

DISCIPLESHIP. LESSON 4

1	PRAYER
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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	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] MATTHEW 11:25 – 14:36
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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 11:25 – 14:36). Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

3	MEMORISATION (20 minutes) [ASSURANCES] (2) JOHN 16:24
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A. MOTIVATION

Read Psalm 119:9,11.

Discover and discuss. Why is it important to memorise Bible verses (passages or chapters)?

Notes. Memorised Bible verses will help you to live a true, pure and holy life in a crooked and perverse world.

B. MEDITATION

(2)

Write the following memorisation verse on a white or blackboard as follows:

Assurance of answered prayer John 16:24
Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.
John 16:24

John 16:24

1. The meaning of God’s names in the Bible.

During the Old Testament period, believers called God directly by his name “LORD” or “God” (Psalm 5:1-2). They did not close their prayers in the name of God. In the Bible, names have meaning. God’s names are an expression of *God’s essence and character!* Only God is exactly what his names say. The fact that God has names means that God knows himself and also that God reveals himself to people. God wants people to know who he is and he wants people to relate to him in prayer.

The name “God” (Hebrew: Elohim) means “the mighty one who commands respect and fear” (Isaiah 40:18 and 46:9-11). The name “LORD” (Hebrew: JaHWeH) means, “I am who I am” or “I will be what I will be”. This is God’s covenant name, in which God says that he will be faithful to the covenant he made with his people (Exodus 3:14-15; 34:6-7).

Jesus Christ is the visible revelation of the invisible God (Isaiah 9:6; Colossians 1:15; 2:9). Also his names have meaning. The name “Jesus” means “Saviour” (Matthew 1:21). The name “Messiah” or “Christ” means “Anointed One”. He has this name, because he has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be the Final Prophet, the Highest Priest and the Eternal King. As Prophet, Christ reveals God and God’s words to us. As Priest, Christ pays the penalty for our sins and prays for us. As King, Christ in a sovereign way rules over our lives and protects us from evil.

2. Praying in the name of Jesus Christ.

Christians pray in the name of Jesus Christ, because he is the Mediator between God and man. As Mediator of the creation God created us through him (John 1:3). As Mediator of the revelation God revealed himself through him (John 1:18). As Mediator of the salvation God justified us completely through his death and resurrection (1 Corinthians 1:30). As Mediator of the judgment he will clear us completely in the Last Judgment (John 5:21,24). And as Mediator of prayer God listens to and responds to prayers through him. Praying in the name of Jesus Christ has three important meanings.

(1) Because Jesus Christ revealed God's character, words and deeds to them.

Christians can know God personally and intimately, because they know Jesus Christ. He, who has *seen* Jesus Christ, has seen the invisible God (John 14:9-10). He, who *knows* Jesus Christ, knows God (John 8:19; cf. Matthew 11:27). He, who *believes* in Jesus Christ, believes in God (John 12:44). He, who *accepts* Jesus Christ, accepts God (John 13:20). God listens to the prayers of Christians that pray to him in the name of Jesus Christ.

(2) Because Jesus Christ merited the complete and perfect righteousness of believers.

The righteousness of a believer comes from God and is based on the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21). When God looks at a believer in Jesus Christ, he sees only the righteousness of Jesus Christ! God listens to the prayers of Christians that have become righteous in Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:12).

(3) Because Jesus Christ has revealed God's will and ways to them.

God listens to the prayers of Christians that pray in harmony with his revealed will in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:14).

Thus, because of Jesus Christ, Christians have direct access to God in heaven (Ephesians 2:18) and Christians may approach God at any time with freedom and confidence (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:14-16).

C. MEMORISATION AND REVIEW

- 1. Write** the Bible verse on a blank card or on one page of your small notebook.
- 2. Memorise** the Bible verse in the right way. (2) Assurance of answered prayer: John 16:24.
- 3. Review.** Divide into twos and check one another's last memorised Bible verse.

