

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 10: The Holy Spirit, the Indwelling

Unit 10 Big Question and Answer:
What Does the Holy Spirit Do In God's People?
He Changes Their Hearts to Be Like Jesus!

PFI NIV Songs 10, Tracks 3,4

Unit 10 Bible Verse: Ezekiel 36:26, NIV 1984

"I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you."
PFI NIV Songs 10, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:
The Holy Spirit Builds God's Church

Many people think that a church is a building, but it's not. Church is the name for all of God's people.

God's Church is built by the Holy Spirit, one person at a time. The Holy Spirit works in the hearts of people, giving them the gift of faith as they hear God's Word, the Bible. The Holy Spirit helps them believe God's Word, turn away from their sins, and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

God has always planned for the Holy Spirit to bring people from everywhere in the whole world to be part of His people, the Church. The Bible tells us that the Church will be made up of people from every single people group and language in the world.

Every week, groups of God's people meet together to worship God in gatherings all over the world. This is what we call going to church. But in heaven, the whole Church--all of God's people, from everywhere and every time--will gather together to worship God forever. What a gathering that will be! The Bible tells us that it will be so many people that we won't even be able to count them.

We can be part of God's Church--God's people--too, when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Acts 9:31, NIV 1984

"[The church] was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord."

CASE STORY

Genesis 1-3,9; Ephesians 1; Revelation 7, 19

Our story is called:

The Case of the Big, Brickless Building.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who planned the Brickless, Big Building? When did He plan it?
2. What did He make His building out of? How big is it to be?

This story starts out before the beginning of time.

From before the beginning, God has been a builder with a grand plan. He planned to build something that to Him, was lovelier than the loveliest sunset, more precious than all the rubies and diamonds, more beautiful-sounding than the most melodious bird song, and more colorful than all the colors of creation. What was He planning to build? His Church! Yes, His Church!

Now this was no brick building, as you might be thinking. God's Church is actually made up of people! The Church is the name that Jesus used to stand for all of God's people. Yes, the Church is God's people from every time, every place, every nation, every language, every kind of person, with hearts full of love for Him and mouths full of His praise. And before the beginning, God planned to build His Church so that one day they would all live with Him and enjoy Him forever.

From the first days of creation, God did things to build His Church. God is spirit. If people were to know God, they would have to have a spirit, too. So when God created people, He created them with a spirit inside their bodies so that they could know and love Him. God was building His Church from people of every nation and language, people who would worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Then came another part of God's plan to build His Church: "Be fruitful and fill the earth," He commanded Adam and Eve. Later He told Noah and his family to do the same thing after the flood. If His Church were to be made of people from every part of the world as He planned, then they would need to spread out to the ends of the earth.

Some made ships and sailed to far away islands; some climbed tall mountains and made their homes near snowy peaks; others settled in thick jungles and forests. The peoples God created were filling the earth.

After awhile, people lived in about every part of the world there is to live, just as God planned. One day, His

beautiful Church would include people with every skin color, every language, every nation, and they would all lift up their praises to God.

But the people of the world, even though they had spread out far and wide into tribes and nations, did not look very much like the beautiful building of God's Church. You see, from the very first, starting with Adam and Eve, all people have rebelled against God. They turned away from Him and made their own idols. People who lived on islands worshiped gods of the sea and sky. People who lived in the mountains worshiped gods of the mountains. People who lived in the jungles and forests made gods of the trees and animals. There was little beautiful about these people now! Their --and our--hearts were ugly, broken and well, dead to God, because of sin. Every one of us deserve to be shut out from God's presence and never ever know Him. Could God make a beautiful Church out of people like these? Did sin ruin His plans?

No, it did not! From even before the beginning, God knew that all people would rebel against Him. So right then, even before the beginning, God planned to make His Church, His people, beautiful Himself, through His Son, Jesus. He would send Jesus, the very Son of God, to come to earth as a man. He would live a perfect life. One that was perfectly beautiful to God because there was no sin in anything Jesus thought or did or said. God planned that Jesus would offer up His perfect life on the cross as the perfect offering for the sins of all God's people--all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their own Savior, Through Jesus, God would forgive all of His people's ugly sin. He would fill their hearts with the Holy Spirit, making them beautiful and clean. Yes, it would be because of Jesus that God's people, the Church that God was building would be beautiful.

And that was just what God did! At just the right time, Jesus came and saved His people as He suffered and died on the cross. Then He rose in victory over sin and death. Now it was time for the next part of God's plan to build His Church.

"Go into every part of the world, making disciples of all people," Jesus told His followers. It was time to begin to bring the good news of salvation to the world so that God's Church would be from every people, just as He had planned.

How could eleven little men--those first disciples of

Jesus-- do such a big, God-sized job by themselves? Well, they couldn't--and God never planned them to. God's Holy Spirit would do the building as He worked in the hearts of God's people.

