24

The Epistles of the Apostle Paul
An Overview

Frank F. Judd Jr.

The book of Acts chronicles three separate missions of the apostle Paul: (1) he traveled through Cyprus and central Asia Minor (Acts 13:4–14; 28),[1] (2) he evangelized primarily in Greece (15:36–18:22), and (3) he revisited Greece and western Asia Minor (18:23–20:38). Since Paul felt a strong sense of stewardship over the church congregations that he established, he would periodically check up on them. For example, after evangelizing in central Asia Minor and traveling on to Derbe in eastern Asia Minor, Paul retraced his steps and returned to congregations he had previously established, "confirming the souls of the disciples and exhorting them to continue in the faith" (14:22). He also "ordained them elders in every church" and "commended them to the Lord" (14:23). As Paul commenced on his second mission, he returned to Derbe and Lystra (16:1–2) before traveling further to Greece and then Ephesus. On his third mission, Paul revisited areas he had evangelized during his second mission, in particular Ephesus (19:1–20) and locations throughout Greece (20:1–3).

When Paul was unable personally to revisit a particular group of saints, he sometimes sent others to inquire concerning their well-being. For instance, after he left Thessalonica and traveled to Athens, he sent Timothy back to instruct the saints and to give them comfort (1 Thessalonians 3:2). When Timothy returned, he thereupon reported to Paul concerning the "faith and charity" of the Thessalonian Christians and that they earnestly wanted to see Paul again (3:6). Similarly, when Paul was in Ephesus during his third mission, he sent Timothy and Erastus to visit the church congregations he had previously established in Greece, while "he himself stayed in Asia for a season" (Acts 19:22).

Sometimes, in lieu of personally returning or having one of his companions return to a congregation, Paul would simply send a letter.[2] After the composition was complete, Paul would then send the letter to its recipients. Since there was no real postal service for anyone but government officials in Paul's day, he would have the letter delivered by one or more of his trusted associates. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, for example, he informed them in the letter that he sent to them two of his faithful companions, Tychicus and Onesimus, in order to instruct them concerning what was happening with Paul as well as to gather information about their situation (Colossians 4:7–9). The implication is that Tychicus and Onesimus were the ones who actually delivered this letter to the Christians at Colossae, and following their visit they would return to Paul with the report. Since a large portion of the population of the Roman world was illiterate, including some members of his congregations, Paul instructed the Colossians to have this letter read out loud to the congregation: "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (4:16).[3]

Paul's letters preserved in the New Testament generally followed a customary outline.[4] They would typically begin with an introduction that identified the writer(s) and the addressee(s) and then expressed a greeting. For example, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians begins, "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians . . ." and then declares, "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 1:1). The body of the letter contained the main points of instruction the writer intended the recipients to understand. Letters would normally conclude with a farewell. Paul ended his first letter to the Thessalonians with one of his standard benedictions: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (5:28).

There has been much discussion among scholars concerning the chronology of Paul's epistles. The New Testament contains Paul's letters in order according to size, beginning with the longest (Romans) and ending with the shortest (Philemon). This chapter, however, will present Paul's epistles in chronological order insofar as it is possible to determine: the earlier letters (Galatians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Corinthians, and Romans), the later letters (Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon), and the last letters (1–2 Timothy and Titus). For each letter, this chapter will attempt to reconstruct the context in which the epistle was written and then outline some of the most important ideas contained within that particular epistle.

Galatians (ca. AD 49–50)

Rather than addressing a particular group of Christians in a particular city, Paul addressed this letter to "the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2).[5] It is difficult to know precisely what groups of people Paul was referencing. The term *Galatia* could be used to describe the people who lived in the northern part of central Asia Minor, descendants of the Gauls who were under the rule of the last king of Galatia, Amynta, who died in 25 BC. But there is no record of Paul evangelizing this area. In fact, Acts 16:6 says that when Paul traveled through

this area he was "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word." On the other hand, the term *Galatia* could refer to those who lived in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. This is the region that Paul and Barnabas visited on their first mission after sailing from Cyprus (Acts 13:14; 14:1, 6). But the term *Galatians* (Galatians 3:1), which Paul used to address his audience, would have been more appropriate for those in the north, who were ethnically Galatians, than for those in the south, who were living in the province of Galatia. Scholars are also divided concerning whether this epistle was written before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 (ca. AD 49) or afterward. Regardless, the Epistle to the Galatians is very likely one of Paul's earliest letters.

After a short greeting at the beginning of the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul dispensed with his typical well wishes and immediately declared, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (1:6). Paul's concern was that the Christians in Galatia were listening to a group of people who came among them in order to "trouble" them and "pervert the gospel of Christ" (1:7). Paul was so upset that he called them "O foolish Galatians" (3:1). These individuals apparently tried to discredit Paul's authority as an apostle as well as his teachings that Gentiles did not need circumcision for salvation.[6]

Paul started his letter by defending his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He declared that he was an apostle "not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (1:1) and that immediately after his conversion he "conferred not with flesh and blood" (1:16). These statements do not deny his priesthood ordination through the proper priesthood channels (although we have no scriptural account of it), but rather they emphasize that Paul's authority came from God and he had the right as an apostle to receive revelation and teach doctrine: "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" (1:11–12).

The issue in question concerned the requirements to become a true disciple of Jesus. While Paul was in Antioch, "false brethren" (Galatians 2:4)—called "Judaizers" by modern scholars—came among the gentile converts and taught the necessity of keeping the law of Moses for salvation. Naturally, Paul and Barnabas disagreed and traveled to Jerusalem to consult with Peter (2:1–2). Paul left the meeting with Peter feeling that they agreed on the issue, for, as Paul concluded, "Neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised" (2:3). Later, Peter visited Antioch and dined with Paul and his gentile converts, but when Judaizers from Jerusalem arrived, Peter removed himself "fearing them which were of the circumcision" (2:12).[7] Paul explained to the Galatians that Peter's example in this instance was hypocritical and sent the wrong message. From their meeting in Jerusalem, Peter understood that Jewish and uncircumcised gentile Christians were allowed to interact. But, as Paul explained, Peter's actions at dinner sent the message to gentile converts that they needed to become Jewish (i.e., circumcised) in order to be acceptable (2:14).

This is the introduction to Paul's famous discussion of salvation by faith apart from the requirements of the law of Moses.[8] Paul concluded: "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16); for if one could be saved by

keeping the law of Moses, then the salvific work of Christ is meaningless: "Christ is dead in vain" (2:21). Salvation by means of the law of Moses required one to live it completely and perfectly, for as Moses himself taught: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law" (3:10; compare Deuteronomy 27:26). But since nobody lived the law perfectly, as Paul concluded, "the just shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11; compare Habakkuk 2:4).

If the law of Moses did not provide salvation, then why was it given in the first place? Paul explained: "it was added because of transgressions" (Galatians 3:19). A revelation through Joseph Smith clarifies that because of the rebellion of the Israelites, God "took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued" (Doctrine and Covenants 84:25–26). The ultimate purpose of the rituals of the law of Moses, according to Paul, was "to bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24) as a schoolmaster. Similarly, the Nephites, explained Mormon, "did not suppose that salvation came by the law of Moses; but the law of Moses did serve to strengthen their faith in Christ" (Alma 25:16).

Paul encouraged the Galatians to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). These gentile converts had been set free spiritually from the requirements of pagan religion (4:8–9). Since some of them were considering submitting to the law of Moses, Paul wondered why they "desire[d] again to be in bondage" (4:9), this time to the requirements of Jewish religion. Paul tried to impress upon the Galatians that Christ had come "to redeem them that were under the law" (4:5)—including both Jews with respect to the law of Moses and Gentiles with respect to their religious requirements.

What does God require from Christians if they are free from the demands of both Jewish and pagan religion? Paul concluded his letter with a heartfelt discussion of the importance of submitting to the Holy Spirit.[9] He counseled the Galatians: "Walk in the Spirit" (5:16), because "if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (5:18). And disciples who do so will be blessed with "the fruit of the Spirit," which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance" (5:22–23). For Christians, one of the primary purposes of following Christ through the Holy Spirit was to engender change in disciples in order to be like their Savior. Thus, as Paul closed his epistle to the Galatians, "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision"; the goal was to become "a new creature" in Christ (6:15).

