

(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 especially learn about the main messages in the book of GENESIS.

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

**Tenth. God called the Hebrew race into being.**

The second part of the book of Genesis, chapter 11:27 to the end, describes the beginning of the Hebrew race. The Hebrew race was a nation of people that originated from Ur of the Chaldeans, a place in modern Iraq. God used this Hebrew nation to fulfil his plan of salvation for very many people of all the nations on the earth. The Hebrew nation was later called “Israel”, a name which God gave to Jacob (Gen 32:28), the ancestor of the nation of Israel. The beginning of Israel is described in the rest of Genesis. In spite of the fact that the human race was wicked, God wanted to reveal his mercy and his grace to people. He did this by choosing a group of people, through whom he planned to write the Bible, to witness to all the nations about himself and to bring forth the Saviour.

**One. God continued to speak his words to Israel and to act in their midst.**

He did that so that they might know him and worship him. He entrusted to them the written books of the Bible, which record the words he spoke to them and the acts he did in their midst.

**Two. God commanded Israel to be his witnesses to the other nations in the world.**

God was not the God of only Israel, but the God of all the nations of the world! God’s plan was not only to save people who belonged to Israel, but to save many people coming from every nation on the earth. As we will see in later history, Israel failed to be and to do what God had commanded them to be and to do. Although Israel failed, God and God’s plan of salvation did not fail! In the New Testament, the Christians of the Christian Church consisting of both Jews and Gentiles became his witnesses to every nation in the world.

**Three. God brought the Saviour of the world through the nation Israel.**

The promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, was born within the family line of king David in Bethlehem.

**Eleventh. God made a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.**

God called Abraham from Ur in modern Iraq to go to an unknown land. God promised to him three things: to make him the father of many nations; to give the land of Canaan to his descendants; and to bless all the families of the earth through him. In Genesis 12:3 God says, “All people on earth will be blessed through you”. God does not say that Abraham or his descendants, Israel, would bless all the families on earth. According to Galatians 3:16-18, it is God himself who would bless all the families of the earth through Abraham’s one descendant, namely Jesus Christ!

Genesis 15:6 says, “Abraham believed the Lord, and the Lord credited it to him as righteousness.” God credited righteousness to Abraham apart from any good works or works of the law. Although Abraham had no righteousness in himself, no merit in God’s eyes, nevertheless God credited righteousness to him because he believed God. God regarded Abraham as a complete righteous person and he treated him as a complete righteous person, not because of anything Abraham did, but because Abraham believed in God’s covenant promise. Abraham believed in the coming of the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, through whom God would bless all the nations on earth! While Christians today look back to Jesus Christ and his completed work, Abraham and the other believers in the Old Testament looked forward to Jesus Christ and the work of salvation he would do.

**POINT 4. THE MAIN MESSAGES OF GENESIS.**

**First. Genesis shows where man came from.** In the first two chapters of the Bible we read that God created the universe, the earth and man. Man did not evolve out of some other species, but God created him a complete man as he is today. God created the man and the woman.

**One. God gave man a body and a spirit.**

Genesis 2:7 says that God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed the breath of life into man, and man became a living 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 hands. The human, just like animals, was given the breath of life (Gen 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 himself gave man respiration and thereby life.

### Two. God gave man a 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 was given a *spiritual nature* that corresponds to God's spiritual nature. He possessed the real and characteristic features of God. He 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.

### Three. God spoke directly to man.

Genesis 1:28-29 says that God spoke directly to man. This was the very first 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 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.

### Second. Genesis shows how sin entered the world.

Genesis chapter 3 describes how sin entered into the world. In Genesis 1:31 we read, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." The fall of Satan and all his evil angels or evil spirits into sin must therefore have taken place after the end of the creation and before the fall of man into sin. Although Satan lied to Eve and Adam and tempted them to disobey God, Adam remained responsible for his disobedience, because God had given the commandment to him!