"I will send the Holy Spirit to give you the right words to speak," Jesus told them. "I will teach you everything you need to know." The disciples remembered how Jesus had told them that the new life of forgiveness of sins and faith in Jesus comes through the Spirit. They trusted that the Holy Spirit would work as they obeyed Jesus' command to tell others the good news of salvation.

So the disciples went further and further away from their home, telling everyone who would listen the good news of salvation through Jesus. As they spoke, the Holy Spirit worked in hearts, just as Jesus had promised. He stirred the hearts of many to see that they were sinners and deserved God's punishment. He helped them turn away from their sins and gave them faith to trust in Jesus as their own Savior. One person at a time, the Holy Spirit changed ugly, broken, sinful hearts of rebellious sinners into the beautiful, Spirit-filled, God-loving hearts of God's people. God's Church was being built.

Dozens, hundreds, thousands, were saved by God, by Holy Spirit working in hearts as the disciples spoke. These new believers joined the first disciples in spreading the good news of salvation through Jesus. Further and further away God's people traveled. They went out into all the world. And as they went, the Holy Spirit worked. God was building His Church from people of every nation and language.

Some got in ships and sailed to far away islands. They urged people to turn away from their sea and sky gods and turn to follow Jesus...and some did. Others climbed over tall mountains and went to tell those who made their homes on snowy peaks. They urged them to turn away from their mountain gods...and turn to follow Jesus...and some did. Still others made their way through thick jungles and forests and shared the gospel with the people who lived there. They told them to stop worshiping their gods of trees and animals and turn to follow Jesus...and some did. This is how the Holy Spirit has been building God's beautiful Church, all according to His plan, from before the beginning.

On and on, for thousands of years now, Jesus' followers have kept going into all the world, telling people

throughout the world about Jesus. On and on for thousands of years now the Holy Spirit has worked in the hearts of those people, building God's Church.

But one day, God will be finished building His Church. When will that be? When the good news of Jesus has been spread to every nation and every language--to every people on earth. Then Jesus will return to gather all God's people--all God's Church-- before the throne of God and together they will sing the most wonderful praises to God.

What will it look like? God gave John, one of Jesus' first disciples, a little glimpse of it: "I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.' (Revelation 7:9-10)

And what will it sound like? John tells us that there will be so many people in God's Church that the sound of their voices will be like the roar of rushing waters and like loud claps of thunder as they praise God saying: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory!

Our Bible Truth is: The Holy Spirit Builds God's Church
Our Bible Verse is: Acts 9:31

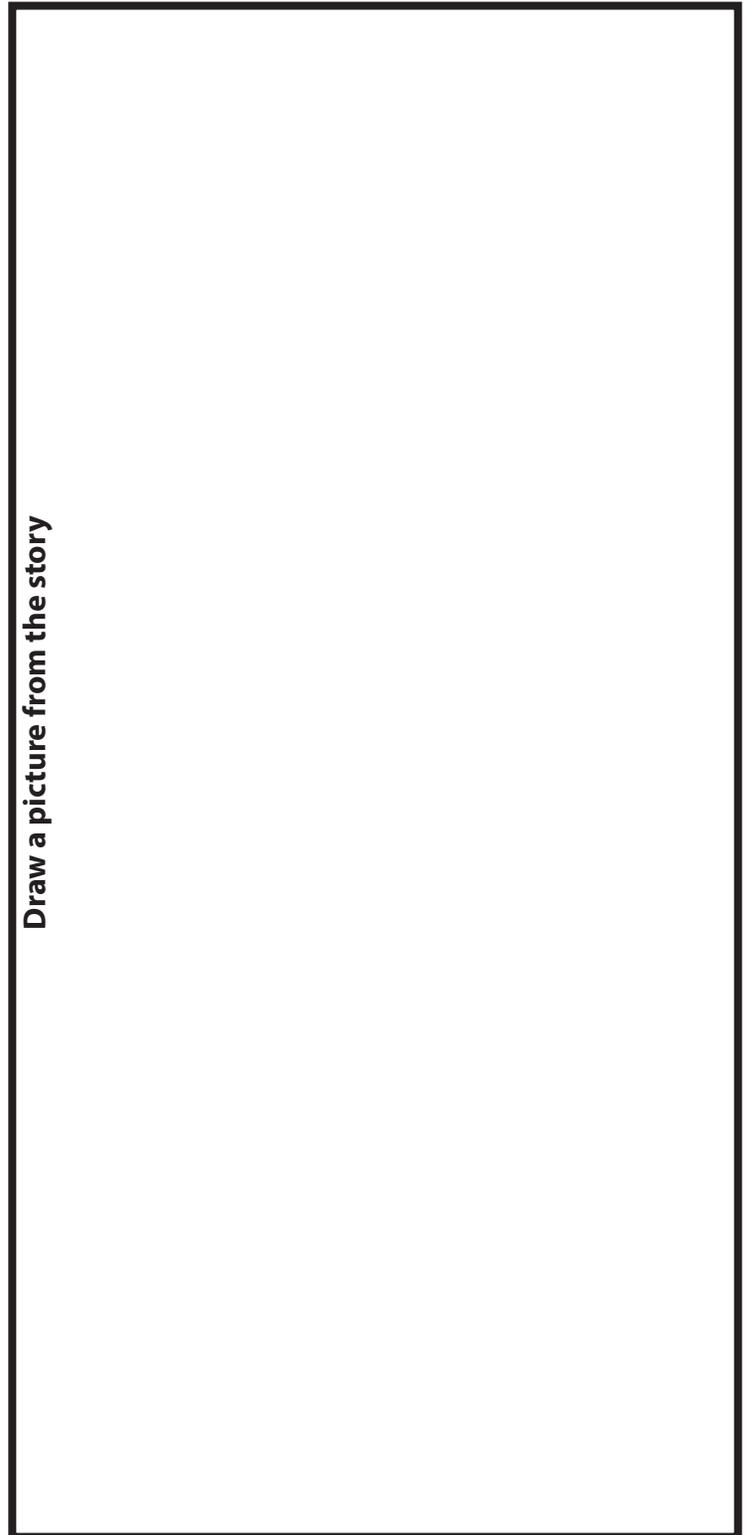
"[The church] was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord."