4	BIBLE STUDY (70 minutes) [QUESTIONS ABOUT LIFE] (2) WHERE DO I COME FROM? GENESIS 1:1 – 2:4a
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Make use of the five steps method of Bible study to study Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a together.

STEP 1. READ.	GOD'S WORD
<i>Read.</i> LET US READ Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a together. Let us take turns to read one verse each until we have completed the reading.	

STEP 2. DISCOVER.	OBSERVATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU? Or WHICH TRUTH IN THIS PASSAGE TOUCHES YOUR MIND OR HEART? <i>Record.</i> Discover one or two truths that you understand. Think about them and write your thoughts in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, take turns to share). Let us take turns to share with one another what each of us has discovered. (The following are examples of people sharing what they have discovered. Remember: In every small group, the group members will share different things, not necessarily these things)	

1:27

Discovery 1. God created man and woman in his own image.

I am different than animals, because they do not have the image of God. As an image of God, I am a recognisable copy of God's personality. I have been given the same kind of characteristic features God possesses.

1:28

Discovery 2. God created me for a specific task.

I am created to have a relationship with God, with other people and with nature. With regard to God, I am to bear his image in a worthy way. With regard to other people, I must respect the difference between male and female. With regard to nature, I must subdue it and rule over it.

STEP 3. QUESTION.	EXPLANATIONS
<i>Consider.</i> WHICH QUESTION ABOUT ANYTHING IN THIS PASSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASK TO THIS GROUP? Let us try to understand all the truths in Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a and ask questions about the things we still do not understand. <i>Record.</i> Formulate your question as clearly as possible. Then write your question in your notebook. <i>Share.</i> (After the group members have had about two minutes to think and write, let each person first share his question.) <i>Discuss.</i> (Then, choose a few of these questions and try to answer them by discussing them together in your group.) (The following are examples of questions the students might ask and some notes about the discussion of the questions.)	

2:4

Question 1. What kind of literary genre is Genesis 1:1 to 2:4?

Notes. Because man was not present at the creation, God gave man a *revelation of creation* after he had completed the creation. He gave man a revelation of creation, not in the form of a scientific treatise, vision or poem, but in the form of an account (of how the existing things: the universe, the earth and everything in it sprang forth) (Hebrew: toldot) (Genesis 2:4). Genesis 1:1-2:4 is a revelation in the form of a historic account even though the creation days 1 and 4 (light and light bearers), the creation days 2 and 5 (above and below the atmosphere) and the creation days 3 and 6 (vegetation and animals/man on the earth) show some parallelism.

1:31 – 2:1

Question 2. How long did creation take?

Notes. The Bible says “in six days”. How must these “days” be interpreted?

The Hebrew word “day” is “jom” and in Genesis 1 the author could not have intended a literal 24-hour day, because the measuring of time would only have been possible from the fourth creation day onwards (Genesis 1:14)! The word “day” (Hebrew: jom) is used in 5 different senses:

- In verse 5, the word “day” first refers only to the light part of a creation day
- and then to the whole creation day.
- In verse 14, the word “day” first refers only to the light part of a 24-hour day
- and then to the whole 24-hour day.
- And in Genesis 2:4 the word “day” refers to the whole period of creation and includes all the six creation days!

In Genesis 1:27, on the sixth creation day after creating all the land animals, God created man, both male and female. This was God’s closing act on the sixth creation day. But in Genesis 2:15-22 a considerable interval of time must have intervened between the creation of Adam and the creation of Eve. Before the creation of Eve, Adam’s task was to work in the Garden of Eden and take care of it. God’s decision to make a suitable helper for Adam implies a long enough period of time in which Adam lost his initial excitement at working in the Garden. To compensate for his lonesomeness, God gave Adam the enormous task of classifying every species of animal and bird. This comprehensive inventory of all animals, birds and insects must have taken a very long time. Finally, after Adam’s renewed loneliness, God created a wife for him from that part of his body that was closest to his heart. Therefore Genesis 1 was never intended to teach that the sixth creation day lasted a mere 24 hours.

