

(T) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. For the next 5 days two teachers will explain the good news from the Bible. The good news in the Bible answers 5 questions of people: One. “How do we know that God exists?” Two. “Why is there so much suffering and death in the world?” Three. “What is the solution to the problem of suffering and death?” Four. “Which response does God require of people?” Five. “What may every Christian expect from the new life in Christ?” As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today’s teaching is: **A DISCIPLE KNOWS THAT GOD EXISTS**.

(S) How can you get to know that God really exists? The Bible tells us that there are 5 things that point to the existence of God: the creation, the Bible, Jesus Christ, the heart of man and the lives of Christians.

(T) **THE FIRST POINTER. THE CREATION REVEALS THAT GOD EXISTS.**

Let me read Isaiah 40:25-26. “To whom do you want to compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. “Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.” God challenges you to try and fathom his greatness and power! There is nothing on earth that can be compared with God’s greatness! The Himalayan Mountains 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 you compare the greatness and power of God? Man does not know anything big enough to compare to God. And so man is silent. Then God invites man to consider the facts about the stars. First. Do you know how many stars there are in the universe? When you look up at the stars on a clear and dark night, then you will be able to see about 2 000 stars without a telescope. Most of these stars are from our own galaxy, called *the Milky Way*, which has about 100 000 000 000 stars! But with the largest telescope, you can see more than 1 000 000 000 galaxies and 3 000 000 000 individual stars! God says, that he created every single star and calls each star by a name! If you cannot even fathom the number of stars, how can you fathom the Creator of the stars? Second. Do you know how far the stars are from the earth? The only star of our solar system is called the sun. The sun is 150 000 000 kilometres from the earth! Just how far is that? If you could travel with a modern aeroplane to the sun at a speed of 1 000 kilometres per hour, then it would still take you 17 years to reach the sun! And it would take you 4 644 000 years to fly by aeroplane to the closest star! The distances of the stars are so immense, that scientists use *light-years* to express the distances to the stars. Light is the fastest thing man knows. Light travels at a speed of nearly 300 000 km/second! That is seven and a half times around the earth in one second! One light-year is equal to the distance light travels in one year. One light-year is 9 454 000 000 000 kilometres! The stars in our galaxy, called *The Milky Way*, are about 100 000 light-years away! The furthest stars are billions of light-years away! And some stars are so far away that their light has not yet reached the earth since they were created! God says that he put every single star in its place and not one of them is missing! God controls every single star! If you cannot even fathom the distances to the stars, how can you fathom the Creator of the stars? Third. Do you know how big the stars are? The earth has a diameter of 12 756 kilometres. The diameter of the sun is 109 times that of the earth. The biggest stars are 1000 times the diameter of the sun! These super-giant stars are so big, that the sun and the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars can easily rotate inside one star! If the earth’s diameter were represented by 1 millimetre, then a super-giant star’s diameter in comparison would be 100 meters! God says that he created all these stars and no one in the whole universe can equal that! If you cannot even fathom the sizes of the stars, how can you fathom the Creator of the stars?

(S) Let me read Psalm 139:1. “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” When you begin to think about how wonderfully you have been made, you must conclude that God exists. No theory of chance can explain these extraordinary facts! First. Consider the cells in your body. Your body consists of uncountable cells. One kilogram of body weight can contain up to 2 000 000 000 000 cells! Each single cell contains tens of small power stations that produce all the energy in your body. But in size, each power station is less than 1 micrometer (one thousandth of a millimetre)! These power stations are so small and yet they are capable of producing so much energy! Who can equal this work of the Creator? Second. Consider your lungs. Your lungs consist of many tiny tubes that end in air sacks. Scientists estimate that there are more than 600 000 000 such air sacks in your lungs. The wall of each air sack contains many tiny blood vessels that absorb the oxygen you need to live. The total surface of your lungs is as big as a football field! And yet that large surface is so artfully folded together that it can be packed into the small space of your chest! Who can equal this work of the Creator?

(T) But you say that you cannot see God the Creator! How do you know that God exists? Let me tell you *the watch illustration*. You can see my wristwatch. But you cannot see the person who made my wristwatch. Although you do not see him, you know that he must exist somewhere in the world. In the same way, even though you cannot see God the Creator, you do know that he exists, because you can see his creation.

