

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 4: The God Like None Other

Unit 4 Big Question and Answer:

Can Anybody Tell Me What the LORD Is Like?

He's Not Like Anyone Else!

PFI ESV Songs 4, Tracks 3,4

Unit 4 Bible Verse: 1 Kings 8:23, ESV

Bible Verse: "O LORD...there is no God like you, in heaven above or on earth beneath."

PFI ESV Songs 4, Tracks 6,7

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 6

The LORD Is Holy

God is holy. He set apart from everything and everyone else. He is good and He is great. He never sins in anything He thinks, says, does or plans. Because He is holy, He hates sin. Sin is rebelling against God and His good ways. God is so holy that nothing sinful can come into His presence.

We are all sinners, so how can we ever become God's people? It is only because of Jesus, the holy Son of God. Jesus came to earth and lived a perfect life. He chose to die on the cross to pay for the sins of God's people. He suffered the full punishment for their sins, exchanging their un-holiness (sinfulness) for His perfect holiness. Now all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior are saved. They get to know God and will one day live in His holy presence forever.

God calls His people to live for Him by being holy as He is holy. He wants them to reflect the way He is. God's Holy Spirit helps them do this. He lives in their hearts and helps them to love God and obey Him. God's people will always struggle with sin while they live here on earth. But one day, they will live with their wonderful God in heaven, perfectly good and holy, changed by Him to never sin again! How wonderful that will be!

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 6 Bible Verse: Isaiah 6:1-3

"I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings...And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

CASE STORY

1 Samuel 4-7

Our story is called:

The Case of the Fish God Who Flopped.

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

1. Who was the Fish God? Why did the Fish God seem to win at first?
2. Who made him flop? How? What did the Philistines and the Israelites come to see about the LORD?

This is an Old Testament story. It takes place about 1000 years before Jesus lived on earth.

What troublesome neighbors were the Philistines! For many years, they had been some of the Sea Peoples who raided ships on the Mediterranean Sea. Then they settled down on a little strip of land on the coast, right next to Israel, bringing their gods and pirating ways with them.

Both the Philistine's habit of raiding others soon became a big deal to the people of Israel. The Philistine land quickly became overcrowded and its five, big cities--Ekron, Ashdod, Ashekelon, Gath and Gaza--were full to bursting! So what did these pirate-y people do? Make plans to steal land from their neighbor, Israel.

And who would the Philistines depend on to give them victory? Their gods, especially Dagon. Dagon was their god of good crops and rain. In other words, he was the god who brought them all the good stuff! He looked like a man from the waist up, but had the fins and tail of a fish from the waist down. What a funny looking god!

But as funny as Dagon may have looked, it under his banner that the Philistine army swooped into Israel to take some more land. The soldiers of Israel came out to meet them. How very different the two armies looked! The Philistines had strong armor, but the Israelites had none. The Philistines stood under the banner of their god, Dagon, but the Israelites had nothing to represent their god. The Philistines didn't think things looked good for the Israelites, especially without a token of the LORD. Most people believed that the gods fought in heaven while the soldiers fought on earth. If your god was to fight for you, then you had to have a token of him with your army. Dagon was sure to beat the LORD.

But the Israelites weren't worried. God's law had told them to make no images or tokens for Him. They were

confident the LORD would easily defeat Dagon in heaven as well as the Philistines' army there on earth. After all, the LORD was the one, true God who created both heaven and earth.

But, to the Israelites' shock, the LORD did not bring them victory! The Philistines killed four thousand of their men and won some Israelite land. Loudly they shouted, "Praise Dagon! He is stronger than the LORD! He has given us victory over Israel today!"

"Why did the LORD let us be defeated," the Israelite leaders wondered. If they had asked the prophet, Samuel, they would have known the answer. "The LORD is holy," Samuel would have told them. "He is set apart from everything else, in perfectly pure goodness and love. Nothing sinful can stand in His presence. He calls His people to be holy, too," he would have reminded them. "You've been worshiping the fake gods, Ashoreth and Baal as well as the LORD. Even the LORD's priests do sinful things with the offerings that are offered to Him. The LORD is holy. He will not put up with this! He won't go out with you to battle until you worship Him in holiness as He has told you to!" he would have said.

But the Israelite leaders didn't even think of asking Samuel. Instead, they came up with their own idea: "The LORD wasn't with us because we went out to battle without a token of Him, like the Philistines do of Dagon. Let's get the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. The LORD is supposed to especially dwell with His people over the Ark. If we bring it here, then He will be with us and help us!" they thought.

What a terrible idea! Had the Israelites really forgotten the special laws about the Ark? The LORD had told them that Ark was so holy that no one was supposed to even look at it—not even the priests! To misuse the Ark in any way meant God's certain punishment!

The Israelites went out to fight the Philistines again, sure that the LORD would fight for them now; but of course, He didn't! He was a holy God. His people were dishonoring Him even more with how they treated the Ark! Once more, the Philistines defeated the Israelites. This time, thirty-thousand soldiers and two priests died. The Ark was captured and placed in Dagon's temple in the city of Ashdod.