1–2 Thessalonians (ca. AD 50–52)

During his second mission, Paul left Philippi and traveled west along the Via Egnatia to Thessalonica, where he preached in the local synagogue and converted a number of people, including "devout Greeks" and "chief women" (Acts 17:1–4).[10] The descriptions "devout" and "God fearer," according to Joseph Fitzmyer, seem to be "quasi-technical phrases" that refer to Gentiles who were sympathetic toward Judaism, believed in one God, but did not submit to all the regulations of the law of Moses, such as circumcision for males.[11] A group

of Jews, however, accosted a man named Jason for receiving Christians and accused them of doing things "contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus" (17:5–7). It became so dangerous for Paul that his converts sent him and Silas away to Berea and eventually, because these Thessalonian Jews continued to pursue them, to Athens (17:10–15).

Paul desired to return to Thessalonica and give assistance to his new converts but was unable to do so (1 Thessalonians 2:18). Because he was concerned about their welfare, Paul indicated that he sent Timothy back to Thessalonica in order "to establish [them], and to comfort [them] concerning [their] faith" (3:2). In the meantime, Paul left Athens and traveled west to Corinth (Acts 18:1). Timothy eventually returned and found Paul in Corinth, where, Paul reported, he "brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you" (1 Thessalonians 3:6). But there was apparently more to Timothy's report, for Paul decided to write a letter to the Christians at Thessalonica concerning questions they had and issues they were facing.[12] First Thessalonians is therefore, along with Galatians, probably one of Paul's earliest letters, possibly written from Athens during his second mission around AD 50. Second Thessalonians was probably composed not long after the first letter.[13]

Apparently, most of the converts in Thessalonica were Gentiles (Acts 17:4). Paul began his letter by mentioning that when he and his companions preached the gospel to them, they "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). This is the same message Paul and Barnabas preached during their first mission to the Gentiles in Lystra who attempted to offer sacrifice unto them after mistaking them for Greek gods. They declared: "Ye should turn from these vanities [i.e., idols] unto the living God" (Acts 14:15).

One of the issues that concerned Paul was the Thessalonian converts' attitudes toward self-reliance and temporal welfare. When Paul and his companions arrived in Thessalonica, they did not rely on the local congregation for temporal support, but they worked "night and day" because, as Paul concluded, "we would not be chargeable unto any of you" (1 Thessalonians 2:9). Not all the new converts, however, were following Paul's example of work, for Paul encouraged them "to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you" (4:11). It seems as though this issue persisted for some time after Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians, because in his second letter Paul reminded them once again that while in Thessalonica, the visiting disciples had worked to support themselves (2 Thessalonians 3:8) and taught them "if any would not work, neither should he eat" (3:10). The reason for this attitude among the members was probably not simply laziness. Rather, as we will see, it was possibly related to their expectation that Jesus would return soon, rendering, in their minds, regular daily work unnecessary.

During his original visit, Paul taught the Thessalonians to "serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:9–10). It seems that church members in Thessalonica expected Jesus to return quite soon, for when some of their number died before that event took place, they were worried that those deceased members would

miss out on important blessings. Paul attempted to calm their fears so that they would not be filled with sorrow "concerning them which are asleep" (i.e., dead) and not be like non-Christians who "have no hope" (4:13) in the Resurrection. Paul explained that those who "are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [i.e., have an advantage over] them which are asleep" (4:15) because when Christ returned, he would bring with him those righteous Christians who "sleep in Jesus" (4:14). Paul hoped that they would "comfort one another with these words" (4:18).

Paul's teachings did not completely resolve the issue, because in his second letter he warned the Thessalonians to not be troubled concerning the idea that "the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thessalonians 2:2). It seems that the expectation of Christ's imminent return was fueled, at least in part, by letters that were forged in Paul's name: "letter[s] as from us" (2:2). Paul reassured them that there was going to be "a falling away" (2:3) before Christ returned. The King James translation "falling away" does not really give a good sense of the Greek word *apostasia* (English *apostasy*), which more accurately means "rebellion."[14] This rebellion, according to Paul, would consist of a "man of sin" who would sit "in the temple of God" and pretend to be God (2:3–4). Paul described this event in terms similar to the desecration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem by the Seleucid king Antiochus IV around 168 BC. According to Paul, this apostasy was currently being held back from its full force, but it would eventually be destroyed when Christ returned (2:6–8).

1 Corinthians (ca. AD 52–56)

Paul visited Corinth during his second mission (Acts 18:1–18). Corinth was an important port city on the west side of the isthmus separating access to the Adriatic Sea to the west and the Aegean Sea to the east.[15] Here he met Aquila and Priscilla, who had come to Corinth from Rome and who were of the same profession (i.e., a "tentmaker" or, more generally, a leatherworker) as Paul (18:2–3). Paul preached in the local synagogue, and among his converts was "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue" (18:8). Paul remained in Corinth for eighteen months (18:11). On one occasion a group of Jews brought him before the Roman governor Gallio, accusing Paul of persuading people "to worship God contrary to the law" (18:12–13). Gallio rebuked Paul's Jewish accusers, saying that if Paul had broken Roman law there would be consequences, but if it was a matter of Jewish law, "I will be no judge of such matters" (18:14–15).

Apparently, soon after leaving Corinth, Paul communicated with the converts in Corinth by means of a letter, for he stated in 1 Corinthians, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators" (5:9). This letter either has not survived or, as some scholars have proposed, is partially preserved in 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1, a section that interrupts the flow of the remainder of 2 Corinthians. Following the writing of this first letter, Paul learned that problems in Corinth were continuing. This information came to Paul by means of people who were "of the house of Chloe" (1 Corinthians 1:11) through a letter that members of the Corinthian congregation had written to him (7:1) and by three representatives (Stephanas,

Fortunatus, and Achaicus) who visited him from Corinth (16:17). In response, Paul wrote a second letter to them (preserved as our 1 Corinthians) in which he dealt with issues such as disunity and factions among them, immorality and their acceptance of such behavior, and lawsuits between the members (chapters 1–6) and then answered the questions that they asked him in their letter (chapters 7–16).[16]

Paul began the letter with his disapproval that many of them were separating into factions—various groups claiming to be followers of Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ (1 Corinthians 1:12; compare 3:4).[17] He exhorted all of them to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" so there would "be no divisions among you" (1:10). Paul admitted that the core message of the gospel—"the preaching of the cross" (1:18), "Christ crucified" (1:23)—was a controversial one to others: "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (1:23).[18] The idea of a crucified messiah was offensive to Jews who expected someone powerful and triumphant, and it was silliness to Gentiles because that meant Christians worshipped a convicted criminal. But, Paul taught, "unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1:18). This is because "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (2:14).

Another issue of concern to Paul was the proliferation of immoral behavior among the members; in particular, one member was apparently having sexual relations with his step-mother (1 Corinthians 5:1). If that were not bad enough, according to Paul, the attitude of the members toward this situation was indifferent: "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you" (5:2). Paul instructed the church leaders to excommunicate the offending party (5:3, 5): "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump [of dough]" (5:7). In his first letter Paul had instructed them not to keep company with outsiders who participate in immoral behavior (5:9). Now, however, Paul intensified his prohibition to also include Christians who participate in this conduct: "any man that is called a brother" (5:11). This is because such association might have a lasting negative effect on disciples who were trying to shun this behavior, for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (5:6).

Paul concluded the beginning sections of his letter by warning the Corinthians against filing lawsuits against one another: "Now there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another" (1 Corinthians 6:7). Paul was particularly concerned that they were employing non-Christians to judge matters between Christians (6:6). He would rather that the two parties either worked out the issue amicably between themselves or sought counsel from a fellow Christian because Old Testament scripture testified that believers will judge the world (6:1–5).

In chapter 7, Paul began to address questions from the letter they wrote to him: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me" (1 Corinthians 7:1). The letter from the Corinthians had asserted: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman" (7:1), meaning that it advocated celibacy within marriage. Paul, on the other hand, instructed married couples to have normal marital relations ("due benevolence," 7:3).[19] In general, Paul's counsel was to

follow his example and remain apart from a marriage relationship: "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I" (7:8). Why would Paul encourage the Corinthians to avoid marriage? The Joseph Smith Translation clarifies this issue by specifying that Paul was referring to those who had been "called unto the ministry" (JST 1 Corinthians 7:29).[20] Paul reasoned that such individuals would thus be able to "attend upon the Lord without distraction" (1 Corinthians 7:35).

