

God's Rescue Plan

THE GOSPEL REVEALED • BIBLE STUDY

Galatians 1:3-5 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | September 2, 2026

The Big Question (from Sunday's sermon)

The Question: *How far did God go to rescue you?*

The Answer (the four points): All the way. In one sentence Paul gives four answers. He **PAID THE PRICE** — He gave Himself for our sins (v. 4a). He **DELIVERED US FROM PRISON** — out of this present evil age (v. 4b). **HIS WILL WAS THE PLAN** — according to the will of our God and Father (v. 4c). And **TO HIM BELONGS THE PRAISE** — to whom be glory forever and ever (v. 5).

Learning Objectives

By the end of this study, you will be able to...

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| 1 | Say what grace and peace are, and why they both come from the Father and the Son. |
| 2 | See that Jesus gave His own life, and that no one took it from Him. |
| 3 | Explain what “for our sins” means: Jesus died in your place. |
| 4 | Explain what it means that Jesus rescued us, or “delivered” us. |
| 5 | Describe “this present evil age,” and how Jesus rescues you from it without taking you out of the world. |
| 6 | Show how grace saves you and then teaches you to live free (Titus 2:11-12). |
| 7 | Explain why the cross was the Father's plan, not Jesus talking an angry God into sparing us. |
| 8 | See why Paul stops to praise God here, and why God gets all the glory. |

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The Text

Galatians 1:3-5 (NKJV)

³ *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,*
⁴ *who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present*
evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, ⁵ to whom be glory
forever and ever. Amen.

The Two Sweetest Words in the Letter (v. 3)

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objective 1: Say what grace and peace are, and why both come from the Father and the Son.*

Galatians 1:3

³ *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Last week we asked by whose authority. Paul answered: this word was sent, not from men; it was signed by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead; and it is settled. So now we know whose word this is. This week Paul tells us what that word brings us. And the first thing out of his mouth is two words. If you mark in your Bible, mark these. Grace. And peace.

Grace, that's God's undeserved favor. God's kindness poured out on your life when you did nothing to earn it. And what about peace? Peace is what grace produces. This peace isn't talking about a nice, calm feeling. In this sense, it's peace with God.

Peace Is Not a Feeling. It Is a Status.

I don't want us to just look at this word peace and skim over it, because peace is more than a feeling. Peace in this sense is a status between you and God. It means the war is over.

Romans 5:1

¹ *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Having been justified by faith. I've got to pause there, because you are justified by faith and faith alone. There are no hoops to jump through, no Hail Marys, no rosaries, no confession, no church membership. There is nothing you have to do to enter the kingdom of God but believe. And because of that, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether you realize it or not, you were on the wrong side of God. You were an enemy to Him in your mind by wicked works, and the cross ended that war and made you His child. You're not His enemy anymore. You've been justified, adopted, made an heir of the kingdom of God.

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The scholars — grace, then peace

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott — BST <i>on v. 3</i>	“Although ‘grace’ and ‘peace’ are common monosyllables, they are pregnant with theological substance. In fact, they summarize Paul’s gospel of salvation. The nature of salvation is peace, or reconciliation—peace with God, peace with men, peace within. The source of salvation is grace, God’s free favour, irrespective of any human merit or works, His loving-kindness to the undeserving. And this grace and peace flow from the Father and the Son together.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 3</i>	“Grace is God’s unconditioned good will toward mankind which is decisively expressed in the saving work of Christ; peace is the state of life — peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and peace with one another (Eph. 2:14-18) — enjoyed by those who have effectively experienced the divine grace.”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 3</i>	“The order in the greeting (“grace,” then “peace”) may be significant, for peace with God and with fellow human beings is a result of God’s grace. Indeed, grace and peace are both gifts of God. They are given by God, who is the Father of believers and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 3</i>	“Paul’s wish that his readers experience “peace,” then, is not a wish that they enjoy a quiet, happy life or that their souls may find rest but that they might experience the full measure of God’s eschatological shalom.”

The scholars — “Christianity is a rescue religion”

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott — BST <i>on v. 4</i>	“Bishop J. B. Lightfoot writes that the verb (‘deliver’, ‘rescue’) ‘strikes the keynote of the epistle’. ‘The Gospel is a rescue,’ he adds, ‘an emancipation from a state of bondage.’ Christianity is, in fact, a rescue religion.”
MacArthur <i>on vv. 1-5</i>	“The nature of His death? It was sacrificial. The object of His death? It was a rescue operation. The word “deliver” there is the word “rescue.” Fantastic word. It’s the word “to rescue.” That’s a very, very strong verb.”

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1. He Paid the Price

♦ **Learning Objective:** *Objectives 2-3: See that Jesus gave His own life, and that “for our sins” means He died in your place.*

Galatians 1:3-4a

³ *Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ who gave Himself for our sins...*

We've got to slow down on that phrase: who gave Himself. God didn't give a little bit of advice on how to straighten up your life. He didn't give you a good example to follow. He didn't even give you an abundance of resources to save yourself. The Bible says He gave Himself. When it came time to pay for your rescue, Jesus gave you His life.

