

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 5: God, the Good Creator

Unit 5 Big Question and Answer:

Can You Tell What God Made?

God Made All Things Good!

PFI ESV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4

Unit 5 Bible Verse: Genesis 1:1,31, ESV

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

God created everything in the beginning. There was nothing but Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Then He spoke, and it all came to be. He created everything in the world around us and everything in the great universe of stars and planets we see in the sky. He created all the creatures of heaven, too. He created it all through Jesus and for Jesus.

When God made everything, He called it very good. It was delightful to Him. It was pure and perfect. It was all exactly made according to His perfectly wise plan. There was nothing wrong or bad in God's creations when He created them. Nothing got sick or died. Nothing disobeyed Him. Everything did what He created them to do, and they did it joyfully. They did everything without wearing out or even making mistakes.

Everything God created points back to Him, their Creator. They are little pictures of something about Him. Look around you. What do God's creations tell you about Him?

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

CASE STORY

Our story is called:

The Case of the Swordless Samurai.

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

1. Who was the Samurai? What was important about his sword?
2. What did he want even more than his sword? Did he find what he was looking for?

Our story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place about 140 years ago in Tokyo, Japan.

Excited and a little nervous, Neesima Shimeta rose up off the floor to face his great, Samurai master. This was one of the most important days in his life: his Gembuhu, the Samurai ceremony of manhood.

"Neesima," the Samurai master began, "for a thousand years, we Samurai have risked our lives to protect our Honorable Emperor and the sacred land of our forefathers from all enemies. Now it is time for you to take the vows of the Samurai and join us.

A Samurai must follow the Code of Bushido—the Way of the Warrior. He must promise to be just, sincere, honest, self-controlled and completely faithful. He must good and loving. Above all, a Samurai must keep constantly in mind, by day and by night, that he has to die. Do you promise to live this way?" the Master asked.

"Yes, Master, I do," Neesima promised.

"Then you are now no longer, a boy," the master announced. You are a man and a Samurai."

Taking a sharp razor, the master cut off Neesima's long, black forelocks. The rest of his hair the master pulled back into a ponytail. Metal arm and leg protectors and a breastplate were strapped in position. A helmet was placed on his head. Last of all, Neesima received his most precious gift—the daito katan, the 2-foot-long sword of the Samurai.

"Wear this sword at all times," the Master told him. "It is the badge of your high calling. It is your protection. Treat it honorably. The daito katan is sacred and we believe it has the life of the gods in it. To lose it or give it away is to give away your very self. Never do that," he warned.

Neesima bowed low as he took the sword and fastened it to his belt. His heart swelled with pride. Now he was a Samurai!

After the ceremony, Neesima went to the Shinto Temple to offer sacrifices and prayers to his ancestors, whom he

worshiped as gods. "You have been Samurai before me," he said to them. "Help me to honor by and dying as a faithful Samurai like you," he prayed.

Now Neesima went into training. He learned sword-play and horseback riding to train his body for battle. He read books by great men of Japan and China to train his mind and spirit to be calm and clear in battle. A Samurai had to prepare body, mind and spirit for battle.

But one day, Neesima found a very different book to read. It was book so hated that it was against the Japanese law to own or even read. It was God's Word, the Bible--written in Chinese.

Neesima snuck the Bible away where he could read it in secret. Excitedly he opened it up to the first page and started reading: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...God saw all that He made, and it was very good," Neesima read.

Neesima was shocked. "I've never heard anything like this before! A God who is more than just a powerful force or ancestors who lived long ago?" he thought. "I must read more!"

So Neesima read the rest of the story, learning how God created everything in the whole universe—even people. He put down the Bible and looked all around him as if seeing the world differently than ever before. New questions--then new answers--filled Neesima's mind. "Who made me, my parents? No, it was God," he could see that now. "God made my parents and let them make me. And who made this wooden table? A carpenter?" thought Neesima. "No, it was God! God created trees and the carpenter used them to make this table," Neesima realized.

The words Neesima read were about to completely change his life: "If God is the creator of this world, I must be thankful to Him," Neesima decided. "I must believe Him and I must find out His good purposes for my life so I can live to please Him," he decided. "But how?" Neesima wondered.

"Christians are not allowed in Japan and I am not allowed to out! Japanese people caught leaving the country are killed, but I must learn more about the Creator God!" Neesima thought. "I know! I will ask the Creator God for His help," he decided. So Neesima closed his eyes and prayed: "Oh, God. Look upon me and listen to me. Help me know what to do."

God soon answered his prayer. Neesima traveled the

Japanese seaport where an American captain, Captain Savory, helped him. He hide Neesima in the supplies closet of his ship and snuck him out of Japan to Shanghai, China. Neesima was free!

