

# PFI PRONTO

## BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

*We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves*

### Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"

PFI ESV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

### Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 ESV

"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever."

PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 5

## BIBLE TRUTH

*We're learning... Bible Truth 1:*

### God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts

God has given many good gifts to all people--whether they love and obey Him or not. He made this beautiful world for all to enjoy. He has given each of us a heart to know and love Him and others. He has given each of us a body to do many different, wonderful things. He provides the sun and rain, the hot and cold, to grow the food we need. He keeps all living things alive each day. These are just some of the many good gifts God has blessed us with.

Why did God give us these good gifts? To enjoy them, to understand what He is like, and to glorify Him for giving them to us. Everyone should glorify God for His many good gifts given to them, but especially God's people. They enjoy the same good gifts as everyone else and far, far more. God is their Heavenly Father and they are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. And one day, they will get to live with Him forever. These are the very best gifts of all. They are gifts that can be ours even today, if 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 1 Bible Verse: Psalm 145:9-10,13,15-17

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you! The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

## CASE STORY

Acts 12:20-35

### Our story is: The Case of the King Who Kept His Mouth Shut.

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

1. Who was the king? Over what was he made king?
2. What did he keep shut about? What should he have done instead?

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

A Jewish prince in jail! Who could believe that! Prince Agrippa certainly couldn't. One minute he had been enjoying the company of the royal family at dinner; the next, he was thrown in prison.

It was his servant Eutychus' fault. Months ago, Agrippa had been enjoying a chariot ride on a beautiful, pine tree-lined Via outside of Rome with his old school buddy, the Roman prince, Caligula. Agrippa and Caligula rode inside the luxurious carpentum, a chariot that was arched overhead with a covering of cloth. Eutychus sat on the outside seat in front, driving the mules. As they rode along, Agrippa and Caligula began to talk about Caligula's great uncle, Caesar Tiberius. Tiberius was a cruel man and a bad ruler. Everyone thought it, but no one said it for fear of Tiberius' punishment. But out there alone on the road with Caligula, Agrippa spoke up: "I can't wait for old Tiberius to die! You could get rid of his grandson, then rule the Roman Empire yourself. Then the world would be happy and so would I!" Agrippa said.

Eutychus heard every one of these dangerous words. He kept quiet until Agrippa had him arrested for stealing some of his clothes. One evening at a dinner with Tiberius and others of the royal family, Agrippa forced Eutychus to appear before Tiberius to receive Tiberius' punishment for his theft in the most embarrassing way possible. But, the things didn't go as Agrippa planned. Eutychus used this as a chance to tell Tiberius what Agrippa said to Caligula about him. Tiberius was furious! Guards bound him in heavy chains ride at the dinner table. They threw him in the palace prison, still in his royal robes.

For six months, Agrippa was chained to a guard in jail. He had lots to think about during that time. What a life full of good blessings he had enjoyed! He was a son of the great, Hasmonean Jewish kings. He had been sent to Rome by his parents to be instructed by the finest

teachers alongside Caligula, Claudius, and other sons of the royal Roman family. His parents had given him money to buy everything he wanted. He had a good wife and five children.

As a Jew, Agrippa knew who had given him all these good things: it was the LORD. He was the one, true God, maker of heaven and earth. He gave all people the good things they enjoyed. He gave them life, itself. What were the words of the Ashrey (Psalm 145) he had heard many godly Jews sing three times a day, every day? "Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise... One generation will commend your works to another... They will celebrate your abundant goodness... The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made... The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down... You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

Yes, Agrippa knew God had given him many good gifts, but what a mess he had made with them! He used up all his money impressing people with big parties and expensive gifts. He borrowed huge amounts of money from others....and never paid them back! He had been an honored friend of Caesar's family and now here he was in jail! Tiberius might even put him to death for his foolish words! Agrippa had used the good things God had given him to make others think he was a great man, but look at him now: a prisoner! He was lower than low.

To whom much is given, much will be required. God had given Agrippa all these good things to glorify Him. Agrippa had used them to get people to glorify himself, instead of God. A day would come when the Lord would no longer show mercy to Agrippa for what he had done with His good gifts to him; but that day was not yet. God, in His great patience and love, was going to give Agrippa more time and more good things.

