

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 11: The God Who Saves

Unit 11 Big Question and Answer:

How Can We Be Saved?

It is God's Free Gift!

PFI NIV Songs 11, Tracks 3,4

Unit 11 Bible Verse: Romans 6:23, NIV 1984

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

Jesus Is the Only Way to Be Saved

The Bible tells us that we have all rebelled against God and deserve His punishment for our sins. It tells us that our sins are so great that there is no way that we can ever earn God's forgiveness on our own. None of us can ever save ourselves.

But the good news is that God can! He has provided the way of salvation for sinful people through His Son, Jesus.

Jesus came to earth as a man. He was fully God and fully man. How amazing! He lived a perfect life. He's the only one who has ever done that! On the cross, Jesus offered up His life. He suffered and died as the perfect sacrifice needed for the sins of God's people. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, showing that He had completely paid for their sins. Yes! He had won the victory over sin and death for them!

Now all who turn away from living a life of sin (repent) and put their trust in Jesus as their Savior will be forgiven their sins. They will be saved from the punishment for their sins they deserve and will live as God's dearly loved people forever.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 2 Bible Verse: John 14:2-6, NIV 1984

"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

CASE STORY

Genesis 22:18; Isaiah 54:6; Acts 1

Our story is: The Case of the Light for the Unlikely.

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

1. Who was the Light? Why was He called the Light?
2. Who were Likely People to receive Him and who were the Unlikely People to receive Him? What did both kinds of people need to do to receive the Light?

This story starts out in Old Testament times, thousands of years before Jesus lived on earth.

"If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine," the LORD promised the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai. And hadn't He shown them already just how precious they were to Him? He had just sent Moses to rescue them from slavery under the mighty Egyptians. He had just protected them from the Egyptian soldiers with a great pillar of cloud, and even parted the Red Sea for them escape unharmed. He had given them His good laws and made a solemn covenant promise to always love and care for them. He was giving them the beautiful land of Canaan to live in and enjoy as their very own. Oh, to be an Israelite! To be God's treasured possession! This was certainly a promise they could trust!

But what about the rest of the world? All the rest of those people, whom the Israelites lumped together under one big word: Gentiles. Did God really not care about them? Sometimes the Israelites acted as if God didn't, even though He had told them otherwise. "I'm going to bless all nations through a child that come through you and your family, the Israelites," the LORD had told Abraham. Who would that child be? The Messiah, Jesus, to save them from their sins.

Through Isaiah, God told the Israelites what He would do through Jesus: "It is too small a thing for the Messiah, the Savior Jesus, to save only My people from the nation of Israel. I will also make him a light for the Gentiles, that he may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." (adapted from Isaiah 54:6)

Yes. Israel was special. But Israel was just a beginning, just a part of God's one, big plan to save a countless number of people from every nation of the world. God was using them to bring the blessing of salvation to all the people of the world, for Jesus the Messiah, the Savior, would come from Israel.

Some Gentiles came to saving faith even before Jesus came. We know a few of their stories. There was Rahab from Jericho that helped the Israelites sent to spy on her city of Jericho. And Ruth, who would be the grandmother of great King David. There were others, too. These few Gentiles looked forward in faith to the day God would send His Savior.

At last, Jesus did come. He was fully God and fully man. He lived a perfect life, then offered it up on the cross, as the perfect sacrifice for God's people, all who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. He suffered and died for their sins, then on the third day, He rose up from the dead in victory over sin and death for all of God's people.

"Go into all the world, making disciples and teaching them," Jesus told His disciples, after He rose from the dead. Now, the message of salvation would be spread far and wide. Yes, it was still time for Jesus to be the Savior to any of the Israelites who trusted in Him as their Savior. But even more, Jesus was going to be the light for the Gentiles, as His disciples took the good news of salvation through Jesus to the them. So out and away the disciples went. First just to nearby cities, then to places farther and farther away.

Three believers, Paul, Silas and Luke, traveled by sea and land to a country called Macedonia, sharing the good news of Jesus as they went. One day they came to the great city of Philippi. Philippi was one of most important cities of all of Macedonia. The Roman Emperor had even made it a Roman colony! Merchants and traders came to Philippi bringing their goods from the nearby port to sell and many Roman soldiers came there to settle down and live after retiring from the army. There were temples to the Roman gods and even a coliseum for gladiator shows and Olympic games. How wonderful it would be for these people to hear the message of Jesus!

"Repent, believe, trust in Jesus and live! He is the only way to be saved from your sins." Paul told a group of people gathered for prayer by the Gangites River outside the city. These were people who heard of the Lord God and believed in Him, but had never heard about Jesus.