The next issue from the Corinthian letter to Paul concerned meat that had been "offered in sacrifice unto idols" (1 Corinthians 8:4; compare 8:1). The Corinthian Christians were primarily Gentiles (compare 12:2) and still had gentile friends and neighbors.[21] The heart of their concern was whether Christians were allowed to eat meat that had been offered to a pagan god. Paul's response covered two circumstances. First, if Christians were invited to a feast at a pagan temple, Paul concluded that it was permissible to attend and eat the meat because they "know that an idol is nothing in the world" (8:4) and that "meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse" (8:8; compare 10:27). The exception was if the Christian knew that someone would get the wrong impression and suppose that Christians advocated pagan sacrifice (8:7), thus becoming "a stumblingblock to them" (8:9; compare 10:28). In such a case Christians should refrain from eating, for as Paul declared, "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh" (8:13; compare 10:31–32). Second, if the extra meat from the sacrifice subsequently was "sold in the shambles" (i.e., the market), Paul taught that Christians were allowed to purchase and eat it, but counseled them to not ask questions about the origin of the meat (10:25).

In the next chapter, Paul addressed the role of women.[22] It should be noted that the Greek words translated as "man" and as "woman" could also be translated as "husband" and as "wife," with the resulting understanding that what Paul said may apply better to roles within the family and not merely to issues of gender. Thus, Paul reasoned that just as the "head" (i.e., leader) of Jesus Christ is God the Father, so also "the head of every man [i.e., husband] is Christ; and the head of the woman [i.e., wife] is the man [i.e., her husband]" (1 Corinthians 11:3). If Paul were living today, he may have chosen his words more carefully to reflect Latter-day Saint emphasis on equality within marriage. Modern prophets and apostles have clarified the roles of husbands and wives: "Fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."[23] As Paul concluded: "Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord" (11:11).

Paul then returned to the questions the Corinthians posed in the letter "concerning spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:1).[24] According to Paul, just as the human body "hath many members" but "are one body" (12:12), so also "there are diversities of gifts," but they all come from "the same Spirit" (12:4). Paul pled with the Corinthians to seek after "the best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31) from the Spirit, who distributed them "to every man severally, as he [i.e., the Spirit] will" (12:11). For Paul, the greatest spiritual gift was charity (13:13), which the prophet Mormon defined as "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47), and exhorted people to "pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love" (7:48).

One particular spiritual gift that the Corinthians were struggling with was speaking in tongues. Apparently, there were many in the congregation who were speaking in an unknown tongue, with the result that nobody could understand them. Paul preferred that people prophesy in a known tongue rather than speak in an unknown tongue, so that the congregation would receive knowledge and be edified (1 Corinthians 14:5–6; compare 14:19). Therefore, Paul required each person speaking in tongues to have an interpreter (14:27–28; compare 14:5, 13). He also instructed them to be in control because the spirit of prophecy is "subject to the prophets" (14:32)—or in other words, subject to those who are filled with the Spirit, and not the other way around—for, as Paul concluded, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (14:33).

In 1 Corinthians, Paul included very important information about the mortal and postmortal ministries of Christ. Since these epistles were likely written before the canonical Gospels were composed, Paul's letters probably contain the earliest references to these events.[25] First, Paul mentioned the Last Supper (11:23), in which Jesus taught that the elements of the bread and wine were symbolic of his death (11:26) and that disciples should reenact this ritual "in remembrance of me" (11:24–25).[26] In addition, Paul repeated one of the earliest formulaic or creedal statements of Christian belief: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," and "he was buried" and "rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (15:3–4). Paul also referred to post-Resurrection appearances of the Savior not recorded elsewhere in the New Testament, including to a group of five hundred people and to the Lord's brother James (15:6–7).

These references led Paul into his discussion of topics of special interest to Latter-day Saints: baptism for the dead and resurrected bodies. Some members of the Corinthian congregation did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12). In response, Paul referred to their practice of vicarious baptism: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (15:29).[27] Paul then taught them about the difference between "terrestrial" (i.e., mortal or earthly) bodies and "celestial" (i.e., resurrected or heavenly) bodies (15:40)—the former full of corruption and the latter full of glory (15:42–44). For Latter-day Saints, the Joseph Smith Translation uses this discussion as a catalyst to teach about the different types of resurrected bodies: there are "also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial, one; and the terrestrial, another; and the telestial, another" (JST 15:40). In closing, Paul addressed their concern about "the collection for the saints" (16:1). He instructed them to gather together their weekly donations for the poor, which he would take with him to Jerusalem (16:2–3; compare Acts 11:29–30; Galatians 2:10).

2 Corinthians (ca. AD 53–56)

It is difficult to make complete sense of 2 Corinthians.[28] Within 2 Corinthians Paul digresses quite a bit, and his tone varies: chapter 7 is conciliatory, while chapters 10–13 are argumentative. Some scholars have proposed that 2 Corinthians is a compilation of a few different

letters that were later combined into one. Even if 2 Corinthians is one unified letter, it is a very mixed letter. It takes some detective work to reconstruct the context that caused Paul to write this letter.[29] Paul originally visited Corinth during his second mission (Acts 18:1–17). Afterward, Paul wrote a letter counseling them to avoid fellowship with immoral people (mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:9). Paul eventually wrote a second letter (1 Corinthians), in which he instructed the Corinthians to excommunicate an immoral member of their congregation (5:13). In that letter, Paul also told them he would soon visit them and deal with the problem if they refused to do so (4:18–21). This background helps one understand the context and purpose of 2 Corinthians.

Paul's original plan seems to have been to visit the Corinthians a second time, travel from Corinth to Macedonia (northern Greece), and then return through Corinth before heading to Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 1:15–16). But it appears that the second visit to Corinth did not go very well, and Paul changed his plans to return through Corinth (2:1, 5). Members of the Corinthian congregation were offended, but Paul defended his decision, saying that he refused to return in order "to spare you" (1:23; compare 13:2, 10). So instead, Paul wrote another letter to them in which he rebuked them and hurt the feelings of some in the congregation (7:8). The identity of this letter of rebuke is uncertain, but it may be 1 Corinthians or possibly 2 Corinthians chapters 10–13, which may have been later combined with other letters to make 2 Corinthians. Paul apologized for hurting their feelings (7:8; compare 2:4) but rejoiced that they "sorrowed to repentance" (7:9).

The Corinthians apparently followed Paul's counsel to excommunicate a wicked member of their congregation, but when writing 2 Corinthians, Paul determined that "sufficient to such a man is this punishment" (2:6) and now encouraged them "to forgive him, and comfort him" (2:7) and "confirm your love toward him" (2:8). Paul praised the Corinthians and compared them to an "epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (3:3). He also acknowledged the challenges they all faced: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (4:8–9). He admitted that while in mortality disciples "groan" because they "earnestly" desire for the Resurrection and life with God (5:2–4). But God gave the gift of Jesus Christ to humanity in order to bring about "the ministry of reconciliation" (5:18). Through the vicarious atonement of his Son, humans may be "reconciled to God" (5:19–21).[30]

Paul reminded the Corinthians to avoid fellowship with anyone who may be involved in wickedness: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14; compare 1 Corinthians 5:9). And for those who may be involved with such individuals or behavior, Paul exhorted them using language from Isaiah 52:11: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (2 Corinthians 6:17). A revelation to the early Latter-day Saints through the Prophet Joseph Smith repeated a similar Isaian plea (Doctrine and Covenants 133:5, 14). Paul's desire for these Christians was clear: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

The book of Acts records a prophecy of one Agabus concerning a famine "which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:28). It also states that disciples in the diaspora "determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea" (2 Corinthians 11:29), which was delivered thence "by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (11:30). When Paul visited Jerusalem, Peter requested that he "remember the poor" (Galatians 2:10), which Paul indicated he was already eager to do. Collecting alms for the poor was a regular part of Paul's ministry. He reminded the Corinthians of the generosity of the saints in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8:1–5), possibly a reference to the congregation in Philippi (Philippians 4:15–16). Accordingly, Paul taught the Corinthians to give generously, "not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6–7; compare 1 Corinthians 16:2–3).

Earlier, Paul had told the members of the congregation, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:8–9). Paul wrote these words in humility, but some may have been using them to challenge Paul's authority and character (2 Corinthians 10:8–10). So in response, Paul felt compelled to "boast" (or assert) his authority, which was not outside his "measure" (or stewardship) as an apostle (10:13; compare Romans 11:13). In the King James Version, Paul referred to his critics as "the very chiefest apostles" (2 Corinthians 11:5; 12:11), a sarcastic reference to them as self-proclaimed "super-apostles" (NIV). He identified them as Jewish Christians: "Hebrews . . . Israelites . . . the seed of Abraham" (11:22) and exposed these pretenders as "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (11:13).

