

Galatians Ep 221



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Galatians – Introduction

Historical Context

Who were the Galatians?

In the 3rd century BCE, a group of people known as the Galatians settled in the region of Galatia, located in central Anatolia (modern-day Turkey).¹ The Galatians were a Celtic people who originated from Gaul (present-day France) and Germany, and migrated eastward into the Balkans before eventually reaching Galatia. They were part of the larger Celtic migration that occurred during this period, driven by factors such as population pressure and seeking new lands.

The Galatians established their presence in Galatia by forming tribal confederations and carving out territories for themselves. Their arrival in Galatia had significant political and cultural implications for the region. The Galatians brought with them their distinct Celtic traditions, language, and social structures, which distinguished them from the local Anatolian populations. Over time, they integrated with the local communities and left a lasting impact on the cultural and linguistic landscape of Galatia. The Galatians' presence in the region became an important historical and cultural phenomenon, influencing the subsequent developments and interactions in Anatolia.

How things were going when Paul first left the Galatians

The letter to the Galatians suggests that when Paul left, the Galatian churches were doing well. They were filled with the Spirit and had an enthusiastic life, just like when they were first established. Paul had trained people to teach the gospel in his style, and they were still carrying on that teaching even after he left. These instructors were likely the ones who informed Paul about the arrival and activities of the other teachers.

Shortly after Paul left, a group of Christian-Jewish preachers called the Teachers arrived in Galatia. They preached a different version of the gospel, which had a significant impact on the Galatians. In later discussions, we will provide more details about these Teachers and their message, but for now, let's focus on two important points.

¹ See: [Galatia – The Celts of Anatolia](#), accessed 6.30.23.

Firstly, the Teachers claimed to have a strong connection with the church in Jerusalem. This claim must have been at least partially true, and it played a major role in their success among the members of Paul's Galatian churches.

Secondly, their message revolved around the covenantal Law given at Mount Sinai, considering it as the timeless word of God, confirmed by the Messiah/Christ. They told the Galatians that without this divinely ordained foundation, they would be lost in the challenges of life. This promise of security seemed like a tremendous relief to many Galatians.²

Paul gets some bad news

We can easily imagine the depth of Paul's consternation and anger on the day when - extremely busy in the early part of his work in Macedonia and Achaia - he looked up to see the sad faces of his Galatian catechetical instructors, as they arrived with bad news. They may have said something like the following:

Very persuasive evangelists have arrived in our Galatian churches, saying that they have the true, Lawful gospel as it is preached and preserved in what they call "the mother church of Jerusalem." They say that you left us with a Lawless gospel, so deficient for the strains and stresses of everyday life as to be worse than none. Not surprisingly, then, their own message is utterly different from the one we received from you. Worse still, with their message they are convincing a number of our members that, in order to be included among God's people, Israel, we must commence observance of the Law with the rite of circumcision. Indeed, in their attempt to undermine your influence, these new evangelists are not only maligning you. They are also attacking us, persuading our brothers and sisters to terminate our work (cf. 6:6).¹⁷ It is imperative that you come back to us immediately (cf. 4:20)!³

Galatians 1

Galatians 1 is a letter written by the apostle Paul to the churches in the region of Galatia. In this letter, Paul addresses a critical issue that has arisen after his departure. He begins by emphasizing his authority as an apostle appointed by Jesus Christ himself, defending his credibility and the gospel he preached. Paul expresses his astonishment at the Galatians' quick departure from the true gospel. He condemns the influence of certain false teachers (probably from Jerusalem), whom he refers to as "the Teachers." These individuals were preaching a distorted version of the gospel, one that added requirements of the Jewish law to faith in Christ.

² One scholar writes, "Christian Jews with similar views had sought to undermine Paul's proclamation of the gospel among the Gentiles in Antioch and Jerusalem ("the false brethren" mentioned in Gal. 2:4), and again in Antioch after the apostolic conference ("certain people from James" and "those from the circumcision" in 2:12–13). After the apostolic conference, James, Cephas, and "even Barnabas" had come to share, at least in part, their point of view (see comment on 2:11–14). The new preachers in Galatia probably saw themselves as authentic representatives of the Jerusalem church's view on Gentile converts' needing to practice the rite of circumcision, despite what Paul and the pillar apostles had agreed at the apostolic conference as recounted by Paul in 2:6–10. With this background, it seems likely that the new preachers came to Galatia not long after Paul had left: they dogged his steps in Galatia as "the false brethren," "the people from James," and "those from the circumcision" had done earlier (and as others would later, in Philippi and Corinth)." See: Martinus C. De Boer, [Galatians, A Commentary](#), Westminster John Knox Press, 2011, p. 10.

³ J. Louis Martyn, [Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary](#), The Anchor Bible, 1997, p. 19.

Paul recounts his own conversion and calling as evidence that his message comes directly from God. He emphasizes that the gospel he preached was not learned from any human source but was revealed to him by Jesus Christ. He also points out that the leaders in Jerusalem, including Peter, James, and John, affirmed his message and recognized his apostolic authority.

The apostle passionately argues that salvation comes through faith in Christ alone, not by following the Jewish law. He warns the Galatians of the grave consequences of turning away from the true gospel and succumbing to the false teachings of the Teachers. Throughout the chapter, Paul expresses his concern for the spiritual well-being of the Galatian believers and his desire for them to return to the truth of the gospel. He ends the chapter with a firm declaration that he is accountable only to God and not to human approval. This first chapter of Galatians sets the stage for Paul's strong defense of the gospel of grace and his opposition to any form of legalism or adding works to salvation. It highlights the importance of faith in Christ as the foundation of salvation and challenges the Galatians to stand firm in the true gospel message.