I want you to think about who this is. This is the eternal Son of God, the One who spoke galaxies into existence, the One the angels can't stop singing about, the One who never owed anybody anything. Heaven had no greater treasure than the Son. And that is exactly what God was willing to spend on you. So the next time you wonder if you're worth anything to God, don't look in the mirror. Look at the cross, and count the price He was willing to pay for your life.

“Gave Himself” — Nobody Took It From Him

Sometimes we look at the cross as something that just happened to Jesus, like He got caught, like the mob and the Pharisees and the Sadducees won. That's not how Jesus saw it.

John 10:18

¹⁸ *No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.*

Nobody took Jesus' life. He laid it down. The nails that were pounded into His hands did not hold Him on that cross. His love for you held Him on that cross. He gave Himself.

The scholars — He gave HIMSELF (the cost of the rescue)

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 4a</i>	“The term “gave” (δόντος) anticipates 2:20, where Paul speaks of the Son of God as the one “who loved me and gave (παράδόντος) himself for me.” The love of Jesus manifests itself in his voluntary death on behalf of his people.”

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Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	“Paul’s words here could be a fragment of an early Christian creed, but it is more likely that Paul himself wrote them to emphasize the voluntary nature of Christ’s sacrifice.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	“Exceptionally, the third element in the salutation (‘grace and peace ...’) is further amplified here with what appears to be part of an early confession of faith or kerygmatic summary, which is reflected in several NT contexts.”
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 4</i>	“Jesus’ sacrifice was ultimate, voluntary, and substitutionary... Christ’s giving himself for us is the essence of love. Spiritual rebirth and all of our Christian experience begin as a gift.”
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 4</i>	“Jesus lavished his generosity upon Paul and his audience to the utmost, to the very point of death, so committed was he to bringing benefit to them (and to all people) in line with God’s plan for extending blessing to all the nations.”

“For Our Sins” — That Little Word Means In the Place Of

And then Paul tells us exactly what He gave Himself for. Notice the next words in verse 4: for our sins. That little word for means in the place of. In your place. See, the reason you needed rescuing in the first place is because of your sin.

Romans 6:23

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And sin has a price on it, and the price is not small. Romans 6:23 tells us the wages of that sin is death. That’s the bill. That’s what your sin racked up on your name, and somebody had to pay for it. Now that’s either going to be you, forever, with the weeping and gnashing of teeth... or a substitute. And this idea of a substitute is the entirety of the gospel.

Word Study — “For” ὑπέρ (hyper)

The preposition Paul chooses is ὑπέρ (hyper). Its ordinary range is “on behalf of,” “for the benefit of.” But in sentences about a death like this one, it slides over into something sharper: in the place of. Not merely Christ dying with our good in mind, but Christ standing where we deserved to stand and taking what we had coming. That is why the commentators keep reaching for the word substitution here. It is not a doctrine imported into the verse — it is what the preposition is doing.

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The scholars — substitution (“for our sins,” in our place)

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 4</i>	“While the preposition hyper means, generally, “on behalf of,” it sometimes also takes on the nuance of substitution, and this is probably the case here.”
Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	“While the preposition (hyper) could mean “on behalf of,” in material like this it often incorporates the idea of substitution. This is the basis of the doctrine of substitutionary atonement—that Jesus, the only righteous One, died on the cross as our substitute, so that our sins could be forgiven based on his sinlessness.”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 4a</i>	“The death of Christ is also substitutionary, for death is the consequence of sin (Rom 6:23), but Jesus Christ surrendered his life to atone for sins, and hence believers are spared final separation from God.”
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	“Paul probably here articulates Jesus’s death in terms of what has come to be called “substitutionary atonement.” ... (The idea that Paul instead corrects a substitutionary idea here runs against the direct sense of the text; one need not choose between substitution and realized eschatology as if they were incompatible.)”
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 4</i>	“Jesus died for “our sins,” not his own, for he was sinless... Christ died for our sins, in our place, so we would not have to suffer the punishment we deserve (see 1 Peter 2:24).”
MacArthur <i>on vv. 1-5</i>	“Jesus died because someone had to die for sin. Sin demands death, and Jesus died a penalty for our sin.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	““For our sins’ means ‘for the forgiveness or expiation of our sins’... the wording possibly owes something to the fourth Isaianic servant song.”

Goes Deeper — The Servant Who Bore Our Sins (Isaiah 53)

Paul is not inventing new language. Seven hundred years before the cross, Isaiah saw it coming and wrote it down: the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Every wandering. Every lie. Everything you have done in the dark that you hope nobody ever finds out. God gathered it all up and laid it on His Son. Jesus took the bill that had your name on it and paid it in full with His own blood. The scholars are agreed: Isaiah 53 is the taproot of what Paul says here about the cross.