The purpose of Genesis 1 is *not* to tell us how long ago, how long or how fast God created the universe and the earth, but to tell who created, what he created and for what purpose he created it.

1:1-2

Question 3. How did God create the universe?

Notes.

(1) In the beginning.

“In the beginning” (in an absolute sense) the Almighty God, created the heavens and the earth. This refers to the birth of the universe when God created energy, matter (elements), space and time “out of what cannot be observed” (Hebrews 11:3; Romans 4:17). The revelation in the Bible concentrates on what would later become important for man within the universe consisting of galaxies of stars, the sun, the moon and the earth. Note that God existed before he created energy, matter, space and “time”. The word “create” (Hebrew: bara’) is only used of God and not of man. The Bible teaches that everything that exists came into existence through the God of the Bible.

When the earth was created, it was formless, empty and dark. The earth was formless: it did not have any ordered form and looked like a great flood. The earth was completely empty: there was no dry land, no trees and plants and no living creatures. The earth was darkness: there was no light that penetrated to the earth.

It took a very long time to form the right galaxy with the right elements that became the Milky Way, to form the right star in the right position within the galaxy that became the sun, and to form the right planet at the right distance from the sun that became the earth that could support life. After that it took a very long time to form everything on earth! How much time (as humans calculate time) it took to create the universe and earth has not been revealed in the Bible!

Genesis 1:1-2 serves as an introduction to Genesis 1:3 - 2:4. The six creation days set forth the orderly progressive stages in which God completed (Genesis 2:1) his work of creating the planet earth within the universe as we know it today.

<p>“in the beginning” (in absolute sense)</p>	<p>GOD “created” (Hebrew: bara’) “Create”: exclusively an act of God (Genesis 1:1) “Created”: <i>out of nothing</i>: the material universe (Psalm 148:5; Hebrews 11:3); <i>bring into being what did not exist before</i>: the great creatures of the sea (Genesis</p>	<p>“the heaven” (the universe) - matter (elements, heavenly bodies/stars, earth</p>
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	<p>1:21); regular recurring natural phenomena as the wind (Amos 4:13); wonders done before people (Exodus 34:10); darkness (disaster) and light (righteousness) (Isaiah 45:7-8); “<i>calling things that are not as though they were</i>”: giving life to a dead person, making a person into a nation (Romans 4:17).</p> <p>“<u>Created</u>” includes <i>completing</i> by processing created matter and making (fashioning/forming) it into something (Genesis 1:7,16,21,25-27; Genesis 2:1-4).</p> <p>“<u>Created</u>” includes <i>sustaining and renewing</i> the creation (Isaiah 41:17-20), the new heaven and new earth (Isaiah 65:17), renewing the heart/spirit of man (Psalm 51:10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - light (energy, light, warmth) - space - time <p>“and the earth”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - formless, flood - empty - darkness
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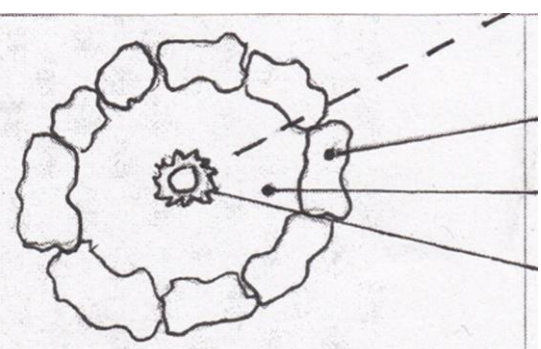
(2) The first creation day.

“In the beginning” (in absolute sense) of the creation of the universe (Genesis 1:1) God created physical light (energy) that radiated out from the galaxies and their burning stars (suns) and their light was reflected by planets and moons (Genesis 1:3-5).

