



“Christ hath redeemed us
from the curse of the law.”

2 Corinthians & Galatians

Dave LeFevre

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2 Corinthians

The situation around the writing of 2 Corinthians spanned several years. After spending about eighteen months in Corinth (50-51 CE), Paul concluded his second mission with a quick stop in Ephesus to drop off Aquila and Priscilla, then went to Caesarea, Jerusalem, and ‘home’ to Syrian Antioch. In the summer of 54, he set out again across Galatia, Phrygia, and Asia, arriving in Ephesus in the fall, rejoining Aquila and Priscilla. He labored in Ephesus from 54-57. During this time he wrote his first letter to the Corinthians (lost but referenced in 1 Corinthians 5:9) and appeared to have made a quick trip to Corinth. Returning to Ephesus, he received a letter (perhaps a visit) from Chloe, outlining additional problems, and wrote 1 Corinthians in reply (around Passover time, 55 CE). Forced to leave Ephesus, Paul appears to have another quick trip to Corinth, returning through Macedonia, probably staying Philippi. He sent Titus back to Corinth to check on things; this was probably where he wrote the third letter (lost but referenced in 2 Corinthians 2:4-9), sending it with Titus. He crossed over to Troas where he was to rejoin Titus, but not finding him went back to Macedonia, where they linked up and Paul rejoiced in the news Titus brought of Corinth. Probably staying in Philippi again, this was when he wrote 2 Corinthians. Finally, in late 58, he possibly made his way south to Corinth for yet another visit, staying about three months with Gaius.¹

Unlike the timing and circumstances of the letter, the reasons for writing 2 Corinthians can be determined by Paul’s comments. Like Galatians, it appears that some, perhaps Jewish converts to Christianity, were still ‘pushing’ the Law of Moses. They came teaching things contrary to what Paul had taught. They criticized Paul personally, including his appearance and speech, as well as his doctrine. He was pleased from Titus’ report that the saints at Corinth were not falling for these teachings, for the most part. Still, he felt compelled to defend himself against the criticism. It is thus a powerful self-portrait of Paul, giving us more personal information about him, his experiences, and his feelings, than any other letter.

It is possible that 2 Corinthians is a collection of more than one letter. The natural divisions and clear breaks in topics indicate that someone may have compiled other writings into this single document. Given that we have two missing letters to Corinth, some have proposed that at least pieces of those missing letters are included here in 2 Corinthians. The major heading in the outline below reflects those potential large sections from different sources.²

A potential outline of 2 Corinthians is as follows:

1. Opening Address (1:1-11)
2. Paul and the Corinthians (1:12 – 7:16)
 - a. Paul’s intended visit (1:12 – 2:4)
 - b. Accepting the repentant (2:5-11)
 - c. Titus (2:12-13)
 - d. Pleasing to God (2:14-17)
 - e. The new covenant (3:1-18)
 - f. Let the light shine out of darkness (4:1-6)
 - g. A treasure in clay jars (4:7-15)
 - h. The inner self (4:16 – 5:10)
 - i. The love of God encourages us (5:11 – 6:13)
 - j. The temple of the living God (6:14 – 7:4)

¹ There is much debate about Paul’s activities during this part of his third journey. The number of visits to Corinth, the timing of them, and the writing of the various letters are all determined quite differently. I have relied on and taken concepts from multiple scholars to determine this proposed timeline, which seems reasonable but cannot be substantiated beyond reasonable conjecture.

² Brown, *Introduction* 541-551.

- k. Experiences at Macedonia (7:5-16)
- 3. The Jerusalem Collection (8:1 – 9:15)
 - a. Generosity (8:1-15)
 - b. Titus (8:16-24)
 - c. The collection for the poor (9:1-15)
- 4. Responding to Challenges to Authority (10:1 – 13:10)
 - a. Paul's defense (10:1-18)
 - b. The false apostles (11:1-15)
 - c. I am a fool (11:16-33)
 - d. Paul's visit to Corinth (12:1-13)
 - e. Examine yourselves (13:1-10)
- 5. Closing Remarks (13:11-13)

Opening Address – 2 Corinthians 1:1-11

1:1 **and Timothy.** Paul co-wrote this letter with his friend and companion, Timothy, who had come from Corinth with news about the situation, which prompted the letter.

1:1 **the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.** Though the letter was addressed specifically to the assembly of the saints at Corinth, Paul expected them to share it with the other members in the area of southern Greece.

1:2 **Grace be to you and peace.** It is interesting to note that a standard Greek greeting in a letter was *chairein*, meaning 'greetings.' Paul did not follow this convention but picked a close term to turn the greeting into a gospel lesson: *charis*, which means 'grace.' Then he added the typical Hebrew greeting of *shalom*, 'peace.'³

1:4 **Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.** The noun *thlipsis*, translated "tribulation," is singular and thus may refer to a specific event (v. 8).

1:5 **the sufferings of Christ abound in us.** Paul was always willing to suffer for his testimony, but recognized that "consolation also aboundeth" in that same testimony.

1:6 **we be afflicted, it is for your consolation.** Paul also taught that his afflictions existed because he was willing to bring others to the knowledge of Christ, which provided them "consolation and salvation." That made them able to bear similar suffering (also v. 7).

1:8 **our trouble which came to us in Asia.** Acts doesn't appear to give us the details of this event ("trouble" is singular). But it was severe enough to that Paul "despaired even of life."

1:9 **not trust in ourselves, but in God.** Paul recognized the purpose of the trial, to build faith in God.

1:10 **Who delivered us from so great a death.** This phrase picked up his resurrection theme from 1 Corinthians 15, but was probably referring to his life-threatening trial in Asia (v. 8). Paul expressed hope that he and others would yet be delivered from future trials.

1:11 **helping together by prayer for us.** Paul asked the Corinthians to pray for him, that many could give thanks for the great gift that they had received from others. This may refer to financial support Paul received from some in Corinth, or perhaps to the donation to help the poor in Jerusalem, which is a major topic of this letter.

Paul and the Corinthians – 2 Corinthians 1:12 – 7:16

In the major body of the letter, Paul discusses his interactions with the Corinthian saints from both a historical and theological perspective. He speaks of how his visit to them changed his plans, how he wrote with many tears, and how he wants to heal their bonds and emphasizes forgiveness. He preaches Christ powerfully, opposes false

³ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 3:200.

apostles who come among them teaching incorrect messages, defends his own preaching, and argues against the doctrines of the false preachers, much like he will do in Galatians and Romans. Paul is committed to preaching truth at all costs and shares some of the great trials he has faced as a result of that commitment. He expresses his confidence in them, based on news from Titus.

Paul's intended visit – 2 Corinthians 1:12 – 2:4

1:12 **in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshy wisdom.** Paul came to the Corinthians with the simple message of Christ and taught and led them with holy sincerity, not after the wisdom of the world.

1:13 **we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge.** Or, “we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand” (NRSV). This refers back to his “simplicity” comment in verse 12.

1:15 **I was minded to come unto you before.** Paul was in Ephesus and originally had intended to go to Corinth, then north to Macedonia, back to Corinth, and from there sail back to Judea (v. 16).

1:17 **When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?** ‘Do you think I wasn’t serious about those plans?’

1:17 **yea yea, and nay nay.** Meaning speaking opposite responses at the same time. Verse 18 has the same meaning: ‘But as God is faithful, our word to you was not yes and no at the same time.’

1:19 **by me and Silvanus and Timotheus.** Or, Silas and Timothy. Both labored with Paul in Corinth, as well as Luke, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos.

1:20 **the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen.** God promises with a firm “yes.” Also v. 19.

1:21 **hath anointed us.** In the OT, priests and kings were anointed. In the NT church, there is evidence that some form of anointing took place with a sealing ordinance, which may be tied to accepting Christ.

1:22 **given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.** God establishes us in Christ and anoints us (v. 21), then seals us with a pledge through the Spirit. “Earnest” in verse 22, which is *arrabōn* in Greek, is similar to how we use ‘earnest money’ today as a down payment, a promise of full payment later. Thus the gift of the Holy Ghost is the Father’s promise that he will keep his covenants.

1:23 **I call God for a record upon my soul.** The language Paul used here is reflective of Old Testament curse formulas (see Job 31:5-8 and Psalms 7:3-5 for examples). This is where a promise is made but if the person does not fulfill it, the punishment is included as part of the covenant. The Greek says that Paul calls upon God to witness the truth of his words; if they are false, God should take his life/soul (“By my life I call on God to be my witness,” NJB).

1:24 **are helpers of your joy.** This is a great image of those sharing the gospel—their goal is the joy of others, so they are helping them find it.

2:1 **I would not come again to you in heaviness.** With one (or potentially three) letters of chastisement, Paul determined not to visit Corinth again until he could come in a position of joy for their obedience to God.

2:3 **I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow.** When Paul sent Titus to Corinth with his letter (which we do not have, written between 1 and 2 Corinthians), it was with sorrow and anguish. He wanted to convey his love but feared he would cause grief (v. 4).

Accepting the repentant – 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

2:5 **he hath not grieved me.** Some specific individual had caused grief to the church at Corinth, perhaps the person mentioned in the previous letter (1 Corinthians 5:1-13).

2:8 **confirm your love toward him.** If this was the man mentioned in 1 Corinthians who had committed significant and flagrant sin, this is a significant difference from the first letter, where he instructed them to excommunicate him. Now the apostle counseled the saints at Corinth to continue to love him, even though he was disciplined.

2:9 **that I might know the proof of you.** Paul wrote to see if they would choose to be obedient to God, and to encourage forgiveness so as to avoid anger or jealousy, which are tools of Satan (vv. 10-11).

