

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 7: The Law-Giving God

Unit 7 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"What Are God's Laws Like?

God's Laws Are Perfect!" PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 3,4

Unit 7 Bible Verse and Song: Psalm 19:7,9,11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The ordinances of the LORD are sure and altogether righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb. By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

We're learning... Bible Truth 1:

God's Laws Are Written in the Bible

A law is something we are told to do or not to do by someone in authority over us. God is our Maker and the King over everything. He has authority over all. He has given us all His laws to obey. They show us how to live lives that please Him: lives that show His holiness and are filled with love for Him and for each other.

God gave the Ten Commandments and many other laws through Moses. Some of those laws were special laws God gave to the Israelites to follow until Jesus came. But many of them were laws that God gave to all people, in all places and all times to obey. Later, God gave us more commandments to live by through His prophets, through Jesus and through Jesus' first followers, the apostles.

We should all learn God's laws. They are written in the Bible, God's perfect Word, for us to learn and obey. God's laws are unlike any other rules. They are always perfect and good. They always show us the best, most loving and God-pleasing way to live.

God's laws are perfect, but we are not! We are sinners. No matter how hard we try, we will never keep God's laws perfectly. We can never please God with just our good works--only Jesus could do that. That's why God offers us forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus, when we turn from our sins and trust in Him as our own Savior.

BIBLE VERSE

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

Bible Truth 1 Bible Verse: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your mother...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

CASE STORY

Genesis 15:12-19; Exodus 19-24

Our story is called:

The Case of the Invisible Hand.

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

1. Whose hand was invisible?
2. What did the invisible hand do and what did that have to do with the Israelites and what does that have to do with us?

Our story takes place in Old Testament times, about 1400 years before Jesus lived on earth.

The hot rays of the sun had hardly begun to warm the desert sands of Egypt, when the sounds of a huge crowd of people talking and walking filled the air. It was Exodus Day! This was happy day when the hundreds of thousands of Israelites left behind slavery in Egypt and headed for new life in the Promised Land.

Ah, the Promised Land! A land so full of good things that they called it "the land of milk and honey." God had promised the Israelites that He would lead them to that wonderful land to live as His special people, His treasured possession. Gladly they left the great cities of Egypt and they followed Moses out into the desert-like wilderness, where little grew or lived. They knew their wonderful new home was just a few days' journey to the north. They could handle this!

But wait! Something was wrong! Moses wasn't leading them north to the Promised Land at all! He was leading them south, further and further into the desert! What was going on?! Why were they going south? Was Moses lost? Had the LORD tricked them?

No, Moses wasn't lost. No, the LORD hadn't tricked them. He was preparing them to be His people. For years they had been distant from the LORD. They had gotten used to the gods of the Egyptians--and they weren't anything like the LORD. They needed to know Him and trust Him. They needed to learn how to live holy lives that pleased Him. They needed His laws. So, further and further south they traveled, until they came to broad plain at the base of the big mountains called Sinai. It was here where the LORD teach them His laws and would make His covenant promise with the Israelites to be their God.

As the Israelites set up camp in the plain, Moses was busy going up and down the steep, rocky slopes of Sinai, receiving instructions from the LORD. "Tell the people: 'I have brought you here to make a covenant with Me,' the

LORD told Moses. "Tell them: "You have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you away to safety. If you obey Me and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, to show the rest of the world what I am like and bring them to Me, too," He promised them.

The seventy elders spoke for all the people when they heard the LORD's message: "Moses, tell the LORD we will do everything He has said." They wanted to be God's covenant people.

Then the LORD told Moses: Gather the people together at the base of Mt. Sinai in three days. I, Myself, will come down the mountain to them in a dense cloud with fire and smoke. I will let them hear Me speak with you, Moses, so they will trust that you are My messenger. Then I will tell them the laws the covenant I will make with them. They will hear Me speak them with their own ears. They will see My majesty and power with their own eyes. I will do this that they might fear and obey Me always.

The LORD gave the people some special preparations to do before their meeting with Him. He was the holy God and they were sinful people. Everything must be just right to meet with Him. "Moses, tell the people to consecrate themselves. Have them wash their bodies and their clothing as signs of wanting to turn away from sin and humbly worship Me," the LORD told Moses. "Have them put limits around the mountain and tell them, 'Don't go up on the mountain! Not even the foot of it! Whoever does--whether animal or person--must be put to death,'" He warned. "I am the LORD, the holy God. When My presence is upon the mountain, even its very rocks are too holy for sinful people to touch. Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain," the LORD told Moses.