Genesis 1:3-5 is an account how physical light and the heat (of the sun after it was created) finally penetrated to the planet earth (after it was created): God’s creative word was at the same time God’s creative act. “Let there be light (on earth which up to now was covered in darkness!)” “Light” penetrated to earth but the light bearers (sun, moon and stars) only became visible on earth on the fourth creation day. Only during the fourth creation day, the sun, moon and stars became the instruments through which people on earth (after they were created) could indicate time and seasons (Genesis 1:14-18).

“Life” and “light” are attributes of God and are inherent to God’s nature (being). “Life” is a summary of all God’s attributes or characteristics, like his holiness and righteousness, his love and faithfulness, his grace and mercy, etc. “Light” is the visible expression of that life in and through Jesus Christ (John 1:4-5)! So there has always been life and light in a spiritual sense, because God is the Eternal One!

On the new earth Jesus Christ himself will be the Source of light in a spiritual and physical sense. Jesus Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God and his life. There will never again be night or darkness in a spiritual or physical sense on the new earth (Revelation 21:23; Revelation 22:5)!

<p>creation day 1 light (energy)</p>	<p>of the sun that eventually reaches the earth</p>	
<p>creation day 2 atmosphere</p>		<p>the water <i>above</i> in the clouds</p> <p>the atmosphere</p> <p>the water <i>under</i> in the flood</p>

(3) The second creation day.

Genesis 1:6-8 sets forth the creation of the *atmosphere or sky*. That is, God “created” in the sense of “fashioning/forming” created matter into an atmosphere that separated the moisture suspended in the clouds in the sky and the moisture condensed on the surface of the earth. Thus, a thick layer of clouds covered the whole earth so that the light bearers (sun, moon and stars) could not yet be seen from the earth.

(4) The third creation day.

Genesis 1:9-13 sets forth the creation of the dry land of the continents and islands in the oceans (in the sense that he caused the land of the continents and islands to emerge visibly above the water of the oceans. It is possible that the gradual cooling of the earth brought about condensation of water and seismic pressures produced mountains. Details are not given.

According to Genesis 1:11-12 God commanded: “Let the earth/soil/dry land sprout (grow out of existing matter/elements)(Hebrew: dasha’) grass (Hebrew: deshe’) and herbs (Hebrew: ‘eseb) yielding seed (Hebrew: mazria’ zera’) and fruit trees (Hebrew: ets peri) yielding fruit according to their various kinds (Hebrew: peri lemimo). So the earth produced (Hebrew: jatsa’) grass and plants bearing seed (Hebrew: mazria’ zera’) according to their various kinds

(Hebrew: leminehu) and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds (Hebrew: ets oseh peri esher zaro' bo leminehu). By God's creative command the soil produced vegetation (that is, vegetation sprouted out of existing matter). Water and the power of sunlight penetrating the clouds around the earth made photosynthesis possible.

God created vegetation via a process. God produced the very many kinds of grass, herbs and trees, each according to its kind, from the elements in the soil. The Bible teaches that God brought vegetation into existence by means of a process.

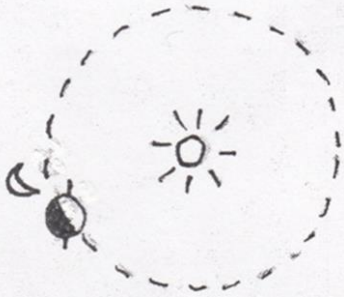
<p>creation day 3 continents and seas with plants and trees on the land</p>	
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(5) The fourth creation day.

Genesis 1:14-19 reveals the creation (in the sense of “coming into existence”) of *time and seasons* for the use of mankind. The stars, the sun, the earth and the moon were already created (Hebrew: bara’) out of nothing observable “in the beginning” (thus not on the 4th creation day) (Genesis 1:1)!

