

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" *PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:

God Gave Us His Laws To Convict Us Of Sin, That We Might Be Saved

God made each of us with a heart that tells us what is right and wrong. When we hear God's laws, we know that they are right. When we disobey God's laws, we know that we are doing wrong. We know we are not the perfect law-keepers God created us to be and calls us to be.

God's laws remind us that we deserve God's punishment for our sins, but that's not all God has planned for His laws to do. He has also planned for His laws to show us our sin, that we would turn away from our sins and be saved.

God loves to save sinners! Jesus promised that whoever comes to Him, repenting of their sins and trusting in Him as their Savior, He will never turn away. No matter how bad of a lawbreaker they have been, He will forgive their sins and save them. He will forgive us all of our sins, if we repent of 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 3 Bible Verse: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

CASE STORY

Exodus 20, 24; Leviticus; 2 Chronicles 28-30;

1 Kings 6-7; 2 Kings 16-18; Isaiah 7-9

Our story is called:

The Case of the Colossal Clean-Up.

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

1. Colossal means "really big." Who ordered a really big clean up? What was being thrown away?
2. What did the people of Israel and Judah deserve? What did they receive from the LORD instead? How did they show they were repenting of the sins?

Our story starts about in Jerusalem, about 1000 years before Jesus lived on earth.

From the time David captured Jerusalem from the Jebusites, he longed for it to be a city dedicated to the glory of the LORD. David wanted to build a beautiful Temple in Jerusalem for the "Name of the LORD," where all people could come and worship Him. It would be where the LORD's special Presence with His people would dwell—just like it had in the Tabernacle. But this time, it would be a permanent house, not a tent that moved around. Guided by the Holy Spirit, David made the plans for the Temple that his son, King Solomon, would build one day.

It took seven, long years for the Temple to be built; and, oh, how magnificent it was when it was finished! The Temple itself was made of white marble. The sun shone brightly off of the white stone, as if the glory of the LORD shone out from it.

One of the first things you saw as you entered the Temple courtyard was the "Sea"—a huge, bronze tub on a tall base. It was carved with twelve bulls and filled with special water. This was where the priests would wash before entering the Temple. Near it stood the great, bronze altar on which all burnt offerings to the LORD were to be made. Every morning and every night, the priests sacrificed a lamb as a burnt offering on it. This was to be a sign of the people's daily promise live for the LORD. The people brought their own sacrifices to the priests, too. They brought sin offerings for their sins, and fellowship offerings to thank God for His blessings.

Inside the Temple were two special rooms: The Holy Place and The Most Holy Place. The walls were decorated with carvings of cherubim and vines. The Holy Place was lit by a golden lampstand with seven wicks shaped like almond buds. It was to be kept burning at all times, as a

Holy Place was lit by a golden lampstand with seven wicks shaped like almond buds. It was to be kept burning at all times, as a sign of God's constant presence. By its light the priests could see to burn incense and oil on the golden Altar of Incense, every morning and night. As the incense and oil hit the hot coals on the altar, a fragrant cloud filled the Holy Place. This cloud stood for the prayers of the people constantly going up to God. There was also a golden table with twelve loaves of bread, baked fresh each Sabbath. These stood for the twelve tribes of Israel, living in the LORD's presence.

Just beyond the Altar of Incense was a curtain, beautifully woven with cherubim. Hidden behind it was the Most Holy Place. This was the most special part of the Temple. It was here that the golden box called the Ark of the Covenant stood. On the top of the box were two golden cherubim whose wings bent over their backs and met in the middle as they faced each other. Inside the Ark were the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. These were the solemn covenant the LORD and the people of Israel made with each other long ago on Mount Sinai. The LORD promised to take care of them and they promised to keep His laws. Curses and blessings came with these promises. Blessings, if they kept their promises. Curses, if they did not.

There, between the cherubim and over the Law of the Covenant that rested in the Ark, the LORD promised His special presence to dwell, like a throne room into Heaven. Only once a year did anyone get to go inside the Most Holy Place. On that day—called the Day of Atonement—the high priest would bring a special blood offering to sprinkle on the cover of the Ark between the cherubim. This offering the LORD accepted to purify the Most Holy Place of the people's sinfulness, so that His Presence could keep dwelling there among them. After all, the LORD was a holy God. He expected them to be a holy people, too. Any broken law, any sin, even if just an accident, broke fellowship with Him.