Titus – 2 Corinthians 2:12-13

2:12 **when I came to Troas.** Paul went to Troas to wait for Titus who was bringing back a message from the Corinthian saints. But Titus was somehow delayed and Paul was greatly troubled, to the point that he finally went to Macedonia to find him (v. 13).

Pleasing to God – 2 Corinthians 2:14-17

2:14 **thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.** Finally finding Titus in Macedonia (probably Philippi or Thessalonica), Paul learned that the news from Corinth was positive, so Paul gave thanks to God, using the imagery of the Roman triumphal procession where the conquering general and army paraded through the town with their conquered treasure and prisoners.

2:16 **the savour of life.** The righteous are a sweet smell to God as they are to each other, even though to the wicked their smell is like death (a strong contrast). Triumphal processions included priests carrying incense burning in hand-held containers hanging from chains. 'Life' is reflected by the triumphant army; 'death' by the prisoners at the back of the procession whose fate was sealed by their defeat. Compare 1 Corinthians 1:18.

2:16 **who is sufficient for these things?** Or, "who is equal to such a task?" (NIV).

2:17 **which corrupt the word of God.** This verse is better translated: 'For we are not as others who sell for profit the word of God; but with sincerity as someone sent from God and even standing in his presence, we speak of Christ.' The people undermining Paul were practicing priestcraft, selling the gospel message for money.

The new covenant – 2 Corinthians 3:1-18

This section (all of chapter 3) compares the Mosaic Law given at Sinai to the new covenant of the gospel of Christ.

3:1 **need we, as some others, epistles of commendation.** Paul's opponents apparently had letters of introduction, recommending them to the people of Corinth, though from who we do not know. Paul countered that the converts in Corinth are themselves Paul's letters of recommendation, because of the message written in their hearts (v. 2).

3:3 **not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.** "In the ultimate sense, the gospel is not written on tablets of stone or in books of scripture, but in the bodies of faithful and obedient persons; the saints are, thus, living epistles of the truth, the books of whose lives are open for all to read."⁴ Tables of stone are from Exodus 24:12 and Deuteronomy 9:10-11, and "an heart of flesh" from Ezekiel 11:19.

3:5 **our sufficiency is of God.** A servant of the Lord does not think highly of him or herself, because God is what makes us all adequate to the task.

3:6 **able ministers of the new testament.** "Adequate as servants [*diakonos*; deacons] of a new covenant [*diathēkē*, ordinances, will, testament].' Paul and the others bore testimony of the new covenant God made with Israel in Christ, which concept goes back to Jeremiah 31:31-34, "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel."

3:7 **the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones.** Paul's language is that the Law of Moses was the "the ministry of death" (NASB) in contrast to the new covenant that brings life through the "ministration of the spirit" (v. 8).

3:9 **the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.** The Law was given in the glory of God on Mount Sinai, which Paul calls "the ministration of condemnation," so how much more glorious is the law of Christ, "the ministration of righteousness"? (Repeats the concept in vv. 10-11).

⁴ McConkie, *DNTC*, 2:414.

3:12 ***we use great plainness of speech.*** Or, “we use great boldness in our speech” (NASB). Knowing the greater glory of the new law of Christ, Paul used boldness to declare it.

3:14 ***their minds were blinded.*** Using Moses wearing a veil to hide the glory of his transformation from the people (Exodus 34:33-35), Paul compared the reading of the Law, happening in synagogues all over the Roman Empire, to having a veil put over their eyes, thereby blinding them to the truth. This veil was “done away in Christ.”

3:14 ***old testament*** – “Old” is ‘worn out’ or ‘worse for the wear’; “testament” is *diathēkē*, meaning ordinances, will, testament, covenant. This is a reference to the Law of Moses, fulfilled in the new covenant of Christ.

3:15 ***when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.*** Paul considers all the reading of Moses going on among Jews worldwide—it must be that their hearts are covered in some way so they can’t hear the message and feel the Spirit, or else the reading of Moses would bring them to Christ.

3:16 ***when it shall turn to the Lord.*** Or, ‘when a person turns to the Lord.’

3:17 ***where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*** Obedience makes us free; sin makes us a slave to Satan. If we are worthy of the Spirit, it will turn our slavery into eternal freedom.

3:18 ***beholding as in a glass.*** With the veil removed, we see God’s glory as in a brass mirror (meaning, not seeing it well for now). But as we endure, we are changed into his image by the Spirit, which provides perfect vision.

[Let the light shine out of darkness – 2 Corinthians 4:1-6](#)

4:1 ***as we have received mercy, we faint not.*** Given the great mercy received from God through Christ, the disciple pushes forward, regardless of the challenges.

4:2 ***renounced the hidden things of dishonesty.*** Paul renounced secret lies that lead to deceit in handling the word of God. He preached truth which commends itself to every man by his conscience.

4:3 ***it is hid to them that are lost.*** Compare 1 Corinthians 1:18, where people are perishing (ongoing) or saved (ongoing). Here truth is hidden from those who are *apollumi* or in the act of being destroyed; their choices hide the truth from them.

4:4 ***the god of this world.*** This is Satan, who strives to blind the minds of men “lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them.”

4:5 ***we preach not ourselves.*** Authorized servants don’t speak of themselves, but of Jesus Christ, who shines light into their very souls.

4:6 ***God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts.*** This beautiful metaphor draws on the words of Genesis 1:3 (“let there be light”) to show that God can create light in our very hearts, chasing away the darkness of a sinful soul.

[A treasure in clay jars – 2 Corinthians 4:7-15](#)

4:7 ***this treasure in earthen vessels.*** Because the authorized servants are humble “earthen vessels,” this light, which is a treasure, shows to others that it is the power of God, not man. Alternatively, the jar is our body with the treasure being our spirit, the first perishable, the second eternal.

4:8 ***troubled on every side, yet not distressed.*** Verses 8-9 (and some later in chapters 11 and 12) give a very personal view of some of the challenges Paul had because of his consecrated missionary service. “This is more than just having a positive mental attitude. Faith in God provides mental stability, knowing that he is ultimately in charge.”⁵

⁵ Ogden, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 151.

4:10 **bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord.** Some see in this a reference to *stigmata*, or having marks in one's body that are similar to those Christ received at his crucifixion. But Paul's reference is surely metaphorical, saying that we are 'marked' by the Atonement so that "the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body," referring to perhaps the example of a good Christian life or the resurrection (or both).

4:11 **Jesus might be made manifest in our body.** Our example as Christians shows others the power and blessings of the gospel of Christ.

4:13 **I believed, and therefore have I spoken.** Quote from Psalm 116:10.

4:14 **shall present us with you.** After Jesus raises us from the dead, as the Father raised him up, we are together presented to the Father, ready to be heirs of all that he has, co-heirs with Christ.

4:15 **the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.** "Redound" is 'exceed,' or 'abound.' Our abundant prayers of thanksgiving bring glory to God.

[The inner self – 2 Corinthians 4:16 – 5:10](#)

4:16 **the inward man is renewed day by day.** Though old age and eventually death overcomes us all, even so the faithful are renewed in their spirits each day.

4:17 **exceeding and eternal weight of glory.** The challenges of this life, called "light affliction" by Paul, do not last long, and if we endure them well (compare D&C 121:7), we receive a glory that exceeds our expectations, and is eternal in nature (see D&C 63:66).

4:18 **the things which are not seen are eternal.** We can see the temporal world all around us, but seekers after Christ use faith to see "things are not seen" but which are eternal and thus of the greatest import.

5:1 **we have a building of God.** Shifting to a construction metaphor, Paul taught that our earthly "tabernacle" (or, tent) ended, we still have an eternal "building" with God. This building is more solid than the tent of mortality, and is not made by man but by God.

5:2 **earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house.** Because of challenges in this life, those who understand our destiny do not see death as an evil thing, but as the next step in our progression, that we might live in the wonderful heavenly 'house' promised us by God, which is our resurrected body.

5:3 **we shall not be found naked.** To be clothed with our eternal, resurrected bodies and still be 'naked' likely speaks to our being unworthy in God's presence and thus having our sins fully exposed.

5:4 **mortality might be swallowed up of life.** Not that we want to prematurely leave this life—quite the contrary. Paul explained that we do not want to be "unclothed" (lose our lives) in mortality, but rather recognize that our future state will be so much better as we "groan" with the challenges of this life.

5:5 **the earnest of the Spirit.** See 1:22 above.

5:6 **we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.** With a veil of forgetfulness over our eyes, this life is all we can remember, so it feels like home. But here we are away and distant from Jesus and the Father, forcing us to walk by faith and not sight (v. 7).

5:8 **willing rather to be absent from the body.** We would rather be with God and away from our bodies, Paul states with confidence.

5:9 **we labour, that . . . we may be accepted of him.** Paul reminded them that he and his companions worked hard to be accepted by God, even if they cannot see him. Paul's call to righteous living is not just for the sake of being a good person but because "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

5:10 **receive the things done in his body.** Or, “so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body” (ESV). To argue that Paul doesn’t say good works are important is to ignore a substantial amount of Paul’s theology. He stressed grace and faith over the rigid works of the Law of Moses, but always agreed with the teachings of Christ that we are ultimately judged based on our own deeds in this life, “whether it be good or bad.”

The love of God encourages us – 2 Corinthians 5:11 – 6:13

5:11 **Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.** The “terror of the Lord” is found in his judgment against those unprepared for it (v. 10).

5:12 **them which glory in appearance, and not in heart.** Speaking of his critics, Paul explains that they only glory in outward appearances but not in their hearts, whereas he, without commending himself, allows them some reason to boast about he and his companions to the false teachers.

