

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION*We're in... Unit 6: God, the Just and Merciful***Unit 6 Big Question and Answer and Song:**

"How Did Bad Things Come to God's Good World?"
Bad Things Came Through Sin!"

*PFI NIV Songs 6, Tracks 3,4***Unit 6 Bible Verse and Song:** Romans 5:12

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."

*PFI NIV Songs 6, Track 5***BIBLE TRUTH***We're learning... Bible Truth 1:***Angels and People Rebelled Against God in the Beginning**

God made the world perfectly good, but it did not stay that way. In heaven, a mighty angel named Satan led a rebellion of angels against God. Nothing sinful can ever remain in God's holy presence. These rebellious angels, called demons, were cast out of heaven and thrown into hell.

Satan continued his rebellion against God by tempting Adam and Eve to rebel against God, too. Their disobedience brought sin and death into the perfect world God created.

There are many things we cannot understand about Satan, evil and sin, or why God allowed them. However, we do know that God is perfectly good, powerful and wise. His ways are perfect and are so much more than our small minds can understand.

God hates sin and will do away with it. He sent Jesus to break the power of sin and death for all who trust in Him as their Savior. And one day Jesus will return again to rid the world of sin and death, Satan and his demons forever. What a wonderful day that will be!

BIBLE VERSE*How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!***Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: 1 John 3:8**

"He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

CASE STORY**Our story is called:****The Case of the Rotten Wretch.****As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. Who was the rotten wretch? What was so rotten about him?
2. How did he change from being a wretch?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It starts out around 1730 in Warring, England.

Not far from the docks of the River Thames, where the great merchant ships unloaded their rich cargo from around the world, there lived a young mother named Elizabeth Newton and her only child, John. Anyone could see from looking at her that Elizabeth was sick. Her weak, thin body and terrible, cough pointed to one thing: consumption—or tuberculosis, as we call it today. There was no cure for it back then. It was only a matter of time until she would die.

Little John was only six years old, but he could see was happening to his mother's body. But there was something else about her that he noticed, too: love, peace and joy. He knew she loved God with all her heart—and, that she wanted him to love God, too. She was determined to fill his little mind and heart with as much about God as she could, before she died.

While just a baby, Elizabeth began to sing hymns to John. When he was three, she taught him to read the Bible. She gave him Bible verses and the godly sayings that Isaac Watts had written for children to memorize: Sayings like: 'Good children must, Fear God all day; Love Christ always; Parents, obey, In secret, pray; No false thing say; mind; little play; By no sin stray; make no delay, in doing good.' John was a quick learner and Elizabeth a persistent teacher. Soon many of these sayings and verses were planted in his mind.

Of all the things Elizabeth wanted to make sure John knew before she died, she wanted him to know the gospel most of all. "We are all sinners in need of a Savior, John," she had told him. Back in the beginning, Adam and Eve knew perfect fellowship with God. They knew God and loved Him and obeyed Him. But Satan led some of the angels to rebel against God; then, he tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God, too. Adam and Eve broke fellowship with God and chose to do things their own way, instead. They deserved death—God's punishment for sin. But God is so rich in mercy, so amazing in grace that He sent His

CASE STORY

that He sent His Son Jesus to defeat Satan and pay for the sins of all who would turn from their sins and trust Him as their Savior," she told him.

"John, like Adam and Eve, we have also rebelled against God," she said. "But also like them, He has not left us without hope. God calls each of us to make: a choice to keep living a life in rebellion against Him; or, to turn from our sins, trust in Jesus and be forgiven. We can be God's dearly loved people!"

"John, I pray that you will choose to trust in Jesus and grow up one day to encourage others to choose Him, too," she urged him.

Day after day, Elizabeth kept teaching her little son, until at last her weak body gave out and she died-- just two weeks before little John's seventh birthday.

How terrible it must have been for John to lose his dear mother at such a young age! But how much worse it was for John, since his father--a sea captain--was thousands of miles away in the Mediterranean Sea, loading his merchant ship with spices, cloth, and tea. And he would not be home for months!

Even when his father did get home, life became so very different for little John. The captain loved his little boy, but he did not love God as his wife had. Now, there was no one to take John to church or read the Bible to him. There was no one who cared what kind of friends he played with or that he went to school at all. On John's eleventh birthday, his father took him out of school and brought him to live on his merchant ship.

