



Pieter Gaal, Moses with the Tables of the Law, 1803, oil on canvas, 249 x 218 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Image via Wikimedia Commons.

GALATIANS

PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTOLIC CALL AND REVELATION (CA. AD 54–58)

LYNNE HILTON WILSON

Introduction

Paul wrote this epistle to correct false teachings and share details about his life and early Church service. The epistle opens in high drama like the last act of a play, making it hard for the modern reader to understand why everyone is mad. From gathering a few shreds of evidence, scholars assume that certain individuals came to Galatia after Paul left and poisoned the faith of his new converts. Josephus and the early Church called these people Judaizers (Greek for “live according to Jewish customs”).¹ Judaizers wanted the gentile Christian converts to adopt circumcision and live the thousands of traditions (or oral laws) associated with the Mosaic laws. Yet Paul saw these traditions as undermining the apostolic teachings about Jesus’s atoning salvation. Adopting such a change was difficult for the Judaizers. At the time of the New Testament, the word *law* referred to the Mosaic laws and sometimes to all ten thousand oral laws as well.

The dating of this letter stems from Paul's reference to collecting welfare contributions either at the end of his third mission or at another time. (The parenthetical ending in the KJV saying that Paul wrote from Rome is not in the Greek text.)

Judaism and Christianity in Galatia

The Roman province of Galatia was modern-day central Turkey. Galatia had a strong Jewish population (Act 15:1; 16:3). Some scholars estimate that in Galatia, "Jews constituted about twenty percent of the population."² By the time Paul wrote this letter, he and his companions had established about six to eight churches in Galatia.³

The book of Acts explained that on their first apostolic mission, Paul and Barnabas baptized in at least four cities in southern Galatia: Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia.⁴ Lystra is remembered as the place where Paul met Timothy, Eunice, and Lois (Act 16:1). It is also the place where Paul and Barnabas healed a man, where they were called Mercury and Jupiter, and where Paul was stoned and subsequently raised from the dead. Paul and Silas returned to visit the early Saints in these cities of Galatia on their second and third missions. Paul ordained "elders in every church."⁵

*Outline*⁶

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Purpose of the Epistle to the Galatians

In the epistle, Paul passionately explained that Jesus is the source of salvation, not the law of Moses. Moreover, Christ fulfilled the law of Moses, so it no longer needs to be followed (Gal 1:11). Paul destabilized those who want all Christians to live the full law of Moses. Up to a decade earlier, in Act 15, Paul addressed the same issue at the Jerusalem Council. The controversial questions of which laws of Moses should be kept and whether gentile converts should be circumcised continued to plague the Church, and Paul answered them in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. Paul was exasperated by those who undermined his teaching.

Galatians 1

Introduction of the issue—Gal 1:1–5

Gal 1:1. “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father . . .).” Paul begins his letter with a clear defense of his divine apostolic call, and it builds throughout his letter.

Gal 1:2 (NIV). “all the brothers and sisters with me, To the churches in Galatia.” We don’t know which companions were with Paul at the time he wrote this epistle. He writes to the plural churches, hoping the letter will be circulated from church to church. A footnote for this verse in the NIV reads, “The Greek word for ‘brothers and sisters’ [*adelphoi*] refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family.”⁷ The Apostolic Church brought dramatic change to the ancient world in allowing women to join with the men in worship.

Gal 1:3–5. “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins . . . : To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.” Paul uses his standard opening again with a beautiful testimony of Jesus’s role and relationship to Heavenly Father.

One gospel received only through Christ—Gal 1:6–10

Gal 1:6. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” Paul fears that some Galatians are changing Christ’s gospel. Paul skips the traditional Greek thanksgiving and jumps right into condemning his audience for leaving Christ’s gospel. The second word, “marvel,” is also translated as “astonished” (RSV, NEB, JB, NIV) and “amazed” (NAS). Additionally, “removed from him” is translated with the stronger words “deserting” (in RSV, NAS, NIV) and “turned away from” (NEB, JB).

Gal 1:7 (NIV). “Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.” Paul reminds the Saints that Christ taught a unified gospel message—even if some charlatans tried to convince the Saints otherwise.

Gal 1:9. “*If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.*” False teachers had stirred up the Saints, so Paul reminds them that the only source of truth is God. Paul does not smear other Church leaders here, but he emphasizes having unity under Christ or otherwise being accursed by Satan. *Accursed* means “damned to hell.”

Gal 1:10 (NIV). “*Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? . . . If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.*” Paul emphatically insists that he has taught the people the doctrine not of mortals but of Christ. For the next several verses, Paul emphasizes the origins of his teachings and testimony in Christ. It is not Paul’s church or Peter’s church—it is Christ’s.

God called and trained Paul through revelation—Gal 1:11–16

Gal 1:11–12 (NIV). “*I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. . . . I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.*” This is the epistle’s thesis statement. Paul’s understanding of the gospel was gained through divine revelation. His teachings came from heaven, not from humans. Paul’s reference to revelation refers to both his visions of the resurrected Christ as well as inspiration from the Spirit that guided his missionary work.⁸

Revelation was the source of the Restoration as well. One of the first things the Lord taught Joseph Smith was how to recognize when the Spirit speaks. Among those teachings are that revelation comes after belief, enlightens one’s mind and heart, fills one with peace, and is a burning in the bosom or physical energy in answer to faith-filled petitions.⁹

Gal 1:13–14. “*I persecuted the church of God . . . being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*” In his “previous way of life” (NIV) Paul tried to destroy Christianity, thinking it was a devilish apostasy from Judaism (Act 9:10–22). This also corroborates Act 22:3, which speaks of Paul’s great zeal for the law of Moses and his mentorship by Gamaliel, a great rabbi.¹⁰

Gal 1:15 (NKJV). “*God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace.*” Paul may have paraphrased Jer 1:5 or Isa 49:1. These two Old Testament prophets and Paul all reference a premortal relationship to God and their foreordained call.¹¹ Here “separated,” *aphorizó*, also means “set apart,” and “from my mother’s womb” means “before I was born.” Paul was called by God’s precious gift of love. Forgiveness is known as God’s grace. Like Paul, all disciples of Christ are called with His grace, by His love. Our restored understanding of a premortal life along with the plan of salvation that Paul hints at here is unique among Christians.