5:13 **whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God.** The reference may be to visionary experiences that others might think is an indication of some insanity on Paul’s part, such as seeing Jesus alive after his crucifixion, or visions of the heavens (chapter 12).

5:14 **if one died for all, then were all dead.** The meaning may be that since Jesus died for all of us, we have the blessing and opportunity to ‘die’ also, giving up our former, sinful lives (also v. 15).

5:16 **though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.** Even if some who read (or helped write) Paul’s letter knew Jesus as a mortal, he is completely changed now, so that knowledge has no reflection on his current, glorified, and exalted state.

5:17 **all things are become new.** Likewise, anyone embracing Christ’s gospel can become a “new creature,” because old things are gone in Jesus and things are now new. Note that the word “all” is not in the best manuscripts.

5:18 **reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.** “Reconciled” is *katallassō*, which means to ‘restore a relationship between individuals’ or ‘make a friend out of an enemy.’ God himself changes us to be more like him through Jesus’ Atonement, so that we can enjoy a relationship like we used to have with him.

5:19 **not imputing their trespasses unto them.** To “impute” is to ‘account’ or ‘count’ sins against us. As Jesus took upon himself the sins of the world, God doesn’t account our sins to us anymore but instead gives us the blessing of reconciliation (v. 18).

5:20 **we are ambassadors for Christ.** “Ambassadors” is *presbeuō*, an envoy or ambassador in the political arena. Paul takes the term and applies it to the missionaries who carry the message of Christ to the world, who speaks “as though God did beseech you” directly.

5:21 **he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.** Jesus took our sins upon us, being made ‘sinful’ in our behalf, though he himself never knew sin. Through that effort, we become reconciled and declared ‘righteous’ to God, forgiven of all. Compare Leviticus 4:1-12 (where the bullock symbolically carries the sins of the people away from the camp) and Romans 8:3.

6:1 **receive not the grace of God in vain.** Don’t embrace the grace or gift of God—the Atonement of Jesus Christ—in an empty or shallow way.

6:2 **I have heard thee in a time accepted.** Quote from Isaiah 49:8.

6:4 **in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God.** Verses 4-5 and 8-10 preserve a number of trials Paul has experienced while verses 6-7 reflect attributes of faithful missionaries and members of the church. Here are some KJV terms that might be less understood:

1. Necessities = “hardships” or “difficulties”
2. Distresses = “calamities”

3. Stripes = “beatings”
4. Tumults = “riots”
5. Labours = “hard work”
6. Watchings = “sleepless nights”
7. Fasting = “hunger” or “deprived of food”

6:6 **By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness.** Compare D&C 232:41-42, which offers a similar list of positive attributes but in a different context: Paul in contrast to sufferings he has endured, Joseph Smith as a tutorial in maintaining priesthood power.

6:7 **the armour of righteousness.** Paul developed this notion of the armor of God more fully in Ephesians 6:11-18.

6:8 **as deceivers, and yet true.** Or, “We are treated as imposters, and yet are true” (NRSV, ESV).

6:9 **as chastened, and not killed.** Or ‘scourged but not yet dead.’ Scourging, which is being beaten by a leather whip with embedded bits of metal, point, or other pointed objects, would kill many. Paul had not been physically scourged (though beaten with a synagogue whip more than once, 11:24) but used this apt metaphor to represent some of the trials he had been forced to endure for his testimony.

6:10 **as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.** Paul had little in this world but had great promises of eternal blessings in coming worlds.

6:11 **our mouth is open to you, our heart is enlarged.** ‘We have spoken freely to you, with hearts opened wide.’

6:12 **ye are straitened in your own bowels.** “you are restricted in your own affections” (ESV).

The temple of the living God – 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:4

Many believe that most of this section (6:14 – 7:1) are inserted from another letter (or even another author) because it disrupts the flow of the message, which changes in this verse and then returns to the topic of the previous section starting at 7:2.

6:14 **Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.** Oxen are referenced in a couple other contexts in Paul’s writings. The first is in this verse. Some cite this as a warning against mixed marriages between Christians and non-Christians, but understanding the metaphor helps clarify that it is broader than that. Oxen were put in pairs when they worked. Some oxen worked best on the left side, some on the right. When you had the correct pair working together, they were ‘equally yoked,’ sharing the load and cooperating well. If you put two ‘left’ or two ‘right’ oxen together, they would be “unequally yoked,” causing problems getting the work done. The broader context of the verse is for believers to not work together in many contexts with non-believers, not just marriage, for their goals and interests would not match and they would work against each other. (Other comparisons are made in the rest of this verse and the next two, with the same lesson.)

6:15 **Belial.** This is the only usage of this term in the NT, though it is found several times in the OT (e.g., Deuteronomy 13:13; Judges 19:22; 2 Samuel 16:7; 2 Chronicles 13:7).

6:16 **as God hath said.** Quote from Leviticus 26:12. This strengthens the Pauline notion that we are God’s temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19) by tying it to the covenant we make to be his people.

6:17 **come out from among them.** Quote from Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 20:41.

6:18 **a Father unto you.** Quote from 2 Samuel 7:14 and Isaiah 43:6.

7:1 **cleanse ourselves . . . perfecting holiness in the fear of God.** The last verse of the insertion using non-Pauline language, though calling us to become pure and holy before God.

7:2 ***we have wronged no man.*** Picking up from the thought of 6:13, Paul assures the Corinthians that he and his companions have not done anything that would wrong, corrupt, or defraud another. This gives another indication of what Paul's enemies were charging against him in his absence.

7:3 ***to die and live with you.*** Paul's affections for the saints went to a willingness to suffer and even die for them, and to live with them again, in spite of the enemies he had in the town.

7:4 ***I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.*** Not because he liked seeing others suffer but because they all suffered together and would thus receive the same reward.

Experiences at Macedonia – 2 Corinthians 7:5-16

7:5 ***when we were come into Macedonia.*** Compare 2 Corinthians 4:8, which may reflect similar trials. After a visit to Corinth, Paul went to Macedonia and sent Titus back to Corinth while he went on to Troas. When Titus was delayed in his coming, Paul returned to Macedonia to look for him (Acts 20:1-2; Romans 15:19-20; 16:23; 2 Corinthians 2:12-13; 8:1-5; 12:14; 13:1).

7:6 ***comforted us by the coming of Titus.*** Paul somehow reconnected with Titus in Macedonia (no doubt through church members who could put them back in communication) and rejoiced at the news Titus gave him of Corinth.

7:7 ***your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind.*** The Corinthians saints were humbled and ready to receive Paul again.

7:8 ***though I made you sorry with a letter.*** This was a letter he wrote between 1 and 2 Corinthians, which is lost, but which is called the letter "with many tears" because of this verse.⁶

7:8 ***I do not repent, though I did repent.*** 'I am glad I wrote it now, though at first I was sorry.' The letter had the desired effect (vv. 9-10), though Paul seems to have feared just to have offended them immediately after sending it.

7:11 ***what carefulness it wrought in you.*** Titus reported to Paul that his letter had caused the saints in Corinth to feel diligence, indignation, fear, passion, zeal, and punishment, which helped them be approved by God.

7:12 ***that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.*** Paul wrote the letter mostly so they would know how much he cared for them.

7:13 ***his spirit was refreshed by you all.*** Titus felt greatly "set at rest" (NRSV) as a result of his quick visit to Corinth.

7:14 ***if I have boasted any thing to him of you.*** Paul spoke highly of the Corinthians to Titus before sending him there, which he justified because it was all "in truth."

7:15 ***his inward affection is more abundant toward you.*** Titus perceived their humility, fear, and desire to obey.

7:16 ***I have confidence in you.*** Paul rejoiced in Titus' report, knowing that now he had full confidence in the saints or Corinth and they were ready for a visit from him.

The Jerusalem Collection – 2 Corinthians 8:1 – 9:15

Part of the charge Paul took from the Acts 15 Jerusalem Conference was to collect for the poor in Jerusalem who were struggling both with famine and a loss of public support in times of need, as Jews began to reject the Christians as violators of the Law. These two chapters reflect his accounting of that effort. The collection effort is also discussed in Romans 15:25-32 and 1 Corinthians 16:1-4.

⁶ Brown, *Introduction*, 542.

Generosity – 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

8:1 ***the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.*** Paul is going to speak of the generosity of the Macedonian saints (such as those from Philippi and Thessalonica) in contributing to the Jerusalem fund.

8:2 ***the riches of their liberality.*** The Macedonian saints gave generously even in the middle of their own trials.

8:4 ***Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift.*** The Macedonian saints begged Paul for the privilege of making this gift, asking him to come and receive it from them, which he did.

8:6 ***we desire Titus.*** Paul sent Titus back to Corinth to collect for the fund from them, giving him charge to return it to Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1, 5-10; Galatians 2:10).

8:8 ***to prove the sincerity of you love.*** Paul was not requesting this as a commandment but as an opportunity for the Greek saints to show solidarity with the Jerusalem saints, so that the Jews might be impressed with the love of the Greeks, uniting Christians from both parts of the world.

8:9 ***Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.*** As Jehovah, Jesus was “rich” in terms of glory and power, yet he came down among men and gave all that up for our benefit. See Philippians 2:7 and 1 Nephi 11:16-34.

8:13 ***I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened.*** Paul was not asking anything of them that he hadn’t asked of the other churches. A donation from Corinth wouldn’t lessen his request to other cities.

8:15 ***As it is written.*** Quote from Exodus 16:18.

Titus – 2 Corinthians 8:16-24

8:17 ***of his own accord he went unto you.*** Titus determined to go to Corinth on his own, not because Paul demanded it of him.

8:18 ***sent with him the brother.*** This man is unidentified (also v. 19).

