

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 NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 NIV 1984

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

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 2:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Even before God created the world, He loved His people. Even back then, He knew all about them. He knew that they would be sinners like everyone else. He knew they would all rebel against Him and deserve His punishment for their sins.

Yet even though He knew all this about them before even a single one of them was born, He loved them deeply and wanted them to be His people. He chose to set His love upon them in a special way. He chose to send His Son, Jesus, to pay for their sins. He chose that by the Holy Spirit, He would give them faith in Jesus, and through that faith, He would forgive their sins. He would give them each a new heart to love and obey Him. They would be His special people--a countless number from every language and people on earth, who would live to enjoy Him and praise His amazing love forever.

We can know God's love and be His dearly loved people, too, when 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 2 Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

CASE STORY

Ephesians 1; Romans 8; Genesis; Exodus; 1 Kings/ 1 Chronicles; 2 Kings/2 Chronicles; Luke; Acts; Revelation 7:9

Our story is called:

The Case of the Long-Lived, Lavish Love.

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

1. Whose love was so long-lived? Who did he love?
2. When did his love for them begin? What was so lavish about it?

Our story today starts out before the beginning of time, when there was just God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God knew them all. All of His people. Abraham and Sarah; Moses, the Israelites; King David and King Manasseh. Peter, and Paul...and many others whose names we don't know. A number too big for our little brains to count. But God could know them all and did know them all--all of His people.

And God didn't just know them when they were born or lived or died. He knew them long before that. Before anything had been created in the heavens or earth. Before the first ray of light shone in the universe or the earth took shape. Before the first dolphin leaped in the ocean or the majestic eagle played upon the wind or a wooly animal munched on a juicy blade of grass. Before wisp of cherubim wing brushed the air or their angelic voices rang out in praise of God. Why even before time itself began. God knew this great number of people, inside and out. And He did not just know them; He loved them with a special love.

You and I know something of love: warm hugs, kind words and hands ready to care for our needs. But even the best that we know of love is only like a tiny drop compared with the depths of God's love for His people.

God's love is full of patience and kindness. He is so slow to anger! When His people sin against Him, He forgives their sins and keeps no record of their wrongs.

How completely He looks after them! His love is always protecting them from anything that is not for their good. He rescues them out of dangers and temptations. When they are scared, He quiets them with assurances of His love. And oh, how He greatly delights in them! The Bible tells us that He even rejoices over them with singing. Can you imagine: God singing over you because you bring Him so much joy? That is how it is between God and His people. Everyone else's love may fail them, but God's

love never will.

Now perhaps you are thinking: "Wow! There must be something really special about these people that He chose to fix His special love upon them even before He created the world. I wonder what it is that made them so attractive, so deserving?"

Well actually, there was absolutely NOTHING in Abraham and Sarah; Moses, the Israelites; King David and King Manasseh; Peter, and Paul nor any other of God's people that made them attractive or deserving of His special love. Matter of fact, there was every reason for them NOT to deserve it. Why? Because of something God saw and knew about every single one of them: they were all sinners!

Yep, all these people--like every other single person God would create--would choose to rebel against Him and His good ways. Abraham, He knew, would grow up as a worshiper of idols. He would lie about his wife, Sarah, to an Egyptian king. He put her in danger to keep himself safe! Sarah would only laugh at God's amazing promises to give her a child in her old age.

Moses would murder a man and runaway from the Egyptian leaders rather than accepting his punishment. The Israelites would forget how God had rescued them from the Egyptians and make idols to worship instead.

The best of their kings, David, would murder a man and take his wife. The worst of their kings, Manasseh, would build altars to idols in the Temple to the LORD and make terrible sacrifices to them.

One of Jesus' best friends, Peter, would deny he even knew Jesus to save his own life. Proud Paul boasted in his good works as a Pharisee and hated Christians so much that he had them put in jail or killed.

And the rest of God's people were no different. They would all be sinners, too. Far from deserving God's special love, they would deserve His wrath and eternal punishment for their sins.

But back there, before time began, God knew this. And still, it was His will and good pleasure to set His special love upon them. Instead of giving them the punishment they would deserve for their sins, He was choosing to lavish upon them every spiritual blessing—every good thing that God could give to the hearts of people.

How could God do this? Didn't His holiness require their sins to be punished? Yes, it did. So there was only one way to do what He chose to do. He must give them all to Jesus,

the Beloved Son of God right there before the beginning. You see, none of God's people would never be able to deserve God's love, but Jesus did. And they would never be able to pay for their sins, but Jesus could.