SCRIPTURE	THE SERVANT WHO BORE OUR SINS
Isaiah 53:5	<i>But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.</i>

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Isaiah 53:6*All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.***2 Corinthians 5:21***For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***Mark 10:45***For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

The only man who never sinned was treated like the worst sinner who ever lived, so that sinners just like you and just like me could be treated like the righteous Son of God. This is the great exchange. He took your sin. You got His righteousness. And it cost Him Himself.

Jesus put His own vocabulary on this. He called it a ransom, the price you pay to get a captive back. In Mark 10:45 He said He came to give His life a ransom for many. You were the captive. His life was the ransom. He didn't bargain. He didn't haggle over the amount. He paid it in full.

The scholars — Isaiah 53 behind verse 4

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 4</i>	"This language itself is rooted in the application of the Isaiah 'servant' prophecies to Christ and his death."
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 4</i>	"Both traditions, but especially the Jewish martyrological tradition, highlight the theme of the righteous person who gives himself or herself for the unrighteous, to deliver the latter from some great evil... The ultimate root of this theology of martyrdom and representative offering of oneself in obedience to God is probably Isa 52:13-53:12."
Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	"This is the means by which God's grace and peace are made available to us, echoing Isaiah 53:6 ('the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all') and 53:12 ('he poured out his life unto death ... [and] bore the sin of many')."
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	"'For [hyper] our sins' might evoke Isa. 53:5-6, 12 LXX... This reason for Christ's death also appears in 1 Cor. 15:3, where it happened 'according to the Scriptures.'"
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	"The earliest evangelist represents him as accepting his death in this spirit: speaking of himself as giving his life as 'a ransom for many' (Mk. 10:45), speaking of his 'covenant blood' as 'poured out for many' (Mk. 14:24)."

So how far did God go to rescue you? He gave Himself. That was the price. So I have to ask you this morning: have you genuinely received Him? I'm not talking about admiring Him from a distance in a religious way, like He's the man upstairs, tipping your hat and bowing your head like at the national anthem and then going right back to your old life. That's not the religion of this Book. The question is: have you been

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born again? Jesus wants a relationship with you. Not lip service, not a show, but true allegiance to the King.

2. He Delivered us from Prison

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objectives 4–6: Explain what it means that Jesus rescued us, describe “this present evil age,” and show how grace teaches you to live free (Titus 2:11–12).*

Galatians 1:4b

⁴ *...that He might deliver us from this present evil age...*

Paying the price is only half a rescue. If a man pays your ransom but the prison doors are never opened, you're still in prison. So notice what Paul does next: not only did He give Himself, He delivered us from prison.

There's that word: deliver. It means to rescue, to pull out. It's an action word, the word for reaching into danger and yanking somebody out. It's the word used when God reached down into Egypt and pulled a whole enslaved people out from under Pharaoh. It's the word used the night God sent an angel into the prison and broke Peter out from under Herod. God specializes in prison breaks.

Word Study — “Deliver / Rescue” ἐξαίρω (exaireō)

This is the only place in all of Paul's letters where this verb appears, and it is not a mild one. It means to pluck out, tear away, snatch from danger. It is the verb the Greek Old Testament uses over and over for God rescuing His people — out of Egypt, out of the fire, out of the enemy's hand. And Luke uses it in Acts for three literal jailbreak-level rescues. Paul is not describing a gentle improvement. He is describing a prison break. Notice too that Paul puts it in the middle voice — God rescues for Himself. He does not just get you out; He takes you home.

SCRIPTURE	THE SAME VERB, THE SAME GOD
Acts 7:34	<i>I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them.</i>
Acts 12:11	<i>...Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.</i>
Acts 23:27	<i>This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.</i>
Galatians 1:4	<i>...that He might deliver us from this present evil age...</i>

Egypt. A prison cell. A lynch mob. And then Galatians 1:4 — the one place in the whole Bible where this rescue word is used of what happens to a soul. God specializes in prison breaks.

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The scholars — “deliver” is the keynote of the letter

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott — BST <i>on v. 4</i>	“The Greek verb in this verse is a strong one (exaireō, in the middle voice). It is used in the Acts of the rescue of the Israelites from their Egyptian slavery (7:34), of the rescue of Peter both from prison and from the hand of Herod the King (12:11), and of the rescue of Paul from an infuriated mob about to lynch him (23:27). This verse in Galatians is the only place where it is used metaphorically of salvation.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 4</i>	“The verb ἐξαίρῃω, while used only here in the Pauline Letters, occurs several times in the book of Acts and frequently in the LXX to denote “rescue” or “deliver,” usually from danger or from an enemy.”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 4b</i>	“The verb ‘deliver’ hearkens back to the OT and probably recalls the Lord’s work in rescuing his people from Egypt (Exod 3:8; 18:4, 8, 9, 10 LXX); hence, it points to God’s promise to deliver his people in the future (Isa 31:5; 60:16; Ezek 34:27).”
Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	“The idea of rescue is taken from the exodus, which is often spoken of as God “delivering” or “saving” his people from the Egyptians (see, for example, Exod 18:8-10). Later the terminology came to be used of God’s future delivery of his people in the messianic age to come (Isa 31:5).”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	“Christ’s self-oblation not only procures for his people the forgiveness of their past sins; it delivers them from the realm in which sin is irresistible into the realm where he himself is Lord.”

