

Know the God of Scripture

Volume 1

(revised 10/09/2024)

Week 44: The Unknown God - Answer Guide

Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.

1. In this particular case Peter had a vision from God and was told to go to a particular place and share the gospel with known Gentiles. In obedience to that calling Peter goes and the result is the salvation and baptism of the Gentiles. The apostles and leaders in the Jerusalem church got wind of the Gentile conversions and demanded an explanation from Peter himself as to what happened. In reporting to the leaders of Jerusalem, Peter emphasized that it was God who commissioned him to go to Caesarea. Peter simply acted in obedience to what God had called him to do. Later, it appears Peter's faith had waned and he relapsed into neglecting the Gentiles and was confronted by Paul about this issue. Reading Galatians 2:11-21 it seems that peer pressure, conforming to the belief of those in his inner circle, was the cause of Peter's relapse. Paul reminded him that the Gospel was intended to be shared with ALL people.

Although we are in the world, it is evident that we are not of the world. We all are commissioned to share the gospel message when the opportunity arises, independent of color of skin or ethnicity. However, we must be aware of our surroundings, practice good Christian disciplines like daily prayers, reading and studying God's Word, discipling others and fellowshiping with like-minded believers. These practices will keep our faith strong and remind us of our goal of sharing the Gospel in a lost world.

2. The apostle James was probably chosen to be executed so Herod could appease the Jews (Acts 12:3). Apparently, Peter was to be executed next, probably for the same reason. It was Herod Agrippa I, Herod the Great's grandson, who had James executed. Reference <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/acts/12-2.htm>

The great Christian apologist and historian, Eusebius, records Clement of Alexander's account of James's death. According to Clement, the accuser of James was converted when he witnessed James' unwavering faith in the midst of eminent death. The accuser confessed his new faith and was executed along with James.

3. At the time of Paul, it was the third largest city behind Alexandria and Rome. It was established during the early persecution of Christians following the death of Jesus. It was largely a Gentile church. It supported Jerusalem during the famine. It was the source of monetary support for all of Paul's missionary journeys. The church was made up of a variety of cultures, backgrounds and ethnicities (Acts 13:1).

4. The purpose of Paul's first missionary journey was to plant churches in Galatia and evangelize the area. Along with Barnabas, Paul visited the island of Cyprus and cities in Galatia (Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe). Churches were planted and elders appointed in each of these cities. Paul came close to dying several times (he was an unpleasant sight in Galatians 4:13). His words were misinterpreted by many, especially the Grecian Jews. John Mark dissented them a quarter of the way through the journey. Through many challenges many Jews and Gentiles came to faith in Christ.

5. In most of the cities Paul went to the synagogue and revealed Christ from the Old Testament. In addition, his life experience was an example of his faith. He exercised great patience and compassion for the people. He had a zeal for sharing Christ, he prayed, he fasted, he broke bread and encouraged new believers in the faith. In essence Paul was making disciples (Acts 14:23). Later Paul would share his testimony of faith as a method of evangelizing.

6. Paul needed this letter of authentication to be able to establish his credentials in the churches he had established. It also held weight in Paul's preaching and establishing churches in new towns. The letter, written and signed by James, confirmed his authority from the Mother Church in Jerusalem.

7. The purpose of Paul's second missionary journey was to encourage existing Galatian churches, establish churches in Macedonia, and gather funds to support Jerusalem which was experiencing a famine. Paul had, and used, the letter from Jerusalem to make church planting easier. He did NOT take Mark or Barnabas, but Silas. On the journey Paul met Timothy. He also was introduced to Luke in Troas. The "we" sections begin signifying that Luke was with Paul. He met Lydia in Philippi, his preaching was confirmed in Berea, and he established a church in Thessalonica. In Athens he addressed the Unknown God and philosophized with the best at Mar's Hill. He established the Corinthian Church and wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians. Towards the end he established a church in Ephesus. Throughout his journey he used his Roman citizenship card to avoid further persecutions.

8. Luke had joined Paul and Silas at Troas. He writes from a first-hand experience in the "we" passages. Luke eventually follows Paul on the next two journeys. It is believed he followed Paul to Rome and witnessed his death. Luke was a trusted companion as well as a good physician.

9. The purpose of the third missionary journey was to strengthen the new churches in Galatia and Macedonia after hearing of their troubles. The staunch Grecian Jews had infiltrated some of Paul's churches claiming that Paul was a blasphemer and that circumcision was essential to becoming a Christian. Paul spends three years in Ephesus, writes 1st & 2nd Corinthians, performs more miracles, and vehemently addressed the seven sons of Sceva. He witnessed the burning of magician books, barely avoided a dangerous riot in Ephesus, raised Eutychus from the dead, and writes Romans from Corinth.

10. A comparison is shown below:

Acts 9:1-18	Acts 22:2-16	Acts 26:9-18
2 nd Person Account	1 st Person Account	1 st Person Account
Personal Account	Addressing Jews	to King Agrippa & Festus
Most Detailed	Most Jewish	Reader's Digest Version
No Time Mentioned	Noon	Noon
Men heard voice	Men saw light & heard voice	Men saw light
He fell to ground	I fell to ground	Everyone fell to ground
Men stood speechless	Men stood speechless	--
Ananias	Ananias	Ananias is not mentioned
Jesus	Jesus of Nazareth	Jesus
Chosen Instrument to	You will be a witness to all men	Chosen to preach Gospel to Jews
Gentiles, Kings & Jews		& Gentiles
		"It is hard to kick against the goads"

11. Why did Luke decide this event was important enough to include in Acts? It was certainly important, but why include it? Maybe it was to teach that Paul was a child of the living God, invincible to attacks of Satan (snake) and that Satan's destiny was the eternal lake of fire. Could it have been a real event that could be translated into a teachable metaphor?

Additional Questions:

- 1.** Peter, now filled with the Holy Spirit, was compelled to share his newfound faith in Christ. He had seen Christ and, better yet, had been restored from the time he denied Christ three times. He preached with boldness, zeal and a passion for the lost. He was a changed man!
- 2.** Answers will vary depending on personal experience.
- 3.** Answers will vary depending on personal experience.