It seems that these Judaizers were teaching that Paul was not a real apostle because he did not demonstrate all the "signs of an apostle" (2 Corinthians 12:12–13). Paul taught the Corinthians that he had an apostolic right to accept temporal assistance from members of the church, but he refused this assistance from the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 9:6, 12; compare 2 Thessalonians 3:8–9). Instead, he "robbed other churches" (2 Corinthians 11:8), meaning he accepted such assistance from them, specifically from the Christians in Macedonia (11:9). This perceived inconsistency apparently offended some of the Corinthians (11:7). Paul was earnestly trying to not burden the Corinthians with a demand for temporal support (11:8; 12:15–16). In what may be a sarcastic response, Paul apologized: "forgive me this wrong" (12:13). Paul closed the epistle by reminding the Corinthians that his written response to them was intended for their "edification" and not for their "destruction" (13:10).

Romans (ca. AD 53–56)

It is apparent that Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans before he ever visited Rome.[31] The book of Acts records that during his third mission, Paul traveled through Macedonia and Achaia (i.e., northern and central Greece) and was inspired to decide that after he returned to Jerusalem he should travel to Rome (Acts 19:21). In Acts, Paul also stated that his purpose in returning to Jerusalem was to "bring alms to my nation, and offerings" (24:17). In his epistle to the Romans, Paul indicated that he was currently bringing contributions from

the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia "for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem" and that after he did so he would travel to Rome (Romans 15:25–28). The book of Acts also explains that as Paul traveled up the coast of Italy on his journey from Caesarea, "the brethren" (28:15) from Rome came to meet him. Thus, Paul was not Rome's first missionary, and Christianity was established there before he arrived. If Paul did not establish the church in Rome, why then did he write the Epistle to the Romans?

There are a number of reasons why Paul wrote this letter. Paul indicated that he wanted to share the gospel among those in Rome, so that he "might have some fruit among you also" (Romans 1:13). Typically, Paul desired to preach in locations where nobody else had preached before so that he would not "build upon another man's foundation" (15:20). Thus Paul's desire to preach among the Romans is noteworthy. In addition, Paul's declaration to the Romans that he was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (1:16) is curious. It seems that Paul was responding to those in Rome who were critical of him, in particular concerning his missionary work among Gentiles, for he stated: "I have written the more boldly unto you . . . that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable [to you]" (15:15–16). Why would Paul want the Romans to understand and accept him? One reason may be that he desired temporal assistance from them in order to get to Spain (15:24, 28). Christians in Rome would be less willing to help Paul if they did not accept his message, so Paul devoted a significant amount of space in this letter to explain his teachings about Gentiles and salvation.

Paul's audience in Rome consisted of both gentile and Jewish Christians. Although in later chapters Paul addressed ethnic Jews (Romans 4:1; 7:1), he began the letter by addressing Gentiles (1:5–6, 13).[32] To them Paul explained that ignorance of God's standards was not a valid excuse for bad behavior, for people were "without excuse" (1:20) because God had revealed basic truths to all humankind (1:18–20). In Book of Mormon terms, Paul was teaching something similar to what the prophet Mormon taught: "The Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; . . . wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God" (Moroni 7:16). Paul taught that God "will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:6). Jews who specifically had been taught the law of God through prophets and scriptures would be judged according to that standard (2:12), while Gentiles, who had received truths "by nature" and had "the law written in their hearts" or their "conscience" (2:14–15), would be judged according to that standard. And if Gentiles lived up to the standard taught by their conscience, they would be considered part of the covenant people (2:26).

Paul anticipated some questions from his audience. First, if both Jews and Gentiles could be saved, why did God have a covenant people? Paul's answer was that God had given Jews the responsibility of bringing forth the "oracles of God" (Romans 3:2), meaning the truths of God through revelation, prophets, or scripture. Second, if the Jews were chosen for such awesome responsibilities, did that mean they were better than other people? Paul responded with an emphatic no: "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23; compare 3:9). Third, if all people were sinners, then how were they saved? Paul answered this question by teaching them about justification.[33] Justification means to be acquit-

ted, or pronounced innocent with respect to the law. For Paul, there were two ways to be justified. The first might be termed justification by works: when one kept all the laws all the time. Concerning this Paul taught: "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them" (10:5; compare Leviticus 18:5). In practical terms, however, this type of justification was impossible to achieve (3:20; compare Galatians 2:16; 2 Nephi 2:5). King Benjamin in the Book of Mormon similarly reasoned: "If ye should serve [God] with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants. . . . Ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever" (Mosiah 2:20–24). If people cannot be justified by their own merits, how can they be justified? Paul summarized: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28; compare Galatians 2:16). This is just as the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob taught: "Remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved" (2 Nephi 10:24; compare 25:23).

Paul used the example of Abraham to prove his point. If Abraham had been justified by works, Paul reasoned, he could boast in his own ability that he had earned salvation (Romans 4:2). But the story of Abraham in Genesis says that before Abraham performed the good work of circumcision, "he believed in the Lord; and [the Lord] counted it to him for righteousness [i.e., justification]" (Genesis 15:6). Thus, Paul pointed out that Abraham was justified while he was still uncircumcised, and that circumcision was a sign of the justification God had already bestowed upon Abraham because of his faith (Romans 4:10–11).

Another question Paul addressed concerned the role of good works in the process of justification. On the one hand, Paul taught the importance of doing good works: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Romans 2:13). On the other hand, however, Paul concluded that people are "justified by faith" (3:28). If a person was justified by faith, then why should he or she perform good works? Paul explained his answer by referring to the symbolism associated with baptism, which recalled the death of Jesus Christ, being symbolic of his burial and resurrection (6:3–5). But baptism was also reminiscent of the ending of a Christian's old life serving sin and the beginning of his or her new life as a disciple who does not serve sin (6:4–6). Thus, followers of Christ do good works not because they can earn salvation, but because they are new creatures in Christ who love and obey him, just as Jesus taught: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15; compare 2 Corinthians 5:17).[34]

Yet, as Paul admitted, there existed an internal struggle within every human heart: "For what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that do I" (Romans 7:15), or in other words: "For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (7:15 NRSV). According to Paul, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do" (7:18–19). The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi lamented concerning this same struggle: "O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities . . . because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me" (2 Nephi 4:17–18). How does one overcome this di-

lemma? Paul exclaimed as Nephi: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God [it is] through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:24–25), through whom we become "more than conquerors" (8:37). "For," as Paul concluded, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (8:18).

Paul also perceived that his Roman audience did not fully understand what it meant to be a member of the covenant people, the house of Israel. Paul clarified his enigmatic statement "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Romans 9:6) with the following explanation: "They which are the children of the flesh [or literal descendants of Abraham], these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise [or those who make and keep covenants] are counted for the seed" (9:8). This was likewise what Nephi taught: "As many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord; and as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off; for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent and believe in his Son" (2 Nephi 30:2; compare 3 Nephi 16:13).

Paul anticipated that some of the Roman Christians might conclude that the Lord loved the Gentiles but not his own people. Paul responded, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1). In order to achieve this, Paul said, he wanted to provoke his people to follow his example (11:13–14). But Paul said that they were "ignorant" of the way that God truly justified his people and were "going about to establish their own righteousness" (10:3). If, however, the law of Moses was not intended to provide a way for God's people to justify themselves by their own works, then what was the purpose of the law of Moses? Paul taught: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (10:4; compare Galatians 3:24). In other words, as Amulek taught in the Book of Mormon, "this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God" (Alma 34:14). Thus the law of Moses did not provide salvation, but was given to teach about Christ, just as Abinadi taught: "It is a shadow of those things which are to come," but "redemption cometh through Christ the Lord" (Mosiah 16:14–15).

Paul warned the Gentiles among his audience, using imagery of grafting and the olive tree.[35] He stated that some of the natural branches of the tree of Israel had been "broken off" because of wickedness (Romans 11:17). This was similar to the imagery employed by the nonbiblical prophet Zenos, whose allegory has been preserved in the writings of the Book of Mormon prophet Jacob (Jacob 5:1–9). At the same time, however, Paul cautioned the gentile Christians: "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee" (Romans 11:21; compare 2 Nephi 30:2). And if the house of Israel did not continue in "unbelief," then "God is able to graft them [i.e., Israel] in again" (Romans 11:23). Paul informed his audience that Israel's "blindness" to the truth of the gospel would continue "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (11:25). Modern revelation teaches that the house of Israel will remain in their state of unbelief "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," when "a light shall break forth among" the house of Israel, which shall be "the fulness of [the] gospel" (Doctrine and Covenants 45:19, 25, 28). Nephi similarly clarified: "After the Gentiles had

received the fulness of the Gospel, the natural branches of the olive tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel, should be grafted in, or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer" (1 Nephi 10:14). And thus Paul concluded that eventually "all Israel shall be saved" (Romans 11:26). Therefore, all disciples had a responsibility to "present [their] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (12:1).