“This Present Evil Age” — Paul Names the Prison

And then Paul names the cell. This present evil age. Let me explain it, because it’s one of the biggest ideas in your Bible. The Bible splits all of history into two ages. There’s this present age, the world we’re living in right now, in rebellion against God, running on its own broken values, under the thumb of the enemy. And there’s the age to come, God’s kingdom, His new heavens and new earth, when He makes everything right. Two ages. And Paul says Jesus reached into this present age and pulled you toward the second.

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And this age has a ruler, and he's been working on you your whole life. His name is Satan, the adversary. The Bible says the god of this age has blinded the minds of those who don't believe.

2 Corinthians 4:4

⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

This present evil age isn't just background noise. It's a system with a spirit behind it, and it had you. It taught you what to want. It taught you what to fear. It taught you that your worth is your paycheck, your title, your position. That your body is your own: my body, my choice. That revenge is a form of justice. That the more you get, the better you are. That you only live once, so you might as well live it up. That was the air we all breathed.

And here's what's interesting about that kind of prison: most people don't even know they're in it. Even the people of God are swimming around in this age, pulled by its current, and you thought, that's just normal. Everybody else is doing it. But all the while you're locked behind bars, and you can't get yourself out. That's the point. A prisoner can't pardon himself. So God did for you what you could never do for yourself.

Colossians 1:13

¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

That is a prison break and an adoption at the same time.

Goes Deeper — The Two Ages, and Why They Overlap

Behind verse 4 stands a Biblical way of dividing all of history in two: this present age, ruled by sin and the evil one, and the age to come, God's new creation. What is stunning about the gospel is the claim that the age to come has already broken in — it arrived early, in the death and resurrection of Jesus. So the two ages are running at the same time. The old one has not finished passing away, and the new one has already started. That is why the Christian life feels the way it does: you are a rescued citizen of a kingdom that has come, still living in a world that has not gone. Already delivered. Not yet home. And Galatians will end where it began — the “present evil age” of 1:4 becomes the “new creation” of 6:15.

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The scholars — “this present evil age” (the prison)

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	“Paul’s αἰὼν πονηρός is an age dominated by an ethically evil power—one which, far from being ‘according to the will of our God and Father’, is totally opposed to it. Those who accept the gospel are thereby delivered from the godless Zeitgeist.”
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 4</i>	“The present age has been so corrupted that it cannot be redeemed; the best it can do is to “pass away,” along with those who belong to its corruption (1 Cor 1:18; 2 Cor 2:15; 4:3; Rev 21:1, 4).”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 4b</i>	“The intellectual worldview that controls the mindset of unbelievers is limited to this age (1 Cor 1:20; 3:18), and Satan rules as the god of this age (2 Cor 4:4). The present evil age is not the only reality, for the “fulfillment [ends] of the ages” (τὰ τέλη τῶν αἰώνων) has now dawned in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 10:11).”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 4</i>	“Believers are rescued from this present age of evil, sin, and death and find their true identity in the new age that has broken into history through Christ’s epochal death and resurrection.”
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	“Deliverance from evil here is noteworthy; Christ died not only to free us from sin’s penalty forensically but also to liberate us from its dominion behaviorally.”
Wilson — Gospel-Rooted Living <i>on vv. 3-4</i>	“Sin is a lordless power, a godless force. Sin is not merely a one-time thing, an event, an action, something that’s over once you’ve done it. Instead sin has after effects; it lives on!”
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 4</i>	“From outward appearances we are still living in the same world, but our allegiance and “nationality” have been changed!... Being delivered from this evil age means, not that we are taken out of it, but that we are no longer enslaved to it.”

Not Out of the World — Kept In It

Now hear this carefully, because it’s important. Paul never says Jesus delivers us out of the world. We’re still here. You still have to go to work Monday. You still have bills. You still live in Arvin. Jesus prayed specifically that the Father would not take us out of the world, but keep us here as salt and light. So the rescue isn’t that you get beamed out of here. The rescue is that right now, in this present evil age, the world has nothing on you. It doesn’t have your attention, your affection, or your priority.

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Romans 12:2

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Do not be conformed to this world. Do not let it put you back in prison.

The scholars — rescued, but left in the world

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott — BST <i>on v. 4</i>	“From what does He rescue us by His death? Not out of ‘this present evil world’, as the Authorized Version puts it. For God’s purpose is not to take us out of the world, but that we should stay in it and be both ‘the light of the world’ and ‘the salt of the earth’.”
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	“Similarly in Rom. 12:2 Paul urges the Roman Christians not to be conformed to this age (τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ) but to be transformed by inward renewal so as to prove by experience how good (by contrast) the will of God is.”