Remember, the word "sin" means to miss God's goal, to fall short of God's intended purpose. After man fell into sin, all his descendants are born in sin. Job 14:4 says, "Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!" And David says in Psalm 51:5, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." And the apostle Paul says in Romans 5:12, "Sin entered the world through one man". This man was Adam. Therefore the Bible says, "There is no one righteous, not even one. ... There is no one who does good, not even one. ... All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:10,12,23). Every human being from birth falls short of God's intended purpose for man. Thus, every human being from birth needs to be saved from sin.

### Third. Genesis shows the failure of man under every condition.

It was necessary for man to know his own weakness and failure, before he would be willing to be saved. Man failed under all circumstances. In the perfect conditions of paradise, man failed to obey God. How much more would man fail now that he is born in sin! In Luke 5:31-32 Jesus says, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have NOT come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus Christ did not come to save religious people, who think that they are righteous, but he came to save all people, who realise that they miss God's goal, who are convinced that they fall short of God's intended purpose for their lives. Only when people realise that they are sick, they call a doctor. In the same way, only when people realise that they are not righteous, but sinners, they will call to God to save them!

### Fourth. Genesis shows how sinful man can get back to God.

In Genesis 15:6 we read, "Abraham believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." Genesis shows that the way to be saved in the Old Testament period is *by faith only*. Hebrews 11:3-10 teaches very clearly that the only way that pleases God is faith. It is not the outward religious activities we do, but it is the inward faith we exercise in God and his Word that pleases God.

God does not simply commend religion, the bringing of correct sacrifices or the following of the correct religious rituals. But God commended Abel for living in the right relationship with him.

God does not regard as righteous an ascetic, who withdraws from this world. But God commended Enoch for walking with God by faith. God regards as righteous every person, who by faith walks with God in the ordinary duties of life.

By faith Noah and Abraham obeyed God. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him!" The book of Genesis clearly shows that the only way sinful man can go back to God is by faith in the God, who revealed himself in the Bible!

### Fifth. Genesis shows the value of an intimate relationship with God.

In Genesis 5:22-24 we read, "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away." Enoch was not an ascetic, who withdrew from normal life. He had sons and daughters. Therefore he committed himself to his family while he walked with God. *Walking with God* means he had close spiritual fellowship with God and pleased God by his faith and obedience. Therefore God caused him not to die, but to ascend immediately into heaven (Heb 11:5). This also happened later to the prophet Elijah. Enoch was no more in the circle of those who knew him, but had entered the very presence of God.

Also Noah walked with God (6:9). Many in the Old Testament and in the New Testament experienced the joy of having an intimate relationship with God.

**Sixth. Genesis shows the importance of obedience.**

In Genesis 6 we read how God told Noah that he was going to destroy the wicked world with a flood. God commanded Noah to build an ark, which is a large ship, in which he and his family and all the animals in it could escape. Hebrews 11:7 says that Noah believed God's warning and obeyed God's command. He built the ark *in holy fear* of God. By believing and obeying God, Noah saved himself and his family. And God regarded his faith as righteousness. The whole Bible teaches that God credits or reckons our faith as righteousness.

We show that we have genuine faith by our obedience. For example, Noah, Abraham and Joseph showed that they had genuine faith in God by their obedience.

**Seventh. Genesis shows how man can conquer in spiritual struggles by perseverance.**

In Genesis 32 we read how Jacob wrestled all night with a man. In the early morning Jacob realised with whom he had been wrestling. Hosea 12:4 says that Jacob "wept and begged the angel of the Lord for his favour". During the night-long struggle, Jacob must have felt that he was wrestling with the God, whom he had deeply offended by his sin and whom he now met as his just Judge. If God had destroyed him in this struggle instead of just injuring his hip, it would have been a just punishment. Jacob had misused his brother's fatigue and hunger and he had misled his old and blind father to cheat his brother out of his inheritance. He had also cheated his father-in-law. He did not deserve God's blessing at all. Jacob must have come to the realisation that unless God blessed him, either God or his brother Esau would destroy him! The struggle of Jacob with the angel of the Lord served to bring Jacob to repentance of his sin and to cause him to plead for God's mercy and favour. Jacob did not want to let the angel of the Lord go unless he blessed him. He wrestled, wept and begged. It was *a real spiritual struggle* for Jacob. But he persevered and conquered. God blessed Jacob and protected him against his enemies.