But on the 4th creation day God made (caused) (Hebrew: asah)(Genesis 1:16) these light bearers (the stars, the sun and the moon) to be visible from the earth and thus to function as indicators of time, seasons and direction. In this way the accurate calculation of time and seasons and the determination of direction would be possible for man after he had been created. From the fourth creation day onwards the movements of the stars, the sun and the moon could be observed from the earth. The constellations of the stars would later help people to find the way when they travel. And the sun and the moon would help them devise an agricultural calendar for the seasons and a historic calendar for the calculation of time (days of 24 hours and years of 365 days).

This clearly points to the fact that God created the earth for man! The two “great” lights are not intended to indicate scientific facts, but describe the way in which people on earth observe them.

<p>creation day 4 time</p>	<p>GOD “<u>made</u>” (Hebrew: asah) - God made, fashioned, formed, produced - God causes something to function as</p> <p>The light bearers are made to function as: - signs that mark the <i>seasons</i> on earth - signs that indicate <i>time</i> on earth - signs that indicate <i>direction</i> on earth</p>	
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(6) The fifth creation day.

Genesis 1:20-23 relates the creation (in the sense of “bringing into being something that did not exist before”) of marine life, freshwater life and all flying creatures. This included the great sea creatures (e.g. whales), all kinds of fish, crabs and shrimps, etc. and all kinds of flying birds, lizards, and insects.

It is interesting that the Cambrian period of geology (the earliest Palaeozoic period, 545-495 million years ago) shows the first evidence of invertebrate animal life (possessing distinguishable joints in an outward skeleton) with startling suddenness. There is no record whatever of the 5000 species of marine and terrestrial animal life of the Palaeozoic era prior to the Cambrian levels of fossil bearing strata.

God's command to multiply is not addressed to these animals, but is his creative word that blesses them with the ability to multiply.

<p>creation day 5 birds and fish</p>	<p>in the water <i>above</i> in the atmosphere (air) in the water <i>below</i> in the seas</p>
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(7) The sixth creation day.

Genesis 1:24-26 relates the creation of all the land animals after their species and the creation of man. In Genesis 1:24 God says, “Let the earth *produce* or *bring forth* (Hebrew: jatsa’) (from existing elements in the soil) living creatures

according to their kinds”. This should not be understood to mean that the earth had the ability to produce animals by itself. By God’s creative command, he created animals from the elements present in the earth. God produced the very many kinds of animals from the elements in the soil. God created animals via a process. The land animals included livestock like sheep and cows, all small animals moving along the ground like snakes and tortoises and all the larger wild animals like lions and elephants (Genesis 1:25). The Bible does not intend to give a scientific classification, of animals, but describes them in the way people looked at animals.

God also “created” (Hebrew: bara’) (Genesis 1:27) in the sense of “made” or “produced” (Hebrew: asah) (Genesis 1:26) or “formed” (Hebrew “jotser”) (Genesis 2:7) man from the dust (elements) of the earth. God produced the man from the elements in the soil. God created man via a process.

creation day 6 animals and man on the land	Genesis chapter 1 – <i>summary</i> of creation Genesis chapter 2 – <i>elaboration</i> of the creation of the man and the woman
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Each one of the six creation days was symbolised by a complete cycle, from the beginning of darkness of a creation day to the beginning of darkness of the following creation day. The real intention of the formula “and there was evening, and there was morning, - the first day”, etc. was to show that there were definite and distinct stages in God’s procedure in creation. The intention of the author was not to use this formula as evidence for a literal 24-hour day concept. God does not reveal how long one of the six creation days took! A creation day could have been very long or very short, depending on the speed with which God created.

Genesis 2:1 is a summary statement: the creation of the whole organised universe had now been *completed*. Verse 2 says that the seventh day started as soon as God had finished his work of creation.

2:2-3

Question 4. How should we understand the seventh day that concluded God’s original work of creation?

Notes.

(1) No closing formula.

The Bible does not teach that God rested only one 24-hour day at the conclusion of his whole creative work. There is no closing formula for the seventh day! The seventh day is not like one of the six creation days, with an end to its period.