Gal 1:16 (NIV, BSB). “*to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.*” The phrase “in me” describes Paul as a mouthpiece of God. *Heathen* and *Gentile* were synonymous terms.

Paul’s personal history—Gal 1:16–2:14

Gal 1:16–17 (BLB). “*I consulted not immediately with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to the apostles before me, but . . . to Damascus.*” We surmise that Paul was responding

to doubts about his Christian education. The phrase “flesh and blood” means Paul’s permission to teach came not from a mortal but from God. He returns to his thesis on personal revelation. His first Christian missionary efforts were in Damascus years before he visited the Apostles in Jerusalem (Act 9:19–22). It is as if he were saying, “I didn’t need human permission, because I was called by Jesus.”

Gal 1:18. *“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”* Paul’s visit to Jerusalem fits chronologically into Luke’s retelling of Peter and Paul’s meeting in Act 9:26–27. What an amazing opportunity for a young convert to stay with the chief Apostle and his family for fifteen days! However, Luke’s version varies slightly, suggesting that the two authors retell the story for different purposes. An experienced leader ministering to a new leader is a great example of working together within the Church. Many Christian historians claim that Peter and Paul worked in separate directions, but this verse gives evidence to the contrary.

Gal 1:19 (BSB). *“But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother.”* Three different Jameses appear in the New Testament. James was a popular name among the Jews because in Hebrew it is Jacob. Paul saw James the brother of Jesus Christ and second son of Mary. (Jesus had four half-brothers and at least two half-sisters, who are listed in Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3.) This James was probably the author of the Epistle of James. This is the only verse that claims James was an Apostle, but we doubt that he was ever a member of the Quorum of the Twelve (just as Paul was never included with them). During Jesus’s life, His brother James did not believe He was the Messiah, but after His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to James and he became a Church leader in Jerusalem (Jn 7:4; 1 Cor 15:7).

This James was not James the son of Zebedee and Salome and brother of John the Beloved, nor was he James the son of Alphaeus, the other original member of the Twelve named James.¹² By reading between the lines, we infer that the Galatians have accepted a false story about Paul’s conversion or early missionary efforts and apostolic call.

Gal 1:21–23. *“I . . . was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.”* We are missing half of the story and must assume that someone in Jerusalem had suggested they knew Paul shortly after his conversion. However, Paul objects, saying they had only heard of him; no Jerusalem Saints beside Peter and James had seen Paul at that time.

Galatians 2

Recounting the Jerusalem Council—Gal 2:1–3

Gal 2:1. *“fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me.”* Paul shares an exact date that was not in the book of Acts. Paul had only returned to Jerusalem twice since his conversion on the road to Damascus. The second trip came after Paul and Barnabas’s first gentile mission when contention grew over how much of the Mosaic law the gentile Christians

should adopt. A delegation traveled to Jerusalem to ask for direction from Church leaders. We now call this meeting the Jerusalem Council. A parallel study of the Jerusalem Council from Act 15:2–23 shows much continuity between the two accounts:

Acts 15	Galatians 2
“They determined that Paul and Barnabas . . . should go up to Jerusalem” (15:2)	“Fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus” (2:1)
“They were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them” (15:4)	“I went up by revelation and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation” (2: 2)
Certain believing Pharisees insisted “that it was needful to circumcise” gentile converts (15:5)	Certain “false brethren” sought to compel Titus “to be circumcised,” but Paul absolutely refused (2:3–5)
The Twelve sent Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch with their decision and a letter to “the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia” (15:23)	Peter, James and John “gave me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles” (2:9 NKJV) Paul and Barnabas went to Antioch (2:11–13)

Gal 2:2 (BSB). *“I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles.”* Paul returns to his thesis: Jesus called him through revelation, and he continued to learn from the same source. He felt inspired by God to gather a council of the Apostles in Jerusalem to reach a global consensus. (In Act 15:28, Luke also emphasized the Spirit’s guidance during that council: “It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.”)

Gal 2:2 (BSB). *“But I spoke privately to those recognized as leaders, for fear that I was running or had already run in vain.”* Paul also called for unity across Christianity and with the Twelve. His education and experience far surpassed that of Peter, James, and John, yet he still honored them as his leaders. Wisely, Paul first met privately with “those of reputation” (KJV) to make sure he was acting in harmony.

Gal 2:3 (NIV). *“Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.”* The leadership agreed in the Jerusalem Council that Titus, as a new gentile convert, could be a full standing Christian without the Mosaic requirement of circumcision. Since the time of Abraham, circumcision was a required sign for males born in or converted to God’s covenant (Gen 17:11). Though circumcision was common among Abraham’s descendants, the Greeks despised it.¹³

Judaizers—Gal 2:4–6

Gal 2:4 (BSB). “*false brothers had come in under false pretenses to spy on our freedom in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us.*” The “false brethren,” or conservative Jewish converts to Christianity who wanted all Christians to keep the Judaic laws, were probably Judaizers. The liberty or freedom Paul refers to comes from Jesus’s salvation, which frees us from sin and death. Christians are also freed from the bondage of most of the Jewish regulations because Jesus had fulfilled the law of Moses (Lk 24:44). Furthermore, Jesus denounced the traditions of the Jews, or the ten thousand oral laws that the rabbis added to Moses’s laws from the Torah (Mk 7:3–11).

Gal 2:5 (BSB). “*We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.*” Paul wanted nothing to do with the traditions the Judaizers promoted; he chose to focus on the Savior’s Atonement as the source of real cleansing.

Gal 2:6 (BSB). “*But as for the highly esteemed—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism—those leaders added nothing to me.*” Paul strongly denies the claim that he had changed his ideas to become popular among the leaders. Paul asserts that he, like God, does “not judge by external appearance” (NIV).

Pillars of the Church—Gal 2:7–10

Gal 2:7–9 (NIV). “*they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been to the circumcised. . . . James, Cephas and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.*” Paul honors James (the brother of the Lord), Cephas (Peter), and John by calling them pillars. He explains that these Church leaders supported his assignment as a missionary to the Gentiles. The same Spirit directed both Peter and Paul, which made them great missionaries with different assignments (Gal 2:8).