"Oh great Dagon, we bring you this token of the LORD, the Israelites' God who you triumphed over. He is your

prisoner," the Philistines proclaimed.

But was the LORD really Dagon's prisoner? The next day, the people went in Dagon's temple and found that some unseen hand pushed over their huge image of Dagon so that it lay face down on the ground before the Ark of the LORD. The Philistines set him upright again, only to find that he had fallen down on his face once more... and this time his head and hands had fallen off.

Who had made this fish god flop? I bet you can guess! It was the LORD! He was no one's prisoner! He could never be made to bow down to Dagon! Yes, He had chosen not to protect His sinful people until they confessed their sins and turned back to Him, but He also chose to make sure the Philistines knew that He, not Dagon, was the one the holy, one, true God. He alone should be worshiped!

The LORD had made it clear who He was, but the Philistines still refused to give up the Ark. So now, the LORD sent trouble upon the people. Tumors grew on their skin and rats flooded their city. People got sick and died. The people of Ashdod said, "Get rid of the Ark of the LORD! He's the one who's bringing these terrible things upon us."

They were right! When they sent the Ark away to the city of Gath, the people of Ashdod got better and the rats went away, but the people of Gath began having them. The same thing happened when the Ark was moved to Ekron, too. At last, the Philistines had had enough! They called for their wise men and said, "What shall we do with the Ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back."

"Send it back with a guilt offering to admit that you have sinned against this holy God," they were told.

They made a guilt offering of five, gold tumors and five, gold rats to represent the punishment the LORD had sent on them. They placed them along with the Ark on a cart pulled by cows and sent it off by itself to the Israelite city of Beth Shemesh. As the leaders watched it go, being led only by the will of the Israelites' God, they knew that it truly had been Him who had brought these terrible sicknesses upon them. At last the sickness and rats came to an end. How happy they were to be rid of the Ark of this holy God!

The Israelites rejoiced when the Ark arrived at Beth Shemesh and offered worship gifts to the LORD, but they still didn't treat Him as the holy God He was. Seventy, curious men decided to look into the Ark, though they knew the LORD's warning that anyone who did would die. And die, those men did! The people were terrified, "Who

can stand before this holy God?" they cried. They sent the Ark faraway to Kiriath Jearim and went back to worshipping their much safer, fake gods: Baal and Ashtoreth.

For twenty, long years, the Israelites kept dishonoring their holy God and the LORD kept on allowing the Philistines to attack them. At last they were sick of their sins. They got rid of their idols of Baal and Ashtoreth and met Samuel at Mizpah with their worship gifts for the LORD. "You are the holy God and we have sinned against You. Please forgive us," the people prayed. And this time, they truly did turn back to the LORD.

Before long, the Philistines attacked Israel once more. "Oh, Samuel! We are so afraid of these Philistines! they cried. "Do not stop praying to the LORD for us that He would rescue us from our enemies this time." they pleaded. Samuel prayed to the LORD as the Israelites went out to face the Philistines.

The Israelites had turned from their sins and turned to honor and obey the LORD, their holy God. Now He would defeat their enemies! The Bible tells us what happened: "The LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were fled Mizpah with the Israelites beating them back far, far out of Israel." The Israelites won without even raising a single sword! How great was the LORD!

Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and named it Ebenezer, saying "Thus far has the LORD helped us." He wanted the people to always remember this day, which turned out to be the day the fish god finally and completely flopped. Never again did the Philistines attack the Israelites.

