

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 5:
God Has Revealed Himself Most Completely through His Son, Jesus

God sent His Son, Jesus, to leave His home in heaven to be our Savior. He was born as a baby here on earth. Jesus grew up and became a man. He was fully human, like us, but He was also, still fully God.

Jesus lived the perfect life that pleases God. He never did anything wrong. He taught about God and He did many amazing miracles. Most amazing of all, He offered up His perfect life as the full payment for the sins of God's people when He suffered and died on the cross. On the third day, He rose from the dead, showing that He had really beaten sin and death, then He rose back up to heaven where He lives now.

Jesus didn't live on earth long--only about thirty years. He taught about God and did miracles only about three of those years. But in that short, little bit of time, He showed us more about God than anything else in the whole world.

The Bible calls Jesus the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of Him. That means when we learn about Jesus and see what He is like, we are seeing what God is like: completely holy, powerful, loving and good. He hates sin, but He loves sinners who turn to Him for forgiveness and mercy! Thank You, God, for sending Jesus to show us what You're like!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 5 Bible Verse: Hebrews 1:1-3

"Long ago...God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature..."

CASE STORY

Daniel 9; Matthew 2:1-12

Our story is:

The Case of the Great Revealing.

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

1. What was revealed? Who revealed it?
2. What was so great about it?

This story begins in Babylon, in Old Testament times, about 600 years before Jesus lived on earth.

Babylon was an amazing city. It was surrounded by ten miles of walls over one hundred feet thick! Inside the walls were huge buildings and temples with tall, golden statues. That's because this city was the home of the king of the huge Babylonian empire. And, home to the finest temples to the Babylonian gods.

Inside those huge city walls, inside one of those beautiful buildings, the great Raj Maj--the chief adviser to the king--was doing something peculiar. He took off his fine, linen robes. He rubbed his body in ashes and put on a simple sackcloth tunic made of coarse, scratchy black goat's hair. Deeply troubled, he cried out to God. And not to any of the gods of the Babylonians, like you might think. But to the LORD. For this most important of all the king's advisers was not from Babylon at all. His name was Daniel and he was from Israel. He had been brought to Babylon to serve the king as a slave, but he loved Israel and was a believer in the one, true God.

"O LORD, Your people, the Israelites, have sinned against You and Your commands. You warned us, but we refused to obey You again and again. O LORD, You were right to punish us by letting the Babylonians destroy Jerusalem and Your Temple where we worshiped You. You were right to let them capture us and serve them as slaves here in Babylon for seventy years, as You warned would be our punishment. But LORD, You are merciful and forgiving. Hear my prayer and forgive us. Please don't wait seventy years! Restore us to our land and rebuild Your city and Your Temple!" Daniel pleaded.

As Daniel prayed, the angel Gabriel appeared before him and said: "Daniel, I have a message from the LORD for you. The LORD says: 'I have heard your prayers and I have sent Gabriel to answer them. The And, because Jesus is God, He knew just exactly what was going on in that young man's heart, even though He had never even seen

and the Temple. Then, 483 years after they rebuild the Temple, I will send the Messiah, the Anointed One, to save them," He promised.

What an incredible message! It was sad that the Israelites would have to finish out their years as captives in Babylon before God would take them home. But, how wonderful it was to hear when the Messiah would come! Oh, how they looked forward to that day when God would reveal Himself more completely than He ever had before!

The Israelites were right to be excited. For while God had revealed Himself through His creations, and through the words of the prophets, and through the Bible, this Messiah would be the greatest revealing of all! Why? Because the Messiah was Jesus! He would be like no other man the world had ever known!

Gabriel's message to Daniel certainly wasn't the first time the LORD had told the Israelites about the coming Messiah. God had spoken to them many times about Him through the prophets. He had told them where this Messiah was to be from and what He would be like. Almost 150 years earlier the LORD had told them, through the prophet Micah: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah... out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old". (Micah 5:2)

The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem; yet, He would not be like other men whose lives begin when they are born. No. His origins were from of old, long before He was born. This didn't sound like any regular man, this Messiah. Could it be that He was more than just a man?

Through the prophet Isaiah, the LORD gave them the answer: "Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, [God with us]... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 7:13; 9:6)

Did you hear that?! Yes, it was true. The Messiah would be God, Himself! Yet He would also be a child that would be born. Both man and God? How could this be? Only time would tell.

And time did tell! The years passed just as the LORD said they would. At the end of seventy years, the Babylonians freed the Israelites to go home. The Jews went back and built Jerusalem and the Temple. The 483 years went by;

and then at last, it was time for the revealing of the Messiah--Jesus!

Once again there was a stirring scene among the Magi living in the lands east of Israel. A spectacular new star had appeared in the sky. To them, that meant only one thing: the rise of a great, new king.

By ways and means that no one but God knows, the Magi decided that this star that rose in the east was the sign of the birth of a great king in the land of Jews, which lay to their west. Perhaps they had known the promise of the coming Messiah that Gabriel had told Daniel, the great Raj Maj, hundreds of years earlier. Or perhaps in His infinite wisdom and power, the LORD had given this star to the magi as part of His plan to make great His name throughout all the world. Only the LORD knows the real answer.

Either way, the Magi decided they would go find this new king and honor him. They packed rich, kingly presents--gold, frankincense and myrrh-- and followed the star to find him.