Gal 2:10 (NIV). “*All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.*” Paul recorded that the Jerusalem Council also confirmed the need for Christian converts to continue to help take care of the poor and live the law of consecration. In the account of the Jerusalem Council in Acts, Luke also included commandments to abstain from eating blood, meats offered to idols, and meat strangled as well as to abstain from fornication (Act 15:29).

Paul and Peter on a bad day—Gal 2:11–15

Gal 2:11. “*But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*” We do not know the full argument against Paul made by some of the Galatians, but we assume that Judaizers gave the impression that Peter agreed with their teachings, unlike Paul. To set the story straight, Paul tells of one of Peter’s bad days. The story intentionally comes after several examples of Paul honoring Peter as a pillar and Apostle, of the two working in harmony on difficult issues,

and of Paul spending over two weeks as Peter's house guest. With this background, Paul shares the story of a dinner party in Antioch during which he got frustrated with Peter.

Paul was upset because Peter's behavior seemed inconsistent with the earlier decision at the Jerusalem Council (Act 15). This dinner incident between Paul and Peter "is instructive in showing two strong leaders agreeing on a principle that came by revelation but applying it with different timing."¹⁴ We do not get to hear Peter's side of the story, but it sounds as if Peter knew the Antioch Jewish converts (and Antioch history claims that Peter settled there after his Jerusalem imprisonment).¹⁵

Gal 2:12 (ESV). *"For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party."* It appears that Peter shared a meal with gentile converts in Antioch until some Judaizers or Jewish converts who were friends of James arrived. At that point, Peter stopped eating with the Gentiles as the Jewish traditions forbade so as not to offend the Jewish converts. But Peter then offended the gentile Saints.

Readers can appreciate Peter's challenge because he had the responsibility to nurture the Jewish converts too. Paul also practiced this as he later expressed: "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, . . . that I might gain them that are without law. . . . And this I do for the gospel's sake" (1 Cor 9:20–23).

Gal 2:13 (NIV). *"The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray."* This hypocrisy sounds like a major concern for Paul—his first companion and fellow Apostle, Barnabas, was among those intimidated by Peter's example of not eating with Greek converts. It escalated the cultural differences and put Paul in an embarrassing position too.

Gal 2:14. *"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all."* Forgetting about his earlier example of starting reproof with private conversations, Paul stood up at the dinner to address the false message that Jews must not eat with Gentiles. Working together with others often presents challenges. We relate to the experience of these men, who were at the same time striving to fulfill their divine callings yet colliding on an issue they felt strongly about. The account emphasizes the fallibility of Peter and other Apostles (as opposed to the infallibility claimed by other Christians for their leaders).¹⁶ The Restoration corrected false ideas of leaders' infallibility.¹⁷ This perspective encourages patience with leaders, fellow mortals, and ourselves.

Justification through faith in Christ—Gal 2:15–21

Gal 2:16 (NIV). *"a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith."* The Greek verb *dikaioó*, "to justify, show to be righteous, declare righteous," was used to "defend the cause of, plead for the righteousness (innocence) of, acquit, justify."¹⁸ Judges used the word to declare innocence. God's justification of humans follows their repentance: "That they might not suffer if they would

repent” (D&C 19:16). Many Jews felt that obedience to all the Mosaic laws and oral traditions saved them. This does not refer to Christ’s law of the gospel. Paul redirects focus from the law and temple rituals to what they symbolize.

Gal 2:17 (BSB). “*But if, while we seek to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, does that make Christ a minister of sin? Certainly not!*” Paul clarifies what abandoning the works of the law means. He does not assert that sinners can claim justification but emphasizes that only Jesus saves, not the Mosaic law. All must obey Jesus and turn to Him to receive His grace.

Gal 2:20 (NIV). “*The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*” Through baptism, we symbolically die with Christ; our old life is buried, and a new life rises with God’s Spirit. The plan centers on Christ’s loving atoning life, death, and resurrection.

Gal 2:21 (BSB). “*if righteousness comes through the law, Christ died for nothing.*” Paul continues to address the problem of relying on the law of Moses for redemption. God never meant for justification to come by the law of Moses, which was only a means to the end. Rather it comes through Jesus’s Atonement.

Galatians 3

Six questions on revelation—Gal 3:1–5

Gal 3:1 (ESV). “*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?*” Exasperated by their change of allegiance, Paul rebukes the new converts for not remembering the importance of Christ’s Crucifixion and redemption. Culturally, the Greeks struggled to accept this as they felt it was absurd for a god to die, especially in a torturous means as a criminal.¹⁹

Gal 3:2 (BSB). “*Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?*” The second question on revelation focuses on the need to remember one’s personal witness of the Spirit. Paul saw belief and faith as prerequisites to feeling a witness of the Spirit. Yet, one may also feel the Holy Spirit while doing good works. Although the witness of the Spirit was available throughout the history of the world, without the higher priesthood most did not receive the ordinance of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Gal 3:3–5. “*Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? . . . He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*” Paul’s sixth and final question asks whether the Saints are going to follow the Spirit or self-centered desires. The power of God’s words comes through His Spirit.

Abraham as our Christian example—Gal 3:6–14

Gal 3:6. “*as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.*” Paul’s second attack against the false preachers begins by referring to Abraham as a great example (compare

Gen 15:6). As a student, Paul would have memorized portions of the Torah. He quotes seven verses in this section. Paul knew the law of Moses very well—perhaps better than any other Christian at the time.

Gal 3:7–8 (NIV). *“those who have faith are children of Abraham. . . . ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’”* Paul next recites Gen 12:3 LXX, which claims that Abraham lived over four hundred years before Moses received the law on Mount Sinai. So, God’s covenant and blessings came centuries before the law of Moses was given.

Gal 3:10 (NIV). *“For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written.”* Over the next three verses, Paul recites four Old Testament statements that refer to cursing in the law of Moses.²⁰ In his last example, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,” Paul uses the Jewish scripture to claim that Jesus’s crucifixion on a tree carried the curse in order that we might be redeemed (Gal 3:13).