Shanghai was so different from anything Neesima had ever seen before. There were many new things to do and to buy. But, there was only two things that Neesima wanted: a Chinese Bible and a boat ticket to America, where he could learn more about the Creator God.

It didn't take Neesima long to find a Bible, but oh, how expensive it was! He had hardly any money--certainly too little to buy a Bible. There was only one way for Neesima to get that Bible: he would have to sell his precious Samurai sword!

"I made a promise to always serve the Emperor and Japan," Neesima remembered. "Without my sword I will break that promise. This sword is the sign of my noble family and calling. They told me it even had the life of our gods in it. Not a day has passed when it was at my side. Should I really break that promise? Should I dishonor my family?" Neesima wondered.

It was a big decision, but Neesima knew what he should do. He sold his sword and bought the Chinese Bible. Now he would have the Creator God's words to read over and over again. What could be more important than that? Next Neesima headed down to the docks of Shanghai in search of the other thing he wanted most of all: a boat to take him to America.

"Want learn Bible. Take me?" Neesima Shimeta asked captain after captain, using the little English he knew.

At last, Captain Taylor of the Wild Rover agreed to help him. "Serve as my cabin boy and I will take you to Boston (America)," he offered Neesima. Neesima quickly agreed. At last he was on his way to America!

The voyage from Shanghai to Boston took eight, long months. Neesima spent every free moment either reading his Chinese Bible or learning English from the other sailors. The more he read, the more Neesima saw what he didn't know. He needed a teacher, if he was to really understand about the Creator God, but how would he get one? Teachers were expensive and he had no money.

"I will ask the Creator God to help me again," Neesima decided. "He helped me before, He will help me now."

God answered Neesima's prayer as soon as he arrived in Boston. Captain Taylor took Neesima to see Mr. Hardy, the

owner of Wild Rover. Hardy was a Christian and as soon as he heard Neesima's story, he wanted to help.

"Neesima, I want to help you learn all you can about the Creator God and His message," Mr. Hardy told him. "I want to pay for your food, your housing, your clothes, your schooling and anything else you might need. I want you to be like a son to me while you live in America."

"Praise God! And thank you, sir!" Neesima exclaimed. How amazing was this Creator God! There was nothing He had not provided him. He had answered Neesima's prayers better than he could have hoped for!

At school, Neesima learned so much about the Creator God and His message. It was here that he understood the Creator God's offer of salvation through Jesus, to all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior. He learned how the Creator God created a new heart in all who do, filling them with Holy Spirit, that they might know and love Him.

"What wonderful news this is," Nessima exclaimed. He eagerly turned away from his sins, trusted in Jesus as His Savior and was baptized.

Nessima loved his time in America, but soon he wanted to go home. Many changes had come to Japan. No longer was it against the law to be a Christian. A new government had been formed and the Samurai were the leaders of it. As a Samurai himself, perhaps Nessima would be allowed to tell many the good news of Jesus.

Neesima went to Mr. Hardy and said, "I must go back home. I want to tell my people about the Creator God. I want to start a Christian school for Samurai boys. They are the future leaders of Japan. What great things God might do in Japan, if there are more Samurai Christians like me. Will you help me?" Nessima asked.

Mr. Hardy was happy to help. He collected \$5000 for Nessima to use to start his school.

Back in Japan, Neesima had to fight hard to start his school. Many people still did not like Christianity, even though it was not against Japanese law anymore. But at last Neesima had his first class of thirty, Samurai young boys.

Oh, how God blessed Nessima's work. As these boys heard about the Creator God and the message of salvation through His Son, Jesus, each and every one of them believed and were saved! They all grew up to be pastors and important leaders in the Japanese government and

about Jesus, just as Neesima had hoped.

Our Bible Truth is:

