

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 1: The God Who Reveals Himself

Unit 1 Big Question and Answer:
How Can I Know What God Is Like?
He Shows Me What He's Like!

PFI ESV Songs 1, Tracks 3,4

Unit 1 Bible Verse: Amos 4:13, ESV

"For behold, He who formed the mountains, creates the winds, and declares to man what is His thought. The LORD, the God of hosts, is His name."

PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 3:
God Spoke to His People through Prophets Long Ago

Before Jesus came, God often spoke to His people through prophets. Prophets were godly people who spoke God's words to people, especially God's people. God would speak to the prophets, then the prophets would tell the people exactly what God said. Sometimes false prophets came who pretended to speak God's words. The difference between the false prophets and God's true prophets was that the words of God's prophets always came true.

Sometimes God used His prophets to warn the people to stop sinning against Him. He urged them to turn away from their sins and receive His forgiveness. If they did not turn back, God used the prophets to tell His people how He would discipline them. After God disciplined His people, He used the prophets to give the people His words of comfort and hope.

The Bible is God's Word. Much of it, God first spoke to His people through the prophets. They wrote it down for God's people to know and obey. The Bible calls Jesus the Word of God, the greatest prophet of all. That's because Jesus is God. He always spoke God's Word.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 3 Bible Verse:
Deuteronomy 18:18-19, HCSB

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to My words that he speaks in My name."

CASE STORY

1 Kings 21

Our story is called:
The Case of the Warned Wicked

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

1. Who were the Wicked? What did they do that was wicked?
2. What were they warned about? What happened after they were warned?

This story is a Old Testament story. It takes place about 900 years before Jesus lived on earth, in the city of Jezreel, Samaria, home of Ahab, king of Israel.

"Warning, discipline, comfort!" Those were the LORD's words to His people through His prophets. And if there was ever a king of Israel who needed the LORD's warning, it was King Ahab. Israel's kings did many evil things but Ahab did just about all of them! And who was it that tempted King Ahab to be so evil? A woman by the name of Jezebel!

Jezebel was a princess from the country of Sidon. Ahab made her his queen, even though he knew she worshiped two, terrible, fake gods: Baal and Asherah. Before long, Jezebel had Ahab worshiping these terrible gods, too!

When Jezebel became queen, she brought 950 priests of Baal and Asherah with her. She wanted them to set up altars to these fake gods all over Israel... and Ahab let her! Jezebel didn't want Ahab rule over the people in the good way the Bible told him to... and Ahab listened to her! Soon Ahab and the people of Israel had turned away from worshiping the LORD and were worshiping Baal and Asherah, too.

As you can imagine, the LORD had a message of warning for Ahab and the people of Israel. He brought it through the prophet Elijah. "Ahab, you have made me angry by marrying that wicked woman Jezebel and worshiping Baal," the LORD told them. "You worship Baal and made a temple to him. You've led my people to follow him, too. You have broken my laws. Turn away from your sins and turn back to me or else I will discipline you!" He warned.

But Ahab didn't turn away from his sins and neither did Jezebel. They kept on sinning against the LORD and kept encouraging the people to sin, too. But, the LORD's warning would not last forever. It would one day change to discipline, if they did not repent. And so it did, right

after Ahab and Jezebel did something terrible to a godly man named Naboth.

Naboth family owned a beautiful vineyard was right next to King Ahab's palace. King Ahab wanted the land to make a vegetable garden.

"Naboth, let me have your vineyard since it's right next to my palace. I'll give you a better vineyard or I'll pay you for whatever it's worth," the king offered.

"I can't do that, King Ahab!" Naboth replied. "This is the land the LORD has given my family. It's against God's law for me to sell it."

Ahab went back to his palace and pouted. He lay on his bed and refused to eat.

"Why are you upset? Why don't you eat?" Jezebel asked Ahab.

Ahab told her the story and Jezebel came up with a wicked plan to get Ahab what he wanted.. She wrote letters in the king's name, and sent them to the important leaders of the city. "Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth where everyone can see him. Put two bad men across from Naboth and have them accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then punish him as the law requires--by stoning him to death," Jezebel ordered in the letters.

The city leaders dared not disobey Jezebel and the king. They called the feast and followed her plan completely. Naboth was falsely accused, then put to death. Then the king scooped up Naboth's vegetable garden. It was a simple as that.

Or was it? For now the LORD's word of warning changed to words of discipline. Elijah, once more, went to Ahab and Jezebel. "The LORD has a message for you. He says: "I have warned you, but you have chosen to keep on sinning against Me in terrible ways. You keep leading the people of Israel to sin against Me, too. Now I'm going to discipline both of you. Ahab, the kingdom will be taken away from your family. Jezebel, you will die at the hands of enemies and not even have a proper burial.," the LORD promised.

