

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Two teachers will teach from the Bible what is a disciple of Jesus Christ. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today's teaching is: A DISCIPLE UNDERSTANDS THE CONCEPTS OF THE GOSPEL.

We will discover and discuss the meaning of sin, death and judgement. We will consider why Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world. And we will discover and discuss what it means to believe in Jesus Christ.

(S)      **POINT 1. THE MEANING OF SIN IN THE BIBLE.**

There are three words used in the Bible to describe sin, namely, "sin", "transgression" and "iniquity".

**First. The word "sin" means, "to miss the goal or target".** In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God*. "Sin" means *"to miss God's goal for your life."* God's goal for people is to have the right relationships with God, others and self and do the right things in life. But because people do not have the right relationship to God or to other people and not even to themselves, they are called "sinners" in the Bible. Because they do not do what is right in God's eyes, they are called "sinners".

**Second. The word "transgression" means, "to cross over the set limits or boundaries."** In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God*. "Transgression" means *"to cross over the limits or boundaries, which God has established."* God's limits or boundaries for human living and human behaviour are revealed in the commandments and prohibitions of the Bible. For example, the Bible prohibits the following: "You shall not murder", "You shall not commit adultery", "You shall not steal", and "You shall not give false testimony." (Exodus 20:13-16). And the Bible commands, "You shall love God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength", "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). Because all people at some times do what is prohibited and at some times neglect to do what is commanded, they are called 'transgressors' in the Bible.

**Third. The word "iniquity" means "to change the reality" or "to twist the truth".** In the Bible it *refers to our relationship to God*. "Iniquity" means *"to subtly change or twist the reality as God views it"*. All people in the world have a world-view. People's world-view is expressed in their view of existence and reality, their beliefs and values, as well as their culture and their institutions. God has revealed to us the correct world-view in Christ and the Bible. He has revealed all the truths he wants people to know, to believe and to do. However, because all people in the world make up their own world-view and create their own beliefs and values, they have changed or twisted the reality as God views it.

(T)      **The root of sin and the fruits of sin.**

**First. The 'root of sin' is "self-sufficiency or independence from God".** The deepest meaning of the word 'sin' is a broken relationship with the living God of the Bible. It is living your life, even a life of good works or a religious life, apart from the God of the Bible. The root meaning of sin is "to set up your own goals and standards apart from the God of the Bible". It is "to live outside the boundaries set by the God of the Bible" or "to live without any boundaries at all". It is "to create and believe your own world-view and culture apart from the God of the Bible". The 'fruit of sin' grows out of the "root of sin".

**Second. The 'fruit of sin' is "to do what God has forbidden and to neglect to do what God has commanded".** Lists of 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. It includes things like unbelief, lying, stealing, murder, sexual immorality, practising magic arts, dishonesty, corruption and idolatry, 'Sin' therefore does not just describe any concept of wrongdoing, but describes "the broken relationship with the living God, who revealed himself in the Bible". When Christians preach the gospel, they must help people to understand 'sin' in both its 'root' meaning and 'fruit' meaning. In summary. The root meaning of sin in the Bible is "self-sufficiency" or "independence from God". The fruit meaning of sin is "doing what God forbids" and "not doing what God commands". In short, sin describes "the broken relationship with God".

(S)      **POINT 2. THE MEANING OF DEATH IN THE BIBLE.**

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

**First. Spiritual death.** Ephesians 2:1 says, "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins." *Spiritual death is the death of the human spirit*. It is separation from the life of God, just like a fresh cut flower is separated from the plant. Every human being is created with a human spirit. One of its functions is the ability to know the God of the Bible and to fellowship with the God of the Bible. As long as people are not born-again by

the Holy Spirit, they are spiritually dead. They don't know the living God of the Bible and cannot fellowship with him. But when they hear the gospel and receive Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives, then the Holy Spirit comes and lives in their bodies. Then the Holy Spirit makes their human spirit alive, so that they can know the living God of the Bible and fellowship with him.

**Second. Physical death.** Psalm 49:10,17 say, people who die will "leave their wealth to others. They will take nothing with them when they die, their splendour will not descend with them." And Ecclesiastes 9:6,10 say, "Never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun. In the grave, where they are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom." *Physical death is the death of the human body.* It is the separation of the spirit from the body and the separation of the spirit from life on this earth. It is separation from possessions and accomplishments and separation from beloved family and friends. When people die physically, their body decays to dust in the grave or is reduced to dust by cremation. Their spirit cannot return to this world and will never again have a part in anything that happens on this present world.

**Third. Eternal death.** Revelation 20:14-15 say, "The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." *Eternal death is the eternal suffering of the spirit and body in hell.* Eternal death is eternal separation from the presence and care of the one and only living God.

### (T) POINT 3. THE MEANING OF JUDGEMENT IN THE BIBLE.

Throughout the history of mankind, people have experienced suffering. However, one of the most puzzling questions of mankind is, "Why is there so much suffering in this present world?"

**First. God has built his present judgements into his creation.** Romans 1:28-29 says, "Since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness." And Galatians 6:7-8 says, "God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction". Because people ignore the God of the bible, he gives them over to moral corruption and wickedness. Because people sow to their sinful nature, the God of the bible allows them to reap destruction. He allows them to suffer the consequences of their own sins. The God of the Bible has built laws into his creation. If these laws are transgressed, they bring punishment with them. For example, if you ignore the physics law of gravity, you can have a nasty fall and even die. Likewise, God has also built spiritual and moral laws into people. If these laws are transgressed, they bring punishment with them. For example, mismanagement of the earth results in all kinds of diseases, droughts and floods. Laziness in work leads to poverty. Hatred leads to broken relationships. Tyranny leads to wars. Nobody can transgress God's laws and get away with it. At one time or another, God will allow his judgement to catch up with the sins of every man! That is why people suffer!