- God had six creation days, each with an indefinite length
- followed by one day of rest which had no end.

No more creation days followed.

The New Testament teaches that this 7th day has continued right into the church age as “God’s rest”. In Hebrews 4:1-11 it is clearly taught that when God completed his work of creation, he rested. However, this “resting” of God after his creative work does not mean that God was tired and did nothing more. It means that God was doing no more creating. In a sovereign way God is still maintaining his creation and reigning over his creation (John 5:17; Hebrews 1:3).

Likewise, God’s people, having completed their service on earth, will enter into God’s rest (Revelation 14:13-14). This “Sabbath rest” (Hebrews 4:9) of the people of God refers to:

- the life in God’s presence in heaven immediately after death of a believer (Philippians 1:23)
- or to the life in God’s presence on the new earth after the second coming of Christ (Revelation 21:3)

This Sabbath rest continues for ever!

(2) The purpose of the weekly Sabbath day.

The pattern of God’s work of creation became the pattern for man’s weekly labour.

The purpose of the seventh weekday was:

- (For yourself). To rest from your weekly work and do things that cause you to get refreshed (Exodus 23:12).
- (For God). To meet with other believers in a sacred assembly (Leviticus 23:3).
- (For others). To do good and save lives (Mark 3:4).

(3) The seventh day of the week and the first day of the week.

In the New Testament the first day of the week (the Sunday) absorbed the seventh day (the Sabbath) and became the weekly “Day of the Lord” (Revelation 1:10), because:

- Jesus Christ was *resurrected* on Sunday (Luke 24:1)
- the Spirit of Jesus Christ was poured out on Sunday (Acts 2:1; Leviticus 23:15-16)
- the first church was founded on Sunday and Christians continued to meet together on Sunday (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2).

creation day 7 rest = to stop creating	The 7 th day of the week (Sabbath) celebrated the end (completion) of God’s creation The 1 st day of the week (Sunday) celebrates the beginning of God’s salvation.
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1:26-27

Question 5. How should I regard the various dinosaurs and man-like creatures that lived many thousands of years ago?

Notes.

(1) The creation of dinosaurs and man-like creatures took place on the sixth creation day.

Palaeo-anthropologists have found the remains of man-like creatures, commonly called “ape-men” or “cave men”. They estimate that these early creatures lived between 1 750 000 and 20 000 years ago. These ancient creatures cannot be dismissed as mere “apes” in their mentality, because stone implements, such as arrowheads and axe heads accompany their remains. And charred remains indicate strongly the use of fire for cooking purposes. In case of Neanderthal (Germany) deposits, there seems to be evidence of burial with adjacent implements as if there were some belief in life after death. Some crude statuettes found may possibly have had cultic purposes. Some remarkable cave paintings may have been of Neanderthal origin. All these species, from the Cro-Magnon (France) back to the Zinjanthropus (China), must have been advanced creatures that possessed considerable intelligence and resourcefulness.

Scientists differ about the modern dating techniques of such ancient creatures. Genesis 1:24-27 teaches that these ancient creatures were created on the same sixth creation day as man, but no one can calculate the duration of the sixth creation day!

(2) The man-like creatures were not “human” in the biblical sense of the word.

Acts 17:26 says, “From one man”, literally: “from one (blood)” (Greek: ex henos (haimatos only in a few manuscripts) God made every nation of men”. And Romans 5:12-21 demands that all mankind subsequent to Adam’s time, at least, must have been literally descended from him, since he entered into a covenant relationship with God as the representative of the entire human race. This indicates that there could have been no true genetic relationship between the human Adam (created in the image of God) and all ancient man-like creatures before the time of Adam. They were genetically not Adam’s ancestors, nor were they involved in the covenant which God made with Adam (Genesis 1:28-30; Genesis 2:15-17).