Gal 3:14. *“That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”* Paul uses Abraham’s example to show how those outside the Mosaic law (including Gentiles) share in Abraham’s blessings if they exert faith as Abraham did.²¹

The law and the promise—Gal 3:15–25

Gal 3:15–16 (NIV). *“Brothers and sisters . . . [the] promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed . . . meaning one person, who is Christ.”* Paul uses the Jewish teaching technique of midrash to expound. As rabbis had searched their scripture to find prophecies of their Messiah, Paul similarly cites Gen 12:7, 13:15, and 24:7 to show how Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies about the offspring of Abraham.

Gal 3:17 (NIV). *“The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God.”* As Abraham lived 430 years before Moses received the law, the blessings or inheritance given to Abraham have nothing to do with the Mosaic law. Furthermore, the promises to Abraham are still valid and can apply to all with faith in Christ.

Gal 3:19 (NIV). *“Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.”* Jesus was the Seed. Paul again denounces the sole redemptive nature of the law. It is a mere entr’acte to the birth, life, and death of Jesus, their Messiah.

Gal 3:19–20 (JST). *“Wherefore then ~~serveth the law? It,~~ the law was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made in the law given to Moses, ~~and it who~~ was ordained by the hand of angels ~~in the hand of~~ to be a mediator of this first covenant, (the law.) Now a this mediator is was not a mediator of ~~one,~~ but God is ~~one~~ 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 promise which God made unto Abraham.” The JST clarifies that Moses was a mediator (or the one who goes between or advocates) in the old covenant and that Jesus is the mediator in the new covenant.

Gal 3:21–23 (BSB). *“Is the law, then, opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! . . . But the Scripture pronounces all things confined by sin. . . . Before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law.”* Paul’s practical approach describes the law of Moses as temporary. Jesus was always the divine Lawgiver and Creator and bringer of mortal and immortal life. As Jehovah, He designed the law like an elementary textbook to prepare the Israelites for His higher laws.

Children of God—Gal 3:26–29

Gal 3:24 (JST). *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster ~~to bring us unto until~~ Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*” The Mosaic law was like a “tutor” (NASB), “guardian” (NIV), “trainer” (BLB), or “guide” (ABPE). The Book of Mormon prophet Jacob also explained this: “For this end hath the law of Moses been given; and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world, unto man, are the typifying of him” (2 Ne 11:4). The JST of Genesis teaches that long before the Mosaic law, God gave the law of sacrifice to guide humans to the promised Messiah (Moses 5:7).

Gal 3:26. *“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”* Christians are no longer under custody of the law but should mature spiritually through faith in Jesus Christ (compare Jn 1:12).

Gal 3:27 (BSB). *“all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”* The covenantal imagery of clothing is especially interesting in Greek, in which the word shares roots with the original meaning of *atone*, “to cover.”²² In Greek, “clothed,” *enedysasthe*, comes from *en-duo*, or “put on, in the sense of sinking into a garment.”²³

Gal 3:28. *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”* All sons and daughters of Adam and Eve were created in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27). Our human stations do not change this natural equality.²⁴ Our gender, ethnicity, age, and other differences are meaningless in Christ’s love. Our Savior will bless all peoples.

Galatians 4

We are God’s heirs—Gal 4:1–11

In chapter 4, Paul describes heirs in a family. He starts with the common practice of servants and children carrying out the same tasks. Although they begin together, the child or heir moves on to a more rewarding life. Paul uses this as an analogy to the Mosaic traditions that can be outgrown when it is time to receive one’s inheritance in the kingdom of God. This analogy develops out of the earlier imagery of the law of Moses as a schoolmaster bringing pupils unto Jesus, the promised Messiah (Gal 3:24).

Gal 4:1 (NKJV). “*the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave.*”

One of the Greek words for “child,” *pais*, also meant “servant or slave.”²⁵ In many Judeo-Greco-Roman families at that time, children and servants served the patriarch of the home—they had to stand up in his presence “to greet him, and perhaps even to bow down before him. He [the child or slave] could not stand or sit in his place, speak in his presence, contradict him, or respond sharply to him. This was the way of the Torah.”²⁶ A child or servant was to give their father or master “food and drink, to clothe and cover him, to help him in and out when he grew old, and to wash his face, hands and feet.”²⁷ Children and indentured servants also worked in poorer homes. Over 90 percent of Jews in Palestine at the time lived and worked as peasants in farming or fishing villages.²⁸

Gal 4:2 (NIV). “*The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.*” Jewish fathers acted as their children’s masters, holding complete control until their children reached age twelve.²⁹ Jewish children could not receive their succession and rights as heir until they reached twelve and a half years old (although usually they did not receive an inheritance until the death of the parents). Roman laws also dictated when sons could become heirs.³⁰ Paul speaks figuratively in this verse about guardians, possibly to reflect his role in the people’s conversion or covenanting with the Lord. He continues to build an analogy based on the servitude of the Mosaic law versus the inheritance of God’s gift of everlasting life.

Gal 4:3 (NIV). “*So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world.*” Paul continues with the analogy of servants or heirs and encourages the Saints to leave their youthful servitude (to the Mosaic law, sin, falsehoods) to become heirs through adoption.

Gal 4:4–5. “*when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, . . . [to] redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption.*” Most Christians use the phrase *fulness of time* to refer to the era between Jesus’s mortal life and Second Coming. In the Restoration, we call Jesus’s mission the meridian of time, and use the phrase *fulness of time* to refer to the Restoration or dispensation when we are to prepare for Jesus’s Great Second Coming.³¹

Jesus taught how to take advantage of His redemption. All can leave bondage and receive an inheritance. Once we covenant to follow Jesus as the Son of God and as our Redeemer, we can leave cultural baggage and bondage behind and find freedom in repentance through the Atonement of Christ.