Caesar Tiberius became sick and died. Agrippa's friend, Caligula became emperor. Caligula released Agrippa from prison and honored him for his loyalty. He took a golden tiara and placed it on Agrippa's head: "I crown you king over the lands from Damascus to Nabatea, your uncle Philip's territories," he told Agrippa. Then picking up a heavy, golden chain, Caligula said: "In prison, you bore a heavy chain of iron for saying I would make a better emperor than my great uncle, Tiberias. You have suffered much.

Now for honoring me on that day, I honor you today. I give you this chain of gold of the same weight as the iron one you once carried."

"Ruler over my uncle Philip's lands!" Agrippa thought to himself. "And not just a ruler, but a king, with powerful to do as I like! Not even my uncle Herod Antipas is a king! This is wonderful!"

Agrippa enjoyed more riches, fame and power than ever before. Before long he had become king over all of Judea (what we call Israel), including the prize jewel: Jerusalem—home of the Temple! What a life full of good things Agrippa enjoyed! But what would he do with these good things this time? Would he choose again to glorify himself with these good gifts, or this time would he glorify the LORD?

Agrippa wanted to be a good ruler for the Jews. He pleased the Pharisees and priests by keeping all their little rules for how to live and what to eat and drink; and, by always making the right sacrifices at the Temple. He even read God's Word aloud at some of the special ceremonies. He took that great, gold chain that Caligula had given him and hung it high in the Temple Treasury room, where people's money offerings were kept, to remind people that even the greatest men may lose all they have and that God sometimes chooses to raise them back up to greatness again. He gave the Jews great gifts and protected them from their enemies. He built a very strong, new wall around Jerusalem and many other beautiful buildings and arenas for the Jews to enjoy. He punished their enemies and tried to crush the Christians by arresting Peter and killing James. The Jews thought what Agrippa did was so wonderful that they called him: Agrippa the Great.

The Jews loved Agrippa, but God was not at all pleased. To whom much is given, much will be required. In His love, God had given Agrippa many good things to enjoy, yes; but also to glorify Him. Agrippa had used the good things God had given him to get people to glorify him, not God. Agrippa had even used his good gifts to kill the Christians and to try to stop the good news of Jesus from spreading to others. A day would come when the Lord would no longer show mercy to Agrippa for what he had done with God's good gifts given to him. That day was not far off now. Soon His patience would come to an end.

King Agrippa decided to hold a big festival to honor Caesar Claudius in the city of Caesarea, about 80 miles

south of Jerusalem. There would be races and lots of fun, kind of like the Olympic Games. Agrippa would be the host in charge of the celebration. A great crowd of people gathered in the huge, outdoor arena.

Among the crowd were some people from Sidon and Tyre--enemies Agrippa had punished by keeping food from their starving people. They had come to make peace with the king. They gave Blastus, King Agrippa's servant, a generous gift that he might work something out with the king. Blastus was successful. Agrippa agreed to speak to them in the great arena on the morning of second day of the Festival.

Everyone gathered in the arena early that bright, sunny morning, and awaited for Agrippa the Great to enter, to hear what he would say to the people of Sidon and Tyre, and to begin the day's festivities. As the king entered, the crowd gasped at what they saw. Agrippa was not wearing his usual, royal robes. Instead, he seemed to dazzle with a blaze of glory. The people had never seen anything like it! They could hardly keep looking at him; he was so blindingly bright with light. From one place in the arena and then another the people began to cry out: "Be merciful to us; for although up to this time we honored you only as a man, yet now we praise you as a god!"

What would Agrippa do with the people's praises? He knew that he had no glory of his own. The splendid brightness the people saw came from the special robe woven entirely out of silver he had made for the Festival. He knew that everything he was and he had were only good gifts from the LORD and that He alone should be worshiped. Agrippa was just a man, no matter how dazzling his clothes were--and he knew it. Here was a wonderful chance to glorify God as the only, true God and the giver of all good things. Here was a wonderful chance to encourage the crowds to see the LORD's love and goodness. But Agrippa didn't take it. He wanted to glorify himself rather than God. He said nothing about the LORD. He accepted the people's praise for himself.

To whom much is given, much will be required. God had given Agrippa so many good things with which to glorify Him. Agrippa had used them to encourage people to glorify himself, instead. Now the day had at last come when the Lord would no longer show Agrippa mercy for what he had done with the good gifts given to him. In His great mercy, God had been patient with Agrippa, now it

was coming to an end. Right then and there, the LORD ordered an angel to strike Agrippa down with a terrible sickness caused by worms inside his stomach. Antipas grabbed his stomach with the sudden pain. He collapsed. His men had to carry him out. For five days Antipas suffered in agony, then God took away His last good gift to Agrippa.... his very life.

