

Galatians: Introduction

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All emphasis added are mine

Galatians 1:1-5 *Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—
2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

P46

ΠΑΥΛΟΣ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΣ ΘΥ ΚΑΤΑ ΠΑΝΘΡΩΠΩΝ ΟΥΛΕ
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ΔΙΩΝΩΝ ΑΝΗΚΙ - ΘΑΥΜΑΖΩΤΙ ΟΥΤΩΣ

P46

P46 dates from between 175-225 AD and contains the following Epistles:

Pages:	Contents:
1-41	Romans
41-64	Hebrews
64-117	1 Corinthians
118-145	2 Corinthians
146-158	Ephesians
158-168	Galatians
168-176	Philippians
176-184	Colossians
184-191	1 Thessalonians
191-195 (?)	2 Thessalonians (?)
195-205 (?)	Uncertain

For more information on Textual Criticism, see sermon on John 7:53-8:11 - sermonaudio.com/sermon/326181330499.

Outline

1. Author
2. Structure
3. Audience and Date
4. Occasion/Purpose

Author

Paul (1:1)

Acts 22:3-8 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. 6 “As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ 8 And I answered, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.’”

Author

Jew, the son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6), but with Roman citizenship (Act 22:25-28).

Brought up in Jerusalem, educated by Gamaliel.

- **Acts 5:38-39** *So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” So they took his advice,*

“Clearly there is no way to understand Paul’s theology or mission apart from the fundamental fact that stands at the center of his life: on the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus and Jesus of Nazareth came face-to-face. After that event neither Saul nor the Christian church was ever the same again.”

Timothy George

Paul goes on to write at least 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.

Author

Acts 9 – escapes from Damascus.

Acts 11 – Barnabas turns to Paul for help with the Church in Antioch

- *Acts 11:25-26 So Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught a great many people. And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.*

Acts 13 – first missionary journey – gospel preached in four cities in Southern Galatia – Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe where “a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed” in Iconium (Acts 14:1) and in Derbe they “made many disciples” (Acts 14:21).

Author



Structure

Common Structure of Paul's Epistles:

- Greeting
- Thanksgiving/Prayer
- Body
- Closing

Structure of Galatians:

- Greeting – 1:1-5
- Thanksgiving/Prayer – NONE
- Body – 1:6-6:10
- Closing – 6:11-18

Structure

BODY:

- 1:6-10 – Summary of the Problem
- 1:11-2:14 – Defense of Paul's Apostleship
- 2:15-6:10 – Defense of the Gospel

Audience and Date

Audience question seems simple:

Galatians 1:1-2 *Paul, an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2 and all the brothers who are with me, To the churches of Galatia*

- Galatia can refer to either a people group (ethnic Galatians) or a Roman Province.

“Galatia became a Roman Province in 25 BC and included people from many ethnic groups, including the “Celts” or “Galatians,” who had migrated to Asia Minor by 278 BC.” Thomas Schreiner

1 Peter 1:1 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,*

Two theories – 1) north Galatian theory that views Paul’s letter going to the ethnic Galatians in the North and 2) south Galatian theory that views Paul’s letter going to the churches in the southern part of the Roman Province of Galatia which are recorded for us in the book of Acts.

Audience and Date

Two strongest reasons for south Galatian view:

1. Paul mentions Barnabas three times in Galatians, and in one instance it seems that the Galatians would know Barnabas personally.
 - Barnabas accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey to those South Galatian cities – Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13-14).
 - No biblical evidence of this kind of missionary activity occurring in Northern Galatia.
 - 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys mention Galatia (Acts 16:6 and 18:23), but no specific cities named.
 - Not Barnabas, but Silas that accompanied Paul on his 2nd and 3rd missionary journeys

Audience and Date

Acts 15:36-40 And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” 37 Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. 39 And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

Audience and Date

2. Comparing Paul's Visits to Jerusalem in Acts vs. Galatians

Acts (3 visits):

- 9:26 – after his escape from Damascus
- 11:30 – church in Antioch sends relief to the Church in Judea by Barnabas and Paul
- 15:4 – Jerusalem council

Galatians (2 visits) :

- **Galatians 1:18** *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days.*
- **Galatians 2:1** *Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me.*

Audience and Date

Traditional View (northern) – Galatians 2:1-10 equated with Acts 15 and one of Paul's previous visits omitted from Galatians.

Problems:

- Seems unlikely that in defending his credibility, especially his connection with the Apostles in Jerusalem, that he would leave out one of his visits.
- The decision reached by the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 directly addressed the false teachers in Galatian. Seems unlikely that he would fail to mention that to the Galatians.

My understanding is that Acts 9 corresponds to Galatians 1, Acts 11 corresponds to Galatians 2 and Galatians was written shortly before the Jerusalem Council – 48-49 AD.

North Galatian view would put the writing between 50-57AD.

Occasion/Purpose

All of Paul's epistles (letters) are written to specific churches or church leaders.

The epistles are both:

- Timely – written to a specific person or people at a particular time and addressing unique circumstances, and
- Timeless – as Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit, they speak into the lives of God's people today.

Need to try to understand, as best we can, the original context. One way to do that is by mirror reading - trying to reconstruct the issues, problems and theology of the original readers based on the one side of the communication we have.

Occasion/Purpose

Galatians 1:6-10 *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. 10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.*

- False teachers had come in and some in the churches had begun to turn to a different (false) gospel and Paul had personally been attacked.

Galatians 5:2 *Look: I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you.*

- The false teachers had added law keeping – specifically circumcision – to the gospel.

Occasion/Purpose

This accounts for Paul's lengthy defense of his apostolic ministry, which we saw begin in the opening verse...

- **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*

Galatians 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

- It is not circumcision that makes you a spiritual child of Abraham, but faith in Christ.

Galatians 2:16 *yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*

- Throughout all of redemptive history there has only been one way of salvation, one gospel – by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.