

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 5:

God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God becomes our Heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

God promises His children to use everything that happens to them in their life on earth for their good and His glory. Ahead of time, God prepared special good works for each of them to do. He has also planned to carefully allow hard times and suffering in their lives for His special, good purposes.

What are these special, good purposes? To bring glory to His name, showing the world what He is like. And, to change them so that they become more like Jesus, who loves His Father completely and delights in Him and His perfectly good will. These are the two things God's people want most of all!

No one likes to suffer--not even for the best of purposes! But, God's people are so happy to know that there is nothing in their lives--from the easiest, most enjoyable thing to the very saddest, hardest thing--that their loving Father has not chosen very carefully to use for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

CASE STORY

Genesis 37, 49-50; Exodus 1, 6-11, 13; Joshua 24

Our story is: The Case of the Ancient Mummy.

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

1. Who was the ancient mummy? What hard thing did he endure in his life and how did God use it for his good?
2. What did God promise him? How did God answer this promise for His own glory?

This story takes place in Old Testament times, in Canaan, about 1750 years before Jesus lived on earth.

What a sight! The Canaanites could hardly believe their eyes! Dozens of sleek, Arabian horses harnessed to fine, Egyptian chariots right there on the east side of the Jordan River, hundreds of miles from Egypt!

Even stranger than the chariots and horses, was who came with them...and what they were doing. It was none other than all of Pharaoh's most important men, dressed in their beautiful headdresses, pleated linen skirts, gold belts and sandals. For seven days straight, they had been weeping and wailing at the top of their lungs around a beautiful sarcophagus on the grain threshing floor of Atad!

The Canaanites were so amazed at what they saw that they renamed the place Abel Mizraim, which means Mourning of the Egyptians. "Who is in that sarcophagus that this huge crowd of Egyptians would mourn for like this?" the Canaanites asked. "Why didn't they just bury him at home in Egypt instead of carrying him hundreds of miles across wilderness and sands to this threshing floor?" they wondered.

Inside the sarcophagus was the mummy of Jacob—or Israel, as the LORD renamed him. He and his sons had lived in Mamre in Canaan, but had moved to Egypt when the great famine struck. He had been living there these past seventeen years and then died. Jacob's sons had promised to bring him home and bury him here, near Mamre in the cave at Machpelah where his grandfather Abraham, father Isaac, wife Rachel and others had been buried before him.

But why would Egyptians be weeping and wailing for Jacob? There was only one reason: Jacob's son, Joseph, Pharaoh's great prime minister. In honor of Joseph, Pharaoh ordered all Egypt to mourn Jacob's death. For seventy days the people wept and wailed for him; and now,

the royalty of Egypt escorted the family here to Atad to mourn at the threshing floor or another seven days.

By themselves, Jacob's family then crossed the Jordan River into Canaan and placed Jacob's body in the cave at Machpelah. This was the first time in over seventeen years that any of Jacob's family had been back home. What did they see? Was the land beginning to get green again or was it still dead and brown from the famine? Whatever they saw that day, they knew could not move home yet, no matter how much they might have wanted to. It wasn't time. They had no choice but to go back to Goshen, the land in Egypt the Pharaoh gave them to live.

It wasn't that Goshen was a pleasant place to live. It was. It had rich grassland for growing crops and grazing flocks. Their families were thriving there. But nonetheless, Joseph's brothers were dreading going back. Why? They were afraid of Joseph.

You see, it had been them, Joseph's own, jealous brothers, who had sold Joseph to some traveling merchants long ago. The merchants sold him as a slave in Egypt. Joseph spent many years in slavery and in prison before the Lord rescued him to serve as the prime minister of Egypt. Joseph had good reason to hate his brothers for all they had done. And now that their father was dead, they were afraid Joseph would punish them for what they did to him.

They lied to Joseph to protect themselves: "Before Jacob died, he said you must forgive us for treating you so badly, Joseph. Please forgive us!" they said.

No lie was needed. "Don't be afraid," Joseph reassured them. "Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. I will provide for you and your families." he told them.

Joseph was right to think God meant it for good to save many, but there was far more to it than just that. God doesn't do everything just for His people's good, but for His glory, too. And God had big plans to do good to lots of His people and to bring lots of glory to Himself through the Israelites' time in Egypt. He promised to make these little families into a great nation. He would deliver them out of Egypt in a great display of His power, then He would take them back to Canaan and bless them richly. The whole world would see how He used all things for His people's good and His glory.