In the final chapters of Romans, Paul addressed some practical issues. First, he exhorted all Christians to "be subject unto the higher powers," for "the powers that be are ordained of God" (13:1). Paul was evidently referring to civic government, a concept he considered inspired of God and to which Christians ought to pay proper taxes (13:7). Using similar language, a modern revelation teaches: "Let no man break the laws of the land. . . . Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet" (Doctrine and Covenants 58:21–22). The Joseph Smith Translation of Paul's exhortation, however, states that "there is no power *in the church* but of God" (JST Romans 13:1; emphasis added). Rather than always being considered a restoration of the original text, the Joseph Smith Translation sometimes functions as inspired application, alerting readers to additional insights not intended by the original writer.[36] Thus Paul counseled Christians to submit to secular government, and the Joseph Smith Translation adds the concept that Christians should submit to ecclesiastical government. Both lessons are true and relevant.

Second, Paul taught his audience about proper tolerance between the church members. Some issues within the church were open to personal choice. Some of the Roman Christians seem to have been vegetarians, possibly avoiding meat because they thought it might have been offered up as sacrifice to a pagan idol (compare Acts 15:20; 1 Corinthians 8:7). Paul's personal opinion was that this kind of prohibition was unnecessary (he referred to these Christians as "weak"), "for one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs [i.e., only vegetables]" (Romans 14:2). But Paul allowed all Christians personal choice in the matter and called for mutual tolerance: "Let not him that eateth [meat] despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not [meat] judge him that eateth" (14:3). Paul also warned Christians who ate meat to not use their freedom to do so as an excuse to make others feel bad: "If thy [vegetarian] brother be grieved with thy meat [eating] . . . destroy not him with thy meat [eating]. . . . For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (14:15, 17). Rather, they ought to be patient with those of a different opinion (15:1–2). Whether one ate meat or not, Paul declared, "we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. . . . Let us not therefore judge one another any more" (14:10, 13).

Paul concluded his letter by recommending to the Christians in Rome a certain woman named Phebe, who was a "servant of the church which is at Cenchrea" (Romans 16:1).[37] Phebe seems to have held ecclesiastical authority as a "servant" (from the Greek word for "deaconess") in the church—possibly functioning similarly to a modern Relief Society general president. Paul encouraged the Roman Christians to "receive her in the Lord" and also to "assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you" (16:2). It is interesting that at the

end of Paul's many greetings, we find this interjection: "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord" (16:22). This is evidence that Paul did not physically write all of his own letters, but rather that he used scribes, who wrote down Paul's instruction.[38] Tertius apparently also knew some of the Christians in Rome and sent his own personal greeting to them.

Philippians (ca. AD 58–62)

Paul visited Philippi on his second mission after "a man of Macedonia" appeared to him in a vision and pled for him to "come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9).[39] There he taught and baptized the first "European" converts: Lydia and her household (16:14–15). Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned for casting out an evil spirt from a girl who brought her masters financial gain (16:16–24). The next day, when the keeper of the prison said they were free to go, Paul reminded him that the magistrates had unjustly beaten and imprisoned Roman citizens (16:35–38). The magistrates were naturally very concerned about this and subsequently "came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city" (16:38–39).

Among those Paul addressed at Philippi were "the bishops and deacons" (Philippians 1:1). The modern organization of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints familiar to members is one bishop presiding over a single group, or ward, of members. But Paul's words reflect a very early ecclesiastical structure with a group of "bishops" (the Greek word for "overseers") and a group of "deacons" (the Greek word for "servants"). This later developed into the concept of a monepiscopacy, or one bishop per congregation (compare 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7).[40] Paul referred to his "bonds" (Philippians 1:7, 13) and was therefore in prison somewhere. Philippians is thus one of Paul's four so-called prison letters (including Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon). Paul's experience in prison caused him to reflect on his innermost desires, whether he preferred to die and return to his heavenly home or to live and continue his missionary labors: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (1:23–24). Paul concluded, however, that he would "abide and continue with [them]" (1:25).

Paul employed an early Christian hymn to encourage the Philippians to follow the example of Jesus Christ.[41] According to Paul, Christ, who was originally "in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6), came to earth in "the form of a servant" (2:7). The emphasis of these phrases was on Christ's divine and mortal identities and natures rather than on merely his physical appearance. Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (2:6), meaning that he did not think that his premortal divine status was something he should selfishly hold on to. Rather, Christ came to earth and "made himself of no reputation" and "was made in the likeness of men" (2:7), or literally, "he emptied himself" of a certain measure of his premortal glory and "became mortal."[42] As a mortal man, Christ "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (2:8). These teachings on the incarnation were similar to what Nephi's angel referred to as "the condescension of God" (1 Nephi 11:26). Nephi saw in vision the birth of Christ into mortality (11:19–20) as well as his

suffering and crucifixion (11:32–33). Modern revelation teaches that after Christ "descended below all things," he also "ascended up on high" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:6). Similarly, Paul taught that after Christ suffered death on the cross, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" and that "every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:9, 11).[43]

There seem to have been some among the Philippians who claimed authority because of their Jewish lineage and who desired others to submit to circumcision of the flesh (Philippians 3:3; compare Colossians 2:11). Paul countered this claim of Judaizers by emphasizing his own Jewish background: "Circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (Philippians 3:5–6). But Paul reminded them that a noteworthy Jewish heritage was not important in the eternal perspective: "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" and "count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (3:7–8). Paul encouraged his audience to have the same perspective (3:15).

In conclusion, Paul exhorted the Philippians to focus on "whatsoever things are true, . . . honest, . . . just, . . . pure, . . . lovely, . . . [and] of good report" and having to do with "virtue . . . [and] praise" (Philippians 4:8). This is part of "the admonition of Paul" referred to in the thirteenth article of faith, which Latter-day Saints seek to emulate. Paul proudly acknowledged the generosity of the Philippians: "For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (4:16). Paul had earlier informed the Corinthians about the generosity of "the churches of Macedonia" who, though they were in "deep poverty," freely gave in abundance (2 Corinthians 8:1–2). Paul was evidently referring to the Christians in Philippi. Paul ended his letter by sending greetings from "they that are of Caesar's household" (Philippians 4:22). Most scholars have understood this reference to mean that Paul was writing from prison in Rome, but it is at least possible that "Caesar's household" could also refer to the household of a local Roman governor elsewhere in the empire.[44]

Ephesians (ca. AD 58–62)

There are some difficult issues associated with this letter.[45] The book of Acts narrates how Paul called the elders of Ephesus to meet him in Miletus and then spoke to them of his three-year ministry among them and his great love and affection for them (20:17–20, 31). Yet, unlike his other letters, Paul did not send any personal greetings to specific individuals in this correspondence and hoped that the audience had heard of his service toward them (Ephesians 3:2). In addition, the phrase "at Ephesus" (1:1) is absent from some of the earliest manuscripts of this letter. These facts have caused some scholars to question the authenticity of this letter as well as its destination. But it is evident that Paul had great concern for the Christian communities to the east of Ephesus, such as Colossae and Laodicea, even though they had "not seen [his] face in the flesh" (Colossians 2:1). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that this letter was originally a circular letter Paul intended for the Christian

congregations in and around Ephesus, similar to the nature of his letter to "the churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:2). Paul's letter to the Ephesians was written while Paul was imprisoned (Ephesians 6:20), probably in Rome, but perhaps elsewhere.

