

Galatians 1

Author - Paul (Gal. 1:1; 5:2).

Internal Evidence - Galatians written with same style as other Pauline writings.

External Evidence - Early church writers attribute authorship to him.

Date of Writing - Not certain. Usually dated from 52-58 A.D.

1. Paul established Galatian churches on 1st missionary journey - 45-49 A.D. - Acts 13:6, 7.
2. Galatians 2 appears to be a reference to some events that took place at the time of the Jerusalem Conference - A.D. 50.
 - a. This would indicate the letter was written after A.D. 50.
 - b. One does not get the impression from Galatians 2 the events he describes had just happened, but we cannot know this for sure.
3. He revisited churches on 2nd & 3rd missionary journeys - 50-52, 53-57. (Acts 16:1-6; 18:23).
4. It is likely he wrote this epistle during this period of time.

Purpose

1. It is very apparent he is defending his apostleship.
 - a. Paul's apostleship was often challenged. (1 Cor. 9).
 - b. Some challenged it because of (1) Fear and uncertainty (2) His message of grace (3) he did not lead about a wife and did not accept support (4) Source of his knowledge.
 - c. Reasons 2 and 3 do not seem to be a problem at Galatia, at least, at the time of the writing of this epistle.
2. He affirms that salvation is by grace, not by the Law of Moses.
3. He describes the life of those led by the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5, 6).

Location of Churches

1. This epistle was written to Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, Pisidian Antioch, etc. located in Southern Galatia.
2. There is not any evidence for the churches of Northern Galatia - Pessinus, Ancyra, Taviumcitas.

Destination and Date.

1. It was addressed to "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2).
2. The Roman province of Galatia included not only Galatia proper, peopled largely by Celts from Gaul, but also portions of Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Phrygia, all situated on the South.
3. The fact that Paul addressed the churches in the Southern part of Galatia is supported by the following.
 - a. He and Barnabas had visited the cities of Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Pisidian Antioch, all in Southern Galatia, and had established churches in the vicinity during the first missionary journey (ACT 13:4; 14:19-21).
 - b. References to Barnabas would be unexplainable in a letter sent to northern Galatia, where Barnabas seems to have been unknown. (Gal. 2:1, 9, 13).
 - c. In the S Galatian cities there were Jews who might have caused the events mentioned in the letter (Acts 13:14-51; 14:1; 16:1-3).
4. If the "South Galatian theory" is subscribed to, Galatians may have been written either at Antioch in Syria at the consummation of the first missionary journey (Acts 14:26-28). It could also have been written at Ephesus in the course of the third missionary journey (Acts 19:10).
 - a. All of this is uncertain and likely makes little, if any, difference.
 - b. According to this theory, Galatians would be the earliest of the apostle's letters.
5. Some believe that Galatians was written at Ephesus in about 52 A.D.

Galatia.

1. It was formed into a Roman province in 25 B.C..
2. When used in a provincial or political sense, it included parts of Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Phrygia.

Salutation

1-2

GAL 1:1 Paul, an apostle (not sent from men, nor through the agency of man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead),

1. The common Roman name "Paul" (Paulos) means "small or little."
 - a. He was also known by his Hebrew name "Saul" meaning "to ask or make request." (Acts 13:9; 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1, 4, 8, 11, 17, 22, 24; Acts 11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:1, 2, 7, 9, 21; 22:7, 13; 26:14).
 - b. In his writings he calls himself "Paul." (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1, 12, 13; 3:4, 5, 22; 16:21; 2 Cor. 1:1; 10:1; Gal. 1:1; 5:2; Eph. 1:1; 3:1; Phil 1:1; Col. 1:1, 23; 4:18; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2:18; 2 Thess. 1:1; 3:17; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Tit. 1:1; Phile. 1:1, 9, 19).
 - c. Peter called him Paul in his second letter. (2 Pet. 3:15).
2. "apostle" (apostolos) - means "one sent forth, messenger, ambassador."

- It is made up of two Greek words. The word “apo” (from) and “stello” (to send.).
 - **Office in church** (Eph. 4:11).
 - a. He was not one of the twelve. (Matt. 10:1, 2; Acts 1:22-25).
 - b. He had seen the Lord. (1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8).
 - c. He was called by Jesus. (Acts 9:3-9).
 - d. He was able to perform miracles. (2 Cor. 12:12).
 - e. He spoke by revelation of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:12; 1 Cor. 14:37).
3. Paul was a devout Jew.
- a. He was born of the tribe of Benjamin. (Phil. 3:5).
 - b. He was a “Hebrew of Hebrews”. (Phil. 3:5). Ancestors were pure Hebrews.
 - c. He was a Pharisee. (Phil. 3:5).
 - d. He was from Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia. (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3).
 - e. He may have been trained in the university of Athens or of Tarsus.
 - f. He spoke both Greek and Aramaic.
 - g. He was a pupil of Gamaliel and was trained in the Old Testament. (Acts 22:3; 5:33-39).
 - h. He wrote 12 books of the New Testament - Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.
 - 1) There is no evidence Paul wrote Hebrews.
 - 2) Paul identified himself in his letters.
 - 3) The writer of Hebrews was not an apostle. (Heb. 2:4). “with them” seems to refer to the apostles.
4. Paul’s commission to preach was from God and Christ.
5. He had been appointed by the resurrected glorified Christ.

