the goal of GOD for your life.

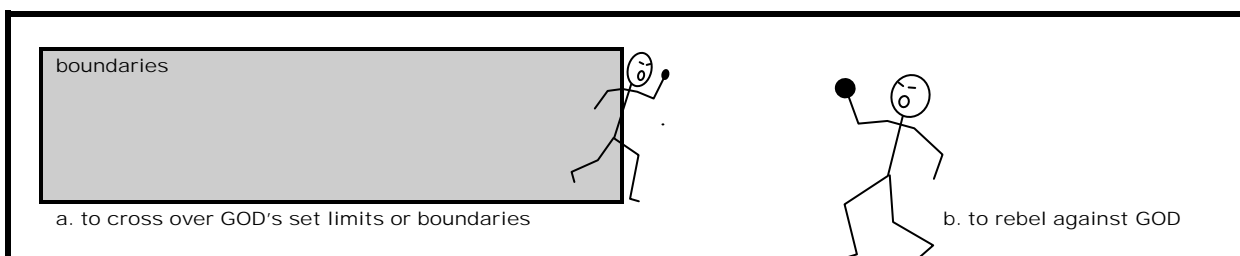
The goal of the God who revealed himself in the Bible is that all people on earth have the right relationship with him. Consequently they would also have the right relationship with other people and do the things that are right in God’s eyes. A ‘sinner’ is someone who misses God’s goal for his life, namely, the right relationship with God and consequently the right relationship with other people!

(2) Sin also means to fall short of the perfect standard of GOD.

The perfect standard of GOD for living right and doing right is Jesus Christ and his teachings in the Bible. No matter which language you speak or which religion you have, your life and your works are measured against this perfect standard of God.

But because all people in the world fall short of God’s perfect standard, they are lost and need a Saviour. Even the people who live exemplary lives and do many good works, still fall short of God’s perfect standard (Romans 3:10-12,23). Nobody qualifies! Nobody will be saved by his religion, by keeping the law or by his good works. Nobody is good enough! Sin does not simply mean ‘committing a crime’ or ‘doing something evil’. It means missing GOD’s goal and falling short of GOD’s perfect standard.

2. The meaning of the word “transgression”.



(1) Transgression means to cross over the limits or boundaries that are set by GOD.

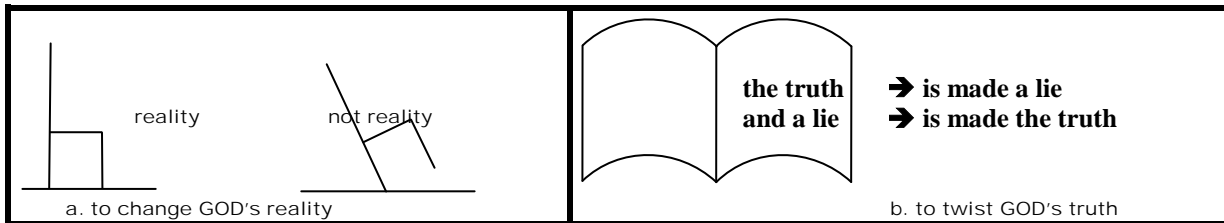
The limits or boundaries for human living and human behaviour are revealed in the commandments, prohibitions and teachings of the GOD who revealed himself in the Bible. Because all people sometimes do what God prohibits and sometimes neglect to do what God commands, they are called ‘transgressors’. Transgression is not simply transgressing the laws of religious teachers, but transgressing the laws and boundaries of the GOD who revealed himself in the Bible.

(2) Transgression also means to deliberately rebel against GOD.

Already in the Old Testament, people rebelled against the God of the Bible and did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25). Today people deliberately spread lies about the GOD who revealed himself in the Bible. They defiantly reject the message of God in the Bible. They spurn the moral values, wisdom and character of the God who revealed

himself in the Bible. They stir up rebellion on earth and promote corruption and perversion. They harden themselves against the God of the Bible. This is rebellion. Transgression and rebellion are visible wrongdoing.

