

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

A. Author

1. Few doubt Pauline authorship.
 - a. Richard Longenecker, *The most uncontroverted matter in the study of Galatians is that the letter was written by Paul, the Christian apostle whose ministry is portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles.*
 - b. Donald Campbell, *Most of chapters 1 and 2 are autobiographical and harmonize consistently with the events of Paul's life recorded in Acts. The theology of Galatians is the theology of Paul as taught in his other writings such as Romans.*
2. It is supported internally by two references to Paul in the letter.
 - a. Galatians 1:1, *Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—*
 - b. Galatians 5:2, *Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.*
3. Pauline authorship was supported externally in the second and third centuries by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. Even heretics of the second century, including Marcion, accepted authorship of Galatians by Paul.
4. Galatians and most of Paul's epistles were written by an amanuensis, a scribe who wrote down Paul's message.
 - a. This was probably due to Paul's poor eyesight.
 - b. Paul personally signed his letters to authenticate the content as from him, Galatians 6:11, *See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.*
 - c. Grant Osborne, *Frequently in the Roman world an amanuensis would add a good deal of supplementary material, but with this letter the task certainly amounted to dictation—the letter is so personal that we can only conclude that all of the content stemmed from Paul himself.*

B. Inhabitants of Galatia

1. Gauls
 - a. They lived west of the Rhine River in what is now Europe.
 - b. They marched through Macedonia to Greece in 280 BC but were moved into Asia Minor.
 - c. In 230 BC, they were defeated by the King of Pergamum and confined to the north and east central region of what is now Turkey.
 - d. According to Caesar, *The infirmity of the Gauls is that they are fickle in their resolves, fond of change, and not to be trusted.*
 - e. J. Vernon McGee, *The Galatians wanted to make Paul a god one day, and the next day they stoned him.*
2. Greeks, Romans, and Jews.

C. Recipients and Date of Writing

1. There are two opinions concerning recipients of the letter to the Galatians.
 - a. North Galatian View.
 - 1) Galatians was written to the ethnic group, the Gauls, who had migrated into the northeastern part of modern-day Turkey in the third century BC.
 - 2) It would have been addressed to churches not founded until Paul's second missionary journey, Acts 16:6, *And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.*
 - 3) The date of writing would have been around 56 AD.
 - b. South Galatian View
 - 1) Galatians was written to the political group, those in the Roman province of Galatia which was founded in 25 BC, in the eastern half of modern day Turkey and extended from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea.
 - 2) It would have been addressed to churches on Paul's first missionary journey.
 - 3) The date of writing would have been around 48 AD.
2. Preference - South Galatian View
 - a. North Galatia is hardly mentioned in Acts and it seems it should have more coverage if it received a major letter.
 - b. The region had little Roman influence and lacked Roman roads which Paul followed on his missionary journeys.
 - c. Paul tended to use Roman imperial names for cities and regions, which would mean that Galatia referred to the Roman province instead of the ethnic territory in the north.
 - d. Barnabas is mentioned in Galatians 2:13 and there is no evidence he ever reached the northern area due to his split with Paul, noted Acts 15:36-40.
 - e. It must have been written prior to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) or it should have been mentioned in the letter.

D. Quotes on Galatians

1. Donald Campbell, *Galatians was written to remedy a desperate situation, to call early Christians back from the Mosaic Law to grace, from legalism to faith.*
2. Tom Constable, *He was not dealing with behavior, as in Corinthians, so much as belief, which is foundational to behavior.*
3. Martin Luther referred to the Epistle to the Galatians *as his wife.*
4. Darrell Bock, *If the church is in a fog on the gospel, then the church very much risks losing its reason for being. A misdirected gospel message robs the church of valuable momentum in the world. Nothing leads to stagnation more quickly than for an institution to forget why it exists.*

E. A three point outline of Galatians

1. Chapters 1 and 2, a vindication of Paul's apostleship and message.
2. Chapters 3 and 4, a proclamation of the true doctrine of grace, justification by faith alone.
3. Chapters 5 and 6, a refutation of license and a call to live by the power of the Holy Spirit.

F. A fuller outline of Galatians

1. Introduction (1:1-10)
 - a. Paul's salutation (1:1-5)
 - b. Paul's rebuke (1:6-10)
2. A defense of Paul's message (1:11-2:21)
 - a. A Personal Defense of Paul's Gospel (1:11-24)
 - b. Paul's Apostolic Authority and Message Endorsed (2:1-21)
 - c. Paul's trip to Jerusalem (2:1-21)
3. Affirmation of justification by faith alone (3:1-29)
 - a. Experience of the Galatians (1-5)
 - b. Example of Abraham (6-9)
 - c. Effect of the Law (3:10-12)
 - d. Effect of Jesus Christ (3:13-14)
 - e. Permanence of God's covenant of faith (3:15-18)
 - f. Purposes of the Law (3:19-25)
 - g. Position of believers (3:26-29)
4. Illustrations of faith over works (4:1-31)
 - a. An illustration from family life (4:1-7)
 - b. Appeals to the Galatians concerning relationships (4:8-20)
5. Christian liberty (5:1-6:10)
 - a. Freedom in Christ is without the Law (5:1-12)
 - b. Freedom in Christ is without license (5:13-15)
 - c. Freedom in Christ is empowered by the Holy Spirit (5:16-26)
 - d. Freedom in Christ is a life of service (6:1-10)
6. Conclusion (6:11-18)
 - a. Paul's signature (6:11)
 - b. Paul's final warning concerning Judaizers (6:12-13)
 - c. Paul's motive for boasting (6:14-15)
 - d. Paul's blessing on all believers (6:16)
 - e. Paul's command that the controversy end in Galatia (6:17)
 - f. Paul's benediction (6:18)