Gal 4:6 (BSB). “*And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, ‘Abba, Father!’*” Paul repeatedly emphasizes the Spirit’s inspiration, supporting his thesis on revelation (Gal 1:11–12). It is the Spirit who teaches disciples to plead, “Abba,” or “Father.” Paul wrote in Aramaic (possibly his mother tongue). *Abba* was “used as the term of *tender endearment* by a beloved child—i.e., in an *affectionate, dependent* relationship with their father; ‘daddy,’ ‘papa.’”³²

Christians can feel a sense of their adoption as the Spirit communicates God's love and care. Especially when one has felt God's forgiveness from sin, the Spirit seems to envelop one's inner being with love, acceptance, and unity. Receiving the companionship of the Spirit is part of the adoption as heirs of God.

Gal 4:7. (NIV). *“So, you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.”* When disciples accept God as their Father, the Spirit facilitates their rebirth. It is a spiritual birth through Jesus's Atonement. Yet, theologically, as heirs of Christ, we still serve, obey, and honor Him as our Master and God.

Gal 4:9 (NIV). *“now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces?”* Paul warns the new converts against returning to their previous beliefs and pleads with them to ponder their devotion to old rituals and customs versus their obedience to God's higher covenants that provide freedom and heirship. While he relates some Jewish rituals and customs to bondage, he does not denounce all ordinances. God later taught, “In the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20).

Gal 4:10–11 (BSB). *“You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that my efforts for you may have been in vain.”* The days and months may refer to gentile or Jewish ritual cleanings, feasts, fasts, or calendars.³³ Paul denounces those who preached the need to return to any traditions except the Lord's higher covenant.

Christians should remain zealous in righteousness—Gal 4:12–20

Gal 4:12 (JST). *Brethren, I beseech you, to be perfect as I am perfect; for I am as ye are: persuaded as ye have a knowledge of me, ye have not injured me at all by your sayings.”* Paul changes his approach by emphasizing his commonality with the Galatian “brothers and sisters” (NIV): he is one of them, and they can live like him. Additionally, he assures them that he has not taken offense by their actions (perhaps implying that they too should refrain from taking offense by his words).

In the ancient Mediterranean world, following teachers was something apprentices and tutors took very seriously.³⁴ The philosophies of teachers were tested by how they played out in the lives of their disciples. Paul refers to this when he asks why the Galatians are not following his good example.

Gal 4:13. *“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.”* While we do not know Paul's specific infirmity, we do know he had a “bodily illness” (NAS). In the ancient world, pain and sickness continually plagued the old and young. If it was not a toothache or broken toe, it was food poisoning or an infection. Whatever plagued Paul, the Lord did not heal him. Paul trusted that God's perspective allowed for the long-term good. Our weakness can help us develop patience, sympathy, humility, and a dependence on God and others.

Gal 4:14 (BSB). *“although my illness was a trial to you, you did not despise or reject me. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God.”* The KJV refers to Paul's physical trial as a “temptation,” *peirasmōs*, which can also be translated “probation, testing, calamity, affliction.”

In the ancient world, sicknesses were often correlated with specific sins. Jesus and the Apostolic Church denounced these connections (see Jn 2–3).

Gal 4:15–16. *“if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy?”* Paul no longer feels the Galatians’ attentive love. His reference to plucking an eye was likely figurative. Jews, who saw the body as a sacred creation in God’s image (Gen 1:26–27; 9:6), would have been offended by any bodily mutation. Besides, blindness was the worst thing that could happen (ancient people often killed blind children rather than having them suffer through life).³⁵ Perhaps the reference alludes to Ps 17:8: “Keep me as the apple of your eye” (NIV; compare Deu 32:10; Pro 7:2). Paul pleads with them to return to their initial feelings for him as God’s messenger.

Gal 4:17–18 (BSB). *“Those people are zealous for you, but not in a good way . . . it is good to be zealous if it serves a noble purpose.”* Paul refers to the Judaizers who have tried to make the gentile converts look inferior unless they adopt Jewish traditions. “They zealously affect you” (KJV) is also translated “are zealous to win you over” (NIV), “are envious of” (NEB), and “eagerly seek” (NAS). Paul asks them why they waste their energies on causes that are not right.

Gal 4:19 (NKJV). *“My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you.”* While the Galatians forgot their prior conversion to Christ, Paul reminds them that he is laboring again to assist with their rebirth. With Christ, new births and beginnings are a consistent possibility. The phrase “anguish of childbirth” (ESV) suggests that more than a ruptured friendship was at stake—the new birth of the early Church in Galatians was part of the new creation that Jesus brought as the second Adam. By the converts returning to their old ways, Jesus’s new creation was aborted early or rejected.

Gal 4:20 (NIV). *“how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!”* Paul wishes he could talk to the Saints face-to-face to clear up their misunderstanding.

Allegory of Jews and Gentiles as Hagar and Sarah—Gal 4:21–31

Gal 4:21. *“Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?”* Paul asks if the Saints know what they are leaving and what they are running to. The phrase “hear the law” quotes one of the most frequently repeated scriptures: “Hear O, Israel.”³⁶ These scriptures became part of the Shema, and devout Jews repeated them at least twice daily.

Gal 4:22–23 (BSB). *“Abraham had two sons. . . . His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born through the promise.”* Paul develops a midrashic interpretation of the scriptures. Jews believed the scriptures contained innumerable interpretations and could be applied anywhere. (We also apply the scriptures to ourselves.) Paul refers to Abraham’s first two wives, Sarah (the “freewoman”) and Hagar (the “bondmaid”), and their sons, Isaac and Ishmael. He develops an analogy with Hagar as those converts who return to the old law of Moses

and Sarah as those who accept Jesus's new law (Gen 16–21). Sarah's son Isaac became the heir, just as Christ can provide an eternal reward for all His posterity. Paul continues to expand on this analogy.

Gal 4:24 (NIV). *“These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants.”* Paul compares the law of Moses or Greek traditions to slavery and bondage through the image of Hagar.

Gal 4:24 (NIV). *“[Hagar] bears children who are to be slaves.”* Hagar was Sarah's servant and represents slavery, but this image may stem from ideas suggested by the Galatians' false teachers.³⁷

Gal 4:26 (BSB). *“But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother.”* Jerusalem, the holy city of the temple, takes on the role of the heavenly Jerusalem “which is above” (KJV). At this point in Christianity, Jerusalem represented the mother church of the Lord's Passion and Resurrection. Paul then quotes Isa 54:1, rejoicing in the blessed fruit of a barren woman.