"Long ago, Paul told them, "The LORD spoke through the prophet Isaiah about Jesus, the coming Messiah. He told them, 'It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel

I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.' We have come to tell you about that Savior, Jesus Christ, that you might trust in Him as your Savior." Paul's message was eagerly accepted and many were baptized that day.

Paul and Silas rejoiced to see so many accept Jesus as their Savior, but Satan, God's great enemy, was not. Before long, big trouble was brewing for Paul and Silas. Angry men stirred up a crowd against them. City officials arrested Paul and Silas, beaten with rods and thrown into jail.

"Guard these men carefully," the city officials ordered the jailer. So he put them in the inner cell-- and fastened their feet in the stocks.

"What are these men in trouble for?" the jailer wanted to know.

"For trying to turn the people away from the Roman gods to another foreign god named Jesus who they claim to be the way to be saved!" he was told.

How the metal of the stocks must have cut into Paul and Silas' legs! How stiff their bodies must have been from being beaten! But Paul and Silas didn't grumble or complain. Instead they sang praises to God, long into the night. They knew that Jesus really was the way to be saved. He was worth suffering for, even dying for. They were grateful to God for being allowed to suffer for His name and to get to bring the good news of Jesus, the light to the Gentiles, the one who brought salvation to the nations.

About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that shook the prison. At once, the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. He was in a panic! He knew he would be killed if he lost any of them. He would rather kill himself than let someone else do it.

But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

What strange men these were! Beaten and imprisoned for sharing about this strange God, Jesus, who they claimed as the way to be saved. Praising Jesus' name rather than cursing Him for being put in stocks! Then, when given a chance to escape for their lives, they stay where they are and try to keep him from killing himself! Perhaps this foreign god is the true God!" the jailer thought.]

The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

They replied, "Repent! Trust in Jesus and live! He is the only way to be saved from your sins -- you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

The next day, Paul and Silas were released from prison and sent out of Philippi. Were they heading home after their terrible beating? No, they did not. They headed out for new places to tell others about Jesus. They were stiff, bruised and sore, but they praised God. He was using them to bring the light of Jesus to the Gentiles and salvation to people of another nation, just as He had promised through the prophet Isaiah hundreds of years earlier. God's one, big plan to save His people from every land was being fulfilled.

Our Bible Truth Is: Jesus is the Only Way to Be Saved

Our Bible Verse is: John 14:2-6

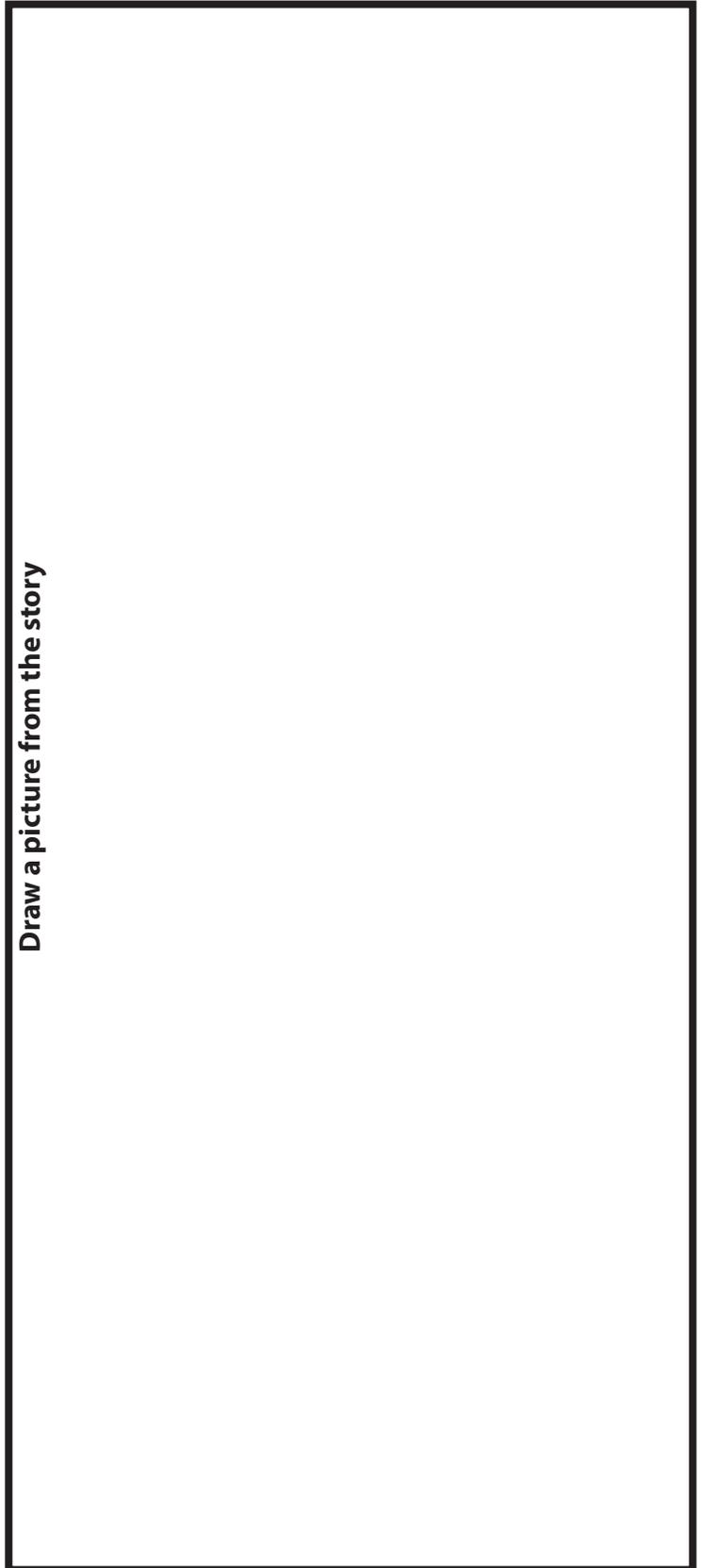
"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