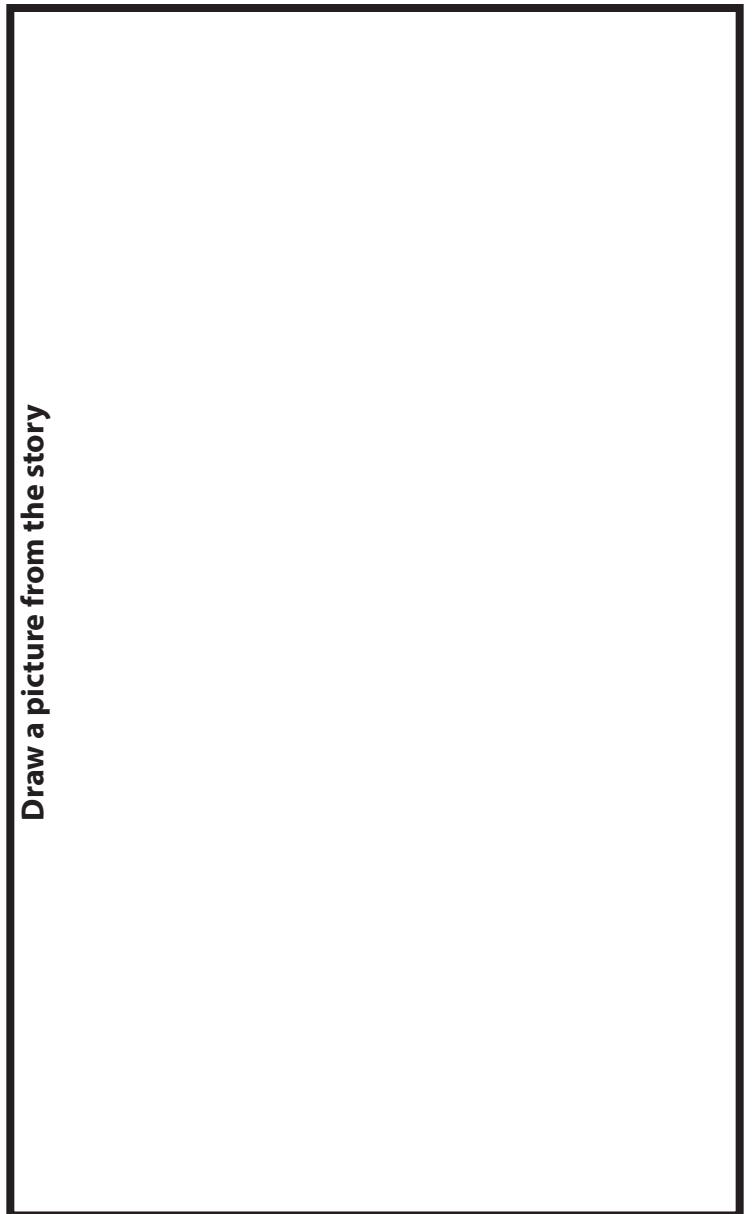
God Created All Things Good in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: Nehemiah 9:6

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

God didn't just create the multitudes of heaven to worship Him, but as Neesima learned, God created people--like you and me-- to worship Him, too. How can we do that? Like Neesima, we can turn away from living a life just for ourselves and turn to live for God. We can ask Jesus to be our Savior and forgive us of our sins. And when we do, God's Holy Spirit will live in our hearts, helping us not only worship God, but enjoy knowing Him and loving forever--and that is best of all!

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God called everything He made “pretty good.” It looked good, but it didn’t come out exactly according to His plan. Answer: False. God called everything “very good.” He created it all according to His perfectly wise plan.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who was the Samurai? What was important about his sword?

Answer: Neesima Shimeta. A Samurai is a special soldier. His sword is not just his weapon, but the symbol of who he was. They believed it had the life of the gods in it. A Samurai never got rid of his sword.

b. What did he want even more than his sword? Did he find what he was looking for?

Answer: To learn more about the Creator God who created everything in the beginning. Yes, he did! Not only learned more about the Creator God, but he trusted in Jesus as his Savior. He came to know God in his heart!

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Nehemiah 9:6

“You are the LORD, you _____. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the _____ and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven _____ you.”

Answers: alone; earth; worships.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

O, Worship the King

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 8

Verse 3

Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?
It breathes in the air,
it shines in the light,
It streams from the hill,
It descends to the plain,
And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Words: Robert Grant Music: Attr. Johan Michael Haydn

This hymn reminds us that all of creation reflects God’s goodness to us. We see His goodness in the bountiful way He cares for us. When we look at the light streaming down from heaven to give us warmth and light; when we see the dew and the rain that feeds thirsty plants so we will have food to eat; in the beautiful hills God gives us to look at; in the flat plains that make good ground to grow crops. Seeing His goodness in His creation makes His people want to worship and praise Him.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Creator God who made heaven and earth.

C God, we confess that we are sinners who need to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, just as Neesima did.

T God, we thank You for letting us hear about You, the Creator God, through Your Word, the Bible, just like You did Neesima.

S God, we ask that You would work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Please help us to want to learn more about You, like Neesima did. Help us to want to know You so much that we would even be willing to give up the thing that was most important to us in order to know You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

You Are the LORD, You Alone

PFI ESV Songs 5, Track 9

You are the LORD, You alone,
You made the heaven with all their host,
The earth and all that’s on it,
The seas and all in them,
And You preserve all of them,
And the host of heaven worship You,
And the host of heaven worship You,
And the host of heaven worship You,
You are the LORD, You alone.
You are the LORD, You alone.
Nehemiah Nine, six.

Words: Nehemiah 9:6, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012

The Bible tells us that there is nothing that God did not make in the heavens or the earth in the beginning. He made all things and He gave life to it all. He is the one that keeps everything going. No wonder the angels--the host of heaven-- worship Him. Who is like the LORD! And this is why we should worship Him, our Creator, too.