Our Bible Truth is: The LORD Is Holy

Our Bible Verse is: Isaiah 6:1-3

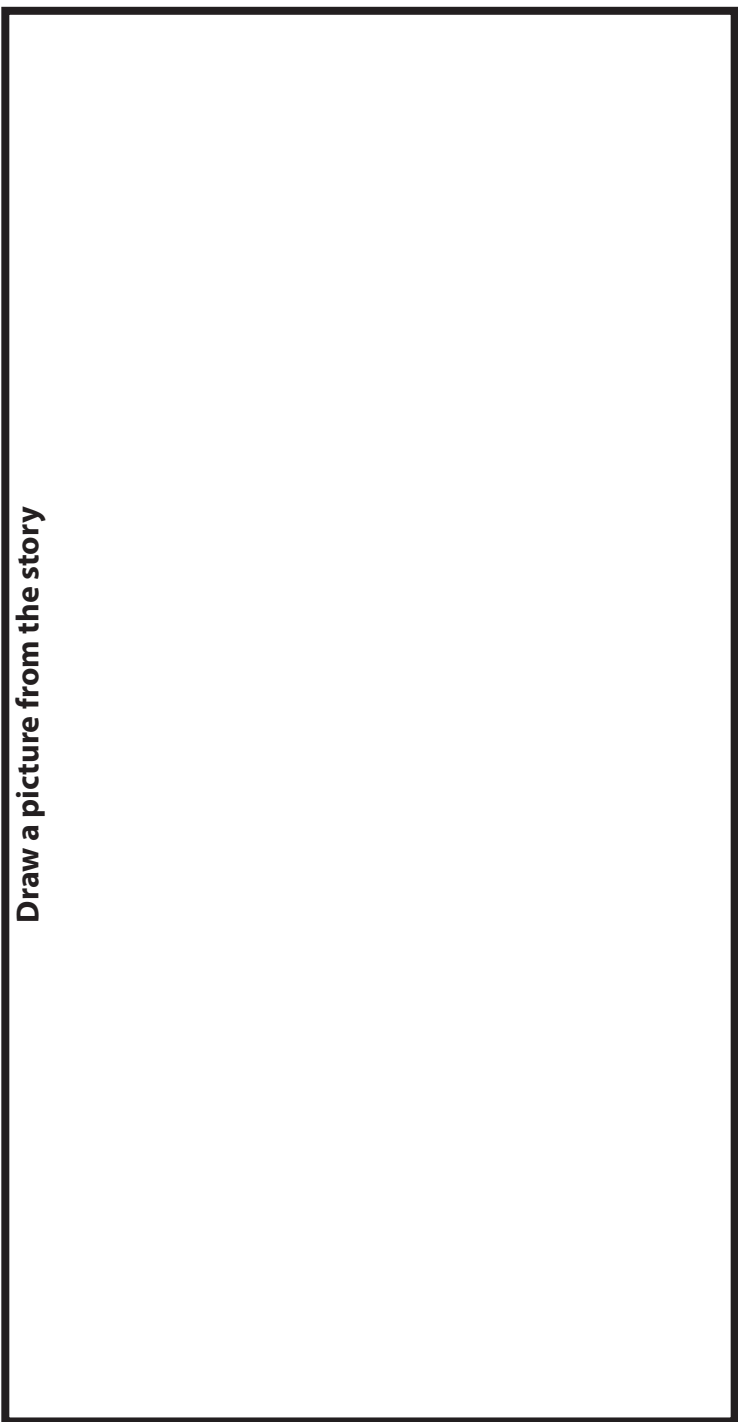
"I saw the LORD seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with 6 wings...and they were calling to one another: 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory!'"

The Israelites as well as the Philistines came to know that indeed the LORD is holy. They saw that He was unlike any other god. He punishes those who sin against Him, yet offers forgiveness to all who turn from their sins and ask for forgiveness.

But what about you and me? Are we so different from the Israelites and the Philistines? How many times do we

forget to live holy lives that honor and obey the LORD? How many times do we chose to break His good laws or disrespect Him? Is there hope for us? Yes, there is, because of Jesus. He came to pay for the sins of all those who will ever turn and trust in Him. He will cleanse of our sins and then fill us with His Holy Spirit and change our hearts so that we can live holy lives that please our holy LORD.

Let's praise God for sending His Son Jesus to make a way for sinful people like us to know and enjoy Him. Let's ask Him to help us to honor and obey Him as He, the perfectly holy God deserves.



Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:
 God is holy. He never sins in anything He thinks, says, does or plans.
 Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions:
a. Who was the Fish God? Why did the Fish God seem to win at first?
 Answer: Dagon. Because the Philistines defeated the Israelites in battle and Dagon was their god.

b. Who made him flop? How? What did the Philistines and the Israelites come to see about the LORD?
 Answer: The LORD. By making his statue fall down and worship Him in his temple. By bringing sickness upon the Philistines in the cities that kept the Ark of the Covenant. That He is holy and is the one, true God.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:
Isaiah 6:1-3
 "I saw the ___ sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had ___ wings...And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of ___; the whole earth is full of his glory!"
 Answers: Lord, six, Almighty.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Holy, Holy, Holy
PFI ESV Songs 4, Tracks 26,27

Verse 2
 Holy, holy, holy!
 All the saints adore Thee,
 Casting down their golden crowns,
 Around the glassy sea;
 Cherubim and seraphim,
 Falling down before Thee,
 Who wert, and art,
 And evermore shall be.

Verse 3
 Holy, holy, holy!
 Tho' the darkness hide Thee,
 Tho' the eye of sinful man
 They glory may not see;
 Only Thou art holy;
 There is none beside Thee,
 perfect in pow'r,
 In love and purity.

Words: Reginlad Heber Music: John B. Dykes

This song is a picture of God in His splendid holiness in heaven. One day, God's people will come before Him and

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being holy.

C God, we confess that like the Philistine and the Israelites we choose to forget that the LORD is the holy, one, true God. We disobey His laws. We deserve His punishment for our sins. We need Jesus to save us!

T God, we thank You for being so patient with sinners like us! Thank You for sending Jesus to pay for our sins and make the way for us to come to You.

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 seek to live holy lives that please You.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

I Saw the LORD
PFI ESV Songs 4, Track 28

I saw the LORD,
 Sitting a throne,
 High and exalted,
 Sitting a throne,
 Above Him stood the seraphim,
 Each had six wings,
 And they called to one another,
 "Holy is the LORD,
 Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts,
 Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts.
 Isaiah Six, one through three.

Words: Isaiah 6:1-3 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2012

These verses are a picture of God's holiness. The LORD is so high and exalted because of His perfect holiness and He is to be worshiped. He is so holy that the seraphs repeat to each other how holy He is. He is so holy that even the whole earth is filled with the glory of His holiness.