I. Introduction

A. Greeting and salutation (Galatians 1:1-5)

II. Paul's Astonishment and Condemnation

A. Surprised at the departure from the true gospel (Galatians 1:6-7)

B. Condemning the influence of the false teachers (Galatians 1:8-9)

III. Paul's Personal Testimony

A. Conversion and calling as evidence of his authority (Galatians 1:10-12)

B. Emphasizing the divine origin of his gospel (Galatians 1:13-17)

C. Confirmation from Jerusalem's leaders (Galatians 1:18-24)

IV. Salvation through Faith in Christ Alone

A. Rejecting the necessity of following the Jewish law for salvation (Galatians 1:6-7)

B. Emphasizing faith in Christ as the means of salvation (Galatians 1:15-16)

C. Warning against deviating from the true gospel (Galatians 1:8-9)

V. Paul's Concern for the Galatians

A. Expressing concern for their spiritual well-being (Galatians 1:6)

B. Urging them to return to the true gospel (Galatians 1:7)

C. Encouraging them to stand firm in their faith (Galatians 1:8)

VI. Conclusion

A. Affirming accountability to God, not seeking human approval (Galatians 1:10)

B. Restating the desire for the Galatians to remain faithful (Galatians 1:10-12)

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1.11-12).

Elder McConkie taught, "God stands revealed or he remains forever unknown, and the things of God are and can be known only by and through the Spirit of God."⁴

Galatians 2

In Galatians 2, the apostle Paul recounts his visit to Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Council as recorded in Acts 15⁵, where he privately discusses his gospel with the leaders and receives their affirmation. However, a confrontation arises when Paul rebukes Peter for compromising the gospel by separating from Gentile believers. Paul emphasizes the importance of justification by faith in Christ alone, rejecting any reliance on the works of the law for salvation. He highlights the believer's identification with Christ's death and new life, living by faith in the Son of God who loved and gave Himself. Ultimately, Paul underscores that righteousness does not come from the law but through the grace of God, emphasizing the centrality of faith in Christ for salvation.

I. Paul's Visit to Jerusalem

A. Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (Galatians 2:1)

Although the matter is disputable, it seems likely that Paul here reports the relevant features of the Council that Luke records in Acts 15 (some prefer Acts 11:30); the issues addressed in Galatians 2:3-9 correspond to the issues addressed in Acts 15. Paul uses a variety of ancient literary devices to make his point in this passage (e.g., aposiopesis or ellipsis, antithesis). Given the probable claims of his opponents that Paul is relaxing biblical requirements to gain more converts, and that their views emanate from Jerusalem, the Jerusalem apostles' support bolsters Paul's case.⁶

B. Privately discussing his gospel with the leaders (Galatians 2:2-5)

II. Agreement on the Gospel

A. Affirmation of Paul's gospel by the leaders (Galatians 2:6-10)

B. Recognition of Paul's apostolic mission to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:7-9)

Galatians 2.7-8 can be a bit difficult in the King James:

⁴ Elder McConkie, "[The Lord's People Receive Revelation](#)," April 1971 Conference.

⁵ The Council of Jerusalem was a meeting of Christian leaders in Jerusalem around 50 CE. It was held because some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem insisted that non-Jewish Christians from Antioch should follow the Jewish practice of circumcision. To resolve this issue, a group led by the Apostle Paul and his companion St. Barnabas was chosen to meet with the church elders in Jerusalem. During the conference, which is described in Acts 15:2-35, Peter and James, who was known as "the Lord's brother," played leading roles. They ultimately decided in favor of Paul and the non-Jewish Christians. From then on, non-Jewish Christians were not required to follow the ceremonial rules of the Jewish law, except for the guidelines set out in the apostolic decree. These guidelines included avoiding food sacrificed to idols, consuming blood or meat from strangled animals, and refraining from sexual immorality (Acts 15:29). The Council of Jerusalem showed that the apostolic leaders were willing to compromise on certain non-essential matters to maintain peace and unity within the church.

⁶ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#), IVP Academic, 2014, p. 527.

But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles. (Gal. 2:7-8, KJV).

Here is another translation:

On the contrary, they saw clearly that I had been entrusted by God with the gospel as it is directed to those who are not circumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to those who are circumcised. For he who was at work in Peter, creating an apostolate to those who are circumcised, was also at work in me, sending me to the Gentiles. (Gal. 2:7-8, Martin translation).⁷

III. Confrontation in Antioch with Peter

A. Peter's inconsistency in his actions (Galatians 2:11-13)

Paul extends the rhetorical technique of comparison (used positively in 2:7-8), contrasting Peter's refusal to comply with the Jerusalem Council's agreement with Paul's defense of it. The Galatians should thus recognize that even if Paul's opponents had been authorized by the Jerusalem apostles—which is not the case (2:1-10)—the Jerusalem apostles would have been wrong to have authorized them.⁸

B. Paul's rebuke of Peter for compromising the gospel (Galatians 2:14-16)

IV. Justification by Faith

A. Emphasizing that justification comes through faith in Christ (Galatians 2:15-16)

B. Rejection of reliance on the works of the law for salvation (Galatians 2:16)

V. Crucified with Christ

A. Identification with Christ's death and new life (Galatians 2:17-20)

B. Living by faith in the Son of God who loved and gave Himself (Galatians 2:20)

VI. The Grace of God

A. Asserting that righteousness does not come from the law but from Christ (Galatians 2:21)

B. Acknowledging the grace of God as the basis for salvation (Galatians 2:21)

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught this regarding habits and change:

Do not try merely to **discard** a bad habit or a bad thought. **Replace** it. When you try to eliminate a bad habit, if the spot where it used to be is left open it will sneak back and crawl again into that empty space. It grew there; it will struggle to stay there. When you discard it, fill up the spot where it was. Replace it with something good. Replace it with unselfish thoughts, with unselfish acts. Then, if an evil habit or addiction tries to return, it will have to fight for attention. Sometimes it may win. Bad thoughts often have to be evicted a hundred times, or a thousand. But if they have to be evicted ten thousand times, never surrender to them. You are in charge of

⁷ J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, Yale University Press, 1998, p. 4.