Grace Does Not Just Open the Door — It Walks You Out

Here’s where it gets personal, and here’s where the Galatians were in real danger. Because you can be rescued from a prison and keep walking right back into the cell. That’s exactly what these people were doing. Christ had set them free, the grace of God had entered their hearts, and they were being talked right back in, back under the law, back under earning. And Paul is horrified. Why would a free man walk back into his cell?

And here’s how grace really makes the difference. The new age Jesus rescued you into isn’t only future. It has already broken in. You’re walking in the age to come right now. And the grace that saved you is at work, teaching you how to live.

Titus 2:11-12

¹¹ For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹² teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,

You say, how? Grace teaches you how to live right, how to live free, how to live holy in the middle of this mess. Titus 2 says the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, right here in this present age. Grace doesn’t just forgive you so you can go off and do your own thing, and it doesn’t leave you to figure it out on your own. Grace trains you. So you don’t have to break out of the prison on your own, because you can’t. The same grace that opened the door escorts you out and walks with you and teaches you to live like a free person.

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The scholars — grace living the life of the age to come, now

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 4b</i>	"Believers have been granted grace to live the life of the age to come in the midst of the present age (τῷ νῦν αἰῶνι, Titus 2:12)."
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	"κατὰ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν may imply not only that believers' deliverance from 'the present evil age' is in accordance with God's will but that such deliverance enables them to live in conformity with God's will."
Stott — BST <i>on v. 4</i>	"Christian conversion means being rescued from the old age and being transferred into the new age, 'the age to come'. And the Christian life is living in this age the life of the age to come."
Wilson — Gospel-Rooted Living <i>on vv. 3-4</i>	"Deliverance from sin and from 'the present evil age' comes only one way; indeed, grace itself comes only one way: through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ."

So let me make this real. What part of this present evil age are you still living inside of, even though Jesus already broke the door open? Is it fear, still terrified of what people will think if you say you're a blood-bought, born-again child of God? Is it greed, still believing that one more paycheck will finally make you okay? Is it bitterness, still holding the offense, waiting for the day you get even? Is it some pet sin you keep sneaking back to, a cell you keep letting the enemy lock behind you? Jesus paid too high a price for you to keep living like a prisoner.

So how far did God go? He did not just pay the Price. He broke open the Prison.

3. His Will is THE Plan

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objective 7: Explain why the cross was the Father's plan, not Jesus talking an angry God into sparing us.*

Galatians 1:4c

⁴ *...according to the will of our God and Father,*

We have seen the Price and the Prison. Now look at the last phrase of verse 4, because it answers a question you may never have thought to ask. Whose idea was this rescue?

According to the will of our God and Father. Church, that little phrase pulls the curtain back on heaven. It tells you the cross was not an accident. It was not plan B. It was not God reacting to a mess He never saw coming. The rescue of your soul was deliberate. It was the settled will of God the Father.

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The Wrong Picture: An Angry Father and a Loving Son

A lot of people carry around a wrong picture of the cross. They imagine an angry Father and a loving Son, as if the God of the Old Testament and the Jesus of the New are irreconcilable, as if Jesus is the nice one and God is the big bad Father. That is not the gospel. Look at the verse again. Whose will was the cross? Our God and Father. It was the Father's will to give His Son. So where did this begin? In the heart of the Father. You know the most famous verse in the Bible. Hear it this morning as the Father's plan.

John 3:16

¹⁶ *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

God gave His Son. The Father loved you so much that giving up His own Son was a price He was willing to pay.

But do not swing to the other error either, as if the Father forced this on an unwilling Son. The night before the cross, with the cup of wrath right in front of Him, sweating drops like blood, the Son prayed this:

Luke 22:42

⁴² *saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."*

The Father willed the rescue. The Son embraced it. There is no division in God here. The Father giving His Son, the Son giving Himself — both of one heart to save you.

The scholars — the Father and the Son, one will

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott — BST <i>on v. 4</i>	"In the cross the will of the Father and the will of the Son were in perfect harmony. We must never imply either that the Son volunteered to do something against the Father's will, or that the Father required the Son to do something against His own will."
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 4</i>	"The appended phrase reminds us afresh that in this self-giving and deliverance Christ and God are at one, that 'God has reconciled us to himself through Christ'—that, in fact, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2 Cor. 5:18f.)."
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 4</i>	"The connection between the divine will and Jesus's voluntary acceptance of death is underscored in the Synoptic tradition (Matt 26:42 // Luke 22:42); here, too, the "will of the God and Father" likely includes not only the end (the rescue of human beings) but the means (Jesus's giving of himself)."

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MacArthur*on vv. 1-5*

"It was God's will that Jesus die. He prayed in the Garden, "Father, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless," what? "Not my will, but thine be done." It was the Father's will that He die."

