

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 8: The God Who Loves

Unit 8 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Is God's Love for His People Like?"

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 3,4

Unit 8 Bible Verse and Song: 1 Chronicles 16:34 NIV 1984

"Give thanks to the LORD for He is good. His love endures forever."

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 4:

God Loves His People by Caring for Their Needs

God is the most wonderful Father anyone could ever imagine. He is always good; always wise. He loves His children with the deepest of loves. He always takes care of their needs. When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as Savior, God becomes our heavenly Father and we become His adopted children.

God's people know that God has already taken care of their greatest need of all: He sent Jesus to die for their sins. When they remember that their loving Father was willing to give up even His own dear Son to save them, they know they can trust Him to take care all the rest of their needs, too.

God delights to hear His people ask Him for what they need; and, He delights to provide them with what they need. He always gives them what He knows is the very best for them.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 4 Bible Verse: Psalm 23:1-6

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the day of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

CASE STORY

Daniel 3

Our story is called:

The Case of the Unbending Knees.

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

1. Whose knees would not bend? Why?
2. What happened because they would not bend? Who rescued them?

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

Enemy kings with powerful armies surrounded the little land of Judah. King Asurbanipol of Assyria, King Nabopolassar of Babibli, Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, and King Kyaxares of Medes. They were all there and all hungry for more land, more peoples, more riches.

The people of Judah wondered what would happen to them. Would their enemies attack and destroy the Temple to the LORD? Would they carry them away as slaves? The people of Judah waited in fear to find out.

If the people had listened to the messages the LORD had sent through his prophets, Habbakuk, Urijah and Jeremiah, they would have known the answers to their questions. Hadn't Jeremiah stood right in the courtyard of the Temple and given them the LORD's final message: "If you don't follow My laws or listen to the words of My prophets, then I will have the Temple and this city destroyed," He warned.

Unfortunately, they didn't repent and now they faced the painful discipline of their loving God. "The armies of Babibli are coming," the LORD told through His prophets. "They will ruin your land and everything in it. They will take you away to be their servants. This is how I am disciplining you, my wayward, stiff-necked people! You will be the slaves of the king of Babibli. I want you to serve him and his people for seventy years. Do this and you will live," He urged them.

Yet even while disciplining His rebellious people, the LORD showed them great kindness: "At the end of the seventy years, I will rescue you. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land again. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD." (from Jeremiah 27:12; Ezekiel 37:13-14)

Before long, it all happened as the LORD had promised. Prince Nabu-kudurru-usur of Babibli with all his father's armies, swept down into Judah and conquered the land. He told them to take all riches of Judah. "Take all gold, silver,

and bronze things out of the Temple," he told them. "We will put them in the temple of Marduk, our god," the prince told them. "Then pick out the smartest, most handsome, young men from the best families in Judah. They will be servants to King Nabopolassar, my father," he said. So the soldiers loaded up carts of beautiful things from the Temple. They gathered up the best young men and set off across the hot, dry wilderness to Bababli.

Daniel, Amaziah, Hananiah and Mishael were young men picked out by the soldiers. How hard it must have been to be forced to leave their families, friends and homeland and become servants of their enemy, King Nabopolassar! Yet, these men went bravely. Why? Because unlike many people of Judah, these men loved the LORD. They remembered His promises to take care of them, even in Babibli. So as they marched away into slavery, these men trusted the LORD to care for them.

And so the LORD did. The king took away their Jewish names and gave them new names to honor his gods. Daniel became Belteshazzar. Hanaiah became Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and, Azariah, Abednego. He made them go to school to learn about the customs of Babibli and train to be his servants. He even tried to make them eat the food from his table—food sacrificed to his gods. The king wanted them to forget the LORD and worship Marduk instead.

Daniel, Azariah, Mischael, Hananiah worked hard for the king, just as the LORD told them to, but never did they forget the LORD. They even chose to eat animal feed rather than the king's delicious food sacrificed to his gods. Even there, far away from home, did they forget the LORD's promise to rescue them. They kept on trusting on Him to provide everything they needed, and the LORD greatly blessed them.

While these young men were in school, King Nabopolassar died and his son, Nabu-kudur-usur became king. Ashpenaz brought Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego before the new king to be interviewed, King Nabukudur-usur was most impressed. These young men were ten times wiser than the wisest men who served him already! Daniel could even tell the meaning to dreams! He gave them some of the most important jobs in his whole government.