Gal 4:28–29 (NIV). *“brothers and sisters, like Isaac, [you] are children of promise. At that time, the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit.”* In Gen 2:19, Ishmael mocks Isaac, who is fourteen years younger. This may refer to Judaizers teasing gentile converts.

Gal 4:30 (NIV). *“what does Scripture say? ‘Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son.’”* Paul alters Gen 21:10 to portray Sarah as the symbol of heavenly Jerusalem or reward. This is not a racial slur in Paul's context but a witness that God is no respecter of persons, for “there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for ye are all one in Christ” (Gal 3:28–29). Paul does not belittle the Egyptian Hagar or her descendants but is trying to highlight freedom in Christ.

Galatians 5

The liberty of Christ—Gal 5:1–15

Gal 5:1. *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”* While Paul preaches the advantages of freedom through faith in Jesus Christ as compared to slavery through the traditions built around the laws of Moses, he does not preach liberty without laws. In nature there are laws—such as gravity, osmosis, cell regeneration—that allow life to adapt and succeed. Gal 4:14–15 explains that certain laws hold even God eternally bound: “All mankind were fallen, and they were in the grasp of justice.” So, God followed other eternal laws to redeem humanity because “the plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made.” Richard Anderson explained,

The God who controls the physical world through law would not ignore law in saving his children. . . .
God respects law enough to require his Son to meet the penalties of law in order to save mankind. Then

does he ignore law in their personal lives after that? . . . Is God careless of the acts of his children who accept Christ? . . . Does the believer have license to ignore the commands of his Savior? Paul consistently teaches both freedom from past rules and obedience to the teachings of Christ and the apostles.³⁸

God's laws enable and ennoble His children to become heirs. Paul's reference to liberty points to these laws that enable a disciple to become more Christlike. Paul does not denounce all laws; he refers to the law of Christ in Gal 6:2, the law of chastity in 1 Cor 7, and the law of consecration in 2 Cor 8:10–15.

Gal 5:2. "I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing."

Paul uses circumcision as a synonym for the law of Moses. As Paul, a full disciple of Christ, was circumcised, his message is not that Christ's power takes no effect in circumcised men. Rather, he teaches that circumcision is an outward sign of the old covenant and that in the new covenant of Christ's gospel, it does not offer additional profit or benefit.

This is an example of not knowing the whole story, especially considering that Paul had Timothy circumcised. As a baby, Timothy had not been circumcised because his father was Greek. However, Paul encouraged his beloved companion to go through the dangerous adult circumcision, "because of the Jews" (Act 16:3 NIV). This probably came from hoping that Timothy would be allowed to preach in Jewish synagogues.

Gal 5:4 (NIV). "You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace." Some Christians feel that it is by their efforts that they may be saved, and others feel they are beyond Christ's forgiveness. Both ideas are a misunderstanding of our Savior's gifts of grace, repentance, forgiveness, immortality, and exaltation. All repentant are forgiven through Jesus.

Gal 5:5. "we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." The Spirit inspires optimism about human potential in Christ. The words "wait" and "faith" here imply that our growth in righteousness takes time and includes action.

Gal 5:6 (BLB). "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any power, but only faith working through love." Power from Christ comes by active faith, which "express[es] itself through love" (Gal 5:6 NIV). In Gal 5:22, Paul lists both faith and love as fruits of the Spirit, but their connection in verse 5 sounds contributory (also see Alm 13:29). Christians feel God's love through their faith in Him.

Gal 5:7–10 (NIV). "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? . . . The one who is throwing you into confusion . . . will have to pay the penalty." In these verses, Paul uses two images—interference in a race and leaven in bread—to represent the corrupting influences of pride in the Judaizers. He reiterates that whoever taught falsehoods would be held responsible. He wants to make clear that the false voices are not speaking for him.

Gal 5:11 (NIV). "Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?" Someone must have charged Paul with changing his message on circumcision.

Gal 5:11 (NIV). *“In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.”* This is variously translated “the offense of the cross ceased” (KJV) and “the stumbling-block of the cross is no more” (NAB). These different translations all mention the difficulty of accepting a god who had died—especially Jesus because He died like a common criminal. The idea that God could die like a mortal was confusing and foreign because the Greeks saw no need for a god to have a body, die, or want a resurrected body.

Gal 5:12 (NKJV). *“I could wish that those who trouble you would even cut themselves off!”* We see Paul’s frustration; someone had lied about him and poisoned the faith of many Saints. His letter has several examples of his growing irritation. He even disparages his enemies through hyperbole and suggests in jest, “They would go the whole way and emasculate themselves” (NIV) or “[They] had better go the whole way and make eunuchs of themselves” (NEB). I think Paul is having a bad day as his vexation takes over the quill.

Gal 5:13–14 (NIV). *“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. . . . For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”* With all the freedom offered through Christ, Paul does not want his audience to lose sight of the fundamental law—found in both the Old and New Testaments—to love and serve others. This law is stated in the chiasmic center of the law of Moses and repeated by Jesus’s summary of the most important focuses of the law (Lev 19:18; Mk 12:31). Yet, at the Last Supper Jesus gave a higher law of love—namely, to love as He loves (Jn 13:34; 15:12).

Works of the flesh versus works of the Spirit—Gal 5:16–26

Gal 5:16. *“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”* Paul instructs disciples to deny the instincts of the “natural man,” or “lusts of the flesh” (repeated from 2 Cor 2:14). He uses the flesh as the antithesis of the spiritual person who obeys the enticings of the Spirit (Mosi 3:19). The Spirit is the vehicle to receive faith and salvation through Christ, so Paul encourages his audience to be led by the Spirit as a means of following Jesus.

Gal 5:21 (NIV). *“that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* To ensure he is understood, Paul lists the opposing groups of works of the flesh and works of the Spirit. In his list he reiterates at least five of the Ten Commandments, emphasizing their importance.

Table 1. Paul’s comparison of the works of the flesh to those of the Spirit in Gal 5:19–24

Works of the flesh (Gal 5:19–22 NIV)	Works of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–24 NIV)
The acts of the flesh are . . . sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies another.	But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions.