Schreiner — ZECNT*on v. 4b*

"Jesus' death is located in the will and purpose of God the Father, and hence it represents the fulfillment of God's saving purposes and thus fulfills OT prophecy."

Goes Deeper — A Plan Older Than the World

And this plan goes back further than you can imagine. It wasn't settled the week of the crucifixion. Before Adam and Eve ever reached for the fruit, the Lamb had already been appointed. And Isaiah says the suffering of the Servant was the Lord's own will: it pleased the LORD to bruise Him. That's one of the most sobering sentences in all of Scripture. The Father purposed the cross. Not because He's cruel, and not because He's angry, but because He is that committed to rescuing you.

SCRIPTURE	THE PLAN, BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN
Revelation 13:8	<i>...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.</i>
Isaiah 53:10	<i>Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days...</i>
Acts 2:23	<i>Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;</i>
Ephesians 1:4-5	<i>...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world... having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,</i>

And when the day finally came, when wicked men nailed Jesus up, beat Him, spit on Him, and pulled out His beard, Peter stands up at Pentecost and says even that, even the worst crime in human history, was in the will of God. He was delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, and you took Him by lawless hands and crucified Him. Both are true. Wicked hands did it. And it was the determined purpose of God. Men and the devil meant it for evil. God meant it for your rescue.

And here's the part that ought to make you shout: this plan had your name on it before you ever had a name at all. Before there was an ocean or a mountain, a star or a galaxy, before you drew a breath or committed your first sin, the Father had already set His love on you and written out the rescue plan for your life. Before you ever fell in the water, the plan to dive in and get you was already in place. Before you were ever born into this prison, the Father had already decided to send His Son to open the door.

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The scholars — the Father's will (the plan, not the accident)

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 4</i>	"In keeping with the portrayal of the mission of the servant in Isa. 53, Paul adds that Christ's giving of himself to effect their rescue was "according to the will of our God and Father"... God's "judgment" on the present evil age... was willed by God himself."
Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	"The incarnation of Christ, his redemptive and atoning death on behalf of humanity, and his victorious resurrection all resulted from God's will. When God created this world he knew that it would succumb to evil, and he predestined the coming of Christ to save it from the power of sin."
Keener — Galatians <i>on v. 4</i>	"Here it applies to God's plan in history (as in Eph. 1:5, 9, 11) and God's sacrificially benevolent desire on behalf of his people, a clear sign of his costly, generous love."
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 4</i>	"Salvation lies in Christ's work, not in any works we do. Our role is to be glad receivers of what we neither deserve nor earn."

Church, do you see the comfort in that? If your rescue was the Father's eternal plan, then it's not weak, it's not fragile, and it doesn't depend on your performance last week. You didn't talk God into loving you, and you can't talk Him out of it. He determined to save you before the world began, and He will not change His mind now. The enemy likes to whisper that you blew it, that you've worn out your welcome, that after what you did last week the whole rescue is off. Don't you believe it. Man might turn his back on you. God never will.

4. To Him Belongs the Praise

◆ **Learning Objective:** *Objective 8: See why Paul stops to praise God here, and why God gets all the glory.*

Galatians 1:5

⁵ *to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

Now look at what happens to Paul. He's only writing a greeting. He hasn't even gotten to his main point yet, we're only in the first five verses. But when he says the word deliver, he remembers the cross, he remembers the Father's eternal plan, and he just can't hold it in.

He says, to whom be the glory forever and ever, amen. That's called a doxology, a burst of praise. And here's what's interesting. Paul does this nowhere else. In every other letter he says his hello and moves on to business. Only here, only in Galatians, does he stop right in the middle of the greeting and take a praise break.

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Goes Deeper — Why a Doxology Here, and Nowhere Else?

Look at how Paul normally opens a letter. Sender, recipient, grace and peace, then straight into a thanksgiving — “I thank my God always concerning you.” Galatians has no thanksgiving at all. He is too alarmed to thank them. What he has instead is this: praise. Some scholars think the doxology stepped into the empty place where the thanksgiving should have been. Others, more simply, say verse 4 is what did it — that when Paul writes out the rescue, he cannot get to the end of the sentence without worshipping. Either way the effect is the same. Doctrine boiled over into doxology in the middle of a sentence.

Why? Because you can't go back over a rescue like this and stay calm. He's writing grace... peace... gave Himself... delivered us... the Father's plan... and by the time he gets to the end of the sentence, he's not writing a letter anymore. He's on his face saying, glory to God.