So, in the most amazing display of love, God the Father gave these people to His Son. He proclaimed them "in Jesus Christ." Jesus would be their substitute. He would change places with them and do for them things they could never do themselves. He would take all the punishment for their sins on the cross, and in exchange, He would give them His standing of perfect holiness before His Father so they could be adopted as His own precious children, and receive all the spiritual blessing that were His. This would be to the praise of God's glorious grace--His love lavished upon undeserving sinners.

As God planned, so all things began. God created His beautiful, perfect world, and placed Adam and Eve in it. All too soon, their perfect relationship with God was broken as they rebelled against Him and His good ways. Death came to them and all people after them, as God's just punishment for sin.

Yet just as He had planned, year after year God's lavish love for His people in Jesus Christ flowed out irresistibly to them. He gave them the Bible to know His truth. He sent the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts, convicting them of their sins and giving them faith to believe. Through Jesus, He saved them from their sins and filled their hearts with love for Him and for others. He blessed them with power to live as He wanted them to live. He filled their voices with songs of praise of the wonders of His glorious grace--His love lavished upon undeserving sinners.

Abraham left his father's house and the idols he worshiped. By faith he believed the LORD and went to the land He promised him. Sarah's mocking turned to faith and praise as she became pregnant and gave birth to Isaac at the age of ninety years old!

Moses stood in the presence of the LORD on Mt. Sinai and believed. God gave him such faith in Him that he went back to Egypt to proclaim the greatness of the LORD to mighty Pharaoh himself and command him to let the Israelites go. Many of the Israelites turned away from idols and went back to worshipping the LORD. They trusted Him to lead them in victory against many powerful enemies.

Great king David was known as "a man after God's own heart" because of his great love for the LORD. King

Manasseh repented of his sins in prison in Assyria. The LORD forgave him and had him freed to return to Jerusalem and destroy all the idols he once had worshiped. All these men and women lived before the coming of Jesus, yet they looked forward in faith to the day He would come.

Then there were others who lived in Jesus' time. The Lord forgave Peter for denying Him. And by His Holy Spirit, God gave Peter great boldness to proclaim Jesus as Lord. Instead of hiding from suffering, now Peter praised God for a chance to suffer and die for Jesus.

Paul confessed himself the very worst of sinners. He counted everything he had been so proud about as garbage compared with knowing Jesus Christ.

The story of God's love didn't stop then. In the thousands of years since Jesus died on the cross and rose to reign in heaven, God has been continuing to work in the hearts of His people, bringing them each to repentance of their sins and faith in Jesus up to this very day. On God's love will go, fulfilling His plan until all His people, over the world, through all time, hear of God's amazing love for them and turn and believe in Him.

How will they hear this good news? Through God's people living today. There is still so much work to be done; a message to take to every corner of the world that all may hear and come to God.

And what a glorious day it will be when at last, at the end of time, all of God's adopted children will all be gathered together for the first time! All that countless number will praise their wonderful Father who chose to love them; and Jesus, who chose to take their punishment for sin; and the Holy Spirit, who worked in their hearts and gave them the gift of faith. In one loud voice they will sing the praise of God's glorious grace--His lavish love poured out upon them, just undeserving sinners. A love that began before the beginning of time and will never stop for all eternity.