Gal 5:22. *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.”* Paul’s list of the fruits of the Spirit differs from his list of the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Cor 12 (which is closer to Moro 10 and D&C 46). Fruits are born from trees that are nourished, pruned, and watered. God shares His greater power through the gifts of the Spirit in the form of faith, hope, charity, healing, visions, prophecy, and similar powerful gifts.

Gal 5:25. *“If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”* Paul’s theme of seeking the Spirit, or personal revelation, builds to a new height as he describes walking as the Spirit directs. In the KJV, Paul uses *walk* thirty times. He communicates a sense of acting with a spiritual focus throughout our days. When disciples walk in the Spirit, God gives them added strength of the Holy Spirit (also a theme in 1 Ths 2:12). Paul carefully differentiates all God’s higher laws from the lower laws of circumcision. Christ’s commandments include to love as He loves, purify one’s thoughts and actions, live the law of consecration, and foster and follow His Spirit’s promptings.

Galatians 6

Bear one another’s burdens—Gal 6:1–15

Gal 6:1–2 (NIV). *“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. . . . Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* Most often, the best way to encourage change and repentance is through gentleness and love. This is usually how Jesus acted. Yet, we also see Him denounce those who desecrated the temple and distorted the truth.³⁹ Paul mentioned the law of Christ earlier, in 1 Cor 9:21, but here he defines it as bearing one another’s burdens.

Gal 6:4 (NKJV). *“But let each one examine his own work.”* If we prove something, we are testing or examining it. When we examine our work, we can find the satisfaction of a job well done.

Gal 6:6 (NKJV). *“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”* Paul may be asking his converts to report to him. Or he may be asking disciples to share their good deeds in prayer with God, the Great Teacher. This may also be a call for missionary work since Christians should share their knowledge of the Lord with others.

Gal 6:8 (NIV). *“whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”* Humans have the agency and power to nurture spirituality. Conversely, wickedness will grow in our hearts and minds if we allow it. To receive the Spirit, disciples must nourish the Spirit through prayer, faith, service, listening to the words of God, and repentance.⁴⁰ The restored scriptures teach more clearly how to foster and retain the Spirit of the Lord.⁴¹

The Lord revealed a similar spiritual law of the harvest to the Prophet Joseph Smith: “There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated” (D&C 130:20–21). The crop grown from obedience is the Spirit, which allows for exaltation.

Gal 6:9–10. “*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap. . . . As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men.*” Of all people, Paul could have claimed weariness. Yet, he asks his readers to avoid weariness in God’s work. President Spencer W. Kimball taught a similar principle by encouraging the Saints to “lengthen your stride.”⁴² Weariness and strength are often dependent on our hearts and minds. Usually, the cares of life drag us down, but God’s work can build us up. Paul reminds his readers of the Judgment Day when we will reap what we have sown. “If we faint not” is also translated as “do not slacken our efforts” (NEB) and “don’t give up the struggle.” (JB). Paul asks the Galatians to be especially loving to other Christians.

Gal 6:11 (BSB). “*See what large letters I am using to write to you with my own hand!*” This verse in the KJV implies that Paul penned the whole letter. However, the Greek text may equally suggest that Paul added this traditional greeting at the end in his own hand using large letters (plural). Thus the verse does not clearly communicate whether Paul wrote via a scribe.⁴³ The word *gramma*, “letter,” means “that which is drawn or written, a letter” and was used for “a letter of the alphabet; collectively: written (revelation); (a) a written document, a letter, an epistle, (b) writings, literature, learning.”⁴⁴

Gal 6:12–13 (BSB). “*Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. They only do this to avoid persecution . . . they want you to be circumcised that they may boast.*” Paul states three final objections against the Judaizers who tried to compel the Greek Christians to live the law of Moses: (1) they want to avoid persecution, (2) they don’t keep the whole law themselves, and (3) they want to boast.

Gal 6:14 (NIV). “*May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus.*” Paul reminds his audience that he finds glory in Jesus’s Atonement, sacrifice, and death on the cross.

Gal 6:15 (BSB). “*What counts is a new creation.*” In most modern translations, “creature” is translated “creation,” as in being born again. Paul reminds his readers that being born of the Spirit matters but circumcision is inconsequential.

Benediction—Gal 6:17

Gal 6:17 (BLB). “*I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.*” Paul refers to marks, or in Greek, *stigmata*, which originally meant “scar” and came from the branding irons of slavery. People were identified as slaves if they had scars on their backs. Paul elsewhere reported, “Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one” (2 Cor 11:24 NIV). He and the Lord shared welts on their backs. The marks may also have resulted from being stoned, and the broken bones may have resulted from being beaten with a rod (see Act 14:5, 19; 13:50). These infirmities came because of Paul’s valiant missionary service. The negative connotations of the Greek word *stigmata* have led to our word *stigma*. Paul uses this phrase to show faithfulness in the face of persecution.

