

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 4:
God Speaks through His Word, the Bible

God used many people to write down His words in the Bible. The Holy Spirit worked in their hearts and minds to help them write down exactly what God wanted written. That's why the Bible is called God's Word. It's the only book where God's words are written down perfectly.

When we read the Bible, God tells us about who He is, who we are, and why He made us. He tells us how we can be saved and how He wants us to live. He tells us of His great plans for this world and for the world to come.

There are many things that God has chosen not to tell us in the Bible. But in it, He has told us everything we need to become His people; to know Him, to live for Him and to look forward to life with Him forever. And by His Holy Spirit working in our hearts, He can use His Word, not to just know these things, but to do them in us.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 119:18, 72-73

"Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law...The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. Your hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding to learn your commandments."

CASE STORY

Deuteronomy 4,5,27-30,34; Jeremiah 1-2,4,11,25,36

Our story is:

The Case of the Forgotten Book.

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

1. What was the Forgotten Book?
2. Who should have remembered it? What happened because they forgot it?

This story takes place not far from the eastern border of Israel, in Old Testament times, beginning about 1400 years before Jesus lived on earth.

An old man (about one hundred and twenty years old!) sat in his tent, crouched over a papyrus scroll with ink reed in hand. It was Moses, hard at work writing down all the words the LORD had spoken to him. How his hand must have ached from day after day of writing, for it was Moses who wrote down the first, five books of the Bible! Now that's a lot of words!

Why would Moses go to all that effort? Because these words were God's words. God commanded him to write them all down. Through them, God would keep speaking the people, long after Moses had died.

But what would the people do with the Word of God? Would they listen and obey it...or not? The answer was a matter of life or death for the Israelites. They had made a solemn covenant with God. God promised to always bless them and protect them. The people promised to obey God's good laws. But along with the promises of blessings and protection, came a promise of punishment, too, if the people didn't obey God's laws as they had promised.

"Worship the LORD only. Do not make any idols. Keep the Sabbath day holy," God had told them. "Honor your father and your mother. Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not crave to have anything that someone else has." Moses wrote down these good laws and many more that the Israelites were to follow.

But Moses didn't just write down God's good laws for the people. He taught them what they should do with them. "You, parents: each and every day, teach God's words to your children, as you rise and sit, as you work, as you walk...no matter what you're so that they will remember to obey the LORD and keep His covenant. You priests! Gather the people and read the Bible to them every seven years. They will help them obey the LORD and keep His covenant," Moses instructed.

“Obey the LORD and His Word and He will protect you and bless you. You will be His special people. But if you choose to go your own way and not live according to God’s good Word, then He will discipline you severely. There will be curses upon your food and your families. Your enemies will overtake you and finally the LORD will remove you from the Promised Land He is giving you, scatter you to other lands and destroy you,” Moses warned them.

What a big decision the Israelites were making! It would be God’s special people, but how scary was the punishments He warned them about!

The Israelites chose to make the covenant with the LORD. “We want to be Your people. We promise to obey Your Word,” they said. So together, the LORD and the people of Israel made their promises to each other.

How wonderful life would have been, if the Israelites had kept their promises. But unfortunately, they were sinners, just like us. All too soon they chose not to live God’s good way. They began to worship idols and to break God’s good laws. How long would it be before the LORD sent down the curses He promised them?

The LORD certainly had every right to send all those terrible curses on them, just as soon as they started breaking His laws, but He did not. You see, God is holy: He hates it when His good laws are broken! But, He is also very merciful and compassionate. His heart is filled with love for His people. He did not want to destroy them! So the LORD patiently wanted the Israelites to repent. He sent prophets to tell them to turn back to Him. He gave them smaller punishments than they deserved. But they kept worshipping idols and breaking the LORD’s laws. So at last, after 800 years, it was time to punish them fully. He would remove from the Promised Land and scattered to other lands.

Another man sat crouched in his room over a scroll. This wasn’t Moses. This was Baruch, the secretary of the prophet Jeremiah. Baruch furiously wrote down the words his master gave him to write: “The LORD says: ‘The time for judgment has come. For eight hundred years I have waited for my stiff-necked people to turn from their idol worship and back to Me. As I promised through the covenant I made with them through Moses, I will now punish My people. I will send in the mighty Babylonian army to destroy all the cities and scatter and destroy all the people. Many will die and the rest will serve as slaves in Babylon. But I will show mercy, too. I won’t punish forever, as the

covenant allows me to. After seventy, hard years in Babylon, I bring them back to the Promised Land.”

Jeremiah wept at the words the LORD gave him. What terrible things were about to happen!