3. The meaning of the word "iniquity".



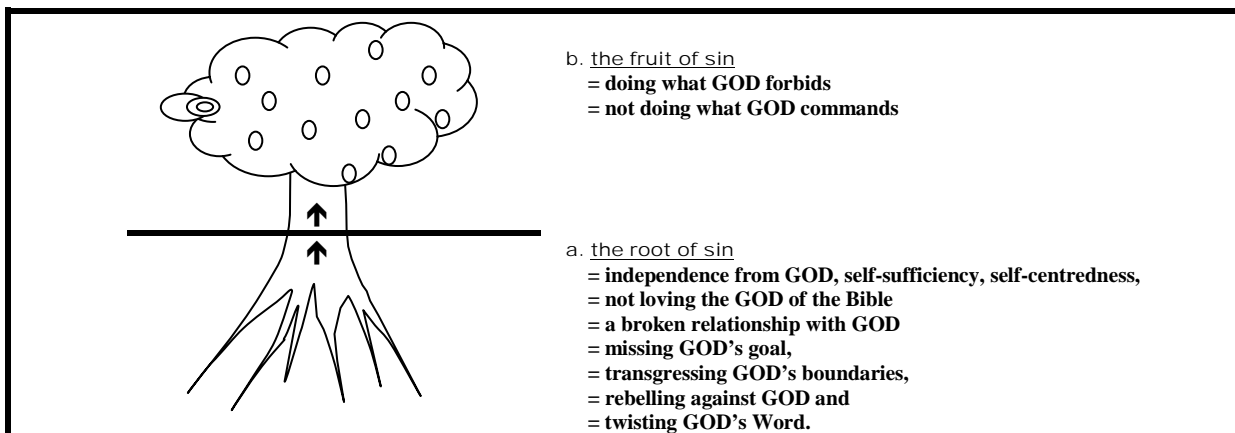
(1) Iniquity means to subtly change the reality as GOD sees it.

All people have a world-view. Their world-view is expressed in their view of existence and reality, their perceptions and attitudes, their beliefs and values, as well as their culture and their institutions. The God of the Bible has revealed the correct world-view in Jesus Christ and in the Bible. This world-view may be called "the kingdom of God culture"! In the kingdom of God there are a great variety of forms, but these forms should express the views of Christ and the Bible! The God of the Bible wants all people to know the kingdom of God culture, to believe it and to live according to it. However, when people make up their own world-view and create their own beliefs and values, they have changed the reality as God views it. This is iniquity.

(2) Iniquity also means to twist or distort the truth of GOD as he has revealed it in the Bible.

God has clearly revealed the truth in the Bible. However, people deliberately misinterpret the truth of the Bible (Isaiah 5:20). Some people make the Bible say things they would like it to say (2 Corinthians 2:17; 2 Corinthians 4:2), while other people neglect certain truths in the Bible, which they ought to consider (Matthew 15:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). As a consequence, there are many false prophets and many people who are misled by these false prophets (Matthew 24:11). This is iniquity. Iniquity is often a more subtle and sneaky way of wrongdoing. It is concealed or camouflaged wrongdoing, often under the guise of religion.

4. Summary. The "root" and the "fruit" of sin.



(1) The root of sin is self-centredness, self-sufficiency or independence from GOD.

The root of sin is a separated relationship with the God who revealed himself in the Bible. The root of sin is to set up one's own goals and standards apart from God. It is to live with one's own rules or boundaries, which are often outside the boundaries set by God or to live without any boundaries at all. It is to create and believe one's own world-view and culture apart from the GOD who revealed himself in the Bible. Although a person might think that he is doing nothing wrong and that he is only doing good works, he is still a sinner in God's eyes, because he lives his life apart from the One and Only True and Living God. The root of sin is to be and to do whatever a person himself wants to be and to do instead of to be and to do what God wants him to be and to do. The root of sin is self-centredness or independence from the God who revealed himself in the Bible.

(2) The fruit of sin is doing what is wrong and not doing what is right.

The fruit of sin grows out of the root of sin. The fruit of sin is to do what God has forbidden and not do what God has commanded. The lists of sins or things that God has *forbidden* are found in Mark 7:20-23; Romans 1:28-32; Galatians 5:19-21; Titus 3:3 and Revelation 21:8. Things that God has *commanded* are found in John 13:34-35; Luke 6:27-28; Colossians 3:18 – 4:1; Hebrews 3:12-13; 12:14-17; James 1:27; 1 Peter 2:11-12.

C. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "DEATH" IN THE BIBLE

The gospel says, "The wages of sin is *death*" (Romans 6:23).

Teach. The word 'death' in the Bible has three meanings: a spiritual, physical and eternal meaning.

1. Spiritual death.

What is the meaning of spiritual death?

Read John 8:24; Ephesians 2:1-3.

Discover and discuss the answer.

Notes. Spiritual death is the condition in which the spirit of man is dead. Spiritual death is separation from the life of the One and Only True and Living GOD who revealed himself in the Bible. Every human being is "a living soul" (Genesis 2:7) that expresses himself in a visible body and an invisible spirit. One of the functions of the human spirit is the ability *to know* and *to fellowship* with the One and Only True and Living God.

As long as people are not born-again by the Holy Spirit, they are spiritually dead. They think that God does not exist or if they believe that God exists, they believe that he is too high and far away. They do not know God in a personal and intimate way and they cannot fellowship with God.

But when they hear the gospel and believe, that is, receive Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives, then the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) comes and lives in them (Ephesians 1:13; Romans 8:9-10). Then the Holy Spirit makes their human spirit alive, so that they are able to know God personally and fellowship with God.

2. Physical death.

What is the meaning of physical death?

Read Psalm 49:10,17 (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6,10; 12:7).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Notes. Physical death is the condition when the physical body of man dies. Physical death is when the human spirit is separated from the human body and when the person is separated from life on earth. It is separation from beloved family and friends and separation from possessions and accomplishments.

When people die physically, their body decays to dust (the natural elements) in the grave (or in cremation). They will never again return to this present world and will never again have a part in anything that happens on this present world.

3. Eternal death.

What is the meaning of eternal death?

Read Revelation 21:8 (Luke 16:22-23; Matthew 10:28; 25:46; Revelation 20:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Notes. Before the final judgement day, eternal death is the eternal suffering of the spirit (or soul) of unbelievers in hell. After the final judgement day, eternal death is the eternal suffering (punishment) of the spirit (or soul) and the body of unbelievers in hell. Eternal death is eternal separation from the presence and care of God.

D. THE MEANING OF THE WORD "JUDGEMENT" IN THE BIBLE

The gospel says, "Whoever does not believe stands condemned already" (John 3:18) and "Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement" (Hebrews 9:27).

Teach. Judgement in the Bible refers to two distinct kinds of judgements, namely, "the present temporary judgements of God" and "the future final judgement of God". The present temporary judgements of God come in two ways: God allows his temporary judgements to come over people and sometimes God brings his temporary judgements over people.

1. The present temporary judgements of God.

(1) Why does God allow certain present forms of judgement?

Read Galatians 6:7-8 (Romans 1:28-32).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Notes. Because God created the earth and its people, he has the right to determine how people should live. God has built physical laws into his creation. For example, if you transgress the law of gravity, you can have a nasty fall. Likewise God has built spiritual and moral laws into his creation. Whenever people transgress God's spiritual and moral laws, God allows them to suffer the consequences of their own sins. "They reap what they sow". A man, who sins, reaps judgement. For example, a man who sows laziness will reap poverty. A man who sows hatred will reap broken relationships. A man who sows tyranny will reap wars. A man who sows drugs reaps addiction.

Romans 1:18-32 teaches that godlessness leads to moral corruption and every kind of wickedness. In many cases, the consequences of a man's sins already catch up with him during his life on earth. Suffering is often the natural consequence of a person's own bad beliefs, bad choices, bad decisions and bad actions.

(2) Why does God bring certain present forms of judgement over the world?

Read Ezekiel 14:21 (Leviticus 26:14-25; Amos 4:6-12; Haggai 1:3-11; Matthew 24:4-14; Revelation 9:20-21;16:9).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Notes. God rules over the whole world. He controls all the forces of nature and all the events in the history of mankind. In times, when people disobey the Living God or when they turn their backs upon God, God withdraws his care and his protection from them and brings his present temporary judgements on them. For example, their harvests fail, wars tear their country apart, their people suffer great losses and there is no more satisfaction in anything on earth, etc. God uses all kinds of natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, draughts, hunger and epidemics throughout the history of man on earth to show to mankind that he is displeased with their sins and to warn them to repent and turn back to him.