But the wonderful thing about the LORD was that He was not only holy, He was merciful, too. He accepted the sacrifices of all who brought them in repentance for their sins and faith in Him as covering for their sin. It was no wonder that people from all twelve tribes of Israel would wait with great expectation outside in the Temple courts for the high priest to return from the Most Holy Place. As he pronounced their sacrifice accepted and their sins

covered, all the people let out such a great roar of joyful praise to the LORD that it seemed to thunder through all of Jerusalem. How wonderful was their God! How merciful He was to sinners who turned to Him in repentance and faith!

I am sorry to say that those days full of praise in Jerusalem did not last very long for the twelve tribes of Israel. After King Solomon died, the twelve tribes split apart and became two separate nations...and bitter enemies. The ten tribes in the north called themselves "Israel." The tribes in the south called themselves "Judah." Israel build a new royal city called Samaria and set up golden calves to worship. Soon the golden calves were not enough. They began to worship Baal and Astarte, the idols of the peoples around them.

Like Israel, Judah often abandoned the worship of the LORD, too. They began to turn away from the LORD and worship idols—especially when Aha was their king. Ahaz closed the Temple and sent away the priests—God's presence was no longer wanted. God's laws lay inside the Ark of the Covenant forgotten. The Israelites rebelled against God and made no sacrifices in repentance and faith that they might be forgiven.

The Israelites had broken their promises to the LORD. Would He just stand by and do nothing? No, He would not! God's promises of blessings for obedience to His covenant were about to change to curses for disobedience! He sent prophets to warn them of His coming punishment. They urged the people to turn back to the LORD, but they refused and kept worshipping their idols.

So God allowed enemy armies to come in and attack first Israel, then Judah. 120,000 soldiers were killed! 200,000 women and children were taken away as captives! Enemies stood ready to destroy them completely. Would this be the end of Israel and Judah? They certainly deserved for it to be!

But this wasn't to be the end, for the LORD is a God of great mercy to His rebellious people. He would be true to His Covenant promises, even when His people were untrue to theirs. So, even in those terribly wicked days of King Ahaz, the LORD made an amazing promise of mercy. One day He would send the Messiah—a Savior. He would be born of a woman who had no husband. His father would be no man, but God, Himself! And the baby would be none other than "Immanuel", God with Us. Yes! God, Himself! God's Son,

come to earth! This Messiah would come and save His people from their sins, once and for all. And we know His name, don't we? It's Jesus!

But the LORD didn't wait until the day of Immanuel to have mercy on Judah. Even right then, while King Ahaz was still on the throne, the LORD was quietly at work in the hearts of some. He helped them to keep remember the Covenant they made with Him. He showed them their sins and helped them repent and worship Him. They waited for better days when King Ahaz would be gone and once more they could restore the worship of the LORD to Judah. Among those waiting was none other than King Ahaz' son, Prince Hezekiah.

As soon as Ahaz died, King Hezekiah set to undo his father's wickedness. He flung open the Temple's doors and called a meeting for all the Levites and priests.

"Listen to me, priests and Levites! Make yourselves and the Temple clean again! It's time to worship the LORD again! Our fathers were unfaithful to Him. That's why our enemies have attacked us. But we are going to repent and turn back to the LORD. We are going to make a new covenant with Him," Hezekiah said.

The Levite leaders set right to work. They dumped all the idols in the trash dump down in the Kidron Valley, outside of town and put all the beautiful things used to worship the LORD back in place. It was time to worship the LORD again!

King Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem gathered together with the priests, offering up thousands of offerings. They confessed their sins and promised to serve and love the LORD. In repentance and faith were turning back to worship Him. They sang the beautiful psalms that David had written for them to sing in the Temple, complete with cymbals, harps, lyres and trumpets. How great was rejoicing that day! Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.