8:20 ***that no man should blame us in this abundance.*** Paul was careful with the collection of funds that no one would charge him with using any of it for himself. He wanted it all to go to Jerusalem.

8:23 ***Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper.*** Or, “Titus is both my friend and trusted co-worker.”

8:24 ***the proof of your love, and of our boasting.*** Paul challenged the Corinthians to prove their love to the Jerusalem saints and to match the generosity he had ascribed to them in his bragging about them to other churches.

The collection for the poor – 2 Corinthians 9:1-15

9:1 ***the ministering of the saints.*** Still referring the collection for the Jerusalem poor, Paul called it “ministering” (*diakonia*, the act of deacons).

9:3 ***I sent the brethren . . . ye may be ready.*** Having sent other missionaries ahead of him, he hoped the saints at Corinth were ready to generously help with the fund.

9:7 ***God loveth a cheerful giver.*** Paul expected not just a gift from them but to see it done in the right spirit.

9:9 ***As it is written.*** Quote from Psalm 112:9.

9:10 ***he that ministereth seed to the sower.*** Quote from Isaiah 55:10 (see also Hosea 10:12).

9:15 ***Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*** After exhorting them to generosity, love, and consideration of all that God has done for them in determining how much to give, Paul closed this appeal with a reference to the gift of God, Jesus Christ, who paid an unspeakable (“indescribable”) price for us.

Responding to Challenges to Authority – 2 Corinthians 10:1 – 13:10

Pauls' defense – 2 Corinthians 10:1-18

10:1 **base among you, but being absent am bold.** Paul declared that he was meek and humble when he was with them but bold when away, referring to his letters. He hoped not to have to be bold when he arrived (v. 2).

10:4 **the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.** Using a metaphor of an army going to battle to conquer a city, Paul assured the saints that their weapons were not swords or spears but even more powerful because they came from God, and allowed them to destroy the strongholds of pride, evil thoughts, and disobedience.

10:8 **our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification.** Though Paul boasted or claimed authority to preach as he had done, it was only for the purpose of building them up (the opposite of what the attacking army would do in v. 4-5).

10:10 **his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak.** Quoting his critics, Paul said their charges against him included that he wrote powerful letters but in person was weak, even sickly, and his speech nothing to get excited about. But he promised that when he came, his speech would be bold like his letters (v. 11).

10:12 **compare ourselves with some.** Paul did not want to compare himself with his critics, whom he claimed would not compare themselves with him but only with each other, which is not wise.

10:14 **we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel.** Or, “we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ” (NRSV). This he said not to boast but only to increase their faith (v. 15).

10:16 **not to boast in another man's line of things.** Being the first in the area of Galatia (from his first journey with Barnabas), Paul was not like his enemies, coming in after him and claiming great things. He preached “in the regions beyond you” and only gave glory to the Lord (v. 17; quote from Jeremiah 9:24).

10:18 **whom the Lord commendeth.** The person who has to commend himself is not approved (meaning tested and proved as authentic, like a coin), but only him whom the Lord approves.

The false apostles – 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

11:2 **with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband.** When a marriage was arranged, the bride was given to one man through the arrangement, and one person (family member, guardian) had the job of watching over her during the espousal (engagement) period to assure the groom that on the wedding day she was a “chaste virgin.” Paul felt he was this person with the Corinthians, preparing them as the bride to be with the groom, Christ.

11:3 **as the serpent beguiled Eve.** The false teachers who had come among them, however, acted as Satan in the garden, tricking them from the simplicity of the gospel of Christ to a corrupt alternate teaching that Paul labeled as “another Jesus” or “another gospel” that he had not preached to them (v. 4).

11:5 **I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.** This is not speaking of those leading the church, but rather the false teachers who have come to Corinth advocating for the Law among the Christians. They claim authority as ‘sent ones’ but Paul calls them *hyperlian apostolos* or ‘super apostles,’ in a mocking tone, and boldly claims to be in no way inferior to them.

11:6 **though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge.** He agrees that he may not be the best speaker but he also says that the ‘super apostles’ don’t know any more than him.

11:8 ***I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.*** Paul accepted money from other churches, especially Macedonia, so that when he was at Corinth he would not need to seek money from them (v. 9). The ‘super apostles’ apparently used this to denigrate Paul’s authority, but he explained that he did it so they would focus on his message and he on his preaching.

11:12 ***I may cut off occasion from them.*** Paul refused to give the false teachers any opportunity to be recognized as equals in their teaching or status. He called them *pseudapostolos*, “false apostles” (v. 13) who attempted to transform (or disguise) themselves as real apostles, but even Satan could transform himself into “an angel of light” (v. 14). Likewise, these “ministers” of Satan tried to disguise themselves as “ministers of righteousness,” but God will judge them for their works (v. 15).

I am a fool – 2 Corinthians 11:16-33

11:16 ***yet as a fool receive me.*** Though Paul didn’t want to be thought of as a fool, he allowed the title for a moment, in order to make a point, and will claim some things in boasting like a fool, “not after the Lord” (v. 17).

11:19 ***ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.*** The Corinthians tolerated fools, since they could tell when a person was a fool and were not persuaded by their nonsense.

11:21 ***Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also.*** Or, “But what anyone dares to boast of (I am speaking in foolishness) I also dare” (NASB). Paul continued to speak “foolishly,” meaning in a mocking tone, in regards to the false teachers coming among the Corinthians.

11:22 ***Are they Hebrews? So am I.*** Paul went through a list of things that the false apostles perhaps claimed as giving them authority, showing that all of those things applied to him, and much more. This included:

- Hebrews, Israelites, and the seed of Abraham – Paul was a Jew by birth
- Ministers of Christ – Paul was more, having worked harder, been beaten more, put in prison more, and faced death more than any of them
- He had been whipped in a synagogue five times, receiving the customary forty lashes minus one (Deuteronomy 25:3)
- He had been “beaten with rods” three times (e.g., Acts 16:22)
- He had been stoned once (Acts 14:19)
- Three times shipwrecked (no record of that happening yet in Acts—the only recorded shipwreck is during the journey to Rome, which is future to the writing of this letter)
- In many perils—journeyings, water, robbers, from his own people, from the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren
- Tired, in pain, sleepless, hungry, thirsty, going without food, cold, and naked

11:28 ***the care of all the churches.*** Beyond these outward sufferings (“things that are without”), he also had the heavy burden of caring for all the churches he had founded, taught, and converted.

11:29 ***who is offended, and I burn not?*** Or, “Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?” (NRSV). Paul had great empathy with his converts and defended and supported them at all times, even as he corrected them.

11:32 ***In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king.*** Doing back to Acts 9:23-25, Paul offers more details, saying that the governor, appointed by the king of Nabatea, Aretas IV, sought to arrest him but he escaped by being let down in a basket through a window in the city wall (v. 33). This helps date the Damascus escape because that city was only controlled by Aretas for a brief period around 35 CE.

The third heaven – 2 Corinthians 12:1-13

12:1 ***I will come to visions and revelations.*** Continuing his “boasting” to compare himself to the false apostles, Paul moved on to divine manifestations.

12:2 ***I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago.*** In the third person, Paul described a vision of “a man,” certainly referring to himself, who saw a vision of “the third heaven” and was “caught up unto paradise, and heard unspeakable words” (v. 4). “Paradise” was where the righteous lived after death but before judgment (Luke 23:43).

12:7 ***there was given to me a thorn in the flesh.*** The nature of this “thorn in the flesh” is unknown, and many possibilities have been suggested, including injury, illness, eye disease, or simply enemies. Whatever it was, Paul prayed mightily to have it removed from his life, but the Lord taught him to instead trust in his grace, “for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (v. 9). So Paul determined to “glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (v. 9). What a marvelous example of dealing with trials.

12:10 ***for when I am weak, then am I strong.*** Mortal weakness was welcomed by Paul after he learned this lesson from his “thorn in the flesh” (v. 7), because it helped him trust in God alone and thus become strong in the Lord.

12:11 ***I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me.*** Because of the doubts of the Corinthians relative to Paul’s teachings and authority, he was compelled to go through this exercise of listing his qualifications and tribulations, when humility would have compelled him otherwise.

12:11 ***in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles.*** Another reference to the ‘super apostles’ (11:5).

12:12 ***the signs of an apostle.*** Paul reminded them that he gave them the signs of his authority when he was there—“signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.” The ‘super apostles’ likely did no such thing.

Paul’s visit to Corinth – 2 Corinthians 12:14-21

12:14 ***the third time I am ready to come to you.*** Paul was prepared for another visit, which would be his third after his first long stay in 50-51 and then his shorter visit not long before this letter. When he came, he would continue not to burden them, that they might focus on his message.

12:16 ***I caught you with guile.*** With some sarcasm and no doubt a nod to the ‘super apostles’ method of being dependent on them, Paul ‘tricked’ them into the gospel because he was not asking them for any money or support (v. 17).

12:19 ***we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.*** If Paul ‘tricked’ them, it was only for their own uplifting and growth, and never for any selfish motivation.

1:20 ***I shall not find you such as I would.*** Paul hoped that when he came they would be repentant and prepared.

Examine yourselves – 2 Corinthians 13:1-10

13:1 ***In the mouth of two or three witnesses.*** Quote from Deuteronomy 19:15. See also Matthew 18:16; D&C 6:28; 128:3 – the former D&C reference quotes this verse, while the latter quotes Matthew.

13:4 ***though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God.*** Jesus allowed himself to be crucified for us but has the full power of God now. So Paul would come among them humbly but use the full power of God to reprimand them if he didn’t see sufficient repentance.

Closing Remarks – 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

13:11 ***Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace.*** The closing remarks included admonitions to righteous living but also blessings.