But like so many of God's plans, these promises would

come about slowly, according to His perfect timing.

Many years went by. Joseph and his brothers became old men. They longed to go home to Canaan, but there still was no sign of God's great plan to take them back home. Yet even as Joseph lay dying, he still had faith. He gathered his brothers and said, "I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you home to Canaan, the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When He does, carry my bones up from this place."

Joseph's brothers promised they would. So Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. They embalmed him, placed him in a coffin, and waited.

Three hundred and fifty years passed. Hard times come. The families of Joseph and his brothers had grown into a great nation of people, over a million strong, but the new Pharaoh made them his slaves. He treated them terribly, forcing them to build his new cities and and work in his fields.

The people cried out to God: "Help us! Help us! Rescue us from this place!" God heard their cries and answered them. At last it was time for God's great plan for their good and His glory to be completed.

The LORD sent Moses and Aaron to work a mighty rescue by His great power. Plague after plague, the LORD sent down upon Pharaoh and his people. "Let was the message Moses gave Pharaoh from the LORD. At first Pharaoh was stubborn and prideful. He refused to honor any god but the Egyptian gods. He refused to let the Israelites go. But when at last, all of the firstborn sons of Egypt died, Pharaoh gave in and released the Israelites to worship the LORD. At last after 350 years, it was time they were headed back home to the Promised Land!

Early on the morning after the firstborn of Egypt died, strong hands took hold of Joseph's sarcophagus that had stood untouched for hundreds of years. Like Jacob his father, the bones of Joseph were escorted out of Egypt, but this time it was by over a million Israelites. Like Jacob his father, the people made a great noise as they carried Joseph's bones out of Egypt--but this time it wasn't mourning for the dead man in the sarcophagus, it was rejoicing over the great God who had rescued them. For this time, they were leaving Egypt and never coming back! God had fulfilled His good plan for them at last. He was making them His own, treasured people. He was taking them home to the Promised Land.

As they left Egypt, the word spread far and wide about the mighty works of the God who had rescued them from the most powerful nation on earth. When the people heard what He had done, they feared the Israelites and glorified the LORD as the great God that He is.

Just as Joseph had said, "God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," and so He had... and done it all to His glory.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Uses Everything in His People's Lives for Their Good and His Glory

Our Bible Verse is: Romans 8:28-30

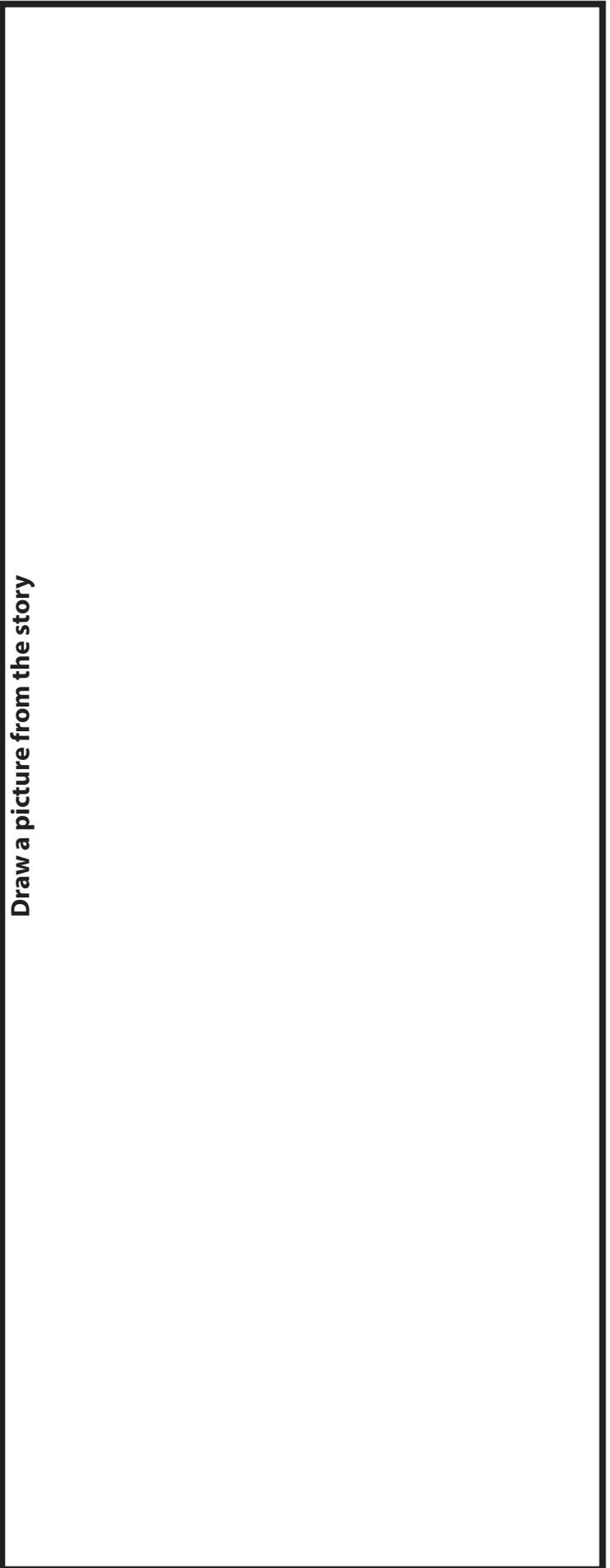
"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