Then King Hezekiah sent messengers throughout all of Judah and Israel: "Come, join us in Jerusalem for Passover! Turn away from your idols! Turn back to the LORD! He will forgive you! He will turn away your enemies, for God is gracious and compassionate," he urged them.

Some of the people refused to repent. But many others were convicted of their sins and set out for Jerusalem. They wanted to turn back to the LORD. What a celebration

it was when they gathered together! For the first time in hundreds of years, people from the twelve tribes joined together to worship the LORD. They offered up Passover lambs in repentance and faith. King Hezekiah, himself, prayed to the LORD to accept their sacrifices and have mercy upon them. The LORD heard his prayer and forgave them. And the people celebrated for two weeks straight!

Our Bible Truth is:

**God Gave Us His Laws to Convict Us of Sin,
That We Might Be Saved**

Our Bible Verse is: Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the LORD while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will freely pardon."

How very different those days of Temple sacrifices and idol worship may seem from our day! Jesus, the Messiah, Immanuel, has come and offered Himself as the final sacrifice for the sins of all who by repentance and faith turn to Him as Savior. There is no need for the blood of animal sacrifices now. And perhaps in our part

And perhaps in our part of the world we see very few idols. But nonetheless, there are still some things that are very much like those days long ago. The hearts of people are just as stubborn and rebellious now as they were then. People still do not want to hear that they are lawbreakers deserving God's punishment. They resist confessing their sins and turning in repentance and faith to Jesus as Savior. If we are honest with ourselves, we know that all of our hearts are stubborn and rebellious, too. Let's praise God for His work then and now in the rebellious, hard hearts of people. Let's ask Him to soften the hearts of people in our world today that many would confess their sins and by repentance and faith, to trust in Jesus as their Savior. Let's ask Him to do that in our hearts, too.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

It's not our fault that we disobey God. No one has told us what His laws are.

Answer: False! Not only have many of us been taught God's laws, but even in our hearts, God has put a sense of right and wrong. There is no one on earth without excuse for disobeying God.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Colossal means "really big." Who ordered a really big clean up? What was being thrown away?

Answer: King Hezekiah ordered the Temple be cleaned of all the idols, then all the beautiful things used to worship the LORD put back in their proper places.

b. What did the people of Israel and Judah deserve? What did they receive from the LORD instead? How did they show they were repenting of the sins?

Answer: They deserved nothing but his punishment for choosing to rebel against Him, over and over. They did receive some of His punishment, but lots of His mercy, too. He promised to send them a Savior; and, He accepted their sacrifices when they restored the Temple. They showed their repentance by getting rid of the idols and by once more coming to worship Him at the Temple.

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

Isaiah 55:6-7

"Seek the ___ while He may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his ___ and the evil man his thoughts. Let him ___ to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him, and to our ___, for He will freely pardon."

Answers: LORD; way; turn; God.

Answers: patient; self-seeking; patient; fails.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 12

Verse 1

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

Words: Edwin Hatch; Music: Robert Jackson

We are all sinners. We were made to love and obey God, but we have all turned away from that most wonderful of lives. Only God can change us and He can, by His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is nicknamed the "Breath of God." Our breath fills our body with the air that it needs to live. The Holy Spirit fills God's people with Himself so that they can know and love God and have His eternal life. God will send His Holy Spirit to work this way in us when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This song is a prayer asking Him to do this.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the one true God, alone worthy of our worship.

C God, we confess that we too many times we choose to not love You when things are hard. We want to please and protect ourselves, instead of pleasing and depending upon You. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for giving Your people the courage to live for You and to love You, even when it is very hard.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Send Your Holy Spirit to work in our hearts so that we would love and live for You, even when it is very hard.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Seek the LORD

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 13

Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call on Him while He is near,
Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call on Him while He is near,
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the evil man his thought,
Let him turn, turn to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him,
He will have mercy on him.
Isaiah Fifty-five, six and seven.

Words adapted from Isaiah 55:6-7 Constance Dever © 2011

This verse tells us how God wants His people to love others. This is how He has treated them through Jesus. He wants them to be like Him and go and love others this way, too. God's Holy Spirit helps them love in these ways. He helps them love even when it is very hard.