Introduction to Galatians

Galatians was written to address the rapid onset of apostasy in that area of the church. There is much debate about the date of this letter and the audience (ethnic Galatia in north-central Turkey or Roman province Galatia, south-central Turkey, including Derbe and Lystra). There is a strong and compelling argument for it being Paul’s first recorded letter written just before or during his second journey, shortly after the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15.

However, because of the similarity to Romans and other factors, I favor a date of about 57 CE, in middle of the third mission, and written from Corinth. I believe that the audience was more likely the cities Paul had visited in his three journeys, meaning Antioch Pisidia, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and not the more northern ethnic Galatia, for which we have no record of a visit.

The purpose of the letter was to correct some misunderstandings and challenges being faced by the Galatian Saints. As with 2 Corinthians, it appears that Judaizers—Christian Jews who felt like Gentile converts should first go “through” the Law of Moses to become Christian. Paul is also on the offensive against what he saw as hypocrisy on Peter’s part, when he came to Antioch and wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles. He writes more about his own experiences and conversion in Galatians than other letters, and offers significant reflections on what it means to be a Christian convert in the Gentile world.

Galatians (with Romans) is at the foundation for the Protestant Reformation. Luther’s doctrines of *sola fides* (‘faith alone’) and *sola gratia* (‘only grace’) came from his reading of these two books. Why these? Luther was assigned to teach them in his position as professor at the University of Wittenberg. He taught Romans in 1515-1516 and Galatians in 1516-1517. In them he saw a reason to reject many of the practices of the Catholic Church of his day and return to the New Testament church, as best he could. However, a careful reading of Galatians and Romans shows that they are equally focused on the things we have to do to merit grace in our lives. As latter-day doctrine concurs, Paul taught that we cannot do anything to earn salvation, but we must do everything we can to bend our lives to God’s will for grace to be positively effective in our lives.

Galatians is probably the main reason why when Paul returned to Jerusalem at the end of his third journey, that James counseled him to go to the temple and offer sacrifices with some other men, so that Paul could demonstrate that he was not completely against the customs and practices of those living under the Law of Moses. The strong language of Galatians would easily have offended many in Jerusalem who believed that Paul was uncompromising and even mean. His attempt to prove them otherwise resulted in his arrest and imprisonment, and trip to Rome.

Outline

From Welch and Hall, *Charting*, 14-4; Sperry, *Pauls’ Life and Letters*, 162f.

- 1) Greeting (1:1-5)
- 2) Problem Statement—Some are Troubling You (1:6-9)
- 3) Paul’s History and Authority (1:10-2:21)
 - a) Paul as persecutor (1:10-24)
 - b) Journey to Jerusalem after conversion (2:1-10)
 - c) Paul confronts Peter (2:11-14)
- 4) Justification by Faith (2:15 – 5:1)
 - a) Made righteous through faith (2:15-21)
 - b) Abraham believed (3:1-14)
 - c) Why the Law? (3:15-29)
 - d) Heirs of God (4:1-11)
 - e) Paul’s personal appeal (4:12-20)
 - f) Hagar and Sarah (4:21 – 5:1)
- 5) The Effects of Liberty (5:2-6:18)
 - a) Circumcision (5:2-12)
 - b) Serve each other through love (5:13-26)
 - c) Bear each other’s burdens (6:1-10)
- 6) Final Encouragement (6:11-18)

Greeting – Galatians 1:1-5

1:1 **Paul, an apostle, (not of men. . .)**. Paul firmly stated his authority as someone sent by God from the beginning of the letter, knowing that he was combating those who would challenge that authority in this letter.

1:2 **unto the churches of Galatia.** Unlike most of Paul's letters, Galatians is not written to an individual or a city, but an entire region. Perhaps when it was sent they took multiple copies, so the various cities could each have their own.

1:3 **Grace be to you and peace.** Paul used his typical greeting that included both Greek ("grace") and Jewish ("peace") elements. However, unlike his other letters, he has few words of praise for the recipients. Instead, he will quickly go into the problems they are facing and his rebuttal and strong counsel.

1:4 **deliver us from this present evil.** Jesus gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the evils of the world. Though the notion of Jesus giving himself for us is not unknown in Paul's writings, it is uncommon.⁷

Problem Statement—Some are Troubling You – Galatians 1:6-9

1:6 **I marvel that ye are so soon removed.** "Removed" is an action of the person; he removes (transfers, deserts, falls away) himself. This was something the Galatians saints had chosen to do.

1:6 **unto another gospel.** Paul's gospel—his 'good news'—was Jesus crucified, buried, and risen again. The other gospel of these saints drifting into apostasy was one of salvation by personal effort, ignoring the Atonement. Paul therefore made a strong case for the power of the Atonement above all else.

1:7 **some that trouble you.** We don't know the identity of these people that troubled the Galatians and other Gentile converts, but scholars refer to them as "Judaizers" because of their emphasis on living the Law of Moses.

1:8 **let him be accursed.** This is *anathema* or "eternally condemned" (NIV). In the Hebrew, it relates to *herem*, meaning 'outside the covenant.' Paul was saying that anyone who preached such false doctrines should be excommunicated and lose the blessings of being in a covenant relationship with God and Christ. He repeated it in verse 9 for emphasis.

Paul's History and Authority (1:10 – 2:21)

This section follows a rhetorical pattern used in an apology or defense, as in a courtroom. Paul's accusers are the Jewish preachers come to contradict his teaching, with Paul as his own defender, and the Galatians as judge.

Paul as persecutor – Galatians 1:10-24

1:10 **do I seek to please men?** Paul's question in this verse sets up the next chapter and a half as he responds strongly that no, he does not seek to please men but rather is focused on pleasing and serving God only.

1:12 **neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.** Paul did not mean that the only way he learned any truth was by revelation, though certainly the Spirit confirmed all such truths to him. He learned from Peter, James, Barnabas, and many others. We have to remember how Paul used "gospel." What he learned on the road to Damascus and in other occasions subsequent to that was the Jesus was alive, resurrected and victorious over death and sin. This good news was not something another man taught him, but something he learned firsthand by the appearance or unveiling (other meanings of *apokalypsis* or 'revelation') of Jesus to him.

1:13 **my conversation in time past.** The word "conversation" in the Bible does not mean what it means today—talking about something. Instead, in KJV English, it meant 'conduct.' It appears in Paul's letters seven times.

1:13 **I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it.** We get the sense here that Luke's account in Acts is only a sample of the zeal Saul exhibited against 'The Way.' "Persecuted" is *diōkō*, 'to run after,' 'to put to flight,' or 'drive away.' "Wasted" is *portheo*, meaning 'to destroy' or 'overthrow.'

1:14 **And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals.** Or, "I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age" (NRSV). Paul says that he was zealous in the Jewish religion such that he was moving

⁷ See 2:20; Ephesians 5:2, 25; 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14.

up the ranks of leadership quickly for one so relatively young. Though it wasn't just about social status, his rapid ascent in the ranks of leadership was a sign to him at the time that God was pleased with him, as it would have been to others.

1:15 **God, who separated me from my mother's womb.** Paul was speaking of his own foreordination to the apostolic office. "Separated" means 'appointed' or 'set apart.'

1:16 **immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.** Returning to his point that his testimony of Jesus came from personal revelatory experiences, he emphasizes that after seeing his initial vision of the Savior, he did not go talk to the church leaders.

1:17 **but I went into Arabia.** Acts gives us very little relative to Paul's early post-conversion years. We learn more details here in Galatians 2, such as this trip to Arabia (the territory of the Nabateans, whose king is also mentioned in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33). This occurred shortly after his baptism in Damascus, to which he returned after his time in Arabia (of unknown duration). Arabia was a large territory and he doesn't give enough details to know where he was, exactly.

1:18 **after three years.** This was the period of time from his conversion to his first trip back to Jerusalem, where he spent two weeks with Peter and James. It would have been marvelous to be a fly on the wall during that time, with Paul peppering Peter and James with questions about Jesus, his teachings, his life, and more, and the apostles carefully questioning Paul to see if his conversion was genuine.

1:19 **save James the Lord's brother.** Paul claimed to have met with no one in Jerusalem except Peter, John, and James, Jesus' (step) brother and leader of the church in Jerusalem, who later wrote the letter of James.

1:20 **before God, I lie not.** Paul took an oath to swear to the truth of what he was just saying. Why is it so important? It gets back to the source of his doctrine and knowledge—it was from heaven, not men.

1:21 **I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.** Syria was the location of Antioch, and Cilicia was the location of Paul's home town, Tarsus. These were the places he labored for the first several years until he and Barnabas went on what we call Paul's 'first journey' to Cyprus and southern Turkey.

1:22 **was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea.** Meaning, Paul did not spend time in Jerusalem and that area, so they would not have known him by sight.

1:23 **preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.** Paul was only known to those in Judea by reputation, which was that he was not a Christian, where before he had been a church persecutor.

Journey to Jerusalem after conversion – Galatians 2:1-10

2:1 **fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem.** Probably meaning fourteen years after his conversion, thus variously dated 47-49 CE. There is some disagreement whether Galatians 2 is another account of the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15 (held in 49 CE, that determined that Gentiles did not need to first become Jews in order to become Christians). McRay⁸ argues (and I agree) that they are not the same meeting, on the grounds that Peter's subsequent actions in Antioch (later in Galatians 2) make no sense if the Jerusalem conference had already been held. So if this visit was an earlier one, then the issue of Gentile conversion had not yet been officially resolved, and Peter tried to please both sides of the debate, which Paul felt left him open to criticism.

