

(S) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn to know the Bible. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. Today we will learn how the book of GENESIS came into being, its character as history, its division into two main parts and its main contents.

### **POINT 1. THE ORIGIN OF GENESIS.**

#### **First. The name of the book.**

The Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language. In the Hebrew Bible, the first five books in the Old Testament are called by the first word. So in Hebrew, this book is called “in the beginning”. In the oldest translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, it is called “origin” (Genesis). The book describes the *origin* or *beginning* of the universe and especially of the earth. It describes the *origin* or *beginning* of everything on the earth, especially of people. It describes the earliest history of the people on earth, especially of the Hebrew race, through whom God would bring the Saviour of the world.

#### **Second. The writer, the date and the place of writing.**

In the book of Genesis we read about the existence of the following smaller written documents: the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created (2:4) and the written accounts of the history or descendants of Adam (5:1), of Noah (6:9), of Noah’s sons (10:1), of Terah and Abraham (11:27), of Ishmael and Isaac (25:12,19) and of Esau and Jacob (36:1 and 37:2). These were written from before 2100 B.C., the time of Abraham, to about 1800 B.C., the time of Joseph. Later, Moses, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, used these books to write the book of Genesis. The book was certainly written before 1405 B.C., while Moses was in Egypt or in the desert of Sinai.

#### **Third. The character of the book.**

The book itself clearly shows that it intends to describe history. The book Genesis is *not* a human tradition about the origin of the earth mixed with mythological stories. It is also *not* a poetical or symbolical description of human ideas about the origin of everything. The book itself clearly says that it describes *history*. In Genesis 2:4 we read, “This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.” The word “account” means *the past history* or *the history of its origin*. In Genesis 5:1, 6:9 etc. the same word is translated as *the record or account of the later period in history* or *the record or account of the descendants* of Adam, of Noah, etc.

The book of Genesis is an historical book. But it is not simply a record of ancient human history, which has been preserved by divine protection. The history of Genesis is nothing less than *divine revelation*! No human being could have written a history of the origin of the world, because humans were only created at the end of creation. However, the God who created everything also revealed to man how and why he created everything! It is God who gives to man the history of the beginning of the earth and the history of the beginning of mankind. It is also God who commanded, inspired and guided these ancient writers to record what he revealed to them. The ancient histories of Adam and the fall into sin, of Noah and the flood, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not only told from father to son throughout the generations, but were clearly revealed by God to those who made written records of these histories.

It is God himself who determined what he would include in this book and what he would leave out. God’s purpose was not to satisfy man’s thirst for knowledge or even curiosity. God’s purpose was *to reveal to fallen man his plan of salvation*! There will be certain things that God has not revealed to man and therefore there will always be certain questions that man cannot answer. The book of Genesis is therefore *a revelation of God’s history of salvation*! Everything described in this book serves to save man, who had fallen into sin.

Not only in Genesis, but in the whole Bible, God’s revelation came in the form of his words and acts in human history. The Bible does not record an abstract religion of philosophical ideas equivalent to any other attempt of man to figure out God. The Bible is a historical record of God speaking and acting within man’s history! The Bible is the recorded revelation of God’s history of salvation!

### **POINT 2. THE DIVISION OF GENESIS.**

Genesis is divided into two main parts.

#### **First. The first part of Genesis consists of Genesis 1:1 to 11:26.**

This part describes the *origin* or *beginning* of the most important aspects of human life. It answers the questions, “How did the universe originate?” “Where does man come from?” “Why does man exist?” “Why are there so many different

nations and languages in the world?” “Why is there evil in this world?” “Why are there disasters like floods, droughts and death in the world?”

The first part of Genesis may be divided into smaller sections as follows: Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 describes the history of the creation of the universe and especially of the earth. Genesis 2:4 to 3:24 describes the paradise and the fall of man into sin. Genesis 4:1-15 describes how sin destroys relationships between people. Genesis 4:16 to 9:29 describes the beginning of human civilisation. And Genesis chapters 10 and 11 describe the beginning of the many nations on earth.

**Second. The second part of Genesis consists of Genesis 11:27 to 50:26.**

This part describes the *origin* or *beginning* of a group of people, whom God chose to use to bring salvation to this world. It answers the question, “How will God save man, who has fallen into sin?”

The second part of Genesis may be divided into smaller topics as follows: The history of Abraham and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac. The history of Isaac and his two sons, Esau and Jacob. The history of Jacob and his twelve sons. Finally, the history of one of Jacob’s sons called Joseph.

**POINT 3. THE MAIN CONTENTS OF GENESIS.**

Genesis describes the *origin* or *beginning* of everything.