⁸ Keener, *Background*, p. 527-528.

you. I repeat, it is very, very difficult to eliminate a bad habit just by trying to discard it. Replace it.⁹

Galatians 3

In Galatians 3, Paul continues his argument against the reliance on the Jewish law for salvation. He emphasizes the importance of faith in Christ as the means of receiving God's promises. Paul reminds the Galatians that Abraham, the father of their faith, was justified by his faith in God, not by obeying the law.¹⁰ He contrasts the curse of the law with the blessing of faith, affirming that Christ redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse for us. Paul underscores that the law was a temporary guardian until the coming of Christ, who offers salvation to all who believe. He emphasizes the unity of believers, regardless of their ethnic or social backgrounds, as all are one in Christ Jesus. Overall, Paul urges the Galatians to hold fast to their faith and not be swayed by those who advocate reliance on the law for salvation.

I. Faith and the Promise

- A. Emphasizing the importance of faith in receiving God's promises (Galatians 3:1-5)
- B. Reminding the Galatians of Abraham's justification by faith (Galatians 3:6-9)
- C. Contrasting the curse of the law with the blessing of faith (Galatians 3:10-14)

II. The Law and its Purpose

- A. Highlighting the temporary nature of the law as a guardian (Galatians 3:15-18)

“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto” (Gal. 3.15).

Greeks usually used the term Paul uses for “covenant” for a “testament” or “will” (a legal document opened at someone’s death), but the Septuagint had used this term for “covenant” and Paul expects his audience to be familiar with this biblical usage. Although Paul means “covenant” in the biblical sense rather than as “testament,” he can play on the legal nuances of the latter (wordplays were common in ancient argumentation, and Scripture spoke of Israel’s “inheritance”). Judaism stressed the covenant made at Sinai, but most Jewish writers saw that same covenant foreshadowed (or, less accurately from an Old Testament standpoint, actually practiced in advance) in Abraham (Gen 17:9-14).

Like other legal documents, testaments or “wills” (nrsv) were sealed so they could not be altered. Once a Greek will was sealed, one did not open it to make changes, since this would require breaking the seals (cf. also Roman practice in Pliny, Epistles 5.7.1-2). Once the testator died, the will was final. Adoption was also permanent (although even a birth child could be disinherited). One kind of will divided the property immediately, the testator, however, retaining the right to use it until death. When replaced by a subsequent will, the new will might be strongly contested by the original heirs (e.g., as a forgery or the product of unethical influence). Under Greek law, testaments were confirmed by their deposit with the municipal records office;

⁹ Boyd K. Packer, *That All May Be Edified*, 196.

¹⁰ I think Paul may also be emphasizing the idea that Abraham was justified and yet Moses hadn’t even been born yet! Abraham came “before the law,” at least to Jewish minds in this time period.

if a new testament would interfere with an older one, it was rejected. (Under Roman law, a later will nullified an earlier one; Gaius, *Institutes* 2.144.) As in most analogies, one does not press all points; God did not need to die for Israel to receive its promised inheritance.¹¹

Here is another translation of Galatians 3.15-16:

Brothers and sisters, drawing an illustration from everyday life among human beings, let me say that once a person has ratified his will, no one annuls it or adds a codicil to it. 16. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham "and to his seed." The text does not say, "and to the seeds," as though it were speaking about many people, but rather, speaking about one, it reads, "and to your seed," and that seed is Christ. (Galatians 3.16-17, Martin¹² translation).

Paul means that Christ is the ultimate seed of the promise through whom the nations will be blessed; this thesis makes good sense of the promise motif in Israel's history. But he argues his case the way the rabbis often did: by attention to a grammatical peculiarity that was not actually peculiar. (As in English, the Hebrew term for "seed" could convey either the singular or the plural [a collective], which Paul well knew—Gal. 3:29. But rabbis argued in this manner too; "sons of Israel" meant either "sons and daughters" or only the men, depending on what the rabbis needed it to mean in a given text. Paul's opponents no doubt read Scripture this way, and Paul responds in kind; he takes "seed" as singular, a sense that the term can have in general but that does not seem to fit of the primary sense of most of the most relevant Genesis texts [Gen 13:15-16; 17:8; 22:17-18; 24:7, 60], because he already knows, on other grounds, that Christ is the epitome of Abraham's line. When later rabbis applied "Abraham's seed" to one person, it was naturally to Abraham's son Isaac.) Judaism nearly always took "Abraham's seed" as Israel; Paul would agree that this is usually what it means (Rom 9:7, 29; 11:1). But his argument in Galatians 3:6-9 permits him to apply this expression to Gentile Christians who are in Christ, hence in Abraham. Roman law allowed testaments to stipulate that property be left first to one heir and then to another after the first one's death. If Paul expected his readers to know this sort of custom, this might explain how his argument for them can move in principle from Christ as the heir to all who are in Christ.¹³

B. Explaining that the law does not nullify the promises to Abraham (Galatians 3:19-20)

C. Demonstrating that the law exposes sin and leads to Christ (Galatians 3:21-25)

ὥστε ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν ἵνα ἐκ πίστεως δικαιωθῶμεν. ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς πίστεως οὐκέτι ὑπὸ παιδαγωγόν ἐσμεν.

"Wherefore the law was **our schoolmaster** to bring us unto Christ, that **we might be justified** by faith. But after that faith **is come**, we are no longer under **a schoolmaster**" (Gal. 3.24-25).

I translate this verse a bit differently, seeing *heis* as "until" instead of "to" as used by the KJV translators. I see this verse rendering the following meaning:

¹¹ Keener, *Background*, p. 530-531.

¹² J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians*, p. 6.

¹³ Keener, *Background*, p. 531.