**Second. God brings his present judgements into our history.** Through the prophet Haggai (1:6,9-10) God says, "You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it. ... You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops." All events in nature as well as in history are part of God's beneficent and timely care. When people disobey the God of the Bible or worship another god, then God either withdraws his care or punishes them. He withdraws the fruits of nature, which supplies people's basic needs of food and clothing. He causes people's wages to be insufficient and blows their high expectations of life away. He even uses all kinds of disasters like earthquakes, floods, and especially droughts and famines throughout history to show his displeasure against sin and to warn people to repent and turn back to him.

**Third. God warns that his future final judgement of all people is definitely coming.** At the end of human history in this world, Jesus will return to earth and judge all the people that ever lived. This day is called the Day of Judgement. Jesus Christ will separate the Christians from the non-Christians and they will be judged as follows:

The non-Christians will be judged for their unbelief (John 3:18-21,36) and for the shortcomings in their life (Matthew 25:41-46). Those ignorant of God's will or message, will perish even though they did not know the law or the gospel, because ignorance is never absolute (Romans 1:20-21, 2:12,14-16). Those who disobey the gospel about Jesus Christ will be punished for their disobedience. The place of eternal punishment is called "hell". These people will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). There are degrees of suffering in hell (Luke 12:47-48), just like there are degrees of glory in the new heaven and new earth (1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

The Christians will *not* be condemned to eternal punishment in hell, because Christ has made atonement for their sins (John 5:24,29, Hebrews 2:17). But they will be judged for how they lived their Christian lives (2 Corinthians 5:10).

(S) **POINT 4. ONLY JESUS CHRIST CAN BE THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD.**

Why is Jesus Christ the only Saviour of the World? Why can other so-called saviours not really save people? According to John 14:6, Jesus Christ claims that he is the *only* Way to God the Father. According to Acts 4:12, the apostles claim that Jesus Christ is the only one that can save people. According to 1 Timothy 2:5, Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and man. Only Jesus Christ can represent God with man and man with God.

**First. Jesus Christ is the only Mediator because only he revealed God completely.** Jesus Christ is the Perfect Revelation of God to man. No other person in the whole history of this world has made this claim. No other person in history was God in human form. Jesus Christ is “the radiance of God’s glory”, that is, the visible expression of all God’s divine characteristics, like God’s holiness and love. Jesus Christ is “the exact representation of God’s being”, that is, he is God who became man (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus Christ is “the visible image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15) and “All the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:9). That is why John 1:18 says, “Jesus Christ has made God known”.

**Second. Jesus Christ is the only Mediator because only he was sinless and perfect forever.** Jesus Christ is the Perfect Sacrifice for the atonement of sins. Other religious leaders in the world never claimed to be sinless. Therefore they also do not qualify to die for sinners, because they are sinners themselves. Only Jesus Christ was sinless and qualifies to be a perfect sacrifice that pays the penalty for our sins. This truth is taught in Hebrews 7:26-28.

**Third. Jesus Christ is the only Mediator because only he was resurrected from death and lives forever.** Jesus Christ is the Perfect High Priest who prays and cares for believers. All other religious leaders in history have died and are still in their graves. They are dead and cannot pray for anyone and cannot save anyone. However, God shows that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world by resurrecting him from the dead! Hundreds of witnesses saw him after his resurrection and for forty days he continued to instruct his chosen apostles. He ascended into heaven and now sits at the right hand of God the Father, from where he is establishing his kingdom in the hearts and lives of millions on earth in every country of the world through the preaching of the gospel of grace. This truth is taught in Hebrews 7:23-25. However, grace to be saved is only available before he returns. When Jesus Christ returns for a second time to earth, he comes to judge and not to save. Then there will be no more chance to repent and believe. Therefore, when you hear the gospel, repent and believe!

(T) **POINT 5. THE MEANING OF FAITH IN THE BIBLE.**

**First. The Christian faith is based on facts.** The Christian faith is not a leap in the darkness. Faith does not begin where reason stops. Faith does not simply believe what one prophet in history says. The Christian faith is based on facts that God has spoken and acted in human history from the beginning of creation through many prophets until he spoke his final word in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). There are more eyewitnesses and ear-witnesses, written historical manuscripts and archaeological proof for the Bible and the truth of its contents than for any other ancient historical event that is unequivocally accepted as history today!

**Second. The Christian faith is based on hearing God’s word, believing that it is true and acting upon it.** In Hebrews 11:6-8, Noah first heard God’s warning about the coming flood. Then he believed that it would happen. And finally he obeyed it and built the ark. Abraham first heard God’s call to go to a foreign country. Then he believed the call was for him personally. Finally he obeyed God by going. “Faith” in the Bible is on the one hand inseparably linked to God’s action of revelation and grace and on the other hand linked to people’s response of trust and obedience. *Without God’s revelation and grace, faith is impossible. Without man’s obedience, faith is incomplete* (James 2:22).

**Third. Also you can believe today.** How should you respond when you hear the gospel? John 1:12 says, “Yet to all who receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” And Romans 10:9,13, “If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord”, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ... Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” With your ears you hear the gospel about Jesus Christ. Then with your *heart* you believe that this is true for you. Finally, with your *mouth* you pray and call to the Lord Jesus Christ to save you and in your prayer you confess that Jesus Christ is now your Lord. *Without hearing the gospel, faith is impossible. You would not know what to believe in. Without a personal response to the gospel, you cannot be saved.* You must believe that the gospel is true for you and you must personally receive Jesus Christ as God’s gift of salvation into your heart and life.

(S) **POINT 6. ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

**First.** Explain these 5 concepts of the gospel to another person.

**Second.** See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www. Etc.

**Third.** Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.