Something for You and Me

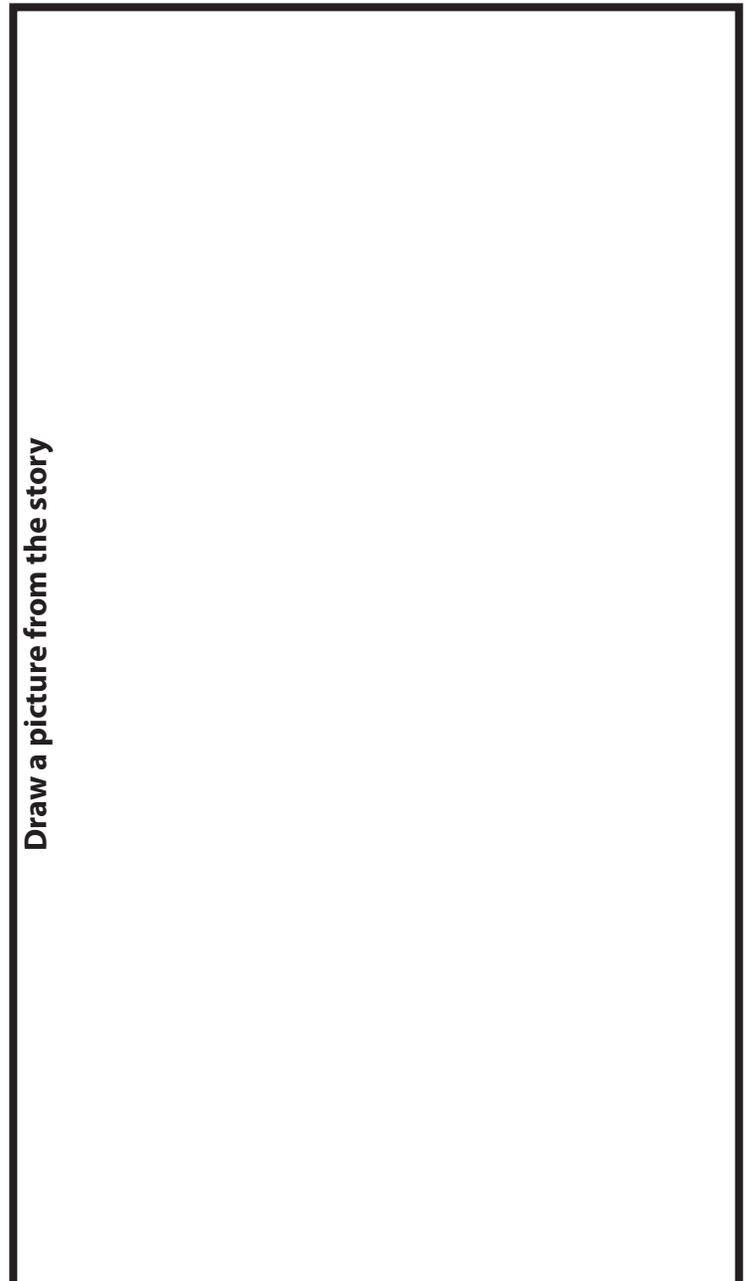
Our Bible Truth is:

God Loved His People Before They Loved Him

Our Bible Verse is: Ephesians 1:4-6

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

What about you and me? Can we be God's precious, adopted children? Can we be part of this great multitude of people loved by Him? Yes, indeed! He promises to adopt as His children all who confess their sins, turn away from and turn to Him in repentance and faith, trusting Jesus as their Savior. Let's praise God for His lavish love towards undeserving sinners. Let's praise Him for making them His precious adopted children and pouring out upon them all the spiritual blessings that belong to His Son Jesus. Let's ask Him to work in our heart that we might turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to give us boldness to share the great news of His amazing love to others that they too might turn from their sins, trust in Jesus, and become His precious children, too.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God didn't start loving His people until after He created the world.
 Answer: False. God knew and loved His people even before He created the world.

2. Crack the Case Questions
a. Whose love was so long-lived? Who did he love?
 Answer: The LORD. He loved all of His people.
b. When did his love for them begin? What was so lavish about it?
 Answer: It began before the creation of the world. He loved them, even though they were sinners who would rebel against Him. He loved them by giving His beloved Son to suffer and die for their sins.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Ephesians 1:4-6
 "For He ___ us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be ___ as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his ___ and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely ___ us in the One he loves."
 Answers: chose; adopted; pleasure; given.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Oh, How I Love Jesus
PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 8

Verse 1
 There is a name I love to hear,
 I love to sing its worth;
 It sounds as music in my ear,
 The sweetest name on earth.

Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Oh, how I love Jesus,
 Because He first loved me.

Words: Frederick Whitfield Music: Anonymous

Through Jesus, God loved His people before they loved Him. He loved them while they were still sinners. He loved them even before the creation of the world. This makes God's people so happy! They know that their sinful hearts would never choose God if He had loved them and chose them first. They know without God choosing to send Jesus to save them from their sins, they would never ever know God. This makes the name of Jesus the sweetest name on earth.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for loving Your people from even before the beginning of the world.

C God, we confess that like all people, we are sinners. We cannot deserve Your love by our own goodness. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You that even before the creation of the world, You knew Your people and planned to send Jesus to save them from their sins.

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. Make us Your dearly loved, adopted people who will get to love You and know Your love forever.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

For He Chose Us
PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 9

For He chose us in Him before the creation,
 Before the creation of the world,
 To be holy and blameless in his sight,
 Yes, he chose us before the creation of the world.
 In love he predestined us to be adopted as His sons,
 Through Jesus Christ,
 With His will and pleasure
 Yes, In love He predestined us.

Words: Ephesians 1:4-5 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

God loved His people long before they loved Him. He loved them and chose to adopt them as His people, even before He created (founded) the world. Why did He do this? Because it pleased Him to do it! It would show how wonderful He is and how great the good gifts He gives His people because of Jesus. We think of what He's done and we praise Him for being so good to people like us. People who are sinners, but through Jesus, are made to be holy--without sin and without blame in His sight.