Life on the sea was exciting, but it wasn't good for John. The sailors taught John to curse and do many other bad things. John knew these things were sinful, but he did them anyway. Soon he even loved doing them. In his heart, John still remembered all his mother had taught him: "Turn from your sins, trust in Jesus as our Savior." But John kept on rebelling. But John kept on rebelling. He turned away from God and tried to turn others away from Him, too.

After six years sailing with his father, John began to work as a sailor on other ships. With each ship, John's behavior became worse. He made up mocking songs about his captains and would sing them to their face. Not satisfied with regular cuss words, John thought up new ones. The other men called him the "Great Blasphemer" for the awful way he would curse God. John did whatever he could to tempt others to sin, too.

John quickly made enemies. Once, he tried to run away

from his ship, only to be caught and punished. The captain treated John so terribly that John talked him into making him the servant of a slave trader in Africa--about as wicked of a job as a man could have--just to get away from the cruel captain.

And what about all John's mother had taught him about God? Had he forgotten it all now? God would have been just to let John never more remember all his mother taught him about God; but in His amazing grace, God kept bringing it to mind--especially during his many, near-death accidents. Once, a horse bucked him off his back and John landed just inches from a huge spike that would have gone right through his body and killed him. Another time, John arrived just moments too late to board a small boat with his friends, only to see the boat sink and his friends all drown. Yet another time, John was mistreated and left to die by the slave trader's wife--but rescued just in time. Each time, the Lord brought his mother's words to mind: "Turn from your sins, trust in Jesus as our Savior."

Each time John almost died, he thought about the punishment he deserved from God for his sinful rebellion and the choice he could make to receive God's amazing grace. But John kept going back to his sinful ways. It seemed John would never change.

Before long, John faced death again. This time, there really seemed no way out. John was sailing home to England on The Greyhound, a great merchant ship filled with beeswax and dyer's wood from Africa. Once more John was up to his bad ways. He refused to do any work. He cursed God in such terrible ways that even the sailors were shocked. And then when he found out that the captain was a Christian, he mocked him and tried to get him to sin. Soon, everyone hated John. They wondered how they would endure the seven thousand mile journey home with him!

Thoughts of John were soon forgotten when a ferocious storm suddenly struck one night. Wham! Bang! A huge jolt woke John awake. A giant wave had slammed into the side of the ship. Water poured into the ship's belly. Before long the ship would sink!

"All men to the pumps! We've got to get this water out or we are sure to sink!" the captain ordered.

John and the others pumped water out of the hull as quickly as they could. During a lull in the storm, they stuffed bedding and clothes in the hole, and nailed boards over them.

Soon the winds rose again, pounding the ship. The men took turns steering the ship on deck. The winds were so

powerful that many were swept off into the swirling seas. Only by tying a man to the steering post with ropes could they keep him from going overboard. At last it was John's turn to steer. Tied to the steering wheel, John worked hard to keep the ship afloat, but he had little hope.

"How much longer until the ship sinks? How much longer before I die?" John wondered. "Have mercy on us, God!" he cried out in panic.

As soon as the words slipped out, John remembered his years of willful rebellion against God. "What mercy can there be for someone like me who's done such horrible things?" he thought. Surely there is none! Surely there is only punishment now!"

Yet, there was still mercy for John! The Holy Spirit encouraged John by bringing to mind the sayings and Bible verses his mother had taught him long ago: Like Adam and Eve we have rebelled against God; but He has not left us without hope. He calls us to turn from our sins, trust in Jesus as our Savior? I pray that you will trust in Jesus and grow up to encourage others to choose Him, too," she had urged him.

John took hope. Perhaps God might save him still. If the Lord brought them through this storm, he would study the Bible to see if it were really true. Before long, the captain shouted up the incredible news: "The ship is clear of water. We are saved!"

John knew that once more the Lord had graciously saved him from death, but this time John was a changed man. For four, whole months, as the ship slowly sailed back home. John studied the Bible and tried to remember all his mother had taught him. Always he was looking to answer his one, big question: "Could God really save such a terrible sinner as me?"