**First. Genesis describes the beginning of the material universe.**

In the first two verses of the Bible, God describes the original creation. In the beginning God created the universe with its uncountable stars. And God created the earth. But the earth was *formless*. It had not yet attained its orderly form it now has. And the earth was *empty*. It was devoid of the numerous living creatures that now populate the earth. And *darkness* was over the *void*. Light was absent on earth. The earth was not yet in a solid state and dry land of the continents had not yet been formed. These two verses simply serve as an introduction to the six days of creation. These six days of creation describe the orderly progressive stages in which God completed his work of creating the planet earth as we know it today.

**Second. Genesis describes the beginning of the human race.**

In Genesis 1:26 to 2:25, God describes how he created the first man and woman. Human beings did not evolve out of some lower species, but were created human beings as they are today! God entrusted man with some very meaningful and responsible tasks. Man had to *multiply* and fill the earth. Man had to *subdue* the earth and to *rule* over the other creatures on earth (1:28). And he had to *cultivate* and *guard* the reclaimed wilderness of Eden (2:15). The perfect state does not exclude tasks and work.

**Third. Genesis describes the beginning of God’s revelation of his will.**

Long before God gave the Law to Moses in Exodus 20, he gave certain definite laws to man in the book of Genesis. In Genesis 2:1-3, God instituted the *Sabbath*. He commanded man to take one day of rest every week from his normal work.

In Genesis 2:18-24, God instituted *marriage*. He said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him” “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” Marriage is not simply a social institution of man. It is the idea and institution of God himself.

In Genesis 2:16-17, God gave man a command in order to teach him the difference between *good* and *evil*. God said, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” Through this command, God gave man a test, a choice to either obey God or disobey God. The ability to distinguish between good and evil was not gained by eating from this tree, but by NOT eating from this tree. God revealed to man that *good* is to obey God and *evil* is to disobey God! If man obeyed God he would consciously and clearly know the contrast between good and evil.

In Genesis 2:15, God gave man the command not only to work in the garden, but also to *guard* it. Without saying that it is Satan, God revealed to man that an evil power existed. God commanded man that he should be on his guard against this evil power and guard God’s garden against the damage it could inflict.

**Fourth. Genesis describes the beginning of human sin.**

In Genesis 3:1-13, God describes how man fell into sin by disobeying God! God had commanded man very clearly what he was free to do and what he was forbidden to do. It is God himself who revealed to man what is *good* and what is *evil*. It is God who set the borders around man and who determined the boundaries within which he should live.

But the evil power, called Satan, came and tempted man. Who is Satan? Satan is an angel, who rebelled against God some time between the end of the creation and the fall into sin. In Genesis 3 he appeared in the form of a snake, and in

2 Corinthians 11:14 he masquerades himself as an angel of light. Satan's methods to tempt man have always been the same. He always lies and Jesus calls him a liar and the father of all lies (Jn 8:44). His purpose is to sow mistrust or doubt in the heart of man concerning the exact words and precise meaning of God's commandment. He wants man to think that God is unreasonable. Satan deliberately misled the woman, Eve, by accusing God of being a liar. He said that God would not punish man with death if he sinned.

Although Satan tempted man, man knew God's commandment and therefore is responsible for his own action. Eve *looked, took and ate* the fruit. She *considered* Satan's suggestion to eat the forbidden fruit. She *looked* at the temptation, then *took hold of* the temptation and finally *succumbed* to the temptation!

What is *sin*? The word *sin* in the Bible has a different meaning than the word *sin* in the world. In the world it means that you are a very bad person or criminal. But in the Bible it means that *you have missed God's goal* and that *your relationship to God is broken*. Therefore even so-called *good* people in the world's eyes are *sinner*s in God's eyes.

#### **Fifth. Genesis describes the beginning of human suffering.**

Human suffering begins with sin. When the man and the woman disobeyed God, *their relationship to God changed*. "Sin" is a broken relationship with God. The first consequence of sin is separation from God. This found expression in the fact that Adam and Eve feared God's holy presence and tried to hide from God. This was the beginning of suffering in the spiritual realm.

The second consequence of sin is that *man's relationship to himself changed*. He felt that his original perfect condition and wholeness had broken into pieces. He had no more inward peace. He felt very uncomfortable about being physically naked. He became acutely aware that he was no more the person God intended him to be. This was the beginning of suffering in the psychological realm.

The third consequence of sin is that *man's relationships to other people changed*. The man accused the woman, their first child killed their second child, and from then onwards, human relationships were broken. This was the beginning of suffering in the social realm.

