

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 NIV Songs 4, Tracks 3,4

Unit 4 Bible Verse: 1 Kings 8:23, NIV 1984

"O LORD, there is no God like you." 1 King 8:23

PFI NIV Songs 4, Track 6

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

The LORD Is a Glorious Spirit

God is spirit. God the Father has no body for us to see, but the bright, magnificent glory of His perfectly pure spirit shines out more brightly than the sun. No human look upon God in all His glory. He is too holy for us to see.

Jesus is God's Son. He is spirit, like His Father, but He became human to live on earth and to die for God's people's sins. He is completely God AND completely man. God's people will live face to face with God in heaven. There, they will see Jesus. He will still have a human body; but there, He will shine with magnificent glory because he is God.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: John 4:24

"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

CASE STORY

John 4:1-32

Our story is:

The Case of the Thirsty Woman.

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

1. Who was the thirsty woman? What did she think she was thirsty for?
2. Who knew what she was really thirsty for? How did he quench her real thirst?

This story takes place in Samaria, during New Testament times when Jesus lived on earth.

Samaria was the name of the little bit of land that lay between Jerusalem and Galilee in Israel. It might have been just a little bit of land, but it was the cause of a whole lot of hatred between the Samaritans (the people who lived there) and the Jews who lived around them in Israel. The Jews were so disgusted by the Samaritans that even to just say the word "Samaria" or "Samaritan" was like saying a cuss word.

It hadn't always been this way. Many years earlier, the Samaritans were accepted as fellow Jews. But then the Samaritans did something that the rest of the Jews could never accept or forgive: they chose to become unclean.

What in the world does "unclean" mean; and why did the Jews hate the Samaritans for being that way? Did they smell bad or need to take a bath? No, they weren't that kind of unclean. This was a special Bible word. It meant the Samaritans were out of fellowship with God and other Jews. You see, the Samaritans had chosen to break some of the special laws that the LORD had given the Jews through Moses—and they had never turned from breaking those laws or offered sin sacrifices to the LORD for breaking them. According to God's laws, this meant they were not to worship the LORD at the Temple, or go about their daily lives around other Jews, until they had stopped breaking the laws and made their sin offerings. That's what it meant that they were unclean.

Now most Jews became unclean from time to time because they ate food the LORD told them was harmful to eat; or, they had a contagious disease that would make others sick; or, they had touched something dead. But the Samaritans were unclean for doing some downright sinful things. Long ago, they had turned away from the LORD. Instead of worshiping the LORD at the Temple in

Jerusalem, they built their own temple to golden calves and other idols, right there on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria! And, instead of marrying other people who worshiped the LORD, they had chosen to marry idol-worshipping Assyrians. These were two things the LORD told the people NEVER to do!

That's why the Jews hated the Samaritans. They had rejected the LORD and His laws! To them, there was nothing worse than a Samaritan. They were unclean through and through. Any God-fearing Jew should have nothing to do with them. They shouldn't talk with them, eat their food, or even set foot on Samaritan land. Why, the Jews thought the Samaritans were so unclean that they could never be forgiven by God and be saved. They were stuck with their sins forever!

But what did Jesus think about the Samaritans? He was a Jew. Did He think there was nothing worse than a Samaritan? Did He think there was no hope for these law-breakers? Was there no way for them to be made right with God? Let's hear today's story and find out.

Jesus and His disciples had been walking since day break. They had been in Jerusalem for the Passover and had begun the three-day walk back home to Galilee. Now the noon day sun was right overhead and it beat down hard upon them. Their stomachs were beginning to grumble and their mouths were dry with thirst. It was time for a rest.

"Look, there is Jacob's well and just beyond it, the town of Sychar," Jesus told His disciples. "There will be food and water there. You go into the town for food and I will wait by the well here for you," He said.

As hungry as they were, the disciples no doubt were NOT looking forward to going into Sychar for food. Why? Because Sychar was a Samaritan town! They would be talking with and buying food...and even touching and eating food from Samaritans. How disgusting! But at their Master's command, off the disciples went anyway.

Jesus rested on the well's stone rim. It was deserted. No one usually came out to the well at this hot time of day, if they didn't have to. Yet, Jesus knew of a woman who would be coming very soon to the well for water because she dared not come in morning with the other women. Everyone had rejected her because she was so sinful. She had tried to find the happiness that only God can give in the love of boyfriends and husbands. She had done many

bad things. Even the Samaritans--rejected as sinful people by the Jews, themselves--rejected this woman! She must be really bad!

Jesus heard footsteps and looked up. Yes, here she came, just as He knew she would. Jesus watched her as she came towards the well, her clay water jar balanced on her head. As thirsty as Jesus' dry mouth was for cool water, He knew that this woman's heart was even thirstier for the refreshing words of eternal life. He could give her. Rejected by people, but not by God; she was why He had come.

"Woman, will you give me a drink of water?" Jesus asked.

"You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. You Jews think all Samaritan women are so sinful that we are born unclean! You think to drink after us will make you unclean! How can you ask me for a drink?"

"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water," replied Jesus.

"Sir, you have nothing to draw with and the well is over 250 feet deep, the deepest in the land. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?"

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life," said Jesus.

"Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water," she begged.

"Go, call your husband and come back."

"I have no husband," she replied.

"You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true," Jesus said.

Jesus' words surprised her. "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet, a man God speaks His words through. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, Mount Gerazim, but you Jews claim that the only place to worship is in Jerusalem," she replied.