When Ahab heard this he repented of his sins. He knew he has sinned terribly against the LORD and against the people of Israel, especially Naboth. The LORD had warned him, but he hadn't listened. He deserved to be disciplined. He confessed his sins and humbled himself before the LORD by tearing his clothes, putting on scratchy sackcloth clothes and fasting, as they did in those days.

The LORD was pleased with this change in Ahab's heart.

Ahab hadn't listened to the His warnings at first, but now he repented of his sins as the LORD disciplined him. The LORD accepted Ahab's confession and comforted him with mercy. "Ahab, I will still take the kingdom away from your family because of the terrible things you have done. But I will hold off taking away it kingdom until after you have died," the LORD told him. In His mercy, the LORD had chosen to withhold the full punishment Ahab deserved.

But Jezebel was a completely different matter! She refused to repent of her sins. She received God's full punishment. She died and was never even buried. Jezebel's days ended with the LORD's discipline since she refused to repent of her sins and turn to worship the LORD. There would be no comfort for her.

Our Bible Truth is: God Spoke to His People through Prophets Long Ago

Our Bible Verse is: Deuteronomy 18:18-19 HCSB

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to My words that he speaks in My name."

Warning, Discipline, Comfort! That was how the LORD lovingly treated His sinful people. Those were the words He spoke to them long ago through His prophets, time after time after time. How merciful the LORD had been to them! But did you know that the greatest way the LORD comforted His people through the prophets was with the promise to one day send a Savior. This Savior would save them from their sins and change their hearts to hearts of love for God. Who is that Savior? Jesus, that's who! God's own Son. Many looked forward in faith to the day He would come. Oh, how they longed to know God's Savior!

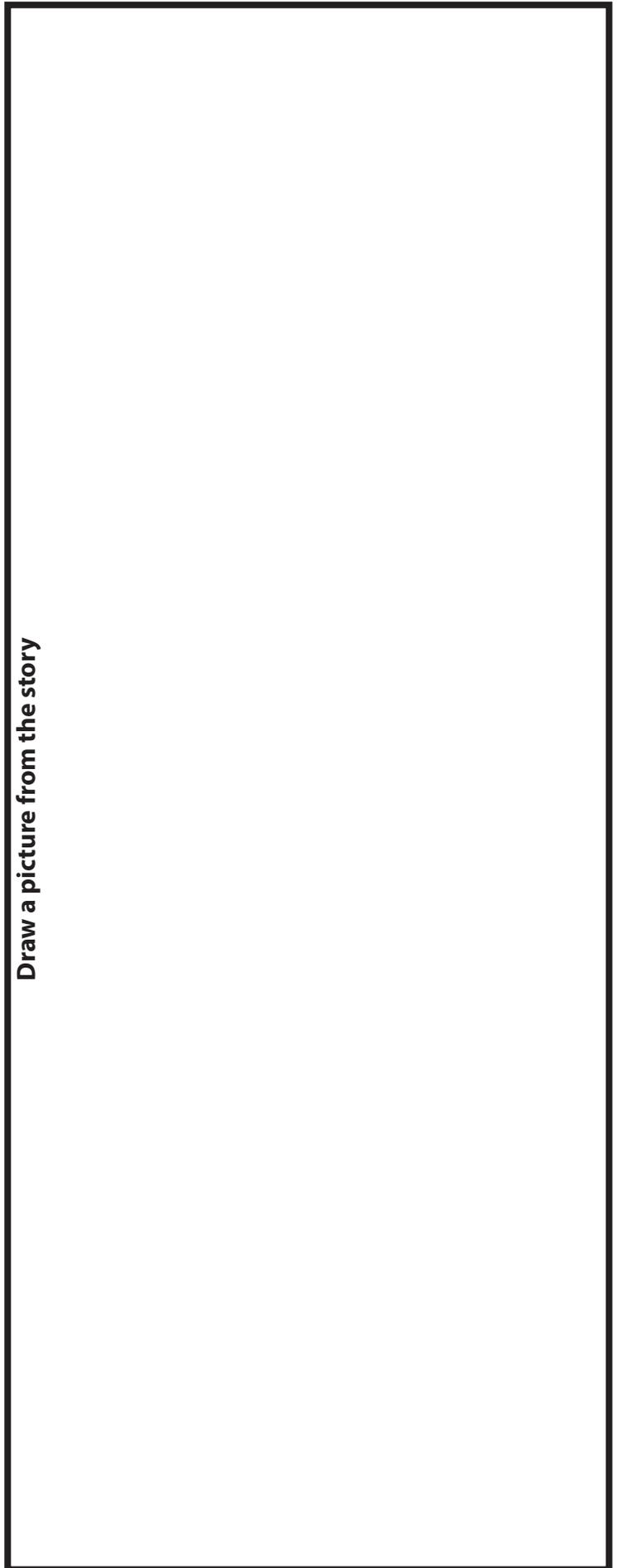
Warning, Discipline, Comfort! Those are the words the LORD still speaks to sinful people today. Through His Word--the Bible-- and His Spirit working in our hearts, the LORD still warns us to turn away from our sins and trust in Him. If we are like Jezebel and do not turn from our sins, there will be no comfort for us. There will come a day at the end of time when we will receive the full and final punishment that our sins deserve.

