

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 ESV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

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

"The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; (sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned;) in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI ESV Songs 7, Tracks 5,6

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4: Jesus Kept God's Law Perfectly, So by His Grace He Could Save God's People

From the time Adam and Eve became lawbreakers, people have offered sacrifices for their sins.

God's laws tell us there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood. God commanded the Israelites to offer up the blood of animals when they sinned, as a sign of their desire to turn from their sins and trust in Him to save them. God received their offerings, given in repentance and faith, and allowed them to remain in fellowship with Him.

But the blood of animals could never take away the sins of a human. Only the blood of a human who lived God's laws perfectly and offered up his life in the sinner's place could do that. God, in His mercy, did just this. He sent His Son Jesus to take on human flesh and be that perfect sacrifice for sins.

Jesus was fully God and fully human. He was perfect; He was not born with a sinful heart like us. Jesus kept all of God's laws. He loved God and others perfectly. He fulfilled all of God's Law with His life. He offered up His life on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for God's people's sins. He took upon Himself the punishment they deserved that they might be forgiven their sins, once and for all. On the third day, God raised Jesus, showing that the power of sin and death had indeed been broken by His perfect sacrifice.

None of us will ever be able to earn salvation with a perfectly lived life, but each of us can have salvation through God's grace—His undeserved gift of salvation to sinners—if we come to Him in repentance and faith in Jesus.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: 1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God."

CASE STORY

Leviticus 16; Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 2:8ff;23;
John 19; Hebrews

Our story is: The Case of the Goat-Lamb Man.

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

1. Who was the convict? Why was he in jail?
2. What did he do that was so convicting? Who did he hope would change?

This story takes place in New Testament times, when Jesus lived on earth.

Night was falling over Israel and it was getting dark—pitch dark! Back then there was no electricity; only fires and little oil lamps. So when the sun went down, the lights went out and people went home! Everyone, that is, but the protectors of the herds. They stayed up all night in the darkness with the animals.

What could be so important about sheep, goats, and cattle—that they needed babysitting all night, in all kinds of weather? After all, they're just animals, right?

Well, the people of Israel wouldn't call them "just animals." They depended on them for a lot of the clothes and food that ate. The Israelites needed these animals like we need grocery and clothing stores.

Because these animals freely grazed the grasslands and wildernesses of Israel, they needed constant protection, especially at night. Bears, lions, wolves, and thieves were always on the prowl. So, while the rest of Israel closed their eyes in sleep, the cattlemen, feeding their cattle on the grassy Plain of Sharon to the south; and the goatherds and shepherds grazing their goats and sheep out in the wilderness lands to the east, kept their watchful eyes open, all night long.

But there was an even more important reason why these sheep, goats and cattle were protected. The Israelites could not stay spiritually "clean" without them. Thousands of sheep, goats and bulls in perfect condition were needed each year to be used as sacrifices to the LORD at the Temple in Jerusalem. Every morning and every evening, a perfect, one-year-old lamb was offered on the Altar of Burnt Offering as the first and last sacrifices of the day. That's 730 lambs right there! Tens of thousands more, perfect, one-year-old lambs were needed to sacrifice as Passover lambs for the families who came to Jerusalem to celebrate that feast each year. Now that's a lot of lambs! So many lambs were needed that the priests hired

shepherds to keep special flocks of sheep just for Temple use in the not-too-distant hills outside of Bethlehem. They built a watchtower called the Migdal Eder, "tower of the flock," from which to keep better tabs on the sheep. Whenever more sheep were needed in the Temple courts for sacrifices, the shepherds picked out perfect ones and drove them into Jerusalem.

But it wasn't just perfect lambs that were needed. Perfect bulls and goats were necessary for Temple sacrifices, too. It was their blood that was presented to the LORD on the Day of Atonement—the most important day of the year. On that day, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place in the Temple. First, he sacrificed a perfect bull calf as a sin offering for his own sins. After all, he was a law breaker like every other Israelite. He could only bring the people's offering for his own sins. After all, he was a law breaker like every other Israelite. He could only bring the people's offering before the LORD if he had been purified first.

Then, two perfect goats were brought before him. One goat was chosen to be the sin offering for the people. A crimson red thread was tied around its neck. The high priest killed it and then took its blood behind the beautiful, cherubim-embroidered curtain into the Most Holy Place. He sprinkled the blood between the two golden cherubim on the cover of the Ark on the spot called the Mercy Seat. When offered in repentance and faith, the LORD counted this blood sacrifice as acceptable to purify the Most Holy Place of the people's sins for the whole year. This was how the LORD's presence could continue to dwell there and the people could stay in fellowship with Him.

After sprinkling the blood on the Mercy Seat, the high priest came out of the Most Holy Place and sprinkled goat's blood on the Holy Place and on the Altar of Burnt Offerings. These needed to be purified from the sins of the people, too, if they were to stay in fellowship with the LORD for the year.

Then other goat was brought the high priest to be the 'scapegoat,' the bearer of the people's sins. The high priest tied a crimson thread around him, too, but this time it was around his head, not his neck. Then he laid both of his hands on the head of the goat and confessed over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins. God accepted this confession and transferred the impurity of their sins onto the goat's head. He handed the goat over to a man who led the goat miles away from the Temple to

die. This was a sign that God had carried away their sins, never to be counted against them again.

So you see, there were very, very good reasons for those herders to stay out all night the animals. Someone had to protect them so there would be perfect animals for sacrifice. God's people were lawbreakers. They could never stay pure by keeping His laws perfectly. They needed these animals to stay in fellowship with the LORD.

But really, God's people needed more than perfect animals—a lot more. They needed a perfect law-keeping person to offer up Himself in their place. His blood could be the final sacrifice that would satisfy God's wrath against their sins for all time. And God, Himself, chose to provide such a person: His own Son, Jesus.