**Eighth. Genesis shows how God is in control of all the people and events on earth.**

In Genesis 37-45 and 50 we read about how Joseph was sold as a slave to Egypt by his own family, how he spent 13 years of imprisonment and slavery, and how he finally became the governor of Egypt directly under the great Pharaoh. Although it was his own brothers who had sold him as a slave, Joseph looked at the difficulties that happened to him from God's point of view. In Genesis 45:5-9 he said, "It was not you who sent me here, but God. ... It was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you." God was in complete control of his enemies, namely, his brothers who had done wrong to him. God was in complete control of the mighty king of Egypt and of the difficulties that Egypt faced. God was in complete control of all the difficult circumstances that Joseph experienced in his life. God was in control when he was enslaved. God was in control when he was falsely accused. God was in control when he sat in prison. God was in control when even his friends forgot him. The book of Genesis shows how God is in control of all people and all the circumstances on earth. It is God who controls all the people and events in history with just one purpose, namely, to fulfil his eternal plan. God's plan is to save his people from sin and to save this earth from all evil people.

**POINT 5. THE MESSIAH, JESUS CHRIST, IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS.**

**First. The seed of the woman points to the Messiah.**

In Genesis 3:15, God promised that the *offspring* or *seed* of the woman would in the future crush Satan. In Genesis 12:3 God promised that in this *seed* of Abraham, God would bless all the nations on earth. According to Galatians 3:16, this *seed* refers, not to the nation of Israel, but to one person, namely, Jesus Christ! It is the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who through his death on the cross would destroy the power of Satan and save very many people from all the nations of the world.

**Second. The offering up of Isaac points to the Messiah.**

In Genesis 22 we read how Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son, the heir of God's covenant promise. By faith Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead (Heb 11:17-19). God tested Abraham and stopped him before he could carry out this sacrifice. But in Romans 8:32 we read, "God did not spare his own Son, Jesus Christ, but gave him up for us all." And in John 3:16 we read, "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." God gave the Messiah, Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of his people.

**Third. The lifting of Joseph from the pit to the throne points to the Messiah.**

There are many parallels between the life of Joseph and Jesus, while he was on earth. Joseph was loved more than anybody else (37:3; Mt 3:17). He began his public service when he was thirty years old (41:46; Lk 3:23). God was with him and he prospered (39:2; Acts 10:38). He excelled above his contemporaries (39: 3-6; Mk 7:37). He resisted temptation and refused to be seduced by an immoral woman (39:6-12; Mt 4:1-11). God granted him favour in the eyes of people (39:21; Lk 2:52). He spoke the truth, particularly with regard to God's judgement of some and restoration of others (40:13,19; Jn 5:24-29). He was discerning and wise (41:39; Lk 2:47; Jn 7:15). He was humble and acknowledged

that God was the Source of his wisdom (41:16; Jn 5:19). People from all countries came to Joseph (41:57; Jn 12:32). He wept (42:24; Jn 11:35). He acknowledged the sovereignty of God in all events on earth (45:5-9; 50:19-20; Mt 26:39; 1 Pet 2:23). He forgave those who had wronged him (45:15; Lk 23:34). All these things *point forward* to the human life of Jesus on earth. Joseph was rejected by his own people, but God lifted him up to become the ruler over his people. Likewise, the Messiah, Jesus Christ was rejected by his own people on earth, but according to Philippians 2:9-11, God exalted him to the highest place. Every knee will one day bow before Jesus Christ. Every tongue will one day confess that Jesus Christ is truly the king of kings!

#### **POINT 6. GENESIS IS A BOOK HATED AND DISCREDITED BY ENEMIES.**

The first book in the Bible, Genesis, and the last book in the Bible, Revelation, is especially attacked by the enemies of God, because they both prophesy the downfall of Satan! The book of Genesis exposes Satan as the enemy of God and the deceiver of people. It foretells how he will be crushed by Jesus Christ. Revelation reveals how this is finally fulfilled.

#### **ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK**

First. Make a commitment to read through the whole Old Testament. During the next week, read Exodus chapters 21-40. Next week 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”.