Paul began this epistle by teaching his audience that they had been "sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13).[46] Modern revelation identifies the "Holy Spirit of promise" as the "Comforter," which the Lord promised his disciples "as is recorded in the testimony of John" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:3). In that Johannine account, Jesus clearly taught that the "Comforter" was "the Holy Ghost" (John 14:26). Paul identified this as "the earnest of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:14; compare 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5). The earnest money was essentially a down payment, promising that the full amount would be paid at a future point. In antiquity, letters could be "sealed" with a wax or clay seal that was stamped with an insignia identifying the person who wrote the letter and indicating that the contents of the letter were approved by the writer. Paul explained that Christians were sealed by the Holy Ghost (Ephesians 1:13). Thus, if disciples were worthy to receive the Holy Ghost, it meant that they were approved of God, who gave them access to this precious down payment "until the redemption of the purchased possession" (1:14)—meaning until God paid in full and brought the righteous into his kingdom.[47]

There was evidently a conflict between some of the local Jewish and gentile Christians.[48] Paul reminded them that Jesus Christ "made both [Jews and Gentiles] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (Ephesians 2:14). He explained that this reconciliation was made possible through "the cross," or in other words, Christ and his atonement (2:16). The result was that Gentiles, some of whom may have previously felt as if they were outsiders, "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (2:19). They became "fellowheirs" and "partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (3:6). As Nephi testified, God "inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; . . . and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Nephi 26:33). Paul testified of the unity of the church and its ordinances: "There is . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:4–5) for both Jews and Gentiles. Ecclesiastical positions like apostles, prophets, and so forth were designed to help achieve this goal of unity—"for the perfecting of the saints" (4:11–12).[49]

This letter also contains counsel for its audience that is applicable in an everyday setting. Paul exhorted them to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11). He encouraged them to "be filled with the Spirit" (5:18). Paul then offered some practical advice. One way to shun the darkness and fill their lives with the Spirit, he stated, was by "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (5:19; compare Colossians 3:16). Living one's life by following the inspiration received through the Holy Ghost was one way to "put on the whole armour of God, that [they] may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

Colossians (ca. AD 58–62)

The ancient city of Colossae was located about 120 miles east of Ephesus. Paul and his companions spent considerable time evangelizing in and around Ephesus (Acts 19:10). Yet, it is apparent that Paul did not personally visit Colossae, for he included them in the category of those who "have not seen [his] face in the flesh" (Colossians 2:1). One of Paul's companions, Epaphras, was originally a member of the Colossian congregation (4:12). Epaphras informed Paul concerning the situation at Colossae, whereupon Paul wrote them a letter (1:7–8; compare 1:4). Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison somewhere (4:3), possibly in Rome. Colossae was devastated by an earthquake around the year AD 61. Since Paul made no mention of this disaster in the letter, he may have written this letter before that date.[50]

Paul warned the Colossians about those who were attempting to "beguile [them] with enticing words" (Colossians 2:4) and "spoil [them] through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men" (2:8). These false teachers seem to have been Judaizers who desired them to keep the regulations of the law of Moses, including circumcision and kosher food laws. Paul reminded the Colossians, "Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands" (2:11), and warned them: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (2:16). In addition, in Colossians 2:18 Paul alerted them concerning those who promised a reward for "voluntary humility" (i.e., living a celibate or ascetic lifestyle; compare 1 Corinthians 7:1) or "worshipping of angels" (i.e., venerating archangels; compare Jude 1:9).

Paul encouraged the Colossians to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). Thus, just as in his letter to the Philippians, Paul countered false notions by quoting an early Christian hymn.[51] This christological poem taught about the superiority of Jesus Christ, who was "the firstborn of every creature" (1:15), "the head of the body, the church," and "the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (1:18).[52] Further, "by him were all things created" (1:15–16), and "he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (1:17), meaning that through Christ all life is sustained. This recalls the teachings of modern revelation that Christ is "in all and through all things. . . . This is the light of Christ . . . which is the same light that quickens your understandings; which light proceeds forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space—the light which is in all things, which gives life to all things" (Doctrine and Covenants 88:6–13). In sum, within Christ dwelt the "fulness" of divinity and power (Colossians 1:19; compare 2:9–10).

Paul taught the Christians in Colossae to "mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Colossians 3:5). The King James Version phraseology can be confusing. Paul did not teach the Colossians to subject members of the church to humiliation, but rather to "put to death therefore what is earthly within you" (ESV)—such things as "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, [and] filthy communication out of your mouth" (3:8). Paul pled with them to "put off the old man with his deeds" (3:9) and to "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of [Christ] that created him" (3:10). This was as

King Benjamin taught the Nephites: "The natural man is an enemy to God . . . unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love" (Mosiah 3:19).

Paul concluded his letter by instructing his audience that "when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16). This verse has important implications for understanding the earliest stages in the process of compiling the New Testament.[53] Eventually, congregations started to share letters. Some documents survived over time, such as the letter to the Colossians, while others did not, such as the letter to the Laodiceans. It is a safe assumption that they shared copies and kept the original letter for themselves. Over time, each community had its own collection of documents, which may have differed from another community's collection.

Philemon (ca. AD 58–62)

Paul's letter to Philemon is the shortest of the extant Pauline Letters.[54] Unlike the epistles directed to entire congregations discussed above, this letter was a personal correspondence with Philemon, a Christian slave owner, concerning Onesimus, his slave.[55] Since we know Onesimus was from Colossae (Colossians 4:9), it is likely that Philemon was as well. And since the church members met in his house (Philemon 1:2), it is possible Philemon was a leader of the Colossian congregation. Slavery was legal in the Roman Empire, but it was not based on race. People could become slaves if they were prisoners of war or as a punishment for crime. Further, individuals could sell themselves into slavery if they could not find a better occupation to support themselves. Some slaves and slave owners converted to Christianity. In his letters, Paul occasionally encouraged Christian "servants" (i.e., slaves) to obey their masters and Christian "masters" (i.e., slave owners) to be kind to their servants (compare Ephesians 6:5–9; Colossians 3:22; 4:1). A conflict between Philemon and Onesimus seems to have been the impetus for writing this letter.

It seems that Paul and Philemon knew each other before this incident (Philemon 1:19). Onesimus had run away from Philemon (1:15), possibly because he had stolen something (1:18). Eventually Onesimus met Paul in prison and was converted to Christianity (1:10). The name *Onesimus* meant "useful" or "profitable." Using a play on words, Paul mused to Philemon concerning Onesimus, "which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me" (1:11). As a runaway slave, Onesimus broke Roman law, which would have merited punishment, but Paul encouraged Philemon "to receive him [back] for ever" (1:15)—however, "not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved" (1:16). Possibly being concerned that Philemon might disregard his request, Paul reminded Philemon: "If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. . . . I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides" (1:17–19). It is evident that Paul expected to

be released from prison sometime in the near future, for he instructed Philemon: "Prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I will be given unto you" (1:22).

1–2 Timothy and Titus (ca. AD 60–64)

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus are almost certainly the last letters we have from the apostle. Timothy originally lived with his Jewish mother and Greek father in Lystra and was one of the early converts from Paul's first mission (Acts 16:1; compare 14:6–7). At the beginning of his second mission, Paul revisited the area, heard of Timothy's good reputation, and had him circumcised (16:2–3), presumably to avoid conflict when they entered synagogues. Thereafter, Timothy became one of Paul's important missionary companions, assisting Paul with the writing of many of his letters.[56] When Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, we learn that Paul had left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3).

Titus was also an early convert—a Gentile who apparently was in Antioch when Judaizers from Judea were preaching that gentile converts must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses (Acts 15:1; compare Galatians 2:1–3). Paul and Barnabas were so concerned about this that they took the uncircumcised Titus with them to Jerusalem as a kind of test case while they discussed the matter with church leaders, who agreed that gentile converts like Titus did not need circumcision (Galatians 2:1–3; compare Acts 15:2, 19). Titus, like Timothy, became an important missionary companion to Paul (2 Corinthians 8:23). In his letter to Titus, Paul indicated that he and Titus had been preaching together on the island of Crete and that he left Titus to continue the missionary work there (Titus 1:5).