However close the skeletal structure of these man-like creatures may have been to modern man, this factor is scarcely relevant to the principle question of whether they possessed a truly human spirit (soul or personality). The implication of Genesis 1:26-27 is that God was creating a qualitatively different being when he made “Adam”, which means “man” in the original language. Adam was the first human being in the modern sense of the word, “a living soul” expressed in a visible human body and an invisible human spirit. “A man” is a human being created in the spiritual image of God! All creatures on earth (including the so-called “manlike creatures, ape-men or cavemen”) were created before Adam, but were not created “in the likeness of God”! They were not bearers of the image of God! The creation of man was unique, because his “body” consisted of the elements of the earth like that of all other creatures, but his “spirit” was given directly by God and revealed that man had become the bearer of the image of God. Man had the ability to know the God of the Bible and to fellowship with him. Animals and the so-called manlike creatures have no soul or spirit with which they show that they know the God of the Bible and fellowship with him! There is no evidence from science to disprove this!

(3) The death of vegetation, dinosaurs, animals and man-like creatures.

“Death” was God’s judgement for the sin (disobedience) of humans that were created in the image of God (Genesis 2:15-17). This does not imply that there was no physical death of all other created living things like trees, plants, birds, fish, animals and creeping things before the fall of man into sin. Physical death was already a reality before the fall of man (Adam) into sin, because the mere consumption of food requires the physical death of fruits, plants and grass (Genesis 1:29-30)! Many species of life cannot survive for even a few hours without food, that is, without causing the death of other living things. “Spiritual life”, “immortal physical life” and “eternal life” were not intended and were also not promised to anything created except to man!

Only man (Adam) was created in the image of God and thus possessed “spiritual life” (capable of a relationship with God), “immortal physical life” (if he obeyed God he would never die) and “eternal life” (knowing and fellowshiping with God for ever)! Only man disobeyed God’s command and thus sinned against God. The “death” of man was not a part of the created order, but a judgement and punishment that affected only man! The death mentioned in Genesis 2:17 and Romans 5:12,18 refers above all to “spiritual death”, then to physical death and eventually to “eternal death”. A spiritually dead person has little or no sense of the existence of God, has no conscious relationship with God and does not possess the righteousness which God requires. Eternal death refers to an everlasting existence separated from God (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9).

After the first humans (Adam and Eve) had sinned, God sent an angel to block the way to “the tree of life”. Apparently man had the potential for eternal physical life, not only before, but also after the fall into sin, if he would have been able to eat from the tree of life. By blocking the way to the tree of life, man’s sinful position and consequent spiritual, physical and eternal death was prevented from becoming irreversible!

Thus, the physical death of all other species of life other than humans existed a long time before Adam's fall into sin and consequent physical death. Carnivorous activity results from the physical laws of thermodynamics and not from the sin of man. People today tend to view animals more as "persons with human characteristics" and consequently view the suffering and death of animals as that of humans. But Genesis 1 says that only humans have been created in the image of God. And Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:16-19 have only the suffering and death of man in view.

1:26-27

Question 6. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?

Notes.

(1) Man has a unique physical life.

Genesis 2:7 says that God formed man from the "dust" of the ground, that is, the elements on earth, and breathed the breath of life into man. In this way man became "a living soul (being)". The human body, just like the bodies of animals, consists of the elements that are found in the earth. However, in differentiation to animals, which were formed by God's creative command, man was formed by God's own creating hands. Humans and animals were given "the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7, 7:22). However, in differentiation to animals, which were given life by God's creative command, man was given life directly by God's breathing into his nostrils. This means that God gave man respiration and thereby life.

(2) Man has a unique spiritual nature.

Genesis 1:26-27 says that the creation of man is even much more special. Man's creation is specially introduced by a decision of the Triune God, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness." And then God made man in his own image or likeness. Man (Adam and Eve) was given a spiritual nature that corresponds to God's spiritual nature. Man possessed the real and characteristic features of God. Man was in another degree a copy of God's personality. In this respect, man is unique in creation. Nothing in creation besides man bears the image of God!