“So then the Law of Moses became our tutor until Jesus Christ came, in order that we may be declared righteous because of our faith. And so the faith having had appeared, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal. 3.24-25, my translation).

A key element in the passage is the term translated “tutor” (nasb) or, better still, “guardian” (niv, esv, nlt). The slave assigned to this role would watch out for the student on his way to school and help him with his manners and schoolwork, but he was not the teacher himself. Children sometimes resented but often grew fond of their slave guardians and later freed them. Such guardians were also normally better educated than the free masses; the image is not intrinsically demeaning. But it was hardly the way most other Jewish teachers would have described the law. (They occasionally describe Moses as Israel’s “guardian” till Israel grew up. Philosophers spoke of philosophy as a “moral teacher,” and Judaism spoke of the law as a “teacher.”)¹⁴

Paul characterizes the law as “our *paidagogos*,” or “custodian” (cf. Lull; Young; Gordon; Sanger 2006). To have been “under the law” (*hypo nomon*) in v. 23 means to have been “under a custodian” (*hypo paidagogen*) in v. 25. A *paidagogos* was “a slave employed in Greek and Roman families to have general charge of a boy in the years from about six to sixteen, watching over his outward behaviour and attending him whenever he went from home, e.g. to school” (Burton 200; cf. BDAG 748; Plutarch, *Mor.* 4A–B; 439F.; Josephus, *Life* 76; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.22.26; 3.19.5–6). The *paidagogos* was a “supervisory guardian” (cf. 1 Cor 4:15), who had “custodial and disciplinary functions” (cf. nrsv, nab: “disciplinarian,” niv: “supervision”; njb: “a slave looking after us”) “rather than educative or instructional ones” (Longenecker 146).¹⁵

A Positive View of the Law

Those who want to see the *paidagogos* as a positive figure, either as a disciplinary “schoolmaster” (kjv; Calvin 66) or as a “pedagogue” in the benign English sense of the term, also tend to take the preposition *eis* in v. 24 to express purpose or goal, translating it as “unto”: “so that the law was our teacher unto Christ.” Supporters of this line of interpretation can then also regard Paul’s claim in v. 23 that “we were confined under the law” (*ephouroumetha hypo nomon*) in a positive light, to signify a form of protective custody (e.g., Calvin 66; Williams 103; Matera 136; Dunn 197, appealing to this connotation of the verb in 2 Cor 11:32; Phil 4:7; 1 Pet 1:5; Lull). The period of the law was thus for humanity’s own good, to protect it from transgressions (3:19) or from Sin (3:22). This line of interpretation, which suits the traditional image of the schoolmaster who both teaches and severely chastises (cf. Luther 1535: 345–46), leads inevitably to speculation about what the law, functioning as a protective if also disciplinary pedagogue, is supposed to have taught his charges during the period of their minority (cf. Luther 1535: 335–51; Calvin 66–67).¹⁶

A Negative View of the Law

De Boer disagrees with the positive view of the Law of Moses, stating:

¹⁴ Keener, *Background*, p. 532.

¹⁵ De Boer, [Galatians: A Commentary](#), p. 240.

¹⁶ De Boer, p. 240.

This traditional line of interpretation is unconvincing for a number of reasons: (1) A *paidagogos* was clearly distinguished from a *didaskalos*, or teacher (Plato, *Lysis* 208C; *Leg.* 7.808D–E); he was not then a pedagogue (schoolmaster, teacher). (2) The preposition *eis* also occurs in v. 23 and is there most naturally understood to be temporal: “we were confined under the law, being shut up until [*eis*] this destined faith should be apocalyptically revealed.” Verse 25, with its claims that since “this faith has come, we are no longer under a *paidagogos*,” meaning “under the law” (v. 23), only makes sense if the *eis* in v. 24 also has a temporal meaning. (3) In the traditional interpretation, the role of the *paidagogos* is looked at from a father’s viewpoint in putting his child under the care of a *paidagogos*. By analogy, God is the parent who has put humanity under the protective care, instruction, and discipline of the law. But as in 1 Cor 4:15 (the only other NT instance of the term), Paul looks at the role of the *paidagogos* from the viewpoint and experience of the *children* involved (“We were under a *paidagogos*”); his assumption is that believers now look back at the period when they were minors as a time when they were unhappily confined “under” (*hypo*) a *paidagogos* (v. 25). That period was tantamount to being “under a curse”—that of the law (3:10)—and “under Sin” (3:22). To be “under” the *paidagogos* that is the law is then to be outside the sphere of blessing and under that of the malevolent power against which God’s justifying (rectifying) action is directed. (4) The import of the clause “We were confined under the law” in v. 23 is indicated by the qualifying participle “being shut up,” being “imprisoned” (*synkleiomenoi*). The same verb has been used in v. 22 in connection with “the Scripture” having “shut all things up under Sin.” The custody under the law as a *paidagogos* cannot then have been protective or pedagogical, but only restrictive and oppressive (Burton 199; Vouga 23; Witherington 268; Sanger 2006: 254–60). The law was a jailer, depriving human beings of their freedom (cf. 2:4; 5:1).¹⁷

III. Sons and Heirs

A. Emphasizing the unity and equality of believers in Christ (Galatians 3:26-29)

B. Describing believers as children and heirs of God (Galatians 3:26-29)

ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε **Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε**. οὐκ **ἐν** Ἰουδαίῳ οὐδὲ Ἕλλην οὐκ **ἐν** δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος οὐκ **ἐν** ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ **ἄρα** τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστέ καὶ κατ’ **ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι**.

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ **have put on Christ**.¹⁸ **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. And if ye be Christ's, **then** are ye Abraham's seed, and **heirs** according to the **promise**. (Gal. 3.27-29).

¹⁷ DeBoer, p. 240-241.