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus are often called the Pastoral Epistles.[57] This designation stems from the fact that these letters were from one "pastor" or shepherd (Paul) to another "pastor" or shepherd (Timothy and Titus) concerning "pastoring" or shepherding the church members over whom they had stewardship. Some scholars consider these letters pseudonymous—written by someone else in the name of Paul. Reasons for this conclusion include that these letters use vocabulary that is not found in Paul's earlier letters and that some of the issues addressed in these letters, such as warning against a form of Gnosticism (1 Timothy 6:20), reflect major issues of later second-century Christianity. While Latter-day Saints acknowledge these concerns, they can be resolved by recalling that Paul used scribes to compose his letters (compare Romans 16:22), which may account for differences in vocabulary, and that these letters were written toward the end of Paul's life, which could explain the references to issues that became more fully developed in later Christianity.[58]

Paul began his first letter to Timothy by cautioning him to not "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying" (1 Timothy 1:4; compare Titus 1:14; 3:9). When Latter-day Saints hear the word *genealogy*, they think of family history work, but this was not what Paul had in mind. Toward the end of this letter, Paul instructed Timothy to avoid "oppositions of science falsely so called" (1 Timothy 6:20). The word translated as "science" is the Greek word *gnosis*, which means "knowledge." Thus, Paul was concerned that some Christians were claiming and teaching special knowledge,

which led to "oppositions," or in other words, disputations. The warning against myths and genealogies may be a reference to speculative stories and genealogies in Jewish apocryphal literature (Titus 1:14; 3:9). At least one issue that later Christian gnostics claimed special knowledge about was the origin of the universe and of divine beings. Paul's warning against "fables and endless genealogies" may also concern an early development of this line of gnostic speculation about the origins of divine beings.[59]

Paul counseled both Timothy and Titus concerning those who serve as bishops.[60] The word *bishop* comes from the Greek word *episkopos*, which means "overseer." Although one should not seek for position within the church, Paul praised those who desired sincerely to serve God and others within the church (1 Timothy 3:1). He taught Timothy and Titus that bishops should be examples of good personal behavior (3:2–3; Titus 1:7–9). According to Paul, a bishop should be "the husband of one wife" (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6). This was not a reference to polygamy. Rather, both the Savior as well as Paul cautioned against unnecessary divorce and remarriage for trivial reasons (compare Matthew 5:32; 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10). Thus, bishops should be a good example of fidelity within marriage, as well as of rearing faithful children (1 Timothy 3:4–5; Titus 1:6).

Paul explained that a bishop should not be a "novice" (1 Timothy 3:6), or new convert, which could cause him to be filled with pride or to become overwhelmed. And bishops should "have a good report of them which are without" (3:7), meaning those outside the church. In other words, bishops should maintain a good relationship with others in the community (3:2; Titus 1:8). Paul gave similar counsel to Timothy concerning deacons (a word meaning "servant"), who should be men of experience, rather than new converts, and examples of good personal behavior with respect to marriage and family (1 Timothy 3:8–12).[61]

Paul cautioned Timothy concerning things that would occur "in the latter times" (1 Timothy 4:1). While it is tempting to think that Paul was only describing events in our current day, one must remember that New Testament writers described their own days as "these last times" (1 Peter 1:20) and "these last days" (Hebrews 1:2). This is not to deny that there are applications of such teachings to our day. But one should understand that when Paul warned Timothy that "in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, . . . forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats" (1 Timothy 4:1, 3), he was referring to issues that were important to them in their own time and the near future. For example, we know that there were members of Paul's own congregations who encouraged others to live an ascetic lifestyle (Colossians 2:18) and who taught against marriage (JST 1 Corinthians 7:1) and against eating certain kinds of meat (1 Corinthians 8:7–9).

Paul also counseled Timothy concerning widows and church welfare. Paul authorized providing temporal support for widows who needed it so that the church members could "honour widows that are widows indeed" (1 Timothy 5:3)—meaning those widows who were examples of a worthy life (5:5, 10; compare Titus 2:3). But Paul also recommended the families of those widows to be the first ones to provide temporal welfare if they were in a position to do so, "for that is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:4). This would allow the church to then step in and give temporal relief to those who do not have such

support from their family (5:16).[62] Because the job market was not always favorable toward women in that day, Paul encouraged younger widows to seek to remarry so they could be part of a self-supporting family unit once again (5:11; compare Titus 2:4).

The general context and content of 2 Timothy are different from that of 1 Timothy and Titus. Paul informed Timothy that he was in prison in Rome (2 Timothy 1:16–17). The book of Acts narrates Paul's journey to Rome and concludes while Paul was still under house arrest awaiting trial (Acts 28:30–31). Before traveling to Rome, Paul informed the Roman saints of his desire to visit them and then to make his way to Spain (Romans 15:28). Although it is not recorded in the New Testament, early Christian tradition is that Paul was acquitted at his first trial, successfully traveled to Spain, and then was eventually imprisoned in Rome again and put on trial a second time.[63] The setting for 2 Timothy seems to be Paul's second imprisonment in Rome, awaiting trial. Thus, Paul's second letter to Timothy is probably the last letter we have from the apostle.

In this final correspondence, Paul lamented to Timothy: "At my first answer [i.e., trial] no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. . . . Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; . . . and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Timothy 4:16–17; compare 1 Corinthians 15:32).[64] It seems that Paul did not expect to be acquitted this time: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6). The great apostle Paul left Timothy with his final testimony: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (4:7–8).

Conclusion

It is interesting to note that the book of Acts never mentions Paul writing letters. This seems strange to modern Christians because of how important we judge these texts to be: over half of the documents that make up the New Testament consist of Paul's letters. But when the narrative in the book of Acts ends, Paul is still alive and under house arrest in Rome (28:30–31). While Paul was alive, his letters were certainly important for the congregations to whom he addressed them, but they do not seem to have been viewed as critical for the church in general. If a Christian or a leader or a congregation wanted an answer to an important question, that person or an appointee could visit Paul and ask him directly. But when Paul and the other apostles began to die and disappear, there were no longer living and legitimate oracles to consult for revelation on difficult issues. Once this happened, all they had left were the letters that Paul and others had left behind. Latter-day Saints are thankful for the teachings and testimony left behind in the writings of the apostle Paul. It can be also be said, however, that Latter-day Saints are likewise thankful for the teachings and testimonies of modern living prophets and apostles today, who "are called even with that same calling with which he [Paul] was called" (Doctrine and Covenants 18:9) and who teach and counsel us today as Paul did nearly two millennia ago.

❧

Frank F. Judd Jr. is an associate professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University.

Further Reading

Anderson, Richard Lloyd. *Understanding Paul*. Rev. ed. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007.

Blumell, Lincoln H. "Scribes and Ancient Letters: Implications for the Pauline Epistles." In *How the New Testament Came to Be*, edited by Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr., 208–26. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006.

Huntsman, Eric D. "The Occasional Nature, Composition, and Structure of Paul's Letters." In *How the New Testament Came to Be*, edited by Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr., 190–207. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006.

Millet, Robert L. "Walking in Newness of Life: Doctrinal Themes of the Apostle Paul." In *The Apostle Paul: His Life and His Testimony*, edited by Paul Y. Hoskisson, 132–50. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994.

Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. 6th ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015.

Sanders, E. P. *Paul: The Apostle's Life, Letters, and Thought*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015.

Wayment, Thomas A. *From Persecutor to Apostle: A Biography of Paul*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006.

Notes

1. Helpful Latter-day Saint resources on Paul's life and letters include Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007); and Thomas A. Wayment, *From Persecutor to Apostle: A Biography of Paul* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006).

2. E. Randolph Richards, *Paul and First-Century Letter Writing: Secretaries, Composition, and Collection* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); and Lincoln H. Blumell, "Scribes and Ancient Letters: Implications for the Pauline Epistles," in *How the New Testament Came to Be*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 208–26. Paul was educated (Acts 22:3) and therefore had the ability to write his own epistles (1 Corinthians 16:21). The evidence indicates, however, that the ever-busy Paul likely dictated his letters to scribes, probably for convenience. For instance, Paul's scribe for his epistle to the Romans sent personal greetings to the saints in Rome in the text of Paul's letter: "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord" (Romans 16:22). After a scribe wrote out the body of the letter, Paul then ended his letters with a personal greeting written by himself: "The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand" (1 Corinthians 16:21). These handwritten testimonials contained expressions of Paul's affection for the recipients, but may also have functioned as a way to guard against forgery. Paul warned the Thessalonians to not be fooled "by letter as from us" (2 Thessalonians 2:2), meaning "letter as if it were written by us." Paul then emphatically wrote at the end of his letter: "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write" (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

3. This important verse also implies that by the time of this epistle, Christians were making multiple copies of Paul's letters and subsequently sharing them among the various congregations.

4. Eric D. Huntsman, "The Occasional Nature, Composition, and Structure of Paul's Letters," in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 190–207.

5. Helpful commentaries include Martinus C. de Boer, *Galatians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011); David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018); and J. Louis Martyn, *Galatians* (New York: Doubleday, 1997).

6. Paul identifies himself as an apostle at the beginning of this letter (Galatians 1:1). The term *apostle* means "one who is sent forth" with authority to preach and minister. The issue of whether Paul was also a member

of the quorum of the twelve in addition to being an apostle is discussed in a different chapter of this volume. See also the discussion in David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals: Selections and Discourses of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1953), 250.

7. Gaye Strathearn, "Peter and Paul in Antioch," in *The Ministry of Peter, the Chief Apostle*, ed. Frank F. Judd Jr., Eric D. Huntsman, and Shon D. Hopkin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 227–46.

8. Mark D. Ellison, "Paul and James on Faith and Works," *Religious Educator* 13, no. 3 (2012): 147–71; and Stephen E. Robinson, *Following Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 82–85.