One night, near Migdal Eder in the hills of Bethlehem, as shepherds kept watch over the Temple sheep an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

How right it was that the LORD chose to be born in an animal shelter near where shepherds kept the perfect sheep used in Temple sacrifices. Had not He, the LORD Himself, had come to earth to be the perfect, law-keeping man who would lay down His life as the final sacrifice for His people? He was the Lamb of God.

That night was just the beginning. Over the next thirty three years Jesus lived out His call. He kept every single bit of the God's law. There was not even one time when He sinned in His heart, with His words or with anything He did. He always loved God with all His heart, mind, soul and strength. He always loved others. He told people to repent and believe in Him. Those who put their faith in Him as their Savior would be saved from their sins once and for all. He was the perfect, law keeping human who had come to be the final sacrifice for God's People.

At last it came time for Jesus to give up His life. His enemies arrested Him and soldiers nailed Him to the cross. They thought they had won, but Jesus knew better. This

was the very thing He had come to do. He was the perfect, law-keeping human come to make the final sacrifice. He had come to suffer and die on that cross for God's people's sins. He was the Scapegoat of God, taking the punishment for all the sins of God's people. When all their sins were paid for, Jesus gave up His spirit and died.

On earth, Jesus' body hung limp and dead. It was buried in the tomb. But Jesus' spirit rose. He was the Perfect High Priest of God. He entered into heaven, the real Most Holy Place, where real cherubim bow before the real throne of God in the fullness of the LORD's glorious Presence. He came before His Father as the perfect high priest who had no sins of his own and brought his own perfect blood to offer as the perfect sacrifice for all those who would ever repent of their sins and believe in Him as their Savior. Here was perfect righteousness that could cleanse guilty consciences and sinful hearts. What no human on earth could do; what no sheep, goats or bulls could do; Jesus did as the final sacrifice.

What happened in heaven was declared on earth. The veil of the Most Holy Place was torn in two the day Jesus died. No longer did the guilt of sin separate the holy LORD from His people. The LORD's holiness was satisfied once and for all with Jesus' perfect, law-keeping life as substitute for theirs. The final sacrifice had been made.

And on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, proving He had conquered sin and death for all of God's people. Yes, He was the final sacrifice!

Our Bible Truth is:

Jesus Kept God's Laws Perfectly, So By His Grace

He Could Save His People

Our Bible Verse is: 1 Peter 3:18:

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God."

How awesome is the LORD! How perfect His holiness! How great His wrath against the sins of His people. Yet, how great is His love! How amazing His grace! To think, that God the Father would send His Son to become a man, to live the perfect life His people could never live. That He would choose to suffer their punishment and death, so that He by His grace He could give them the gifts of forgiveness of sins and eternal life that they never could deserve!

Let's praise the LORD for the riches of His love. Let's ask

Him to help us to never forget what Jesus did to be the final sacrifice for God's people. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts that we might turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. Let's ask Him to help us live out our lives in thankfulness and in obedience as the best way we have to show Him how grateful we are for what He has done.

Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Only people who try really, really hard to keep God's laws can be saved from their sins by their own effort.

Answer: False! None of us, no matter how hard we try to keep God's laws can ever deserve God's salvation. But anyone, who turns from their sins and trusts in Jesus as their Savior, can be saved! His sacrifice is enough for even the worst of sinners!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was Goat-Lamb Man? What goat was he like?

What lamb was he like?

Answer Jesus. He was like the scapegoat who bore the people's sins and took them away. He was like the Passover lamb that was killed so that God would Passover the people's sins.

b. What did he do so that no more goats or lambs were needed?

Answer Jesus bore the punishment for sins of God's people in His body, once and for all. No more scapegoats or Passover lambs would ever be needed again. They pointed to His final, perfect sacrifice.

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

1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ also suffered once for ___, the ___ for the unrighteous, that he might ___ us to God."

Answers: sins; righteous; bring.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace

PFI ESV Songs 7, Tracks 17,18

Verse 1

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now am found.
Was blind but now I see.

Verse 2

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Words: John Newton Music: Virginia Harmony: arr. Edwin O. Excell

We would all be lost in our sins and rebellion forever, if it were not for God sending His Son Jesus. Jesus kept God's laws perfectly and offered up Himself as the perfect sacrifice needed for sin. Then He gives to all who repent of their sins and trust in Him the amazingly gracious gift of salvation. He first gives them "sight" to make them aware of their sinfulness and to fear His judgment, then as they turn to Him, He relieves their fears by taking away their guilt the hour they believe.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Gracious Provider of the final sacrifice for sins, without which we could never be saved.

C God, we confess that we are sinners who cannot please You with our own goodness. We need Jesus to be the Lamb who perfectly takes away the punishment for our sins.

T God, we thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment for sinners like us! Thank You that our guilt can be completely taken away because of Him!

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to live thankful and joyful lives that seek to obey You in everything we do, as the only way we have to show how grateful we are.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For Christ Suffered for Sins

PFI ESV Songs 7, Track 19

For Christ suffered once for sins, once for sins,
The righteous for the unrighteous that he might bring
us to God,
Bring us to God,
For Christ suffered to bring us to God.
First Peter Three, eighteen.

Words: 1 Peter 3:18 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2015

Jesus chose to suffer and die on the cross as the perfect substitute for all who turn from their sins and trust in Him as Savior. He alone is righteous. He alone kept God's laws perfectly, so he alone could bring us to God. He knew none of us could never pay for our own sins. We would never be able to come to God on our own. So He chose to give up His life to give them salvation by His grace--His free gift given to undeserving sinners, like you and me. Yes, He would bring us to God.