The scholars — the rescue overflows into doxology

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 5</i>	“This addition of a doxology to the end of the introductory salutation is unparalleled in Paul's letters... But the doxology may be prompted here by the gospel summary of v 4... There is the further possibility that the doxology here takes the place of the missing thanksgiving.”
Moo — BECNT <i>on v. 5</i>	“The doxology is best seen, then, as a natural addition to the christological/soteriological assertion of verse 4.”
Osborne — Galatians <i>on v. 5</i>	“As often happens when Paul makes a key point that gets at the core of the gospel, here in verse 5 he is overcome by the enormity of the truth and breaks out in doxological praise... he lifts his voice in worshipful praise to the glory of God for his gift of salvation in Christ.”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 5</i>	“The saving work of God in Christ leads Paul to doxology. God's glory and honor and praise are displayed supremely in Christ and in the cross.”
Barton — LABC <i>on v. 5</i>	“Paul's spiritual depth broke through as he uttered an expression of love and awe... Glory belongs to God alone. Even if God had not done so much for us, he would still be the only one deserving glory from his creation.”

“To Whom” — Notice Who Gets the Glory

And notice who gets the glory. To whom. To God. Not to Paul. Not to you. If what He did for you was entirely His doing, and it was, His Son, His plan, His blood, His power, His Spirit, then you can't take any of the credit. You didn't even help. You were the one drowning. So all the glory, every last bit of it, goes to the One who rescued you. From start to finish it's His work.

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And that's just the honest response to being rescued. If a man dives into that river, drags you up on the bank, and breathes life back into your lungs, you're not going to walk away and never mention it again. You're going to talk about that man for the rest of your life. You'll name him at every dinner table. You'll tell your grandkids. So let me ask you honestly: has the cross become boring to you? Can you sing about the blood of Jesus and then glance over at your phone? Is it possible you've forgotten where you came from?

Let the memory come back this morning. Remember where He brought you from. Remember the sins that had your name written on them. Remember that you brought nothing to your own rescue. And remember the nail-scarred hands that reached down into the water and pulled you out. When you do that, nobody has to force you to praise. It takes care of itself.

Word Study — “Glory... Forever and Ever” δόξα (doxa)

The word is δόξα (doxa) — the Old Testament kabod, the weight and worth and blazing splendor of God, the recognition of honor that is simply due Him. And the time-phrase Paul chooses is not the ordinary one. He writes εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων — literally “into the ages of the ages,” the strongest, most unlimited way Greek has of saying forever. Note what he has done: the “age” Paul just rescued us out of in verse 4 is the same word he now piles up in verse 5. The evil age has an end. The glory does not.

And “Amen” is not punctuation. It is a congregational word. When this letter was read out loud in the churches of Galatia, the people were expected to answer it — to add their own Amen and put their name on the praise. So do not read verse 5 silently. It was written to be answered.

The scholars — “glory forever and ever... Amen”

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Bruce — NIGTC <i>on v. 5</i>	“The ‘glory’ (Heb. <i>kābôḏ</i>) of the God of Israel in the OT is primarily the radiance of his presence; when ‘glory’ is ascribed to him it denotes the transcendent praise and worship of which he is worthy... As this letter was read in the churches of Galatia, the hearers would add their ‘Amen’ to Paul’s at the end of the doxology, thus endorsing the ascription of glory to God.”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 5</i>	“I would define the glory of God as the beauty, majesty, and greatness of who he is, and therefore in all he does, whether in salvation or in judgment, the greatness of his being is demonstrated.”
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 5</i>	“The word translated ‘glory’ denotes the widespread recognition of honor, virtue, and worth... The ‘amen’... may... be understood as a solemn affirmation (e.g., ‘truly, indeed’).”

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Keener — Galatians*on v. 5*

“God acted sacrificially on our behalf, so he receives the eternal honor... “Amen” was a common affirmation, especially for blessings, curses, and prayers. Hearers were to respond, “Amen,” showing agreement or confirmation.”

Osborne — Galatians*on v. 5*

“The concept of Shekinah... indicated the glory of God “dwelling” (Hebrew: shakan) among his people... Paul’s prayer here is for this glory to be eternal, “forever and ever.””

This Praise Does Not End

“Forever and ever.” This is not a Sunday morning feeling that wears off by Tuesday. The rescued will be praising the Rescuer when the sun has burned out. Turn to the end of your Bible and listen to what heaven is doing right now around the throne.

SCRIPTURE	THE RESCUED SINGING ABOUT THE RESCUER
Revelation 5:12	<i>... Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!</i>
Philippians 2:10-11	<i>...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.</i>
Romans 11:36	<i>For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.</i>

Do you hear it? Ten thousand times ten thousand voices. And the song isn’t about how clever we were, or about the lights and the band and the gimmicks. The song is about the Lamb who was slain, the rescued singing about the Rescuer. That’s what you were made for, and that’s what you’ll be doing forever.

Every knee, every tongue. The only question is whether you bow now, gladly, as one of the rescued, or bow later, forced, as one who refused the rescue. Paul chose now. He said it in verse 5: to whom be glory forever and ever, amen.

The scholars — where the doxology is pointed

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
deSilva — NICNT <i>on v. 5</i>	“It would be more in keeping with Paul’s doxologies elsewhere to regard “our God and Father” as the antecedent here, though if Paul were actually pressed with the question, it is difficult to imagine him consciously making a choice between the two.”
Schreiner — ZECNT <i>on v. 5</i>	“He breaks into a praise-filled doxology at the conclusion, affirming that “from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen” (Rom 11:36).”