Everything he read, every time he prayed, everything he remembered, pointed to the same answer: Yes! Yes! Yes! There was still forgiveness for him, if he would repent and believe!

And that's just what John did! He turned away from his sins, and trusted in Jesus as his Savior. The Lord forgave him! His heart flooded with love and joy as the Holy Spirit worked in his heart.

This was the beginning of a new life for John Newton. Not only did the Lord lead him to become a pastor, as his mother had hoped and prayed; but the Lord also changed him from being known as the Great Blasphemer to a Great

Praiser of God. John Newton became famous for composing many beautiful words of praise to God. Without even knowing it, you probably have sung one of his songs many times. It is called "Amazing Grace":

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound!

That saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now am found.

Was blind but now I see.

Our Bible Truth is: Angels and People Rebelled Against God in the Beginning

Our Bible Verse is: 1 John 3:8

"He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

What about you and me? Like John Newton, you and I have learned the truths of God. We know about Satan's and Adam and Eve's rebellion against God. We have heard of God's offer of salvation through Jesus and of our choice to turn from our sins and trust Him as our Savior. Will we learn from John Newton's life? What choice will we make?

Let's praise God for His gracious offer of salvation to rebellious sinners. Let's ask Him to give us hearts that choose to turn from our sins and trust in Him. Let's ask Him to make us people who spread the good news of His gracious offer to others.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

Satan rebelled against God, but no one else did.

Answer: False. Satan rebelled against God and other angels rebelled with him. Then he tempted Adam and Eve to rebel against God, too.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the rotten wretch? What was so rotten about him?

John Newton. He turned away from the good news of Jesus he learned as a boy and became someone who loved to curse God and do many bad things.

b. How did he change from being a wretch?

The Lord, in His great mercy, let him feel the awfulness of his sins and the punishment he deserved, then reminded him of the good news of Jesus and helped him to repent of his sins and trust in Jesus as his Savior.

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

1 John 3:8

"He who ___ what is sinful is of the devil, because the ___ has been sinning from the beginning. The ___ the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

Answers: does; devil; reason.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

This Is My Father's World

PFI NIV Songs 6, Track 7

Verse 3

This is my Father's world,
O let me ne'er forget,
That though the wrong
Seems oft so strong,
God is the Ruler yet.
This is my Father's world.
The battle is not done.
Jesus who died shall be satisfied,
And earth and heaven be one.

Words: Malthie Babcock Music: Franklin L. Sheppard

The wrong in this world that often seems so strong is sin. It came into the world when Adam and Eve believed Satan's tempting lies and rebelled against God. Oh, what terrible suffering and death into God's perfect creation that day! Yet, God is still the ruler of the world, not Satan. He will fight and win over Satan, sin and death! God sent Jesus, just as He promised, to break the power of sin and death, when He died on the cross. And at the end of time, Jesus will come back and bring an end to Satan, his demons and all that is evil, once and for all. God is the Ruler yet. God's people take joy in this. They know that God, their heavenly Father, will do all that He has promised to do.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for Your great patience and mercy shown to sinners, even great sinners.

C God, we confess that many times we choose to rebel against You and Your good ways, just like John Newton did. We need a Savior, just like he did!

T God, we thank You for giving us the gospel! Thank You for giving us parents who teach us about You.
Thank You that no sinner is too bad to receive Your forgiveness.

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 tell others the good news of Jesus. Bring them to know You, too.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

He Who Does What Is Sinful

PFI NIV Songs 6, Track 8

He who does what is sinful is of the devil,
because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.
But wait! There's good news!
But the reason the Son of God appeared,
Was to destroy, destroy the devil's work,
But the reason the Son of God appeared,
Was to destroy, destroy the devil's work.
(And He did it!) First John Three, verse eight.

Words: 1 John 3:8 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Satan was the first to sin. He was sinning from the beginning of creation. Adam and Eve became "of the devil" when they chose to rebel against God. They no longer wanted to keep on loving and pleasing God. But oh, how wonderful that God sent His Son Jesus! Jesus was the Savior who came to rescue sinners from God's punishment that they deserved. Jesus destroyed the devil's work, when He suffered and died on the cross, then rose on the third day in victory! Now all who repent of their sins and trust in Him will be saved.