The Magi traveled many long miles over dry, desert lands; then into Israel, and straight to the king's palace in Jerusalem. Surely that would be where the great, new king would be found.

"Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him," the Magi asked throughout Jerusalem. Yet no one seemed to know of him. When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

"What does this mean? Is there a king I don't know about? I am not even a Jew!" thought King Herod. The Romans gave me this land to rule when they conquered it. Is there someone else who has come to take the throne away from me? The Jews murmur about promises of God sending a great Messiah—or Christ—one day to smash the Romans. Could this be about him? I had better find out! This could be serious!"

Herod called together the chief priests and teachers of the law, asking them where the Messiah was to be born.

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written: " 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" (Matthew 2:2-6)

So it was in Bethlehem--only five miles away from Jerusalem--that the Messiah would be found! The Magi

were thrilled. The great king they were looking for was only a short journey away.

How much more excited they would have been if they knew this King was God, Himself, come to reveal Himself more completely than He ever had before.

Before the Magi set off for Bethlehem, Herod called them back to his palace for a secret meeting. "This is wonderful news!" King Herod lied to the Magi. "To think! The Messiah has come! Please, go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him," he urged them.

The Magi agreed went on their way. The star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, incense and of myrrh.

It was true. God's Messiah had come, as He had promised long ago through Daniel, and the prophets, Isaiah and Micah. And these men who were not even Jews had been some of the first to come worship Him.

King Herod never heard again from the Magi. The LORD protected His Son, telling the Magi in a dream to not go back to him. They left Jesus and returned to their home country another way.

What did the Magi think as they went home? Did they understand that the Messiah was more than just a mighty king sent by God? Did they realize that He was God, Himself, come to reveal Himself to us more completely than He ever had through creation or the prophets' words or the Bible? What could they know by just looking at the little child, Jesus?

We don't know the answers to these questions. But we do know that when that little child grew up, He revealed what God was like to many people in everything He said and did. They saw God's wisdom in the way Jesus taught. They saw God's power, in the way Jesus controlled nature and healed sicknesses. They saw God's justice and mercy, in the way Jesus exposed the hidden sins of proud people, but welcomed humble sinners. And most of all, they saw how God's amazing love in Jesus' death on the cross for all those who would ever turn from their sins and trust in Him for forgiveness. Yes. Here was Immanuel, God with Us, come to reveal Himself as never before.

Our Bible Truth is:

God Reveals Himself Most Completely through His Son, Jesus

Our Bible Verse is: Hebrews 1:1-3 ESV

"Long ago...God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature..."

And what about you and me? What will we do with this wonderful God who has revealed Himself most completely in His Son, Jesus? Will we act like we don't see and live for ourselves? Will we continue to live with our sins unforgiven and separated from wonderful fellowship with God, the most wonderful Person there is to know?

Or, will we see the way He is and turn to live our lives for Him? Will we turn from disobeying God and trust in Jesus as our own Savior for the forgiveness of our sins?

Let's praise God for showing us what He is like so completely in Jesus. Let's ask Him to help us turn from our sins and live our lives for Him. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts right now, giving us faith to trust in Jesus as our Savior!

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 Jesus is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of Him because when we learn about Jesus we are seeing what God is like.
 Answer: True. This is because Jesus is God!

2. Crack the Case Questions:
a. What was revealed? Who revealed it?
 Answer: God was sending His Son, Jesus into the world to save God’s people and show us more of what He’s like. The LORD revealed it to God’s people through Daniel, as well as many other prophets.

b. What was so great about it?
 Answer: Before the time of Jesus, people could know God in their heart, could see His creations, could hear His words through the prophets and through the Bible; but now, with Jesus, God revealed what He is like more completely than ever before.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
Hebrews 1:1-3
 “Long ago...God spoke to our ___ by the ___, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...He is the radiance of the ___ of God and the exact imprint of his nature...”
 Answers: fathers; prophets; glory.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 22

Verse 1
 O, for a thousand tongues to sing,
 My great Redeemer’s praise,
 The glories of my God and King,
 The triumphs of His grace!

Words: Charles Wesley Music: Carl G. Glaser

This hymn reminds us that Jesus is the great Redeemer who came to earth to show us what God is like and to save His people from their sins. When we see what God has done through Jesus, we want to sing of His glorious love and mercy and grace shown to undeserving sinners.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Provider of Your people’s righteousness through Jesus.

C God, we confess that we are all sinners who can never do enough good works to please You. We need Jesus to be our Savior!

T God, we thank You for sending Jesus to pay for the sins of Your people! Thank You that no one is too sinful to find forgiveness in Jesus.

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. Please help us to be more grateful for all You do for us through Jesus!

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The Son Is the Radiance
PFI ESV Songs 1, Track 23

The Son is the radiance, the radiance of God’s glory,
 The Son is the radiance, the radiance of God’s glory,
 And the exact imprint of His nature,
 And the exact imprint of His nature,
 The Son is the radiance, the radiance of God’s glory,
 The Son is the radiance, the radiance of God’s glory,
 Hebrews Chapter One, verse three.

Words: Hebrews 1:1-3, ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012

The Bible tells us that when we see what Jesus is like, we are seeing what God is like. There is nothing or no one else who can show us more about God than Jesus. That’s because Jesus is God!