(3) What is the real reason why God brings his present temporary judgements on people?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:32 (Hebrews 12:4-11).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Notes. God brings his present temporary judgements on people in order to safeguard them from his future eternal judgement! The purpose of his present temporary judgements is to discipline people, that is, to warn people, to expose their sins and to rebuke them for their sins. God's goal is always to do what is best for people now. To allow people to continue in their present sins, would lead to their ultimate slavery to sins and consequently to God's eternal punishment for their sins. The purpose of God's present temporary judgements is to cause people to turn from their godlessness and wickedness and instead share in God's holiness and righteousness!

2. The future eternal judgement of God.

(1) By looking at the life-styles of godly people and wicked people, why would you describe life as either just or unjust?

Read Ecclesiastes 12:14 (Psalm 73:2-16).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Teach. Life is manifestly unjust! Good people suffer, unselfish people are exploited, meek people are terrorised, and poor people are deprived. On the other hand, evil people flourish, selfish people make fortunes, brutal people oppress the meek and rich people cause poor people to get poorer. Tyrants die peacefully in their beds while saints are tortured to death. If, as we are assuming, there is a God who is all-powerful and good, how can he possibly allow the injustices in the world to continue? If he does nothing about all the injustice in the world, either now or after this life in order to redress such gross injustice and put down such rampant evil, then he is either not all-powerful and so cannot do it, or he is not good and so does not care!

However, the Bible teaches very clearly that the Living God is all-powerful and good and that justice on a cosmic scale will be done. All the people who ever lived on earth will be present at this final future judgement!

(2) What will God's future judgement be like?

Read Hebrews 9:27 (Matthew 25:31-33).

Discover and discuss the answer.

Teach. The Bible teaches that the physical death of man is NOT THE END! After physical death, there is a much more serious and greater suffering for people!

Jesus Christ will return to this earth. All people, who have ever lived on earth, will be judged. He will judge every deed and every hidden thing (Ecclesiastes 12:14). And he will weed out of his kingdom all people who do evil and everything that causes sin (Matthew 13:41). He will separate those who do not believe in him from those who believe in him and he will judge them in accordance with their relationship to Jesus Christ (Matthew 25:12). The people, who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, will be judged on the basis of their knowledge of God's law (Romans 2:10-16), their unbelief (John 3:18-21,36), their shortcomings (Matthew 25:41-46), their evil deeds (Revelation 21:8), their trampling of Jesus underfoot and their insulting of the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:26-31). Everyone, who rejected the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will be punished for their disobedience (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Nevertheless, God will judge every human being with absolute justice (Luke 12:47-48). He will judge oppressed people with justice and people poor in spirit with mercy (Matthew 5:3-12). But he will send greedy rich people away with empty hands (James 5:1-6) and he will destroy all wicked people. He will judge the whole world and every one living in it for all the wickedness they have committed on God's earth! He will make an end to all arrogance and pride of people (Isaiah 13:11). And he will push the mighty rulers of this earth from their thrones (Daniel 2:44; 1 Corinthians 15:25).

The place of eternal ruin (but not eternal annihilation) is called "the fiery lake of burning sulphur" or "hell". Hell is a place of fire and torment (Luke 16:23-26). Everyone, whose name was not found in the book of life, will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). It is a place of burning without getting destroyed, a place of weeping, of excruciating pain and frenzied anger without end (Mark 9:42-49). It is a place from which no one can escape (Luke 16:26). The godless will be punished with everlasting ruin and shut out from the presence, love and care of God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Christians will not be condemned to eternal punishment (John 5:24,29), but they will be judged for how they lived as Christians on earth (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	<i>[REACTIONS]</i> PRAYER IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD
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Take turns in the group **to pray short** to God in response to what you have learned today.
Or divide the group into two's or three's and pray to God in response to what you have learned today.

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
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(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Make a commitment to explain the gospel clearly to people.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter from Matthew 11:25 - 14:36 each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. **Bible study.** Prepare the next Bible study at home. (2) Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a. Theme: Where do I come from? Make use of the five steps method of Bible study. Make notes.
4. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. **Update your notebook** on making disciples. Include the worship notes, the notes on your personal time with God, the teaching notes and this preparation.