9. Gaye Strathearn, "Law and Liberty in Galatians 5–6," in *Go Ye into All the World: Messages of the New Testament Apostles*, ed. Ray L. Huntington, Jerome M. Perkins, and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 57–74.

10. For a discussion of the evidence in Acts, see Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 55–71.

11. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 449–50.

12. Following the last verse of 1 Thessalonians in the King James Version is the following note: "The first epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens." This conclusion is drawn from 1 Thessalonians 3:1–6 but does not take into account Acts 18:1–5, where it says that Paul traveled from Athens to Corinth before Timothy returned. These notes that follow Paul's letters in the King James Version are called "subscriptions" and were not part of the original letters. They were added by scribes many years later, and some of them are in error. On this, see Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 71.

13. For recent commentaries, see M. Eugene Boring, *I & II Thessalonians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015); and Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

14. Stephen E. Robinson, "Early Christianity and 1 Nephi 13–14," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 178.

15. See Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *St. Paul's Corinth: Texts and Archaeology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983).

16. For helpful commentaries, see Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014); and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *First Corinthians* (New York: Doubleday, 2008). For a recent Latter-day Saint commentary, see Richard D. Draper and Michael D. Rhodes, *Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015).

17. For historical background on many of the following issues, see Eric D. Huntsman, "'The Wisdom of Men': Greek Philosophy, Corinthian Behavior, and the Teachings of Paul," in *Shedding Light on the New Testament: Acts–Revelation*, ed. Ray L. Huntington, Frank F. Judd, Jr., and David M. Whitchurch (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009), 67–97.

18. Jennifer Lane, "Jews and Greeks: The Broader Context for Writing the New Testament," in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 62–77.

19. Kent R. Brooks, "Paul's Inspired Teachings on Marriage," in Huntington, Perkins, and Wayment, *Go Ye into All the World*, 75–97.

20. See the discussions of this issue in Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 102–4; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment, *Making Sense of the New Testament: Timely Insights and Timeless Messages* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 352–53; and David R. Seely, "'Is Christ Divided?' Unity of the Saints through Charity," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 66–67.

21. Eric D. Huntsman, "The Impact of Gentile Conversions in the Greco-Roman World," in *The Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles: From the Day of Pentecost through the Apocalypse*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 80–96.

22. Camille Fronk, "'Submit Yourselves . . . as unto the Lord," in Huntington, Perkins, and Wayment, *Go Ye into All the World*, 98–113; and Sherrie Mills Johnson, "Paul's Teachings in 1 Corinthians on Women," in Huntington, Judd, and Whitchurch, *Shedding Light on the New Testament*, 129–52.

23. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Ensign*, November 1995, 129.

24. Robert C. Freeman, "Paul's Earnest Pursuit of Spiritual Gifts," in *The Apostle Paul: His Life and His Testimony*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 34–46; and David M. Whitchurch, "The Unifying Power of Spiritual Gifts," in Huntington, Judd, and Whitchurch, *Shedding Light on the New Testament*, 98–127.

25. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Paul's Witness to the Early History of Jesus' Ministry," in Hoskisson, *Apostle Paul*, 1–33.

26. Mark D. Ellison, "The Setting and Sacrament of the Christian Community," in Huntington, Perkins, and Wayment, *Go Ye into All the World*, 145–66.

27. Daniel B. Sharp, "Vicarious Baptism for the Dead: 1 Corinthians 15:29," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 6 (2014): 36–66.

28. For helpful commentaries, see Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2003); and Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark, 1994–2000).

29. Seely, "Is Christ Divided?," 57–82.

30. Frank F. Judd Jr., "Jesus Christ: The Savior Who Knows," in *Celebrating Easter*, ed. Thomas A. Wayment and Keith J. Wilson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2007), 113–36.

31. Helpful commentaries include Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (New York: Doubleday, 1993); Robert Jewett, *Romans* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2007); and Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018).

32. James E. Faulconer, *Romans 1: Notes and Reflections* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1999).

33. Robert L. Millet, "Walking in Newness of Life: Doctrinal Themes of the Apostle Paul," in Hoskisson, *Apostle Paul*, 132–50.

34. Robinson, *Following Christ*, 65–90.

35. James E. Faulconer, "The Olive Tree and the Work of God: Jacob 5 and Romans 11," in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994), 347–66.

36. On this, see Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds*., Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 8–11.

37. Camille Fronk Olson, *Women of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014), 291–95.

38. See Blumell, "Scribes and Ancient Letters," 208–26.

39. For helpful commentaries, see Charles B. Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009); Paul A. Holloway, *Philippians* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2017); and John Reumann, *Philippians* (New York: Doubleday, 2008). See also Eduard Verhoef, *Philippi: How Christianity Began in Europe: The Epistle to the Philippians and the Excavations at Philippi* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013).

40. Gaye Strathearn and Joshua M. Sears, "The Church of the First Century," in Holzapfel and Wayment, *Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles*, 35–62.

41. Thomas A. Wayment, "'Each Person Has a Hymn': The Creator-Savior Hymns," in *Thou Art the Christ, the Son of the Living God: The Person and Work of Jesus in the New Testament*, ed. Eric D. Huntsman, Lincoln H. Blumell, and Tyler J. Griffin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2018), 192–215.

42. On this interpretation, see Frank F. Judd Jr., "The Condescension of God According to Paul," in Huntington, Judd, and Whitchurch, *Shedding Light on the New Testament*, 181–83; and Nicholas J. Frederick and Frank F. Judd Jr., "The Revelation of Jesus Christ to Paul: Presenting a Deeper, Full Christology," in Huntsman,

Blumell, and Griffin, *Thou Art the Christ*, 224–25. There are various ways to express the nuances of verses 6–7. For other interpretations, see the discussion in Holloway, *Philippians*, 117–21.

43. See the discussion in Judd, "Condescension of God," 171–92.

44. On the different possibilities, see Holloway, *Philippians*, 19–24.

45. Helpful commentaries include Stephen E. Fowl, *Ephesians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012); and John Muddiman, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (New York: Hendrickson, 2001).

46. Elder David A. Bednar, "Ye Must Be Born Again," *Ensign*, May 2007, 22; and Lawrence R. Flake, "Holy Spirit of Promise," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:651–52.

47. Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 94–95.

48. Thomas A. Wayment, "Internal Divisions: Ephesians in Historical Context," in Huntington, Judd, and Whitchurch, *Shedding Light on the New Testament*, 153–70.

49. Grant Underwood, "The 'Same' Organization That Existed in the Primitive Church," in Huntington, Perkins, and Wayment, *Go Ye into All the World*, 167–86.

50. For recent commentaries, see Jerry L. Sumney, *Colossians: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008); and R. McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon* (London: T&T Clark, 2005).

51. Wayment, "'Each Person Has a Hymn,'" 192–94.

52. Clyde J. Williams, "The Preeminence of Christ," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*, 136–45.

53. Richard D. Draper, "The Earliest 'New Testament,'" in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 260–91.

54. Helpful commentaries include Cousar, *Philippians and Philemon*; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Letter to Philemon* (New York: Doubleday, 2000); Scot McKnight, *The Letter to Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2017); and Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon*.

55. David R. Seely, "From Unprofitable Servant to Beloved Brother in Christ," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*, 165–77.

56. See 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Romans 16:21; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; and Philemon 1:1.

57. Helpful commentaries include Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002); Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); and Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).

58. See the discussion in Blumell, "Scribes and Ancient Letters," 219–21.

59. See the discussion in Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 109–14. On the issue of protognostic speculation concerning the origin of divine beings, see Johnson, *First and Second Letters to Timothy*, 163.

60. Bruce A. Van Orden, "The Pastoral Epistles," in *Studies in Scripture, Vol. 6: Acts to Revelation*, 178–91.

61. In Paul's day, as well as in the early days of the Church in the latter days, deacons were adult men rather than boys around the age of twelve.

62. This is how the welfare program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints works today: "We are carrying on a great welfare/humanitarian service. Our welfare program, as we know it today, was begun during the Great Depression, and puts tremendous emphasis on self-reliance. We try to teach our people to be self-reliant and, when they can't take care of their own needs, to enlist the help of their families. And when those needs cannot be met by the families, then the Church moves in to help them." Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 686.

63. Anderson, *Understanding Paul*, 355–57.

64. Paul was speaking figuratively here about being delivered from death at his first trial. As a Roman citizen, if Paul were convicted of a capital crime, he would have been beheaded rather than crucified or sent to wild beasts.