Summary. *By studying the creation, you can know God as the Creator. The creation reveals the wisdom, power, beauty and order of God's work in nature.*

(S) THE SECOND POINTER. THE BIBLE REVEALS THAT GOD EXISTS.

Let me read Matthew 24:35. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."

Jesus says that this created universe will one day pass away, but the words in the Bible will last forever!

Therefore the Bible must be very important! About 40 different people wrote the Bible. Among them were many prophets, kings, judges, an administrator of an empire, a priest, a governor, two women, a rich landlord, a poet and philosopher, a farmer, a shepherd, a fisherman, a tax-collector, a medical doctor and a religious teacher. The Spirit of God inspired each one of them to write a book about God and his message. Most of these people did not know one another, because they lived in different times of history, they lived in different countries, they had different cultures and they spoke different languages. They lived between 1500 BC and 100 AD. This means that they lived up to 1600 year apart from one another. They lived in different countries, from modern Iran and Iraq in the East to modern Italy, Greece and Turkey in the West. These countries are more than 2500 kilometres apart. They belonged to different eastern and western cultures and spoke different eastern and western languages.

(T) How could so many different people write one book? God's Spirit inspired these very different people to write about the same God and the same message! When the 66 books in the Bible were completed, these books were put together in one book called *the Bible*. The word *Bible* means "The Book" and refers to the holy Book of God. The Bible is absolutely complete. It reveals the one and only living God. It describes the beginning of the material universe, the beginning of the human race and the beginning of the revelation of God's will. It relates the beginning of sin and redemption. It records the beginning of human family life, man-made civilisations and the nations of the world. The Bible also records the meaning and purpose of existence and vividly describes the end of this world. All the 66 books of the Bible have one major theme, namely, *God who speaks and acts in human history for the salvation of his people*. The Bible reveals all God's words and acts in human history. The Bible is so complete that nothing ever needed to be changed after its completion. Nobody else could write such a Book!

(S) Was the Bible ever changed or amended? No! The Bible never needed any changes or any amendment!

For example, modern scientists say that the universe could not have been created in 6 days. However, a famous scientist, Einstein, proved that the time of creation depends on the speed of creation. Because God created time, it is also possible for God to create the whole universe in a very short time! It is not the Bible, but the modern scientists who have to change their point of view! The Bible never had to change its record! Forty different writers writing 66 books over a period of 1600 years could only produce one complete book, the Bible, if there was one and the same Author or Editor behind all these writers! The existence of the Bible points to the existence of the Author and Editor of the Bible, namely God.

Summary. *By studying the Bible, you can know God, who is the Author and Editor of the Bible. The Bible reveals the thoughts, feelings and will of God. The Bible reveals the words and deeds of God in human history.*

(T) THE THIRD POINTER. JESUS CHRIST REVEALS THAT GOD EXISTS.

Let me read three Bible passages. 1 Timothy 6:16. "God who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see." John 1:18. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." Colossians 1:15 says that Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God.

Who is Jesus Christ? God is Spirit and cannot be seen. Thus unless God reveals himself to us, no one can know God! God is also holy and cannot be approached. Thus unless God approaches us, no one can ever have a personal relationship with God! God is one divine being and has one divine nature. But God reveals his divine nature within his creation and within the human history in three distinct ways. First. God reveals himself to us through his Word. For centuries God spoke his words to us through his prophets and finally he spoke his Word to us through Jesus (Heb 1:1-2). God's words are written in the Bible. Second. God reveals himself to us through Jesus. God takes on a human body and enters his creation and he enters our human history in Jesus (John 1:1,14, 18). God's human nature is revealed in Jesus. Third. God reveals himself to us through the Holy Spirit. God not only lives in the highest heaven, but also comes to live in the bodies of Christians (1 Cor 6:19-20) and in the Christian community (Eph 2:22). Thus, especially Jesus is the One who reveals God to us. When we see Jesus, then we see God. The invisible God becomes visible in Jesus Christ. The unapproachable God approaches us through Jesus Christ. And we can approach God through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is therefore very very important for all people.