It will be a magnificent thing to see this Church that God built through the Holy Spirit. And you and me, can we be a part of this most beautiful of buildings, God's Church? Yes, we can! The offer of salvation is for us, too. God promises to save all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. He will send the Holy Spirit to live in our hearts. He will make our hearts beautiful and new, changed and forgiven of our sins. And we will become a part of His Church, too. Then on one marvelous day, we will get to stand among all of God's people, who will praise and enjoy God forever. What a day that will be!

But you know, God's people don't have to wait for that day to enjoy praise God with His people. Even right here on earth, each time believers gather together to worship God, it's a little picture of that great day. It's a tiny taste of

that wonderful worship God's people will have when all the people of God gather together in heaven before their amazing, marvelous God.

Let's praise God sending His Holy Spirit to build His Church and ask Him to work in our hearts. Let's ask Him to help us turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to fill us with His Holy Spirit and make us part of His Church, God's people.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

The church is a building where God's people worship.
 Answer: False. That's a church building! The church is the name for all of God's people.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who planned the Brickless, Big Building? When did He plan it?

Answer: God is the planner. He planned it even before He created the world.

b. What did He make His building out of? How big is it to be?

Answer: People. Only God knows. But it is so big that it is made up of more people than we can count.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

Acts 9:31

"[The ___] was strengthened; and encouraged by the _____, it grew in numbers, ___ in the fear of the Lord."

Answers: church; Holy Spirit; living.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The Church's One Foundation

PFI NIV Songs 10, Track 19

Verse 1

The Church's one foundation
 Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
 She is His new creation,
 By Spirit and the Word:
 From heav'n He came and sought her
 To be His holy bride,
 With His own blood He bought her,
 And for her life He died.

Words: Joseph H. Gilmore Music William B. Bradbury

Church is the Bible word for all of God's people. Jesus Christ is the Church's foundation because He is the only one who could save His people. Without Him, no one could ever be forgiven their sins and come to know God. He bought all of God's people by paying for their sins with His own blood when He died on the cross. The Holy Spirit works in each of God's people, helping them turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior when they hear God's Word.. He gives them a new heart that knows and loves God and want to serve Him. One day the whole Church will be together with Jesus. The Church will be like His bride whom He loves and delights in forever. And how the Church will love Jesus! Like a bride loves her new husband, but far, far more!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Great Builder of the Church, Your people.

C God, we confess that like all people, we have chosen to rebel against You. Our hearts, like everyone else, are ugly and broken with sin. We cannot worship You, the one, true God as You created us to, unless You work in our hearts. We need a Savior! We need the Holy Spirit to work inside of us!

T God, we thank You for choosing to make Your people into the beautiful Church. Thank You for sending Jesus to save Your people and for sending Your Holy Spirit to live inside them, encouraging them.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins, trust Jesus as our own Savior, and be Your people. Send the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we might know and love You. Keep strengthening Your people to go out and tell all peoples about You that many more might be saved.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The Church Was Strengthened

PFI NIV Songs 10, Track 20

The church was strengthened,
 and encouraged,
 By the Holy Spirit,
 by the Holy Spirit,
 It grew in numbers,
 it grew in numbers,
 Living in the fear of, the fear of the Lord.
 Acts Nine, thirty-one.

Words: Acts 9,31 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

The Holy Spirit strengthens and encourages God's people, the Church. He works in their hearts, giving people faith to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus as their Savior as they hear God's Word. He fills their hearts and helps them to grow in understanding God's Word and in loving God. He helps them to live in the fear of the Lord-- that is, He helps them want to honor and obey God most of all.