¹⁸ Note Paul’s use of enduo in this verse. ἐνεδύσασθε is the 2nd person plural aorist middle of ἐνδύω *enduo*, which means to put on clothing. In the Christian context, the act of clothing oneself is frequently understood as a symbolic representation of the process of “putting on Christ.” This concept finds its roots in the usage of the Greek word “enduo” employed by the apostle Paul to depict this transformative action. Notably, “enduo” draws upon its usage within the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where it primarily denotes the act of donning sacred vestments. These vestments serve as symbols that encompass various aspects of salvation, righteousness, glory, strength, and even resurrection. By employing this terminology, Paul conveys the notion of believers equipping themselves with Christ’s divine attributes, allowing them to be spiritually prepared to stand before God. John Welch explains, “The Greek word *enduo* has two meanings, and both are pertinent to the

This use of *enduo* in Galatians 3 is provocative. Paul is using language that some of his readers may understand in a temple context. In Christianity, putting on clothes is often seen as a symbol of putting on Christ. The apostle Paul used the word "enduo" to talk about this idea of clothing ourselves with Christ. This word was also used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, specifically to describe putting on special garments that represented salvation, righteousness, glory, strength, and resurrection. It's like getting dressed in these special clothes to be ready to stand before God. So, when Paul talks about putting on Christ, he means that we should embrace his qualities and be spiritually prepared to face God.

“Putting on” Jesus Christ and “putting on” sacred vestments

In a temple setting for Latter-day Saints, or in a liturgical setting in the Greek Orthodox or Roman Catholic tradition, sacred vestments serve a dual purpose by aiding in the individual's preparation to approach the sacred and by establishing a symbolic connection between the physical act of donning sacred clothing and the spiritual act of embracing Christ and His holiness. This theological concept finds reinforcement in the translations of the phrase "put on" in both the Old and New Testaments. The usage of this phrase highlights the significance of incorporating Christ's divine attributes and holiness into one's being, akin to the deliberate act of adorning oneself with sacred garments. This parallel highlights the profound spiritual transformation and communion with the sacred that takes place through the symbolic practice of "putting on" Christ. By engaging in the act of donning sacred clothing, individuals symbolically align themselves with the divine attributes and holiness of Christ.

The parallel between *enduo* in the Hebrew Bible is *לָבַשׁ labash* “put on” or “clothe.” We see this used in connection with clothing in several places in the Hebrew Bible, especially in Leviticus and places where sacred clothing is discussed:

1. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed [לָבַשׁ] them (Gen. 3.21).¹⁹
2. And thou shalt put them on [לָבַשׁ] Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office (Exodus 28.41).²⁰
3. The priest shall put on [לָבַשׁ] his linen garment, and his linen breeches shall he put upon his flesh” (Leviticus 6:10).

endowment. First is "to dress, to clothe someone," or "to clothe oneself in, put on." The second is, figuratively, to take on "characteristics, virtues, intentions." The meaning of the English word *endue* (or *indue* from the Latin) likewise "coincides nearly in signification with *endow*, that is, to put on, to furnish. . . . To put on something; to invest; to clothe," and Joseph Smith's diary uses these spellings interchangeably, as for example when Joseph prayed that all the elders might "receive an endowment in thy house." John Welch, [Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount: A Latter-day Saint Approach](#), chapter 3 "Toward an Understanding of the Sermon as a Temple Text," Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 1998.

¹⁹ Technically it reads וַיִּלְבָּשֵׁם “and he clothed them.”

²⁰ It also reads וְהִלְבַּשְׁתָּ אֹתָם אֶת־אֶהָרִן אֶחָיִךְ “And you will put them on Aaron your brother.”

4. "He shall put on [שָׁבַט] the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them [שָׁבַט] on" (Leviticus 16:4).
5. "Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on [שָׁבַט] when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there" (Leviticus 16:23).
6. "And he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on [שָׁבַט] his garments" (Leviticus 16:24).
7. "The priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on [שָׁבַט] the linen clothes, even the holy garments" (Leviticus 16:32).
8. "He that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on [שָׁבַט] the garments" (Leviticus 21:10).

In numerous instances within the Hebrew Bible, the verb *labash* is employed, the Greek translators of the Septuagint often opted to render it using the various inflections of the Greek verb *enduo*. This same Greek verb, *enduo*, also finds application in several New Testament passages that pertain to Jesus Christ and His Atonement. One noteworthy example is found in the writings of the apostle Paul, specifically in Romans 13.14, where he employs *enduo* to convey the concept of believers "putting on" or incorporating the transformative presence of the Lord Jesus Christ into their lives. This verb, "put on," recurs frequently in Paul's writings, featuring in various expressions that underscore the significance of embracing and manifesting the qualities and virtues associated with Christ.

We see this being used in Galatians 3.27 noted above as well as in these other instances:

The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on (ἐνδυσώμεθα) the armour of light (Rom. 13.12).

But put ye on (ἐνδύσασθε) the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof (Rom. 13.14).

For this corruptible must put on (ἐνδύσασθαι) incorruption, and this mortal must put on (ἐνδύσασθαι) immortality (1 Cor. 15.53).

And that ye put on (ἐνδύσασθαι) the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4.24).

Put on (ἐνδύσασθε) the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6.11).

Seeing that you have And have put off the old man with his actions, and have put on (ἐνδυσάμενοι) the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him (Col. 3.9b-10).

(Ἐνδύσασθε) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering (Col. 3.12).

But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on (ἐνδυσάμενοι) the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation (1 Thes. 5.8).

And the seven angels came out of the temple... clothed (ἐνδεδυμένοι) in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles (Rev. 15.6).