2:1 **with Barnabas, and took Titus.** This fourteen-year visit to Jerusalem included Barnabas, mentioned prominently in Acts, and Titus, who is mentioned in 2 Corinthians, this letter, 2 Timothy, and, of course, Titus, the letter addressed to him. The fact that Titus is not mentioned in Acts 15 is another argument in favor of the two describing two different trips to Jerusalem.

2:2 **but privately to them which were of reputation.** Another example why this visit is not the same as Acts 15, which portrays a very public meeting, though others have argued that this simply reflects Paul being a careful

⁸ McRay, *Paul*, 75.

lobbyist, going to the Church leaders first in private so he would be sure they were all on the same page. What is clear is that there were factions in the church that disagreed on the nature of Gentile conversion.

2:3 **Titus, who was with me.** Paul brought Titus to the meeting as a living witness that the gospel was preached to uncircumcised Gentiles and that they had the Spirit, too. Titus had apparently joined the church in Antioch as a Gentile convert.

2:4 **JST**

Galatians 2:4 KJV	JST
And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:	Notwithstanding there were some brought in by false brethren unawares, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

The change moves the “unawares” comment away from the “false brethren” to those brought in by the false brethren; in other words, the false brethren brought people to the conversation who were unaware of their true motives.

2:4 **that they might bring us into bondage.** Or, slavery. Paul is speaking metaphorically; the “false brethren” wanted to enslave them to the Law of Moses.

2:5 **To whom we have place by subjection, no, not for an hour.** Or, “we did not submit to them even for a moment” (NRSV). Paul and his companions were not deceived by these false teachers in any way.

2:6 **whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me.** Paul’s comment about the false brethren (who were “somewhat,” or better translated, ‘seemed to be important’) was that their standing did not make any difference to him—he did not change his message because of them, nor did they teach him anything.

2:6 **God accepteth no man’s person.** Quote from Deuteronomy 10:17.

2:9 **James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars.** James, the brother of Jesus; Cephas, or Peter; and John, the beloved. These three were the “pillars” or core leadership of the saints. We sometimes equate them with the First Presidency today but there is no NT indication that such a function existed in their day. Rather, Peter, as the senior member of the Twelve, led the church in conjunction with others of the Twelve and local leaders like James.

2:9 **the right hands of fellowship.** To offer the right hand of fellowship is to develop a close, personal relationship, to share or create a partnership. Some believe that this is when Paul was ordained to the quorum of the Twelve,⁹ but it could simply be a reflection of their endorsement of his efforts to take the gospel to the Gentiles.

2:10 **they would that we should remember the poor.** Paul sought to support the poor in Palestine during each of his journeys, bringing collections back from the Gentile saints each time. The Jerusalem area saints especially suffered because the normal support system of society was denied them as they embraced Jesus as Messiah.

Paul confronts Peter – Galatians 2:11-14

2:11 **when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him.** “Peter was the President of the Church; Paul, an apostle and Peter’s junior in the church hierarchy, was subject to the direction of the chief apostle. But Paul was right and Peter was wrong. . . . Without question, if we had the full account, we would find Peter reversing himself and doing all in his power to get the Jewish saints to believe that the law of Moses was fulfilled in Christ and no longer applied to anyone either Jew or Gentile.”¹⁰

2:12 **he withdrew and separated himself.** When Peter came to Antioch, he first ate with the Gentile converts. But when others came from Jerusalem, he stopped doing that, likely out of a desire to not offend these Jewish

⁹ Ogden and Skinner, *The New Testament*, 161.

¹⁰ McConkie, *DNTC*, 2:464.

Christians who were still struggling with the implementation of the Law among Christians. Paul's account here is another indication that Peter's visit to Antioch was prior to the Jerusalem Counsel in Acts 15, because the decision of that counsel resolved this issue and he would have had no reason to fear offending anyone by eating with Gentiles.

2:13 **the other Jews dissembled.** The other church leaders with Peter likewise acted hypocritically, in Paul's judgment, including his friend Barnabas, which could have added to the tension between them that led to their going different ways on their second journey in Acts 15:36-41.

2:13 **dissimulation.** 'Hypocrisy.'

2:14 **I said unto Peter before them all.** Paul boldly called out Peter (and the others with him) for their hypocrisy or happily eating with the Gentiles but then eating only with Jews when those who would be offended by that came to Antioch. We don't have Peter's reaction and most imagine the two as at odds for many years, but given the desire both had to follow Jesus, I don't see the confrontation being a lasting problem. Paul's point in relating this account is to bolster his own claim to authority on this issue and show that even Peter could be wrong.

Justification by Faith – Galatians 2:15 – 5:1

After making the case that justification is through faith in Christ in the rest of chapter, Paul offered six arguments from his own life experience and from scripture (chapters 3-4) to convince the Galatians that they had been tricked by the false preachers.¹¹

Made righteous through faith – Galatians 2:15-21

2:15 **We who are Jews by nature.** It's not clear if Paul's rebuke of Peter ends at verse 14 or 16. Either way, these verses teach his point that neither Jew nor Gentile are justified by the works of the Law but by faith.

2:16 **not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.** "Justified" is a very specific legal and religious term, *dikaioō*. It is a verb that means to make something fair or right legally or to be found innocent, and in the religious sense, 'to pronounce someone righteous,' meaning forgiven of sin.¹² Nothing we can do on our own will get our sins forgiven, but by God's grace we can be granted forgiveness through the atonement of Christ, if we exercise faith and repent.

2:17 **is therefore Christ the minister of sin?** We are all sinners and we seek justification through Christ. Paul asks if taking on him our sins makes him the 'servant' (*diakonos*, as in 'deacon') of sin? His answer is 'Certainly not!'

2:18 **if I build again the things which I destroyed.** Meaning, 'If I go back to living the Law of Moses after I have already removed it from my life.' We are transgressors if we go back to any sin or mistake we had previously rejected and removed from our lives.

2:19 **dead to the law, that I might live unto God.** Compare 2 Nephi 25:25: "For, for this end was the law given; wherefore the law hath become dead unto us, and we are made alive in Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled."

2:20 **I am crucified with Christ.** Our sins are crucified with him and "our sinful nature dies" when we "rise from the symbolic watery grave of baptism to newness of life."¹³ We do this so that we might live in Christ, through faith in him who gave himself for us.

2:21 **if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.** If a person could become forgiven of sins just by living the Law of Moses, there would be no need for Jesus' atoning sacrifice. Compare Mosiah 13:28.

¹¹ Brown, *Introduction*, 472.

¹² Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 2:211-219.

¹³ Ogden and Skinner, *The New Testament*, 164.

[Abraham believed – Galatians 3:1-14](#)

[The Spirit by faith – Galatians 3:1-5](#)

The first argument appealed to their memory of feeling the Spirit from Paul's preaching of Christ, not because of the Law of Moses. Since the Spirit teaches and testifies of truth, the gospel of Christ must be true.

3:1 ***O foolish Galatians.*** "Foolish" is 'lacking in understanding.' "You stupid people in Galatia!" (NJB). This was a very emotional appeal for Paul.¹⁴

3:1 ***who hath bewitched you.*** 'Put you under a spell' or 'brought evil upon you by pretending to praise.'

3:1 ***that ye should not obey the truth.*** This phrase is not in the better and older manuscripts. It was likely a late scribal addition to explain the "bewitched" phrase preceding it.

3:2 ***Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*** 'Which activity brought the Holy Ghost into your life: living all 613 laws of the *Torah* or hearing in your faith the preaching of the gospel?'

3:3 ***are ye now made perfect by the flesh?*** After being changed, taught, and inspired by the Spirit that came from embracing Christ, could they go back and be perfected by living a Law that did not teach of Christ?

3:5 ***He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit.*** Paul is speaking autobiographically; he brought the Spirit and miracles to them and he did not teach the Law but faith in Christ. This speaks to his point that his actions are the proof of his testimony.

[Abraham before circumcision – Galatians 3:6-14](#)

The second argument was that Abraham received great promises—before he had been circumcised. Thus God blessed him for his faith first, not just because of the covenantal act.

3:6 ***it was accounted to him for righteousness.*** 'He became acceptable to God, in a state of approval.' This was only after Abraham "believed God" and before any covenants had been made. Quotation from Genesis 15:6.

3:7 ***the children of Abraham.*** All who share Abraham's faith in God become his children, whether they are Jew or Gentile.

3:8 ***In thee shall all nations be blessed.*** "All nations" includes the Gentiles—in fact, the word "nations" in the Old Testament was usually interchangeable with "Gentiles" (see Genesis 12:3 and 18:18; see also Abraham 2:9-11). Paul was pointing out that from the beginning the blessings promised to Abraham were not limited to the Jews, since Abraham was not a Jew! He also called out this promise because it was given *before* Abraham was offered the covenant of circumcision.

3:10 ***Cursed is everyone that continueth not.*** Quoted Deuteronomy 27:26 (also 28:58), where Moses was proclaiming a curse on all of those who did not obey his law. Paul declared that all are therefore cursed because no one can perfectly keep the full Law of Moses all the time.

3:11 ***The just shall live by faith.*** Quoted Habakkuk 2:4. In other words, to become just requires faith.

3:12 ***The man that doeth them shall live in them.*** Quoted Leviticus 18:5. That scripture's point is that to "keep" the Law is to live in the commandments of God. Paul uses it slightly differently, that

3:13 ***being made a curse for us.*** As Paul knew, the Law of Moses taught that "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Deuteronomy 21:23). Jesus was indeed cursed, but not for his own sake, since he was without sin. Rather, he was cursed for our sake, to remove the curse of our sins.

¹⁴ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 3:280.

3:14 **the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles.** The promises of Abraham, given before the Law of Moses and before there were any Jews, are available to Gentiles as well “through Jesus Christ” and “through faith.”