What would cause Paul and Silas to praise God for getting to suffer for Him? Only their love for God and their faith that Jesus was really the only way to God. They remembered how Jesus had suffered to pay for their sins and the sins of all who turn and trust in Him. They counted it an honor to suffer so that other might know about Him.

The same message that Paul, Luke and Silas took to Macedonia is the same message we all need to hear and believe: "Repent of your sins, trust in Jesus and live! He is the only way to be saved from your sins."

Let's praise our Saving God who through Jesus made a way for sinners to come to Him. Let's ask Him for work in our hearts, helping us to repent of our sins, and believe in Him, too. Let's ask Him to give us courage to boldly tell others about Him, too, that He might use us in His one, big plan.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

As sinners, we would be without hope, if it weren't for God sending Jesus to save us. He promises to save all who confess and turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Light? Why was He called the Light?

Answer: Jesus was the Light. A light shines brightly and shows the way. Jesus, the Son of God, came to show what God was like. He not only showed the way for sinners to come to God, but He made the way, Himself.

b. Who were Likely People to receive Him and who were the Unlikely People to receive Him? What did both kinds of people need to do to receive the Light?

Answer: The people of Israel were the Likely People and the Gentiles (non-Jews) were the Unlikely people. Both Jew and Gentile must confess their sins, turn away from them and trust in Jesus as their Savior, if they are to be saved. This is the only way to God.

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

John 14:2-6

"In my Father's house are many ____; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a ____ for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the ____?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father ____ through me."

Answers: rooms; place; way; except.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

To God Be the Glory

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 8

Verse 1

To God be the glory,
great things He hath done;
So loved He the world
that He gave us His Son,
Who yielded His life
an atonement for sin,
And opened the lifegate
that all may go in.

Refrain:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father,
Thro' Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory,
great things He hath done.

Words: Fanny J. Crosby Music: William H. Doane

We give glory to God for giving us His Son who He loved so much to be the payment for sins. Sinners could never pay for their sins. Only by Jesus giving up His life in the place of sinners could there ever be a way for them to come to the Father.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

In My Father's House

PFI NIV Songs 11, Track 9

"In my Father's house are many rooms," Jesus said.
"I go prepare, prepare a place for you.
You know the way."
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,"
Thomas said to Him.
"Lord, we don't know where You are going,
How can we know the way?"

"I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.

I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life,"
Jesus answered.
No one can come to the Father, except through me."
John Fourteen, two through six.

Words adapted from John 14:2-6 Constance Dever © 2011

On the night before He died on the cross, Jesus comforted Thomas and the other disciples that He was making the way for them to be saved. He called heaven, His Father's house and promises them that He is about to make the way for them to be able to live there. There was still much they didn't understand yet, but later, after He rose from the dead it all began to make sense. On the cross, He paid for God's people's sins. He made the way for them to go to heaven. They could depend upon Him and His promises. He was the truth. He would beat sin and death for them so they could have eternal life. He would prepare a place for them and all of God's people in heaven to be with Him. And one day, He will come back to take them to be there with Him forever. How wonderful that will be!

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for loving people from every land and the fulfiller of Your one, big plan to save them through Jesus.

C God, we confess that many times we are not like Paul and Silas. We do not tell other about Jesus who need to hear. We avoid anything that would cause us to suffer, even for Jesus' sake. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for sending out people to even our part of the world, that we might know the way to be saved.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to tell others about Jesus. Send out Your people to every part of the world so that those who still have not heard, may hear, repent of their sins, and believe.