Paul's deliberate utilization of inflections of the verb *enduo* in the aforementioned passages appears to serve a specific purpose, as it evokes certain Old Testament references related to the act of donning sacred vestments. This intentional connection between *enduo* and the concept of putting on sacred attire carries considerable significance. Notably, Paul employs *enduo* in conjunction with terms associated with Jesus Christ, baptism, and other significant theological themes. By employing this linguistic collocation, Paul establishes a symbolic and theological continuity, emphasizing the spiritual significance of incorporating Christ's transformative presence and virtues through the act of "putting on." This deliberate choice of language underscores Paul's intent to evoke the imagery and theological implications of sacred vestments found in the Old Testament, thereby enriching his theological discourse and reinforcing the spiritual depth of his message.²¹

IV. Conclusion

A. Encouraging the Galatians to stand firm in their faith (Galatians 3:1, 3:5)

B. Warning against turning back to the law for justification (Galatians 3:1-3, 3:10-14)

Galatians 4

In Galatians 4, Paul uses an analogy of a child and an heir to illustrate his argument. He explains that before Christ's coming, humanity was like underage children under the guardianship of the law. However, through faith in Christ, believers have received adoption as God's children and are no longer enslaved to the elemental spiritual forces of the world. Paul expresses his concern that the Galatians, who once embraced the freedom of faith in Christ, are now observing aspects of Judaism that Paul worked so hard to remove as obligatory to Gentile converts to the Christian Church (see Acts 15). He appeals to the saints in Galatia to return to their former understanding of grace and freedom, reminding them of their shared affection and urging them to reject the bondage of the legalistic practices commonly practiced among the Jews of Paul's day. Paul concludes by emphasizing the importance of living by the Spirit and the freedom found in Christ Jesus.

I. Introduction

A. Greeting and affirmation of Paul's apostolic authority (Galatians 4:1-5)

II. Analogies of Childhood and Sonship

A. The analogy of an heir under guardians and managers (Galatians 4:1-3)

B. The analogy of being enslaved to the elemental forces (Galatians 4:3, 9) C. The contrast between slavery and sonship (Galatians 4:4-7)

²¹ For further discussion regarding these ideas, see: Donald W. Parry, *Ancient Sacred Vestments: Scriptural Symbols and Meanings*, [Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-Day Saint Scholarship](#) 48 (2021): 11-32.

III. Concern for the Galatians' Return to Legalism

A. Expression of concern about the Galatians turning back to observing Jewish customs and festivals (Galatians 4:8-11)

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain (Gal. 4:9-11).

Gentiles had unlucky days, special festivals, and so forth. Judaism had its own special calendar of holy days, new moons, sabbatical years and so forth. Paul is saying that by returning to a ceremonial, calendrical religion, the Galatians return to pagan bondage under these spirits in the heavens (4:3, 9). From a technical standpoint, this argument is standard rhetorical exaggeration: Judaism and paganism felt that they had little in common (including regarding calendars, Jubilees 6:35). From the standpoint of experience, however, they would relinquish the Spirit (3:2; 4:6) for tradition and custom. Some commentators think that Paul here links the deified elements of paganism (4:8-9), which correspond to Judaism's angels of nature, with the angels who gave the law (3:19); although that linkage is uncertain, Paul's image here is negative, at best that of an adult going back under the guardianship of a slave.²²

B. Personal appeal to the Galatians based on their previous relationship (Galatians 4:12-20)

And my temptation (πειρασμὸν)²³ which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus (Gal. 4:14).

Physical infirmities were quite often regarded as the curse or punishment of the gods; this belief in sickness as divine retribution appears often even in Jewish texts. Receiving Paul as God's "angel" (cf. Acts 14:12) meant receiving him with the hospitality due the one who sent him, Christ Jesus. Messengers were to be received as representatives of their senders. (The wording need not imply that Christ is present as an angel; cf. 1 Sam 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17, 20; 19:27; Zech 12:8. Many second- and third-century Jewish Christians did portray Christ as the chief angel, because of the limited categories available in Judaism to communicate him to their culture. The image was discontinued in the fourth century due to its exploitation by the Arians, who regarded Christ as deity but created, although the image fit earlier use by Ebionites who rejected Christ's divinity. Some Jewish writers, like Philo, portrayed the Word as the supreme angel, but earliest Christianity lacks any direct evidence for this portrayal.)²⁴

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me (Gal. 4:15).

Sacrificing one's eye for someone else was a figure of speech for a great sacrifice, attested in various sources. Thus Paul's statement that the Galatians "would have dug out your own eyes to give them to me" need not mean that his infirmity (4:13-14) was an oozing eye sore, as some commentators have suggested. In Greek culture, friendship was especially demonstrated by

²² Keener, *Background*, p. 533-534.

²³ πειρασμός – An experiment, attempt, trial, proving. A putting to the proof or trial. See: 1 Pet. 4:12; Heb. 3:8; direct temptation to sin, Lk. 4:13; trial, temptation, Mt. 6:13; 26:41; 1 Cor. 10:13; trial, calamity, affliction, Lk. 22:28.

²⁴ Keener, *Background*, p. 534.

sacrifice; Paul here reaffirms the bond that exists between himself and the Galatians. Letter writers sometimes appealed to the recipients' love for them (e.g., Fronto, *Ad M. Caesarem* 5.1-2; Symmachus, *Epistles* 1.95.2). Likewise, letter writers sometimes affirmed their affection by protesting the recipients' lack of or decline in comparable affection.²⁵

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them (Gal. 4.16-17).

Demagogues who told people what they wanted to hear became popular through their flattery. Moralists thus always pointed out that the flatterers were not concerned for their hearers' good; those who told them the truth openly were those who really loved them (cf. similarly Prov 27:6). Speakers would sometimes ask what crime they committed against their hearers (e.g., Dio Chrysostom, *Orations* 45.8) or would rhetorically confess a noncrime (cf. Acts 24:14). Speakers could complain if someone treated them as an "enemy" without good cause (Cicero, *For Sestius* 52.111) or could ask why accusers treated the speaker as an enemy when he has loved them so much (Sallust, *Letter of Gnaeus Pompeius* 1).²⁶

I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you (Gal. 4.20).