Why the Law? – Galatians 3:15-29

The third argument said that since the Law came after Abraham, it cannot replace the promises God made to Abraham.

3:15 **I speak after the manner of men.** “Let me take an example from everyday life” (NIV). This verse speaks of legal agreements between people, potentially a will. If it was confirmed to be legal, no one could set it aside or add conditions to it, since it represented the desire of the person now deceased.

3:16 **to thy seed, which is Christ.** Paul’s argument is that God made promises to Abraham’s “seed” not “seeds,” so it is singular, which he concludes therefore refers to Christ. See Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 24:7; D&C 107:40.

3:17 **four hundred and thirty years after.** Likewise, the promises made to Abraham are not set aside by the Law of Moses, which came hundreds of years later. The number of years comes from Exodus 12:40.

3:18 **God gave it to Abraham by promise.** Again, the “promise” (*epangelia*, meaning assurance or declaration) to Abraham came before the Law, therefore the “inheritance” associated with the promise cannot be dependent on the Law of Moses.

3:19 **then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions.** See D&C 84:19-27. The law first given to the children of Israel through Moses was a higher law, which they rejected, so the Lord gave them a lesser law to bring them to Christ.

3:19-20 JST

Galatians 3:19-20 KJV	JST
Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.	Wherefore then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made in the law given to Moses, who was ordained by the hand of angels in the hand of to be a mediator of this first covenant (the law).
Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.	Now this mediator was not a mediator of the new covenant, but there is one mediator of the new covenant, who is Christ, as it is written in the law concerning the promises made to Abraham and his seed. Now Christ is the mediator of life; for this is the promised which God made unto Abraham.

In the KJV, the only mediator mentioned is Christ, but the JST teaches that Moses was a type of Christ, mediating before God on behalf of his people. But he was the mediator of the former covenant, while Christ, according to the promises of Abraham (vv. 16-18) was the “mediator of life” according to the Abraham promises. The JST also deletes the problematic phrase “God is one” and incorporates just the word “God” into the final teaching about God making promises to Abraham, reflecting back to the previous verses. In short, this lengthy addition expands Paul’s point to include the receiver of the Law himself, and distinguishes between the old and new laws given by both Moses and Christ, all while perfectly capturing and extending Paul’s argument in words that could be his own.

3:21 **if there had been a law given which could have given life.** If God could give a set of steps or rules to follow which would lead to salvation and eternal life, then all we would have to do is follow all those steps precisely and we would get our greatest eternal reward. But it doesn’t work that way. In fact, that’s essentially how Satan wanted it to work from the very beginning, but Paul and we can see the flaw in that plan immediately (see Moses 4:1-4).

3:22 **scripture hath concluded all under sin.** “Concluded” should be ‘enclosed’ or ‘encircled.’ It refers to the Law which encloses us in sin because we can’t possibly live it perfectly our whole lives, so we are “under sin.”

3:23 **shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.** Or, “imprisoned until the coming faith should be revealed” (ESV). Because no one could fully live it, the Law imprisoned everyone, forcing all to wait for the revelation of Christ to the world.

3:24 **the law was our schoolmaster.** “The Greek word is *paidagōgos*, describing a slave in Hellenistic society who acted as tutor and guardian to children as well as imposing discipline. The slave also led the children to the school, ‘helped to bring up the child and at school must have been a helpful overseer.’ Hence, the *paidagōgos* was a trusted member of the family and even sometimes had charge of ‘home-schooling’ before group schooling became accepted.”¹⁵ The job was only temporary, until the children were grown. Compare 2 Nephi 11:4, which shares his perspective as to the reason the Nephites lived the Law—it all points to Christ.

3:26 **ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.** Compare Mosiah 5:7-8, “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters. And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives. And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ.”

3:27 **have put on Christ.** Or, “have clothed yourselves with Christ” (NRSV, NASB, NIV, NAB). In Hebrew, the word for “atonement” means to ‘cover.’ Here, Paul uses the word *enduō*, which means ‘to clothe’ and is the root of our word *endow*. As we put on Christ like new clothing, he covers our sins.

3:28 **ye are all one in Christ Jesus.** To God, the things that humans use to distinguish themselves don’t matter—race, color, social status, etc. Instead, God invites us to unity with him through his Son.

3:29 **Abraham’s seed, and heirs.** Those who have embraced the gospel covenants and Christ as their Savior become Abraham’s seed and heirs to all the promises that he received, which was done by a grace (gift) of God.

Heirs of God – Galatians 4:1-11

Fourth argument: Why would the Galatians want to go back to being slaves? They were slaves to Satan before Paul’s preaching; now do they want to be slaves to the Law?

4:1 **the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant.** Children had few or no rights in Roman society, thus they differed little from slaves. They were under the direction of adults who governed their lives and behavior.

4:2 **under tutors and governors.** Or, “under guardians and trustees” (NRSV). Children are not just under the hand of their parents but are also told what to do by household managers and tutors, whom they must obey until the father determines they are ready. This leaves them “in bondage” according to worldly standards (v. 3).

4:4 **the fulness of time was come.** *Plēroma* means something filled up or even overflowing, as in the baskets of food left over after Jesus fed the multitude (Mark 6:43). However, some early manuscripts have a different word that means ‘appropriate time,’ meaning Jesus came at the right time, the one planned by God from the beginning. In the Book of Mormon, “fulness of time” has a similar meaning, applied to Christ’s mortal ministry (2 Nephi 2:3, 26; 11:7) but in the Doctrine and Covenants, it typically applies to our day (D&C 27:13; 76:106; 112:30; 121:31; 124:41; 128:18, 20).

¹⁵ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 3:284.

4:4 **made of a woman.** Or, “born of a woman” (NRSV, NASB, NIV, NAB, NLT, NJB). While everyone is born of a woman in this life, it’s curious that only in three passages in Job do we find this phrase, where it is used negatively, such as “how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4; also 14:1; 15:14).

4:4 **made under the law.** Also, ‘born under the law.’ Jesus was born a Jew and thus fully raised under the Law, and honored it his whole life, though he did challenge the way Jews of his day interpreted parts of it.

4:5 **we might receive the adoption of sons.** Through Christ’s atonement we are redeemed (freed from slavery) and promised adoption—full familial rights with the potential to receive a full inheritance at a future time.

4:6 **the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.** Paul used this phrase again in Romans 8:15, one of many examples of the language shared between these two letters. But it likely originated from the stories of Jesus’ Atonement, as later reflected in Mark 14:36.

4:7 **no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.** Through covenants and Christ’s grace and mercy, we can progress from being a slave to a son, and then an heir of all the Father’s blessings.

4:8 **ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.** Paul pled with the Galatians not to go back to their previous ways, giving service to gods of stone and wood and observing special days where it was felt that good luck—the blessings of the gods—would help them.¹⁶

4:9 **turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements.** Now that the Galatians have “know God,” or better yet, “are known of God,” would they go back to worshipping to pagan gods that have no power and provide no blessings, even though they demand enslavement to their rituals?

4:11 **I am afraid of you.** Or, “I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted” (NRSV).

[Pauls’ personal appeal – Galatians 4:12-20](#)

The fifth argument reminded the Galatians that they treated him wonderfully when he was among them. Why do they now want to treat him as an enemy?

4:12 **JST** “Brethren, I beseech you **to be perfect** as I am **perfect**; for I am **persuaded** as ye **have a knowledge of me**, ye have not injured me at all **by your sayings.**” Paul showed a forgiving nature but also invited the Galatians to be as ‘complete’ as he was in his relationship with Christ.

4:13 **through infirmity of the flesh I preached.** In Paul’s previous visit (probably his first mission), he was perhaps ill in some way, though this illness was not recorded in Acts (unless it refers to his being stoned in Acts 14:19; compare 1 Corinthians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 10:10). However, the word “infirmity” (*astheneia*) can also mean ‘weakness.’ It could be that Paul was reminding them that he, too, had sins, and preached the gospel with those sins in their view.

4:14 **my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not.** “Temptation” is better translated ‘trial,’ referring back to his illness or weakness in v. 13. In their culture, it was felt that someone who was ill had fallen out of favor with the gods, even if the reason wasn’t obvious in that person’s conduct. In spite of Paul’s weakness or illness, the Galatians overlooked that, accepted him, and listened to his words as a messenger (“angel”) of God.

4:15 **plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.** Some see this as a reference to Paul’s ailment (even the “thorn in the flesh” of 2 Corinthians 12:7), that he had trouble with his eyes in some way—migraine headaches, failing vision, cataracts, etc. It could also simply be a metaphor for their devotion to him.

4:16 **Am I therefore become your enemy.** With this close and supportive relationship in their history, how could the Galatians now believe the false preachers that Paul was their enemy? They were merely trying to put themselves between Paul and the Galatians saints (v. 17).

¹⁶ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 3:285.

4:18 **zealously affected always in a good thing**. Compare D&C 58:27, where we are counseled to “many things” and “bring to pass much righteousness.”

4:19 **I travail in birth again**. Paul has labored once on their behalf, as if he had been giving birth to them. Now it felt like he was doing it again, but he was willing to do it until Christ was fully part of their lives.

4:20 **I stand in doubt of you**. Or, ‘I am perplexed and puzzled by you’ (AT).

Hagar and Sarah – Galatians 4:21 – 5:1

Picking up the Abraham story again, the sixth and final argument uses the analogy of Hagar and Sarah, because the false preachers had also used this story, though applied it incorrectly, Paul reasons. These two women, mothers of Abraham’s two sons, served Paul as an allegory (v. 24) with a spiritual meaning. Hagar represented the Law of Moses (not the Gentiles as the false preachers taught), while Sarah was the Law of Christ (not the children of Israel). Hagar was a slave; Sarah was free. Ishmael was born to Hagar without a promise; Isaac was born through a promise and a miracle. We, with Isaac, are now the “children of promise” (v. 28), and as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, so will the world persecute the saints. But God will finally say, “Cast out the bondwoman,” for the two cannot have the same inheritance. Those who follow the old Law will be rejected; those who follow Christ will be saved.