So the people prepared to meet the LORD. They washed their bodies and clothes. They put limits around the mountain and waited for the third day.

At last the third day came. Instead of the usual cloudless, blue sky, there was thick, dark cloud that covered the mountain. Something like streaks of lightning flashed in the cloud and the air was filled with great rumbles of thunder. The blast of a loud trumpet suddenly filled the air and got louder and louder. The time was here! The LORD was coming! Everyone in the camp trembled with fear as

clouds of smoke filled the air and the whole mountain trembled violently, as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder.

Moses spoke to the LORD and the people heard the very voice of the LORD answer him. "Come up to the top of the mountain for Me to speak to you," the LORD told Moses. The people watched in awe as Moses bravely set foot on the quaking mountain and straight into the cloud, billowing smoke and fire.

"I am about to descend on the mountain and speak the words of My laws to the Israelites," the LORD told him. "Make sure they stay off the mountain," He urged Moses again.

So down Moses went to the base of the mountain again to warn the people one last time; then, the LORD descended upon the mountain and with a loud voice He said to them: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I have saved you. Worship Me as God alone. Don't make any idols out of anything I have created in heaven or in earth. Don't worship them as gods. I alone am God. I don't want you to share your worship with anything else. My Name reflects My holiness. Do not misuse it. Keep the Sabbath day as a day for resting and for worshiping Me. I give you six days each week to do your work, but the seventh day you are to rest and worship Me. Honor your father and your mother. Listen to their wise words. They will teach you My good ways that your life may go well and you many live long in the land that I, the LORD your God, am giving you. Do not murder anyone. Don't share the special love you should only have for your husband or wife with another man or woman. Be faithful to your own husband or wife. Don't steal. Don't tell lies about others. Don't crave what others have, but be content with what I give you. These are the Ten Commandments of My covenant promise that you are to keep," the LORD told them.

The people heard the thunder and the trumpet. They saw the lightning and the smoky mountain, and they trembled with fear! They were so overwhelmed at the holiness and power of the LORD that they didn't think they could bear to hear speak anymore. "Speak to us yourself and we will listen," they pleaded with Moses. "But do not have God speak to us or we will die."

But Moses said, "Don't be afraid. God has come to help you understand that He is the Holy God, so that your fear

Him will help keep you from sinning against Him. You will want to keep His good laws and honor Him," he reassured them. "But now, I will go up to the LORD and receive the rest of the covenant laws and promises for you," he told them. So Moses went into the thick darkness where God was on Mount Sinai.

On the mountain, the LORD continued giving His laws to Moses. He gave them laws to help them know how to live out the Ten Commandments in their everyday lives. He promised to give them the Promised Land and bless them with many good things, if they would obey His good laws. When the LORD finished telling Moses all of the laws and promises of the covenant, Moses went back down the mountain and told the people everything the LORD had said.

And what did the people think about the LORD's covenant? They were amazed! Never in the world had such wonderful laws been made. They were good, just and perfectly holy, just like the LORD. And how wonderful the blessings He promised to them if they would keep His laws! Together they said to Moses, "Everything the LORD has said we will do. We are ready to make a covenant with Him.

So Moses went and wrote down God's words in "The Book of the Covenant." The next morning, he built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He set up twelve stone pillars, for the twelve tribes of Israel. Worship offerings were made and prepared to seal their promises with God with bull's blood. Moses sprinkled half the blood on the altar. Then he read the Book of the Covenant to the people. They listened and promised, "We will obey everything the LORD says." So Moses took the bull's blood and sprinkled it on the people. "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you," He told them. And it was done! The covenant was made!

Then the LORD called Moses, Aaron, Aaron's two sons Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy leaders (elders) of the Israelites up to the edge of the mountain to share in a meal from the animals used in the worship offering and... to see Him!

What did they see? The Bible tells us very little. It only says that under His feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. Could those feet have been the feet of Jesus in all His glory? Did they see no more than His feet because they bowed their heads down

in worship before the glory and holiness of God? We do not know. But God in His mercy allowed these leaders of the Israelites, even though they were sinners, stand in His holy presence and live.

When they had all finished eating, everyone went back down the mountain except Moses. "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here," the LORD told them, and I will give you tablets of stone with My laws written on them." So Moses and Joshua, his assistant, went up Mount Sinai, all ablaze on top with the glory of the LORD. Like a great, consuming fire. He stayed there forty days and nights, receiving the two copies of the Ten Commandments on stone tablets, written on both sides by God, Himself; and learning many other things to tell the Israelites. There was much to know and obey if they were to be the LORD's holy nation, a kingdom of priests, a dazzling display of His holiness that the nations might see His glory, turn from their sins and trust Him as their Savior.