Alternate translation of Gal. 4.20: Would that I could be there with you now, and that I could change my tone of voice; for I am quite uncertain about you.²⁷

Keener of Paul's use of rhetoric:

Rhetoricians like Isocrates recommended honestly confessing, "I am at a loss as to what to say," when confronting an emotionally stirring and painful situation. (Pretending such distress that one could not decide what to do was called *aporia* by rhetoricians.) Letters were considered a surrogate for one's presence (4:18) and were supposed to reflect the same character the person would display if present. But it was easier for Paul to write stern letters than to be stern in person (2 Cor 10:10-11); indeed, even when he was writing a letter of blame, it hurt him worse than it hurt them (2 Cor 2:4).²⁸

C. Allegory of Sarah and Hagar to illustrate the distinction between law and promise (Galatians 4:21-31)

Paul reverses the argument of his enemies

It has been suggested that Paul's response in Galatians may be directed towards an opposing viewpoint which asserts that only individuals of Jewish descent and circumcised converts have the right to claim lineage as children of Abraham. It may be that the teachers opposing Paul who are coming from Jerusalem were teaching the saints in Galatia that they were descendants from Abraham via Ishmael.

²⁵ Keener, *Background*, p. 534.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 535.

²⁷ Martyn translation, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p. 6. The Greek of Gal. 4.20 reads: ἤθελον δὲ παρεῖναι πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἄρτι καὶ ἀλλάξαι τὴν φωνὴν μου ὅτι ἀποροῦμαι ἐν ὑμῖν. I render it thus: "I have a mind to be with you all right now, even to change my tone in this communication, since I am in doubt of you."

²⁸ Keener, *Background*, p. 535.

Paul reverses this argument when he says, “Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Gal. 4.28).

In Gal. 4:8–11 Paul recalls for the Galatians their pagan past as worshipers of false gods, and he did so in order to warn them of the danger of returning to that past if they become observers of the law, as the new preachers in Galatia insist. The Galatians will then have abandoned the God by whom they have come to be known in Christ. In 4:12–20 Paul has directed the attention of the Galatians to the time that he came and preached the gospel to them, and he has done so in order to alert them to the danger of abandoning him, their founding apostle, if they take the route of law observance. They will then have abandoned the gospel that he preached to them initially and thus also the God of that gospel. In the present passage, Paul alerts the Galatians to the danger of losing their new identity through a wrong *exegesis* of Scripture. He has a particular section of the Scripture in view: Gen 16–21, parts of which tell the story of Abraham and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac; the first is begotten by the slave woman Hagar, and the other is begotten by his wife, Sarah (Gen 16:1–16; 17:15–27; 18:9–15; 21:1–21)... It is also probable that the new preachers in Galatia are using this very passage in their missionary efforts among the Galatians.²⁹

Galatians 5-6

In Galatians 5-6, Paul addresses the theme of freedom in Christ and the importance of living by the Spirit. He emphasizes that believers should not allow themselves to be burdened by the yoke of slavery, referring to legalistic practices and the Mosaic Law. He encourages them to walk by the Spirit, highlighting the contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit. He inspires these members of the early Church to live in freedom, expressing love, kindness, and self-control. He warns against using freedom as an opportunity for the flesh and emphasizes the superiority of faith working through love over circumcision and the Law of Moses. Additionally, he calls for unity, mutual support, and accountability within the early Christian Church. Paul concludes with final exhortations, blessings, and a benediction, underscoring the significance of walking in the Spirit and living out the transformative power of Christ.

I. Introduction

A. Reminder of the call to freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1-6)

II. Walking by the Spirit

A. Exhortation to live by the Spirit and not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-18)

B. Contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:19-23)

C. Crucifying the flesh and living in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:24-25)

III. Freedom in Christ and the Law

²⁹ Martinus C. De Boer, [Galatians: A Commentary](#), Westminster John Knox Press, 2011, p. 286.

A. Emphasis on the freedom from the bondage of the Law (Galatians 5:1, 11-15)

And I, brethren, if I yet **preach circumcision**, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is **the offence** of the cross **ceased**. I would **they were** even **cut off** which trouble you (Gal. 5.11-12).

ἐγὼ δὲ ἀδελφοί εἰ **περιτομήν** ἔτι **κηρύσσω** τί ἔτι διώκομαι ἄρα **κατήργηται τὸ σκάνδαλον** τοῦ σταυροῦ. ὄφελον καὶ **ἀποκόψονται** οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς.

“Cutting themselves off” (cf. kjv) could mean to cut themselves off from the community, but most commentators take the words as meaning “mutilate” (nasb), “emasculate” (niv) or “castrate” (nrsv, gnt) themselves: while they are circumcising others, they ought to make a full sweep of themselves and remove the entire organ. Although Paul’s language purposely avoids being explicit, there is no reason to think that such an insult is beneath him; witty insults were the mark of good public speakers in the heat of debate, and Paul is far more impassioned in his criticism of his opponents than in his blame of the Galatians themselves. Many pagans thought of circumcision as a form of mutilation, and the Roman emperor Hadrian later outlawed it under an anticastration law. (Many people also ridiculed some self-castrated followers of a Phrygian goddess.) But as Paul knew, Jewish people particularly abhorred eunuchs, castrated men (Deut 23:1).³⁰

B. Warning against using freedom as an opportunity for the flesh (Galatians 5:13)

C. Affirmation of the superiority of faith working through love over circumcision and the Law (Galatians 5:6)

IV. Exhortations for Christian Conduct

A. Call to love one another and fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 5:13-14)

B. Warning against biting and devouring one another (Galatians 5:15)

C. Encouragement to walk by the Spirit and bear the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26)

“Works of the flesh” (Gal. 5.19).