“Yet before I do this,” the LORD continued through Jeremiah, “I want to give them one more chance to turn from their sins. Jeremiah, take this scroll with My words written upon it and have it read before all the people next time they gather at the Temple for a fast. If they hear My words and turn back to Me, then I will forgive them and I will not send the Babylonians to destroy them.” How merciful and patient is the LORD!

Yet there was a problem. Jeremiah had to figure out how to get the LORD’s message to the people.

“How will we do this, Baruch?” Jeremiah asked his scribe. “You know that the king hates me and my ‘messages of doom,’ as the people call them. I have been forbidden to enter the Temple at all. You will have to be the one to read the scroll. But from where can you read them the message so that they can all hear? We must make a plan,” he said.

Jeremiah and Baruch shared with their friend, Gemariah, what the Lord commanded them to do. Gemariah was a high official of King Jehoiakim. It would be risky for him to help Jeremiah, but Gemariah had a third story room that faced out into the Temple courts. It would be the perfect place to read God’s Word to all the people. What would Gemariah do with the Word of God? He would risk his job and life and let Baruch read it from his room? Yes, he would!

The day of fasting finally came and all of the people of Jerusalem and the rest of the country gathered in the temple courts. Baruch snuck up to Gemariah’s third floor room, faced the people and began reading in a loud voice all of God’s words:

“Turn back to the LORD!” Baruch told them. “This is your last chance. If you refuse, I will send the Babylonians to destroy your land and you will serve them as their slaves. But even so, He will show you mercy. After seventy years of punishment, He will send you back home.”

What would the people do with the God’s Word? Would they accept it? No, they would not.

News of Baruch’s stunt made it to the ears of King Jehoiakim’s officials. When they heard what was on the scroll, they were afraid.

“The King needs to know about this. Give us the scroll!”

the officials demanded. "And as for you, I'd advise you and Jeremiah to go and hide before the King finds out about it. You know what he will do to you!"

Jeremiah and Baruch went to hide and Jehudi, the King's servant, was sent to take Jeremiah's scroll to the King and report what had happened.

"Read me that scroll!" ordered King Jehoiakim.

So Jehudi began to read: 'The time for judgment has come. For eight hundred years I have waited for My stiff-necked people to turn from their idol worship and back to Me. I am giving you one more chance before I send the Babylonian army to destroy your cities and scatter the people. Turn back to Me!'

King Jehoiakim listened as Jehudi read. What would he do with the Word of God? King Jehoiakim did not believe it! He took the scroll of the Word of God and he cut it up piece by piece and threw it into his fire until it was all burned up!

There would be no turning back from God's judgment now. Word reached Baruch and Jeremiah of what the king had done. Six years later, the Babylonian army swept into Jerusalem, burning it down, killing many and taking the rest to be slaves in Babylon for seventy years, just as the LORD had promised.

But the LORD said to Jeremiah, "Write my words down again." So that's exactly what Jeremiah did. Why did God want Jeremiah to write down all those words again? Because God's Word was not just for King Jehoiakim and the people who heard it and rejected it that day in the Temple. It was also for many others who would come. These others would hear those words and believe. They would turn from their sinful ways and trust in the LORD.