The fourth consequence of sin is that *man's relationship to the earth changed*. The earth became a broken earth, produced thorns and thistles and made it very difficult for man to live. Later God sent disasters like the flood as a punishment for sin. This was the beginning of suffering in the physical and material realm.

#### **Sixth. Genesis describes the beginning of God's plan of salvation.**

In Genesis 3:15 we read God's judgement of Satan, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Jesus Christ teaches that the evil spirit that was hiding behind the snake was Satan. God was not speaking to a mere snake, but to this evil spiritual personality. In Genesis 3:15, God judged Satan.

The friendship of man with Satan resulted in a curse for man. God's first act of mercy was that he turned this friendship into enmity. This enmity would result in the greatest blessing for man. God said that throughout history there would be enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of Satan. The meaning is clear. Throughout history there would be enmity between the children of God and the children of the devil. Throughout history the people of God would be engaged in a spiritual warfare against the evil spirits and the evil people, who belong to Satan.

But God also determined the final outcome of this struggle. In the future, a descendant of the woman would arise and he would crush the head of Satan. He would utterly overcome the power of Satan and finally destroy him forever! This was the first promise in the Bible concerning the coming Messiah, the Saviour of the world. In this struggle, the Saviour Jesus Christ would be hurt. He would die on the cross. But through the cross he would conquer Satan.

#### **Seventh. Genesis describes the beginning of human family life.**

In Genesis 4:1-15 we read about the relationship between the two brothers, Cain and Abel. This happened after man had fallen into sin. In this chapter we see how *sin destroys the relationships within a family*. Outwardly, both brothers brought the best part of their possessions as an offering to God. However, God looked inwardly into their hearts and saw the difference. According to Hebrews 11:4 and 1 John 3:12, God did not accept Cain's sacrifice, because he brought his sacrifice without conversion from his evil and without faith. God teaches that he is not pleased with the outward forms of religious worship, but only with the inward surrender of the heart. Psalm 51:16-17 says, "You do not delight in sacrifice. ... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise." Cain was jealous and angry, because God had not accepted his sacrifice. God warned Cain to resist the temptation to do wrong. God said, "If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; its desire is to have you, but you must master it" (4:7). God warned Cain that *sin* is like a wild and dangerous animal, waiting to attack him and longing to destroy him. After man fell into sin, *sin* became a very dangerous reality. Sin is a destructive force with which all people must reckon. God moreover says that sin must be

mastered. It must be controlled and conquered. God says that sin can be mastered by trusting in God and by obeying God. In the history of Cain we see that Cain could not master sin. Instead, sin mastered him and destroyed him.

**Eighth. Genesis describes the beginning of man-made civilisation.**

In Genesis 4:16-9:29 we read how the first man-made civilisation began. We read that Cain was the first person to build a city (4:17). Jabal was the first to live in tents and raise livestock (4:19). Jubal was the first to play musical instruments like the harp and the flute (4:21). Tubal-Cain was the first to forge all kind of tools out of bronze and iron (4:22). In Genesis 4:26 we read how in those days “men began to call on the name of the Lord”. This cannot refer to the first time people began to worship the Lord. It is clear that Eve already worshipped the Lord (4:1) and that her sons, Cain and Abel worshipped the Lord when they brought sacrifices to God. It is rather a reference to the first time people began to worship God together publicly.

However, not only man-made civilisation and culture developed, also sin and wickedness increased. In Genesis 6:5 we read, “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.” In verse 11-12 we read, “The earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. The people on earth had corrupted their ways.” Adam and Eve had yielded to outward temptation, but now human beings yielded to temptation that came from inside their own hearts. As a punishment for the wickedness of mankind, God sent the flood. It destroyed all people on earth except eight people, who became the ancestors of all modern man.

**Ninth. Genesis describes the beginning of the nations of the world.**

After the flood, God again commanded Noah and his sons, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth” (9:1) But instead of spreading out and re-peopling the earth as God had commanded, they stuck together in a small area. In Genesis chapter 10 we read that they decided to build a city with a great tower as the centre to keep them together and to make a name for themselves. They thought that they could establish a world empire that would be independent from God. This was the first attempt to create unity apart from God.

However, God judged them. He confused the one language of the whole world, so that they could no longer understand each other. Thus, the people were forced to scatter over the whole earth. Each group of people had its own language. Genesis 10:32 says that from the three sons of Noah came the nations that spread out over the whole earth after the flood.

**ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. During the next week, read Exodus chapters 1-20. After two weeks we will introduce the book of Exodus.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and build Christ’s Church” and Internet on [www.dota.net](http://www.dota.net)

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