Elder Asay taught:

“Today the dealers of pornography, sex, alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, and other forms of vice hate the souls of youth but love their money and resources. Such despisers of youth would make slaves of the young by drowning them in the addictive works of the flesh. So they raise their voices high and seek to entice young people to get lost down strange roads with dead ends. Their contempt for you is evidenced in the trail of broken hearts, broken promises, and broken health (physical and spiritual) they leave behind.”³¹

Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, **variance**, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies (Gal. 5.20).

εἰδωλολατρεία φαρμακεία ἔχθραι **ἔρεις**, ζῆλοι, θυμοί ἐριθείαι διχوستασίαι αἰρέσεις

³⁰ Keener, *Background*, p. 537.

³¹ Carlos Asay, *The Road to Somewhere: A Guide for Young Men and Women*, Bookcraft, 1994, p. 127.

Variance is ἔρις, used in the plural here as ἔρεις, it is associated with strife, discord, animosity, jealousy, combat, zeal, or contention.³²

“The Fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5.22).

Elder Parley P. Pratt on the Holy Ghost and how it operates:

“The Holy Spirit...quickeneth all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections; and adapts them, by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness and charity. It develops beauty of person, form and features. It tends to health, vigor, animation and social feeling. It develops and invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens, invigorates, and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being.”³³

President Hinckley taught:

“You recognize the promptings of the Spirit by the fruits of the Spirit—that which enlighteneth, that which buildeth up, that which is positive and affirmative and uplifting and leads us to better thoughts and better words and better deeds is of the Spirit of God. That which tears us down, which leads us into forbidden paths—that is of the adversary. I think it is just that plain, just that simple.”³⁴

Robert Millet taught:

“The gifts of the Spirit are one thing, the fruit of the Spirit another. Patience, mercy, meekness, gentleness, longsuffering, and, of course, charity or the pure love of Christ—these are the kinds of things that characterize men and women who have begun to live in Christ. Such persons are simply more Christlike. Elder Mark E. Petersen once asked a haunting question that strikes at the core of this matter of being Christlike. He inquired: ‘If you had to prove in court that you are a Christian, what would you use as evidence?’

The interesting thing about the fruit of the Spirit is that such attitudes and such actions do not seem to be situational. In other words, a person is not just very fruitful in the Spirit while the sun shines, pleasant and kindly only when circumstances are positive. Rather, those who enjoy the fruit of the Spirit feel ‘love for those who do not love in return, joy in the midst of painful circumstances, peace when something counted upon doesn’t come through, patience when things are not going fast enough, kindness towards those who treat others unkindly, goodness towards those who have been intentionally insensitive, faithfulness when friends have proven unfaithful, gentleness towards those who handle us roughly, self-control in the midst of intense temptation.’”³⁵

³² [The Oxford Classical Greek Dictionary](#), Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 138.

³³ Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology/A Voice of Warning*, Deseret Book, 1965, p. 100-101.

³⁴ [Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley](#), Deseret Book, 1997, p. 261.

³⁵ Robert L. Millet, [Selected Writings of Robert L. Millet: Gospel Scholars Series](#), Deseret Book, 2000, p. 80.

V. Conclusion

A. Final exhortations and blessings (Galatians 6:1-10)

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not (Gal. 6.7-9).

There is wisdom in this. Life is a great teacher. From my experience, the Lord does allow us to work our agency to either life or unto death. The choice is ours. I appreciate this thought from Alma:

O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people! Yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might not be more sorrow upon all the face of the earth. But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord hath allotted unto me. I ought not to harrow up in my desires the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he allotteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction. Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience (Alma 29.1-5).

Paul also encourages the saints in Galatia to share with proper teachers. Galatians 6.6 can be read as follows:

And let him who is instructed in the word share with him who is instructing -- in all good things (Gal. 6.6 YLT).

Many teachers charged fees for their instruction; some philosophers insisted that they and their students should share all things in common, and some groups of teachers and *disciples lived communally. Here Paul urges the Galatian Christians to support their teachers who could provide sound teaching (unlike that of his opponents).³⁶

B. Final remarks and benediction (Galatians 6:11-18)

Ye see in how large letters I have written to you with my own hand; as many as are willing to make a good appearance in the flesh, these constrain you to be circumcised -- only that for the cross of the Christ they may not be persecuted, for neither do those circumcised themselves keep the law, but they wish you to be circumcised, that in your flesh they may glory (Gal. 6.11-13 YLT).

The metaphor here is grotesque: Paul has been assailing those who live “by the flesh,” by merely human, mortal power, ignoring God; physical circumcision was commonly said to be “in the flesh” (so also kjv,

³⁶ Keener, *Background*, p. 539.

nasb, nrsv here). Here Paul may speak of these culture-bound missionaries as if they want to show the Galatians' foreskins to their senders. See comment on 4:29 and 5:11.³⁷

"I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus" (Gal. 6:17).

"Paul was stoned and left for dead at Lystra, which was one reason he could remind the Galatians that his sacrifice for them was beyond reproach: 'I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus' (Gal. 6:17)."³⁸

Soldiers or others often displayed their wounds as signs of loyalty or to invite sympathy for their claims. Some slaves (cf. Philo, *That Every Good Person Is Free* 10), criminals and prisoners of war were tattooed, as were devotees of some religious cults in Egypt and Syria. Greeks and Romans normally associated tattooing with barbarians, and branding was usually reserved for horses. Paul's term is the one normally used for tattooing, but could more commonly apply simply to any mark or puncture wound. In this context, Paul simply means that he was crucified with Christ (6:14), who was flogged and nailed to the cross; the evidence was Paul's "scars" (gnt) from his past persecutions (5:11; 6:12-13).³⁹

³⁷ Keener, *Background*, p. 540.

³⁸ Richard Lloyd Anderson, [Understanding Paul](#), Deseret Book, 1983, p. 151-152.

³⁹ Keener, p. 540.