But, oh, what comfort we can know if we, like Ahab, we humbly turn from our sins and ask God for forgiveness. Jesus is the Savior God promised would come. If we trust

Him as our Savior, He will not treat us as our sins deserve. He will comfort us with His mercy and forgive us our sins once and for all. He will make us His special people...a people for Himself! We can know Him in our hearts now; and one day, He will take us to live with Him forever. That will be most wonderful of all!

Let's praise this loving, merciful God who spoke words of warning, discipline and comfort through His prophets long ago. Let's ask Him to help us to heed His warnings and discipline when we sin so that we might also receive His comfort through Jesus.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Before Jesus came, God often spoke to His people through announcements on the television.
 Answer: False. He often spoke to them through prophets.

2. Crack the Case Questions:
a. Who were the Wicked? What did they do that was wicked?
 Answer: King Ahab and Queen Jezebel were wicked. They worshipped Baal and Asherah and led the people in worshipping them, too. They broke God's laws in terrible ways.

b. What were they warned about? What happened after they were warned?
 Answer: That if they didn't turn away from their sins, they would be punished. Ahab repented of his sins and turned back to the LORD. The LORD didn't give him the full punishment he deserved. Jezebel refused to repent and she died, as the LORD said she would.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
Deuteronomy 18:18-19
 "I will raise up for them a ___ like you from among their brothers; I will put my ___ in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to My words that he ___ in My name."
 Answers: prophet; words; speaks.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The God of Abraham Praise
PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 18

Verse 2
 His Spirit floweth free, High surging where it will:
 In prophet's word He spoke of old, He speaketh still.
 Established is His law, And changeless it shall stand,
 Deep writ upon the human heart, On sea or land.
 Words: Daniel ben Judah Dayyan, Translated by Newton Mann
 Music: Meyer Lyon

God's Holy Spirit works powerfully, doing everything God wants Him to do. Long ago, in the days of the prophets, God's Spirit spoke His words to them, and then they spoke God's Words to the people. The prophets didn't just speak God's words. They also wrote them down in the Bible. God spoke different kinds of things to His people through the prophets. Sometimes God's words were laws He wanted His people to keep. Sometimes they were words of comfort or warning. Other times, they were words about the future. God's Holy Spirit helped the prophets say God's words just right...and He helped them write them down just right. Even now, we can read God's words that the prophets wrote down when we read the Bible. God can use them to "write" His truth deep upon our hearts. That is, He can use them to teach us His ways and how He wants us to live. He can use them to help us to know Him and obey Him.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY
A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being a holy God that justly punishes sin, yet also a merciful God who forgives those who turn away from their sins.

C God, we confess that we are sinners who many times hear Your words of warning, but deep on disobeying You. We need Jesus to save us!

T God, we thank you for being so merciful that You don't just punish sinful people as they deserve, but help them repent of their sins and turn back to You. Thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment we deserve for our sins when we trust in Him as our Savior.

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. Help us to hear Your words of warning against our sins and turn away from them.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

I Will Raise Up
PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 19

I will raise up, I will raise up,
 I will raise up for them a prophet like you.
 I will raise up, I will raise up,
 I will raise up for them a prophet like you.
 He will come from among their brothers,
 I will put my words in his mouth,
 And he will tell them everything I command him.
 And whoever does not listen,
 I will hold him accountable.
 I will raise up, I will raise up,
 I will raise up for them a prophet like you.
 I will raise up, I will raise up,
 I will raise up for them a prophet like you.
 Deuteronomy Eighteen, eighteen and nineteen.
 Words: Deuteronomy 18:18-19, HCSB Music: Constance Dever ©2012

God tells us in His Word that He would raise up prophets to instruct the people. He used them to instruct the people in how they could be saved by trusting in Him. He used them to warn the people to turn back to Him when they kept on sinning against Him and to offer them forgiveness for their sins. The people were to obey the prophet's words because they were His words. God's people still read the words of the prophet's written in the Bible today. There are things that God wants them to still obey that He commanded through them, long ago.