(S) What makes the life of Jesus so very special? Prophets prophesied the birth of Jesus hundreds of years before he was born. More than 700 years BC the prophet Micah prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, a city in Israel (Micha 5:2). More than 1000 years BC king David prophesied how Jesus would die. He said that his hands and feet would be pierced. More than 700 years BC the prophet Isaiah prophesied why Jesus would die on the cross. He said, "He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him" (Isaiah 53:5). More than 550 years BC the prophet Daniel

prophesied that Jesus would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed. This kingdom would crush all other kingdoms and endure forever (Daniel 2:44). All these prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ! The prophets prophesied more than 60 prophecies about Jesus, hundreds of years before he was born. Thirty of these prophecies were all fulfilled in one day when Jesus was crucified! Maybe one or two of these prophecies could have been fulfilled also in another person, but not 60 prophecies! In order to fulfil only 8 of these prophecies, you would have one chance out of a number of 18 digits (1x10 to power of 17)! Jesus literally fulfilled all 60 prophecies! The significance of these prophecies as predictions is that they prove that there exists a divine mind behind the Bible. They confirm that God exists, that Christ is divine and that God inspired the Bible!

(T) Why did Jesus have to die? Let me tell you a story that is told in Africa. “Two brothers lived in a big city. One day the youngest brother got involved in a fight. He pulled a knife and killed his opponent. When he saw the blood all over his hands and clothes, he got very scared and fled. Soon the police gave chase after the fugitive. The youngest brother ran home and told his elder brother what he had done. The elder brother told him to exchange clothes with him, wash his hands and go away. Soon after the murderer had fled, the police arrived at the home of the elder brother. They saw that he was wearing clothes with blood on it and they saw the knife lying on the table. The elder brother was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. One year after his death, the younger brother felt sorry for what he had done and gave himself up to the judge. He told the judge that it was he who had committed the murder and not his brother. But the judge said that the crime had already been punished and that his elder brother had already been put to death. The judge said that because the elder brother had been punished in the place of the younger brother, the younger brother was not guilty anymore in the eyes of the law. The judge declared the younger brother righteous and forgave him. He went out completely free!”

In the same way, when Jesus died on the cross, he took the punishment for my sins on himself. Jesus died in my place so that I may live forever. If you believe in Jesus, then God the Judge will also pronounce you “not guilty” and set you free forever!

Summary. *By studying Jesus Christ, you can know the God who took on human nature and entered creation and human history. Jesus Christ reveals the character, life and purpose of God. Jesus Christ is also the only way to approach God.*

(S) THE FOURTH POINTER. THE HEART OF MAN REVEALS THAT GOD EXISTS.

Let me read Romans 2:14-15. “Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law.....They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.”

How can people from different cultures in the world all know the difference between right and wrong? How do they all know that “You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, and you shall not steal”? This is possible only if the same Lawgiver wrote some of his moral laws on every human heart! If you begin to listen to these moral laws written in your heart, your heart will begin to tell you that there is a God who loves what is right and hates what is evil. This will not always happen, because the human heart is deceitful. Only when something very special happens to your heart, will your heart know God and love God.

Summary. *By listening to my heart and conscience, I can know the God who is concerned with right and wrong. The heart of man reveals some of the moral laws of God.*

(T) THE FIFTH POINTER. THE LIVES OF REAL CHRISTIANS REVEAL THAT GOD EXISTS.

Let me read 1 Timothy 1:15-16. “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.” Paul wrote these words. Who was Paul? He hated Christians and persecuted them. Then one day Jesus appeared to him and turned his heart. Jesus forgave his sin and saved him. Paul’s life changed and he began to live a complete new life. Who changed Paul’s life so much? Paul gives a testimony that it was God through the work of Jesus Christ. Millions of Christians give testimonies of how their lives have changed. Behind these real Christians is the real God. He changed them and is still changing them. When you look at the lives of real Christians and listen to their testimonies, then you can get to know the real God who transforms lives.

Summary. *By studying the lives and testimonies of real Christians, you can know the real God who transforms lives. Real Christians reveal God’s power to change lives.*

(S) ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Consider the following problem: “If God exists, why is there so much suffering and death in the world?” We will discuss this question tomorrow. Listen tomorrow to Discipleship training on the air.

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”.