4:24 **which is Agar**. Or, Hagar.

4:25 **answereth to Jerusalem which now is**. Hagar represents the Law as it is currently taught and lived in Jerusalem and other areas of Judea.

4:26 **Jerusalem which is above**. The heavenly Jerusalem, where the temple of God is.

4:27 **For it is written**. Quote from Isaiah 54:1.

4:30 **what saith the scripture**. Quote from Genesis 21:10.

5:1 **Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free**. The concluding remark of the Hagar/Sarah metaphor—stay free in Christ, not enslaved to the Law which is a yoke that no one can bear.

The Effects of Liberty – Galatians 5:2 – 6:18

Paul’s final warning voice was that the Law of Moses could not save anyone. Rather, it is the Spirit that manifests God’s love and salvation to us. Circumcision was not evil, just not effective in bringing justification to Gentile converts.

Circumcision – Galatians 5:2-12

5:2 **if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing**. Continuing his thought, Paul used circumcision as a ‘code word’ for living the Law, and instructed that relying on the Law for salvation makes their relationship with Christ unprofitable or of no benefit.

5:3 **he is a debtor to do the whole law**. If you are going to try and get saved by the Law of Moses, then you’d have to live every aspect of it perfectly every day of your life.

5:4 **Christ is become of no effect unto you**. Or, “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law” (NASB).

5:4 **ye are fallen from grace**. “Fallen” (*ekpiptō*) referred to the dropping of a flower when the bloom had run its course.¹⁷ “To fall from grace is to turn from such a course of obedience so that the goodness of God departs and the

¹⁷ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 3:289.

former saint is left to his own power and strength. God is no longer pleased with his conduct and no longer pours out upon him special blessings.”¹⁸ See also D&C 20:32-34.

5:5 **through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness.** Paul develops this concept further in other letters; it is the notion that the Spirit provides the assurance of future blessings not realized in this life, giving us hope.

5:6 **neither circumcision availeth any thing.** Here we learn one of the major arguments of Paul’s detractors. They were teaching that a Gentile must first be circumcised. After all, they no doubt reasoned, Abraham was circumcised, so the practice pre-dated the Mosaic Law. Even if the Law was fulfilled, this covenant was given before Moses, and so should continue. Paul’s counter-argument was the circumcision followed the covenant by many years, so faith and obedience to God were at the core of our relationship to him, not this outward act.

5:7 **Ye did run well; who did hinder you.** Invoking the image of an athletic contest, Paul told them they were in the lead. But someone “did hinder” them, meaning cut them off in the race and moved into the lead. Did that mean they should stop running? That notion does not come from God (v. 8).

5:9 **A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.** A proverbial phrase that means a small act can have a bit impact. Paul used this also in 1 Corinthians 5:6-7.

5:10 **he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment.** Since this is singular, there may only have been one false teacher troubling the Galatians.

5:11 **then is the offence of the cross ceased.** Paul argued that if he had continued to preach circumcision (meaning, the Law), then his life would have been much easier. The Jewish religion was well-established and accepted in the Roman empire, but the message of Christianity was mocked as foolish and ridiculous, with its founder and leader crucified as a Roman criminal and now resurrected with an eternal body—two messages that put off many among both Jews and Gentiles.

5:12 **they were even cut off which trouble you.** Speaking of those advocating circumcision, Paul actually said here: “As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!” (NIV).

Serve each other through love – Galatians 5:13-26

5:13 **ye have been called unto liberty.** The gospel of Christ brings freedom from the Law and other restrictions imposed by pagan religions. But Paul counseled them not to see that freedom as justification to sin. Rather, their efforts should be to “serve one another.”

5:14 **the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.** Quoting Leviticus 19:18 (and certainly Jesus, as in Matthew 22:39), Paul summarized his whole argument about grace and freedom into a quest to love others.

5:15 **bite and devour one another.** The verbs used refer to the way wild animals might tear each other apart.¹⁹ This is the opposite of v. 14, loving each other.

5:16 **Walk in the Spirit.** To walk or live in the Spirit is to be guided by the will and voice of God in everything we do. Paul started this section with that call to righteousness and ended it (v. 25) the same way.

5:17 **the Spirit against the flesh.** The Spirit struggles against our carnal natures because the two are “contrary the one to the other.” As we give in to the flesh in any way, it keeps us from being fully obedient to God.

5:18 **led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.** Likewise, Paul portrays the law as a carnal commandment, that keeps us from being fully obedient to God, which the Spirit tries to get us to do. 1 Nephi 4:6 is an example of Nephi being led by the Spirit, and D&C 20:45 and 28:4 counsel the same for the modern Church.

¹⁸ McConkie, *DNTC*, 2:479.

¹⁹ Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds*, 3:29.

5:19 ***the works of the flesh***. Verses 19-21 provide an extensive list of the “works of the flesh,” which exclude a person from inheriting the kingdom of God. Some of the KJV terms that might be hard to understand are listed here with better translations:

- Uncleanliness = “impurity”
- Variance = “discord” or “enmity”
- Emulations = “strife” or “contention”
- Wrath = “jealousy”
- Strife = “disputes” or “selfish ambition”
- Seditions = “dissensions”
- Heresies = “divisions” or “factions”
- Revelings = “orgies” or “carousing”

5:22 ***the fruit of the Spirit***. Verses 22-23 provide a shorter but marvelous list of the “fruit of the Spirit.” Most are translated well, with the exception of “temperance” which is better as ‘self-control.’

5:24 ***crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts***. Those who embrace the gospel of Christ has killed or put away fleshy passions and desires.

5:25 ***walk in the Spirit***. To “walk” is to act in a certain way, as in ‘our daily walk.’ If the Spirit is with us, it will impact our daily activities in a positive way.

5:26 ***Let us not be desirous of vain glory***. Or, “Let us not become conceited” (NASB).

Bear each other’s burdens – Galatians 6:1-10

6:1 ***restore such an one in the spirit of meekness***. Correcting other saints is part of how we strengthen and fellowship each other, but Paul counsels doing it in “meekness,” so that we do not succumb to similar sins. See D&C 20:80.

6:2 ***Bear one another’s burdens***. See Mosiah 18:8-11 for examples of how we bear each other’s burdens.

6:3 ***something, when he is nothing***. Don’t think you’re greater than you are, because that is self-deception.

6:4 ***prove his own work***. Test your own efforts (with God) and you’ll have rejoicing in your results.

6:5 ***bear his own burden***. This passage refers to the practice of a soldier carrying his own supplies. We strive for self-sufficiency, all while working together in an army that supports each member.

6:6 ***him that is taught . . . him that teacheth***. See D&C 50:22.

6:7 ***whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap***. The Law of the Harvest—if you plant carrots, you’ll get carrots, not tomatoes or radishes or broccoli. If you sow sin, joy and righteousness cannot come from it (v. 8). Compare D&C 6:33.

6:9 ***let us not be weary in well doing***. Sowing takes patience and continued work to see the crop ready to harvest. You cannot sow the seeds and walk away, expecting results. So it is with our spiritual life—we must not be weary in doing good things each day. See D&C 64:33.

6:10 ***do good unto all men***. Going back to Christ’s statement to love others, but Paul especially counseled them to do good to other members of the church, to build up unity, love, and the Spirit among them.

Final Encouragement – Galatians 6:11-18

6:11 ***Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand***. The large letters Paul was writing with his own hand probably just refers to his writing this final section. Many scholars believe this ties back to his eye problems (4:15), forcing him to write large letters so he can read it.

6:12 **make a fair shew in the flesh.** Harkening back to those arguing for the Law, Paul says that they emphasize looking good in the flesh (a direct reference to circumcision) but their motivation is only to avoid being persecuted. By making themselves look as Jewish as possible, they avoid the negative association with Christianity happening at this time.

6:13 **keep the law.** Even those most strongly advocating for circumcision cannot live the Law completely—no one can! But they see themselves as somehow successful before God if they can persuade Gentiles to go through the procedure.

6:14 **I should glory, save in the cross.** On the other hand, Paul takes no personal glory in any success he has in getting others to embrace Christ, except to give glory to the Savior himself for his Atonement.

6:15 **but a new creature.** The transformation required of us is to become something completely new, a creature attuned to God and obedient to him, not just a small physical change. See 2 Corinthians 5:17.

6:16 **peace be on them, and mercy.** Living the law of Christ bring both peace and mercy in our lives, something no one living the Law of Moses alone can experience.

6:17 **I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.** Paul did indeed bear many marks in his body from multiple beatings, stonings, and other things he suffered on account of his testimony of Christ. The word he used for “marks” was used for two things: slaves who were marked to indicate who owned them, and religious adherents who were marked to indicate their devotion to a specific god. Both meanings of the word applied to Paul. His final point was that the marks of suffering for God that he bore were more important than the mark of the knife of his own circumcision.

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Abbreviations:

- AT – Author’s translation
- BYU – BYU New Rendition
- CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
- ESV – English Standard Version
- JST – Joseph Smith Translation
- KJV – King James Version
- LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
- NAB – New American Bible
- NASB – New American Standard Bible
- NIV – New International Version
- NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
- NLT – New Living Translation
- NRSV – New Revised Standard Version
- TNT – William Tyndale 1534 New Testament
- TW – Thomas Wayment translation

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