But Jesus told her, "Worship is not really about making the right sacrifices on Mount Gerazim or even at the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. God is spirit. He isn't looking just for people who make the right sacrifices at the right place. His true worshipers are people who worship Him by knowing

and believing in Me. sent to save God's people. They worship God, sincerely with their whole lives. These people turn away from sinning against God. They know God in their heart (their spirit).

"I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." she said.

Then Jesus declared, "I am the Messiah."

This was different from anything that this poor woman had ever heard! Jesus was telling her that the LORD is a glorious spirit, completely holy and without sin. She knew in her heart that nothing sinful, especially sinful like her, could come near Him. Yet, here was the Messiah telling her that if she would turn from her sin and trust in Him, she could receive eternal life through Him! Could it be there was hope for Samaritans after all? Could it be there was hope for a sinful woman like her to know and worship the holy LORD? Right then and there, that sinful woman trusted in Jesus. Even though she was a Samaritan and a very sinful person, her thirsty heart accepted His invitation to receive His gift of eternal life.

"How exciting! How amazing!" she thought. "I must tell the others! The Messiah was here and was offering forgiveness of sins and eternal life." She left her water jar and hurried back to town with the news. Before she avoided the people who rejected her, but now she spread the word to everyone she could find: Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" she said to the townspeople.

The people came out of the town and made their way toward Jesus. As the woman told of the hope that Jesus promised for all who turned to God to worship Him truly, hope rose in their hearts, too.

"Jesus, we know Jews think makes them unclean to spend the night in a Samaritan town, but would You stay with us and tell us more. We want to know how we can be true worshipers of God," they pleaded.

So Jesus stayed with them. For two days and night, He ate Samaritan food on Samaritan plates; slept on Samaritan beds; and most of all, He talked with them. Many of them turned from their sins and were saved.

They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said about Jesus; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

How amazing! Jesus offered the gift of eternal life to

rejected people like those Samaritans!

Our Bible Truth is: The LORD Is a Glorious Spirit

Our Bible Verse is: John 4:24

"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

Jesus offered the gift of eternal life to sinful, even rejected people like those Samaritans. And, He still offers this gift to sinful, even rejected people today. That's people like you and me. How could it be that sinful people like us could become people of God, who is a perfectly, purely good spirit? How could He accept us into His presence? Because Jesus, Himself, the perfect Son of God paid for their sins on the cross. In God's eyes, all who repent of their sins and trust in Him have been completely forgiven of their sins. God looks upon them as if they are as perfectly, purely good as Jesus. One day, all God's people will stand before Him and wonder at all His glory. They will praise Him for His perfect holiness and for making them God's people.

Let's praise God for being the glorious spirit, perfectly good! Let's thank Jesus for making the way for sinful people to one day stand in His presence and worship Him forever, by offering up Himself as the perfect payment for their sins. Let's ask God to work in our hearts, even today. Let's ask Him to help us to turn from disobeying Him and to trust in Him as our own Savior.

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SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

In heaven, God’s people will get to see God in all His glory.
Answer: True!

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Who was the thirsty woman? What did she think she was thirsty for?

Answer: A Samaritan woman who had done many sinful things. Water.

b. Who knew what she was really thirsty for? What was it and how did he quench her real thirst?

Answer: Jesus knew. He knew that she needed most of all to be forgiven of her sins and come to know God. He showed that He was the Messiah, God’s Son, who became a man to save us from our sins and bring us to God. He told her how she could be saved through faith in Him.

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

John 4:24

“God is spirit, and ___ worshipers ___ worship in spirit ___ in truth.”

Answers: His; must; and.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

O Worship the King

PFI NIV Songs 4, Track 7

Verse 1

O worship the King, all glorious above,
And gratefully sing His wonderful love;
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,
Pavillioned in splendor and girded with praise.

God is spirit. We cannot see spirit, but the bright, magnificent glory of His perfectly pure spirit shines out more brightly than the sun. From heaven above, He rules as King over all, reigning in the splendor of His glory. Those who see Him, like the angels cannot help but praise Him for how glorious He is. He is girded in their praise. That is, their praise surrounds Him, just like when we gird our Middle with a belt.

But not only is the LORD full of glory, but He is also full of steadfast love for all those who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. They are His people and He is their God, forever and ever. He is the Ancient of Days--He has always lived and He has always loved them. He is their shield and defender. He will take care of them every day of their lives and bring them safely home to live with Him forever. There, they, too will see Him in His glory and their praise will surround Him for His wonderful love shown to them.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the God who seeks out and saves sinners.

C God, we confess that like the Samaritan woman, we are sinners who have disobeyed You. We like to live our own way, instead of Your good way. We need Jesus to save us.

T God, we thank You for being willing to forgive even the worst of sinners who turn to You for forgiveness.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to come to know You and worship You in spirit and in truth.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

God Is Spirit

PFI NIV Songs 4, Track 8

God is spirit,
God is spirit,
And His worshipers worship Him
In spirit and truth.
God is spirit,
God is spirit,
And His worshipers worship Him
In spirit and truth.
John Four, twenty-four, Hey!

Words: John 4:24, NIV 1984 Music: Constance Dever ©2012

This verse tells us that God is spirit. It also tells us that if we want to be true followers, true worshippers of God, that we will worship Him with the spirit He put inside of us. How do we do this? By turning from our sins, believing in Jesus, the Son of God, and trusting in Him as our Savior. When we do, God puts His Holy Spirit inside our spirit. He works powerfully inside us, helping us to live out our faith in Him by seeking to know Him more and more and love Him in everything we do in our lives.