God has never failed to work for the good of those who love Him. He never fails to use even the hardest things in their lives to help them love Him and obey Him. And God never fails to use all those things to glorify Himself. Joseph knew learned this.

But what about you and me? Could God work in our lives this way? Could He really bring glory to Himself through us? Yes, He could! Yes, He can! It is His promise when we become His people! How do we become His people? By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our own Savior.

Let's praise God for using all things in His people's lives for their good and His glory. Let's ask Him to make us His people. Let's ask Him to help us to trust Him to work good in the difficult things we go through. And let's ask Him to bring glory to Himself as others see His love for His people in how He works good in everything in their lives.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God's people are so happy to know that most everything they go through, God will use for their good and His glory.
 Answer: False! God's people are so happy to know that EVERYTHING they go through God will use for their good and His glory!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Ancient Mummy? What hard thing did he endure in his life and how did God use it for his good?

J Answer: Joseph. He was sold into slavery in Egypt and lived as a slave and as a prisoner in jail for many years. God used it to save his entire family from death by starvation.

b. What did God promise him? How did God answer this promise for His own glory?

Answer: God promised Joseph that he would bless his family in Egypt and many years later take them back to the Promised Land to live. The people would carry his bones home with them.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse: Romans 8:28-30

"And we know that in ___ things God works for the ___ of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew, He also ___ to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also ___; and those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified."

Answers: all; good; predestined; called.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Worker of Your people's good and Your glory, even in the hardest things that happen to them.

C God, we confess that we are tempted to lie instead of trusting You, God, when we are afraid of punishment, like Joseph's brothers did. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being true to Your promises and always working out Your good purposes.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Use all the things that happen to us for our good and Your glory, like You did with Joseph.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

How Firm a Foundation

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 15,16

Verse 3

"When thro' fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
 My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
 The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
 Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

Verse 4

"The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
 I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
 That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
 I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"

Words: John Rippon's Selection of Hymns

Music: Joseph Funk's Genuine Church Music

God's people know all God has an unbreakable plan to use all things in their lives for their good. He has planned that even their "fiery trials"—the hardest things that happen to them—that God will use them all to make them like Jesus. They do not have to like the fiery trials, but they can praise God for how He will use them for their good and His glory.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

All Things

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 17

All things, yes, all things,
 And we know that in all things, God works for the good,
 Of those who love Him, Who have been called,
 Called according to His purpose.
(But why? What was God doing for His people?)

For those God foreknew,
 He also predestined, He predestined,
 To be conformed, to be conformed,
 To the likeness of His Son.
(But why? What was God doing for Jesus?)
 That He, That He might be,
 The firstborn among many, many, Of many, brothers,
 So He might be, firstborn of many brothers.
 Romans Eight, twenty-eight and twenty-nine.

Words: Romans 8:28,29 NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2015

God's people are those who love Him. In His great love, He has called them to turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. This is what it means to be justified. But being justified in just the beginning of God's good forever plans for His people. He also planned for all things in their lives—both enjoyable things and hard things—for the good purpose of making them more like Jesus. Yes, He would use all of them to prepare them for life with Him in heaven, where they would be glorified: forever freed from sin and a pure reflection of God's glory. This is God's wonderful plan for making everything in His people's lives for their good and His glory.