### **Something For You and Me**

**Our Bible Truth is:**

**God Blesses All People with Many Good Gifts**

**Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 145: 9-10,13,15-17**

"The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his works...The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all His works."

What a terrible ending to a man God had blessed with so many good things! How merciful and patient He had been with Agrippa! God gave him more and more good things. He gave him so many chances to use them to glorify Him; but Agrippa rarely did. He used them instead to glorify himself. I wonder what Agrippa thought about those last five days of his life? I hope that he repented of his sins against the Lord.

But what about you and me? Each day God, in His love, blesses us with many good gifts: friends, family, food, homes. Talents and opportunities. Bodies that move and breath; heart that can know and love God and others. What do we do with them? Enjoy them, no doubt. But who do we use them to glorify: ourselves or the LORD? Like Agrippa, there are many times we do not use the LORD's good gifts to just glorify ourselves. We should confess these sins and turn away from them. We can trust in Jesus, who came to save us even from God's punishment for them. He will forgive us. But that is not all! The LORD promises to all who trust in Him like this, He will send His Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and give them more love for Him and help them to use all God has given them to glorify Him. Let's praise God for being the loving Giver of everything good that we enjoy. Let's ask Him to send His Holy Spirit to work in our hearts, so we might truly glorify Him with them.

**SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU**

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

The best of God's good gifts are those that God's people know and receive.

Answer: True! God is their Heavenly Father. They are His dearly loved children. Jesus died to save them from their sins. The Holy Spirit lives inside them and helps them to love, obey and enjoy God. They will get to live with Him forever. These gifts can be our when we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

**2. Crack the Case Questions**

**a. Who was the king? Over what was he made king?**

Answer: King Agrippa. He was made king over all of Judah.

**b. What did he keep shut about? What should he have done instead?**

Answer: The people praised him for being a god. He should have instead turned their praise to the LORD instead of keeping it for himself.

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

**Psalms 145:9-10,13,15-17**

"The LORD is good to all, and his \_\_\_ is over all that he has made. All your works shall give \_\_\_ to you, O LORD, and all your saints shall bless you!

The LORD is faithful in all his words and kind in all his \_\_\_\_...  
The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand; you satisfy the desire of every living thing. The LORD is righteous in all his ways and \_\_\_ in all His works."

Answers: mercy; thanks; works; kind.

**BIBLE TRUTH HYMN**

**Be Thou My Vision**

*PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 7*

**Verse 3**

Riches I heed not, or man's empty praise,  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Words: Ancient Irish; tr. Mary E. Byrne; versified, Eleanor H. Hull

Music: Traditional Irish Melody; harm. David Evans

Riches are a good gift from God. We use them to buy many good things that we enjoy. When people praise us for good/important things we do, that is a good gift from God, too. We all like to be encouraged and valued. These are good gifts, but they are not the best gift. The best gift we can have is when we become one of God's people and God, Himself, is our treasure and inheritance. That makes riches and people's praise worth almost nothing ("empty") in comparison.

**AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY**

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

**A** God, we praise You for being so patient to sinners, giving them many chances to turn from their sins and turn to You in faith.

**C** God, we confess that many times, Agrippa, we do not honor You as we should. We like for people to honor us more than we want them to honor You.

**T** God, we thank You for promising to save all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their own Savior.

**S** God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Give us grateful hearts for all You give us and to help us give You the glory for all Your goodnesses shown to us.

**BIBLE VERSE SONG**

**The LORD Is Good to All**

*PFI ESV Songs 8, Track 8*

We all with unveiled face,  
Beholding the glory of the Lord,  
Are being transformed,  
Into the same image,  
From one degree of glory to another,  
For this comes from the Lord,  
The Lord, who is the Spirit.  
For this comes from the Lord,  
The Lord, who is the Spirit.  
The Lord, who is the Spirit.  
Second Corinthians Three, eighteen.

Words: 2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, Moses met with the LORD and sometimes would actually glow with God's glory. Sometimes he would wear a veil that would cover up God's glory when he was with the people. Moses' face may have sometimes shown with God's glory, but God's people have His Holy Spirit inside them. God doesn't want them to hide His glory--they are not to veil His work in their lives, but show it to all. The Holy Spirit works inside them and transform them. He helps them to love God and live holy lives that reflect Him.