Man thus has a physical and a spiritual existence, or in short, man has "a body" and "a spirit". Man's body is very special, because God formed it with his own hands. And man's spirit is unique in creation, because only man bears the image of God.

(3) Man has a unique relationship with God.

Genesis 1:28-29 says that God spoke directly to man. After Genesis 2:15-17, this was the second revelation of God to man! This means that man has the ability to know God and to communicate with God. Moreover, God gave man the task (responsibility):

- to subdue the earth
- to rule over all living creatures
- and to utilise all plants and trees.

God thus revealed that he created the earth for man and made man the steward of his creation.

Also study Genesis 1:24 – 2:25, "The cultural task of the Church" in Dota manual 3, lesson 26.

STEP 4. APPLY.

APPLICATIONS

Consider. WHICH TRUTHS IN THIS PASSAGE ARE POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS?

Share and record. Let us brainstorm with one another and record a list of possible applications from Genesis 1:1 - 2:4a.

Consider. WHICH POSSIBLE APPLICATION DOES GOD WANT YOU TO TURN INTO A PERSONAL APPLICATION?

Record. Write this personal application down in your notebook. Feel free to share your personal application.

(Remember that people in every group will apply different truths or even make different applications of the same truth. The following is a list of possible applications.)

1. Examples of possible applications (convictions) from Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a.

- 1:1,28. The first two chapters in the Bible do not tell us how long ago God created the universe and the planet earth, how fast he created or how long he took to create. He does tell us who created everything, what he created and why he created. God created everything for man whom he created in his own image!
- 1:1-2. God had created the heavens and the earth already before the six special creation days during which he completed the creation of the universe by especially making and ordering everything on the planet earth (Genesis 1:11,21,24). God reveals that the different species did not come into existence by natural evolution out of existing matter without God, but that God created the different species by means of a process (Genesis 1:12,21,25). How the creation process developed, is not revealed.
- 1:27-28. God's purpose is to fill this earth with people "in his own image"!
- 1:28. God's cultural command to people is that they should care for God's creation.
- 1:31. At the completion of creation, there was not yet any evil in God's creation! "All that God made was very good!"
- 2:2-3. God desires that people work for six days and "rest" for one day in the week.

2:4. The first two chapters in the Bible are not an imaginative story of ancient people about the origin of everything, but a historical account of creation, which God revealed to the first people. Genesis 1 and 2 is an account of how the existing things: the universe, the earth and everything in it sprang forth. Genesis 2:4 says that this is “the account (Hebrew: toldot) of the heavens and the earth”.

2. Examples of personal applications from Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a.

I am a special creation of God. Both my body and spirit are very precious to God. Therefore I never want to look down upon myself, despise myself or reject myself. I want to take good care of my body and my spirit.

I want to take my God-given task serious. As God’s creation, I want to know God and bear his image in a worthy way. I want to take the difference between male and female serious. And I want to help take care of nature.

STEP 5. PRAY. **RESPONSE**
 LET US TAKE TURNS TO PRAY ABOUT ONE TRUTH THAT GOD HAS TAUGHT US in Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a.
 (Respond in your prayer to what you have learned during this Bible study. Practise to pray only in one or two sentences. Remember that people in every group will pray about different issues.)

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	[INTERCESSION] PRAY FOR OTHERS
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Continue to pray in groups of two’s or three’s. Pray for one another and for the people in the world (Romans 15:30; Colossians 4:12).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	[ASSIGNMENT] 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 one of the possible applications.
2. Personal time with God. Have a quiet time from half a chapter from **Matthew 15:1 – 18:20** each day. Make use of the favourite truth method. Make notes.
3. Memorisation. Meditate and memorise the new Bible verse. (2) Assurance of answered prayer: **John 16:24**. Daily review the last 2 memorised Bible verses.
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 notes on your personal time with God, memorisation notes, Bible study notes and this preparation.