Notes

- 1 Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 2.463: “When the Syrians thought they had ruined the Jews, they had the Judaizers in suspicion also.”
- 2 Howard Vos, *Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Manners and Customs* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), xcix. “During the first century, some three million Jews lived in Palestine, four million in the Roman Empire outside Palestine, and one million in Babylonia, for a total of possibly eight million.”
- 3 J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 15–17.
- 4 Two cities named Antioch appear in the New Testament: one north of and one west of Jerusalem. Antioch in Pisidia, or western Galatia, is where Paul is at this time. This is not to be confused with the eastern city of Antioch in Syria, where Paul spent most of his early Christian life.
- 5 Act 14:23. See also Act 16:6; 18:23; Gal 3:1–4; 4:13–14; 5:7.
- 6 Adapted from John W. Welch, *Charting the New Testament* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2005), section 14; and Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 468.
- 7 This verse and its footnote can be accessed online at <https://biblehub.com/niv/galatians/1.htm>.
- 8 Act 9:3–6; Rom 8:16; 2 Cor 3:6; 12:2.
- 9 See, for example, D&C 5:16, 6:14–15, 22–23; 8:1–3; 9:7–9.
- 10 Paul’s teacher, Gamaliel, was a well-respected member of the Sanhedrin (Act 5:33–40). Tradition holds that Gamaliel’s grandfather was the sage Hillel, one of the greatest Jewish teachers in the Mishnah. Paul’s letters also attest that Paul excelled in Greek. As a Roman citizen born in a capital Greek city to a zealous Pharisaic family, Paul was uniquely qualified. More importantly, once the Lord intervened and corrected his understanding, the Lord taught Paul the gospel through personal revelation (Act 22:6–10, for example)
- 11 See also Alm 13:3; D&C 49:17; 93:29; Abr 3:19–25.
- 12 Mt 10:3. The Gospels of Matthew and John usually refer to the Twelve as Jesus’s “disciples”; Mark and Luke refer to them as “apostles” more often.
- 13 William Pinar, *Race, Religion, and a Curriculum of Reparation* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 44. “As a mutilation of the natural male form, circumcision violated Greek aesthetics. Moreover, Greeks held athletic contests in which the young male participants appeared nude. The Greeks’ sense of modesty dictated that the foreskin should cover the glans.”
- 14 Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2007), 258.
- 15 Glanville Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 583–586.
- 16 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (New York, NY: Scribner, 1871), 1:152, 163, 182. Speaking as a mouthpiece of the *Westminster Confession* and Reformed Protestant theology in America, Hodge insisted that the entire Bible was divinely inspired: “All the books of scripture are equally inspired. All alike are infallible in what they

teach. And secondly, that inspiration extends to all the contents of these several books . . . the Spirit of God pervades the whole Scripture.” See also pages 1:138–140.

17 See, for example, 2 Ne 4:17–21, 27–28.

18 Tom Thatcher, Chris Keith, Raymond F. Person Jr., and Elsie R. Stern, eds., *The Dictionary of the Bible and Ancient Media* (London, UK: T&T Clark, 2017), 113.

19 Israel Draz, *Maimonides and the Biblical Prophets* (Jerusalem, Israel: Gefen, 2009), 209. See Gal 5:11.

20 In order of Paul’s recitation, Deu 27:26; Hab 2:4; Lev 18:5; Deu 21:23.

21 Michael Edward Stone, Esther Glickler Chazon, David Satran, and Ruth A. Clements, *Things Revealed: Studies in Early Jewish and Christian Literature in Honor of Michael B. Stone* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2004), 210. “Paul steps onto an exegetical platform, first erected probably by the itinerant teachers, to debate the relevance of Abraham. . . . Paul’s midrashic argument of [Gal] 3:10–13 is notoriously complicated.”

22 Hugh Nibley, *Approaching Zion* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies; Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 558–559.

23 “Enduo,” *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, available online at <https://biblehub.com/greek/1746.htm>.

24 This was reaffirmed in Restoration scripture. The Lord revealed the equality of literal sons and daughters when Moses claimed, “I am a son of God, in the similitude of his Only Begotten.” Mose 1:13; also see Mose 3:5; Abr 3:21; D&C 76:24.

25 See Mt 2:16; 8:6, 8, 13; 12:18; 17:18; 21:15; Lk 2:43, 7:7; 8:51; 12:45; 15:26; Jn 4:51; Act 3:26. Also in Greek, *doulos* means both “servant” and “slave,” or “bondman, man of servile condition.” Similarly, a female servant or handmaid was a *doule*. See Jn 15:15; Lk 1:38; Lynne Hilton Wilson, *Christ’s Emancipation of New Testament Women* (Palo Alto, CA: Good Sound Publishing, 2015), chapter 7.

26 Shaye J. Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1987), 122.

27 Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1969), 363.

28 Bonnie Thurston, *Women in the New Testament* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1998), 15–16. Unfortunately, we do not have many historical records from this class of people as they were too poor.

29 Mishnah, *Kiddushin* 2:1. The day after the twelfth birthday, the child was no longer a minor, and the day after turning twelve and a half, the child could legally be married. “A man may give his daughter in betrothal while she is still in her girlhood either by his own act or by that of his agent.”

30 Martyn, *Galatians*, 386.

31 Moses 5:57; 6:57, 62; 7:46; also 2 Ne 2:3, 26; D&C 20:26; 39:3; 76:106; 112:30.

32 “Abba,” *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, available online at <https://biblehub.com/greek/5.htm>.

33 Martyn, *Galatians*, 414.

34 Martyn, *Galatians*, 419.

35 Avraham Steinberg, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Medical Ethics* (Jerusalem, Israel: Feldheim, 2003), 106. “Blindness was a very common condition in antiquity. Throughout the bible where human blemishes are cited, blindness is always mentioned first. A blind person in ancient cultures was considered very lowly and was the subject of scorn, ridicule and even death. A newborn determined to be blind was not allowed to survive. If the blindness was not recognized until he grew up, he became a beggar.”

36 Deu 6:4. The Shema included three Old Testament passages: Deu 6:4–9; 11:13–21; and Num 15:37–41. It was written on phylacteries and door posts and was recited daily at the temple.

37 Martyn, *Galatians*, 436–439.

38 Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 164.

39 See Mt 11:21; 18:7; 23:25.

40 Lk 22:44; Jn 7:39; Act 2:38; 4:31; Rom 15:30; Gal 3:2; Eph 5:18; 6:17; Php 3:3.

41 “Whosoever believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit” (D&C 5:16). “As often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit. . . . [Thou] hast been enlightened by the Spirit of truth. . . . [If] you desire a further witness, cast your mind upon the night that you cried unto me in your heart. . . . Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:14–15, 22–23). “Whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive . . . I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost . . . ; behold, this is the spirit of revelation” (D&C 8:1–3; see D&C 12:5; 14:8). “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong” (D&C 9:8–9).

42 Spencer W. Kimball, “Becoming the Pure in Heart,” April 1978 general conference, online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

43 A professional scribe was called an *amanuensis*. Paul probably asked a fellow Saint to help him write down his epistles. We have the names of a few of them: Tertius (Rom 16:22) and possibly Epaphras (Col 1:7; 4:12; Phm 1:23).

44 “*Gramma*,” *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, available online at <https://biblehub.com/greek/1121.htm/>.