

Know the God of Scripture

Volume 1

(revised 10/10/2024)

Week 47: Thank God For Grace - 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. It's been highly debated which part of Galatia Paul was addressing in his letter. Most commentaries lean toward the upper portion of the province of Galatia. Either way, the known residents in Galatia stemmed from the barbaric Gauls from the north of Europe. Subject to Roman rule, these people were ripe to hear the gospel of grace. Neophytes in their newfound faith meant they were easily disposed to being persuaded by authoritative Jewish leaders to adhere to the Law of Moses. This is evident from the tone of Galatians.

2. Paul emphasizes (Galatians 4:19-26) the law was not given to adhere to for salvation but given as a standard of righteousness no human could ever live up to. In other words, the law acts as a mirror in that it exposes our sin and filthiness, our depravation, and our need to be cleansed. It points to and appeals to our need for salvation. It plays a significant role in the plan of salvation in that it convicts us of our inability to be righteous before a righteous God. It reminds us of our need for Jesus.

3. Paul used the Old Testament, which the Jews were familiar with, to expose Jesus Christ to them. Verses like Galatians 3:8, 22 and 4:30 and his extensive knowledge of Abraham support this. In Galatians 1:11-12 he states that his gospel did not come by human persuasion but by revelation (through Scripture) from Jesus Christ. He then lists his credentials for being an authority on the Scriptures by his training. Paul made sure to emphasize that his "right hand of fellowship" (Galatians 2:9) was extended by James, John and Cephas.

4. They appear to have been persuaded to avoid Gentiles because of their uncleanness (i.e. Levitical Law). They may even have stopped disseminating the truth of grace through faith. In any account, Paul recognized their hypocrisy and boldly confronted and reminded them of the truth that the Gospel is for all people. This demonstrates how easily one can be persuaded by the influence of another, the importance of fellowshiping with the saints and the biblical concept of iron sharpening iron.

5. Paul appeals to Abraham and the Old Testament. God had declared Abraham righteous on the basis of his faith years before either circumcision or the law were given, thereby justifying faith rather than works. The Law was sent to point us to salvation by grace through faith in God. Paul emphasized the fact that God would even call the Gentiles to salvation through the blood of Jesus. No one is capable of abiding by the Law of Moses, but the law provides for us a guideline to righteousness in which Jesus fulfilled in His life. It is only through grace by faith in Jesus can one be saved.

6. The Greek word Paul employs here for foolish is "*anoetos*" and refers to someone basically not using their brains to think. I believe Paul is exposing his frustration that his hard work and investment in Galatia may have been in vain (4:11). It shows how easily people (sheep) can be persuaded by those they believe to be authorities on a subject. I believe this phrase caught the attention of his audience in an effectual manner which was probably his intention.

7. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact ailment Paul is alluding to here. Some have said it may have been some form of malaria he contracted when visiting the islands. Some point to his beating in nearby Lystra, that he was bruised and battered. More than likely his reference to them giving him their eyes (Galatians 4:15) points to some type of ophthalmia or eye disorder. This may have occurred during his Damascus experience with the bright lights, being his thorn in the flesh God would not remove. In any event, the Galatians graciously accepted him and Paul was grateful for that.

8. A freedom from the curse of sin. It is not a liberty that leads to license, as his accusers charged, but rather a liberty that leads to mature responsibility and holiness before God through the prompting of the Holy Spirit living in them. It is the newfound power of the Holy Spirit in a believer that compels them to live the life of righteousness allowing the process of sanctification to be demonstrated in their lives. It is easy to see how an outsider could misinterpret this liberty and Paul was quick to address that in chapter 5.

9. One originates from the flesh and the other from the Holy Spirit living inside a person. It is important to note the necessity of crucifying the passions and desires of the flesh to produce the fruits. In addition, fruits are seen by the outside world and vital to promote the work of Christ in a person.

10. The new creation, being born again in Christ Jesus, is the beginning of true life in an individual. It is the birth of salvation from which a life of contentment in Christ begins. From this new birth comes fruits of righteousness for all to see. Remember, Jesus said His disciples would be known by their love for others.

Additional Questions:

1. Galatians is the first of thirteen books attributed to Paul. In it Paul lays out the foundation of salvation, that one is saved by grace through their exercising of faith in Jesus Christ. The Law, so fundamental to Jewish believers in his day, was never fulfilled by man and cannot save anyone. Paul explains the fact that no man can attain righteousness by following the Law. It is only by grace that we can come to the cross of salvation where Jesus, who fulfilled the Law, sacrificed His atoning blood for the forgiveness of our sins so that we can be saved. It is there that we can receive the robe of righteousness provided by Jesus.

2. Answers will vary depending on personal experience.

3. Many New Age heresies seem to be seeping into the modern-day churches. Some include the prosperity Gospel that promotes the idea that our prosperity is dependent solely upon our personal efforts. Another is the proclamation that the Bible is not inspired, inerrant or infallible. Some faiths (Jehovah Witnesses) promote the idea that Jesus was not fully God, but the highest-ranking angel in heaven and that He was made by God.

4. The “church” are the called-out ones, the elect of Jesus Christ. As later explained by Paul (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), the church is like a human body where all parts are dependent upon each other to function properly. No part is more significant than another. Likewise, the members of a church function cooperatively with others to edify Jesus. One important way to do this is for individuals to discover, develop and deploy their God-given spiritual gifts within the confines of the church. Also, believers should find comfort and solace within the body of believers and be encouraged in their faith to walk with Jesus.