King Nabopolassar had been great, but now his son, The music sounded and all the important men fell face down

and worshiped the image. All that is, except Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. these young men loved the LORD and would worship Him only. Some astrologers noticed what they were doing. and went to tell the king.

The king was furious. He ordered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be brought before him for questioning. "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? I'm giving you another chance. The musicians will play again, if you fall down and worship the image, very good. But if you don't, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could save their lives if they would worship the image, but they chose to keep on worshiping the LORD and trust Him to take care of their needs.

"O Nabu-kudur-usur, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king," they told the king. "But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold."

The king was furious! He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual (and that must have been very hot, indeed, for the furnaces of Babibli were known to be heated up to over 1000 degrees F!) Some of his strongest soldiers tied up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and threw them into the blazing furnace. The heat from the fire killed the soldiers, but what of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? The king looked in the fire and in amazement at what he saw.

"Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods." God had sent an angel—or perhaps Jesus Himself—to protect these men!

King Nabu-kudur-usur then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the king's important men crowded around them amazed: the fire had not harmed them at all—not their robes their bodies or even a hair on their head!

Then Nabu-kudur-usur said, "Praise be to the God of

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. Therefore I decree that anyone who speaks against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego will be punished by me, for no other god can save in this way.”

Our Bible Truth is:**God Loves His People By Caring For Their Needs****Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 23:1-6**

“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the day of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

God took care of every one of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s needs. By His Holy Spirit He strengthened their hearts to keep worshipping Him alone and to boldly proclaim Him as the one, true God. He took care of their bodies’ needs with animal feed. He even rescued them from a fiery death.

But what about you and me? Can we trust God to take care of all our needs, too? If we are God’s people— those who turn away from our sinful ways and trust Jesus as our Savior—then we, too, can know God will take care of our needs just exactly as is best, every, single day of our lives.

Let’s praise God for loving His people and giving them what they need. Let’s ask Him to help us, like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, to think first of all about honoring the Lord and trusting Him, as our loving Father, to take care of all our needs as He knows best.

NOTE

Since this is such a familiar story to most children, I used Babibli, the Babylonian word for Babylon; and Nabu-kudurr-usur, the Babylonian word for Nebuchadnezzar. Feel free to substitute back in the English versions, if you desire.

Draw a picture from the story

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God has taken care of all of His people's needs, even their greatest need for a Savior.

Answer: True.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the Penniless, Rich Man? How did he choose to be penniless? Why?

Answer: Hudson Taylor. He chose to ask God in prayer for what he needed in order to grow his trust in God's ability to provide all he needed when he would be all alone in China.

b. Who made him rich? How?

Answer: God made him rich. Not rich with a lot of money, but rich by providing everything he needed when he needed it.

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

Psalm 23:1-6

"The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in _____. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of _____ for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a _____ before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the _____ of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."

Answers: want; righteousness; table; days.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The King of Love

PFI NIV Songs 8, Tracks 12,13

Verse 1

The King of love my shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never.
I nothing lack if I am His
and He is mine forever.

Verse 4

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
With Thee dear Lord beside me.
Thy rod and staff, my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Words: Henry Baker, Psalm 23 Music: Traditional Irish Melody

God's people praise God for being the King of love. He is their king who they obey. It is delightful having Him as their king because all that He does comes from His heart of love for them and for the glory of His name. He takes care of them like a good shepherd does his sheep. Sheep are very stupid and need someone to take care all of their needs or else they will die. God does this for His people. They lack nothing; His goodness never fails them; even when facing death, they still fear nothing "ill" because He is with them. God's people know God will care for them after death by taking them to heaven to be with Him forever. We can become God's people when we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being able to perfectly care for Your people, no matter what.

C God, we confess that many times, like the people of Judah, we choose to rebel against You and Your good ways. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for always being with Your people, and always being able to care for their needs.

S God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Take care of our needs and help us to trust You and live for You, even when it is very hard.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

The LORD Is My Shepherd

PFI NIV Songs 8, Track 14

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters, He restores my soul,
He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of death,
I will fear no evil, For You are with me,
Your rod and Your staff they comfort me,
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me,
All of the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD,
Forever and ever and ever.
Psalm Twenty-three. verses one through four, and six.

Words adapted from Psalm 23:1-4,6 Constance Dever © 2011

These verses remind us that God loves His people and cares for their needs completely, just like a good shepherd loves and takes care of his sheep.