Our Bible Truth is:
God Speaks through His Word, the Bible

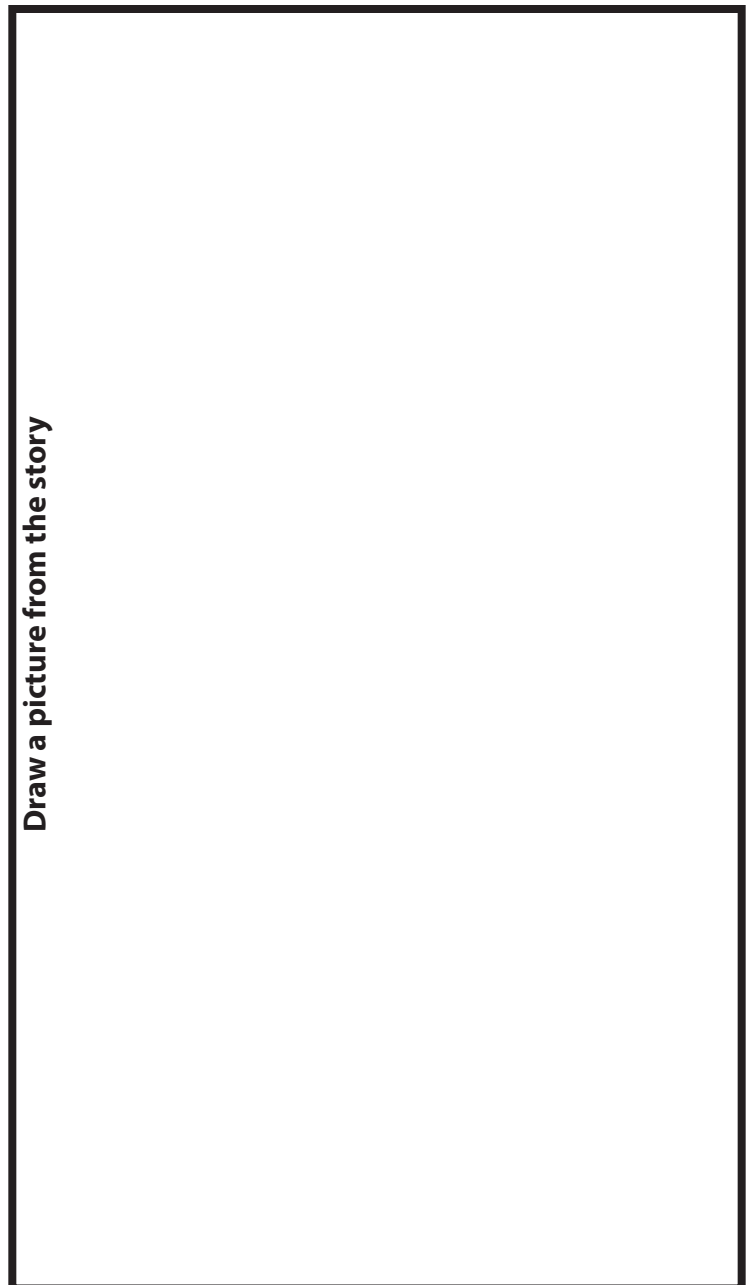
Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 119:18,72-73 ESV

"Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law...The law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. Your hands made me and fashioned me; give me understanding to learn your commandments."

Who are some of those who would hear and believe? Some were the people who the Babylonians captured to work as slaves. These people would remember God's promises to rescue them after seventy years and take

comfort. But, you know, those people in Babylon weren't the only people those words were written for. Many people, in the hundreds of years since Jeremiah wrote them down have read them and been warned to turn from their sins and seek God's forgiveness.

And would you believe that God even had Jeremiah write those words down for us to hear today? Yes, He wants to know what will WE do with the Word of God? Will we reject it, like King Jehoiakim and the people did long ago? Or, will we turn away from our sins and ask Him for forgiveness? God is just holy and just as merciful now as He was then! We face His punishment for our sins, but He promises to forgive us and make us His very, own special people forever, when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God used just one person to write down all His words in the Bible.

Answer: False. God used many people.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

Answer: God’s Word, the Bible.

b. Who should have remembered it? What happened because they forgot it?

Answer: The people of Israel and their kings forgot it. They turned away from God and worshiped other fake gods. When they would not turn back, the LORD disciplined them by sending them to Babylon. In the end, they turned back to the LORD.

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

Psalms 119:18,72-73

“Open my ___ that I may behold wondrous things out of your law...The law of your mouth is ___ to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold. Your hands made me and fashioned me; give me ___ to learn your commandments.”

Answers: eyes; better; understanding.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being so patient with sinners, wanting them to repent of their sins and turn to You.

C God, we confess that many times we don’t love God’s Word and don’t want to read it or obey it. We deserve Your punishment, too! We need Jesus to save us!

T God, we thank You for how wonderful Your Word is! Thank You for all that it tells us about You. Thank You for how You warn us about our sins and tell us how we can be saved through it.

S God, work in our hearts! By Your Holy Spirit, help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to understand, love and obey Your Word, the Bible.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Amazing Grace

PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 20

Verse 4

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word, my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

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

This hymn reminds us that God’s people read in His Word His promises to do good to them. They know that they can have unfailing hope in Him for their salvation, their protection and provision for all their needs. They know they can depend on Him for these things their whole live because God always does what He promises to do.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Open My Eyes

PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 21

Open my eyes that I may behold,
Wondrous things out of your law.
Open my eyes that I may behold,
Wondrous things out of your law.
The law of your mouth is better to me,
Than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.
Your hands they made me and fashioned me.
Give me understanding
That I may learn your commandments.
Open my eyes that I may behold,
Wondrous things out of your law.
Open my eyes that I may behold,
Wondrous things out of your law.
Psalm One-nineteen, eighteen, seventy two and three.

Words: Psalm 119:18,72,73, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012

There is no book like the Bible! It alone is God’s Word, written down perfectly. When we read the Bible, God speaks to us about who He is, who we are, and why He made us. He tells us how we can be saved and live to please Him. That is why it is more precious to God’s people than even a lot of money—because they want to know those things and live out those things most of all.