So here’s what the fourth answer does to the first three. He paid the Price. He delivered us from Prison. His will was the Plan. All of that was God’s work for you. And the Praise? That’s just you giving back to Him. Not that you can pay Him back,

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you can't, but you give Him what a rescued heart owes: your gratitude, your worship, your whole life lived out as a thank you. You were saved for the glory of God, so now you live for the glory of God.

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Pastoral Takeaways

- 1 The price was the Rescuer Himself.** When you wonder what you are worth to God, do not look in the mirror. Look at the cross and count what He was willing to spend. Heaven had no greater treasure than the Son, and that is what He spent on you.
- 2 Nobody took His life. He laid it down.** The nails did not hold Him to that cross — His love did. The cross was not something that happened to Jesus. It was something Jesus did.
- 3 You were in a prison, not just in a debt.** Grace does not only forgive the prisoner; it breaks the prison. And the hardest part of that prison is that most people never knew they were in it.
- 4 Rescued does not mean removed.** God did not take you out of the world. He took the world's ownership off of you. You still live in Arvin, in this present age — you just do not belong to it anymore.
- 5 Grace opens the cell and walks you out.** Titus 2 says grace trains you. You do not have to fight your way into freedom on your own; the same grace that saved you is teaching you how to live free.
- 6 It was the Father's plan all along.** There is no angry Father and kind Son. Your rescue does not rest on your grip on God but on God's settled will before the world began. That is why it holds.
- 7 A rescued heart worships.** Doctrine that never reaches doxology has stalled. If the cross has gone boring, you have forgotten you were drowning. Let verse 5 finish what verse 4 starts.

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Discussion Questions — At Home or in a Group

- 1** Observation: In verse 4, underline the three phrases “gave Himself,” “deliver us,” and “according to the will.” Beside each one write a single word for what it tells you about the rescue.
- 2** Observation: Circle the word “for” in “for our sins.” It means in the place of. Why does one small preposition carry so much of the gospel?
- 3** Interpretation: John 10:18 says no one took Jesus’ life from Him. How does that change the way you picture the cross — and what did the pastor mean by “the nails did not hold Him there, His love did”?
- 4** Interpretation: What is “this present evil age”? Name two or three specific things it taught you to want or to fear before Christ. (See The Two Ages, pg. 11.)
- 5** Interpretation: Paul says we are delivered from this age, but Jesus prayed that we not be taken out of the world. How do those two fit together?
- 6** Interpretation: Read Titus 2:11-12. If grace forgives us AND trains us, what does that say about the Christian who wants forgiveness but not change?
- 7** Interpretation: Why does it matter that the cross was “according to the will of our God and Father”? What wrong picture of God does that phrase destroy? (See A Plan Older Than the World, pg. 16.)
- 8** Application: Which cell are you still living in as though the door were locked — fear, greed, bitterness, an old habit? What would walking out of it actually look like this week?
- 9** Application: Where has your knowledge of the gospel (v. 4) stopped short of worship (v. 5)? Name one concrete way to let it overflow into praise before Sunday.

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Quick Review — You Know More Than You Think

This isn't a test. It's a chance to see how much of Sunday's truth is already yours. The answers are at the bottom. Take it as encouragement.

- 1** "Gave Himself for our sins" teaches which truth?
(a) Jesus set a good example
(b) substitution — He died in our place
(c) we pay God back slowly
- 2** True or False: The mob took Jesus' life from Him against His will.
- 3** Fill in the blank: The Old Testament chapter standing behind "gave Himself for our sins" is Isaiah _____.
- 4** The verb "deliver" (exaireō) is used in Acts of three rescues. Name one of them.
- 5** Who is called "the god of this age" (2 Corinthians 4:4)?
- 6** True or False: Being delivered from this present evil age means God takes us out of the world.
- 7** According to Titus 2:11-12, grace does two things — it saves us, and it _____ us.
- 8** Whose will was the cross — the Son's alone, or the Father's too? Give one verse.
- 9** Finish the verse: "to whom be _____ forever and ever. Amen" (Galatians 1:5).
- 10** In your own words — how far did God go to rescue you?

Answer Key: 1) b · 2) False. "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10:18) · 3) 53 · 4) Israel out of Egypt (Acts 7:34), Peter out of Herod's prison (Acts 12:11), or Paul from the mob (Acts 23:27) · 5) Satan · 6) False. He leaves us in it as light and salt; the world simply no longer owns us · 7) trains (teaches) us · 8) The Father's will too (Luke 22:42; Acts 2:23; Isaiah 53:10) · 9) glory · 10) All the way — He gave Himself.

If these came easily, you have grasped the very heart of Galatians 1:3-5. He gave Himself. Now go live like one of the rescued, and give Him the glory.