Our Bible Truth is: God's Laws Are Written in the Bible

That day at the base of Mount Sinai the Israelite's received these laws: God's Ten Commandments. They made a covenant to be God's special people; but what about you and me? Were those commandments just for the Israelites? No, they were not. They are the laws God has revealed to all of us, if we want to live holy lives that honor Him. They are for us to keep, too.

And was it just the Israelites God intended to be a holy nation of people, a kingdom of priests? No, He did not. The Israel's were to be the ones to teach everyone else about Him, how He wants us to live, and how we might be saved by faith in Him. The Israelites weren't to be the end of God's people. They were to be just the beginning. For to all who turn from their sins and trust in Jesus as Savior, God promises to forgive their sins and make them part of holy nation that reflects His holiness with their holy lives. They get to be part of the kingdom of priests to go out and tell others about Him.

Let's praise the LORD for giving us Him holy laws and for calling us, too, to be part of His holy nation. Let's ask Him to give us the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts that we would turn away from our sin and by faith trust Him as our Savior. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts and help us to obey God's good laws, that we would reflect His holiness by keeping His laws.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

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

God is our maker and king, but He doesn't care how we live.

Answer: False! He is our maker and king, but He very much cares how we live. That's why He gave us the Ten Commandments.

2. Crack the Case Questions

a. Whose hand was invisible?

Answer: The LORD's hand.

b. What did the invisible hand do and what does that have to do with us?

Answer: He wrote down the Ten Commandments of His law. Those laws were for the Israelites to obey, but they are also for us all to obey. They tell us how God wants us all to live.

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

Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21

"Hear, O Israel, the decrees and ___ I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them...I am the LORD, your God...You shall have no other ___ before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything...You shall not ___ the name of the LORD your God...Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy... Honor your father and your ___...You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false ___ against your neighbor. You shall not covet ...anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Answers: laws; gods; misuse; mother; testimony.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

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

A God, we praise You for being the Giver of Perfectly Good Laws.

C God, we confess that we break the good laws You gave us to live by. We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for not just giving us Your good laws, but sending Jesus to save all who turn away from their sins and trust in Him as their Savior.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us to keep Your good laws so that we love You and love others as You want us to.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

The God of Abraham Praise

PFI NIV Songs 7, Track 6

Verse 2

His Spirit floweth free,
High surging where it will:
In prophet's word He spoke of old,
He speaketh still.
Established is His law,
And changeless it shall stand,
Deep writ upon the human heart,
On sea or land.

Words: Daniel ben Judah Dayyan, Translated by Newton Mann

Music: Meyer Lyon

God's Holy Spirit works powerfully, doing everything God wants Him to do. Long ago, in the days of the prophets, God's Spirit spoke to them and gave them His words to speak to God's people. The prophets spoke them to the people, but also, they wrote them down in the Bible. Sometimes, God's words were laws He wanted His people to keep. Sometimes they were words of comfort or warning. Other times, they were words about the future. God's Holy Spirit helped the prophets say God's words just right...and He helped them write them down just right. Even now, we can read God's words that the prophets wrote down when we read the Bible. God can use them to "write" His truth deep upon our hearts. That is, He can use them to teach us His ways and how He wants us to live. He can use them to help us to know Him and obey Him.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

Hear, O Israel

PFI NIV Songs 7, Tracks 7,8

Refrain:

Hear, O Israel, the decrees and the laws I declare,
Learn them and be sure to follow them,
be sure to follow them.

You shall have no gods before Me,
You shall not make an idol,
You shall not misuse the name of the LORD,
Observe the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy,
Honor your father and your mother. *Refrain*

You shall not murder,
You shall not commit adult'ry,
You shall not steal,
You shall not give false testimony,
You shall not covet anything. *Refrain*
Deuteronomy Five,
Verses one, six through twenty-one.

Words: Deuteronomy 5:1,6-21 Music: Constance Dever ©2011

Long ago, the LORD gave the 10 Commandments and many other good laws to the people of Israel. The Israelites agreed to keep them. He would be their God; they would be His people. He would bless them and take care of them. These verses are the Ten Commandments (laws) that God gave them. But even though God gave them to the people of Israel that day, they are laws for all of us to keep. They tell us how God wants us all to live.