Circular Epistle

GAL 1:2 and all the brethren [brothers] who are with me, to the churches of Galatia:

1. “all the brethren” are not identified.
 - a. “all” seems to suggest there were many.

- b. The omission of their names may mean the Galatia Christians knew who they were.
2. This book is addressed to the “churches of Galatia.”
 3. The word “church” comes from the Greek word “ekklesia” which is composed of two Greek words - the word “ek” (out of) and the word “kaleo” (to call).
 - a. It refers to those who have been called out of the darkness in the light by the gospel.
 - b. It most often used in the sense of an assembly - local or universal.
 - c. The word “church” is sometimes used in the universal sense. (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:25).
 4. Churches in the New Testament are often referred to by their location. (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; Rev. 2:1, 8,18; 3:1, 14).
 - a. Today we often use streets or directions.
 - b. We are then using the word church in a local sense.
 5. The church is also referred to by **ownership**.
 - a. “church of God” or “churches of God” - Gal. 1:13; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5).
 - b. “Household (family) of God” (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - c. “church of the living God” (1 Tim. 3:15).
 - d. “Churches of Christ” - Rom. 16:16
 - e. “church of the Lord (God)” - Acts 20:28
 - 1) Some ancient manuscripts read God (tou theou) and some read Lord (tou kuriou).
 - 2) It is impossible to be certain of the exact rendering here.
 7. There are other designations for the church.
 - a. “Church” - Matt. 16:18; Acts 5:11; 8:1, 3; 11:22, 26; Phil. 3:6; Jas. 5:14.
 - b. “church of the first-born” - Heb. 12:23

HEB 12:23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born [ones] who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect,

- 1) The Greek “prototokon” is plural of “prototokos” meaning “first-born.”
- 2) It is used of Christ the One who (1) existed before all creation and (2) who is superior to all creation. (Col. 1:15).

3) The plural in Heb. 12:23 shows he is not talking about Christ, but Christians. They are “first-born” in the sense they enjoy special blessings from God.

- c. “bride of Christ” - 2 Cor. 11:2
- d. “kingdom” or “kingdom of God” (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 16:18, 19).
- e. “body” (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23).
- f. “Household (family) of God” (1 Tim. 3:15).
- g. “Temple of God” (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:19-22).
- h. “to those being saved” (Acts 2:47).
- i. “flock” (Jn. 10:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-4).

GAL 1:3 Grace [unmerited favor] to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,

1. “Grace” and “peace” are from both God the Father and Jesus Christ.
2. “And” (kai) does not mean “even” here.
3. God raised Christ, His Son, from the dead. (Gal. 1:1).
4. Paul loves the “brothers” at Galatia and he wishes God’s blessings on them.
5. He is not their enemy. (Gal. 4:16).
6. He does not, however, commend them as he did many churches. He is really upset with the gravity of the false doctrine being taught and accepted at Galatia.

Note: “and” (kai) means, even, also.

GAL 1:4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver [rescue] us out of this present evil [wicked, pernicious] age, according to the will of our God and Father,

- “evil” (poneros) - evil, bad, pernicious.
 - “Age” (aion) means age, world.”
 - “For” (huper) means “in behalf of, in place of.” (Jn. 11:50). See 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.
1. Paul is very clear why Jesus died - “for our sins.” (Matt. 26:28).
 2. He is also clear that Jesus was not forced to die - “gave Himself.” (Jn. 10:18).
 3. The 20th century is very evil, but Paul referred to his age as “this present evil age.” Rom. 1:18-31.
 4. Every age is evil, corrupt and needs the blood of Jesus.

5. The act of redemption was in accordance with God's will.

GAL 1:5 to whom [God the Father] be the glory forevermore [into the ages of the ages] . Amen [so be it].

Paul Amazed, Shocked 6-10

GAL 1:6 ¶ I am amazed [marvel ,astonished, surprised, shocked] that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

- “different” (heteros) - “another of a different kind.”
 - “gospel” (euaggelion) - “good news, glad tidings.”
1. They had received the soul-saving gospel.
 2. Paul is shocked that they are so quickly receiving “a different” (false) gospel.
 3. God had called them through the gospel. (2 Thess. 2:14, 15). See John 6:45; Rom. 1:16.
 4. The gospel they were drifting to was a different kind of gospel. It was a gospel of condemnation, not a gospel of salvation.

Gospel

1. The word means “good news,” and it is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 4:15; Mk. 16:16).
2. The heart of the gospel is defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. See Acts 2:22-36.
3. The gospel includes more than the death, burial of resurrection of Christ. (Jn. 14:15; 15:14; Lk. 6:46).;
4. Other names or descriptions of the gospel.
 - a. Truth (Jn. 8:32; 16:13; Gal. 4:16, 17; Eph. 1:13; 4:15; Col. 1:5; 2 Thess. 2:10, 12; 1 Tim. 2:4; Jas. 1:18; 2 Jn. 1, 2, 4; 3 Jn. 3).
 - b. Word (Acts 2:41; 8:4).
 - c. Faith (Acts 6:7; Jude 3).
 - d. “Will of God” (Matt. 7:21; 12:46-50).
 - e. “Apostles teachings” (Acts 2:42).
 - f. “Teaching of Christ” (2 Jn. 9, 10).
 - g. “commandments” (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3).

GAL 1:7 which is really not another [gospel of the same kind]; only there are some [Judaizing false teachers] who

are disturbing [troubling] **you, and want to distort** [pervert] **the gospel of Christ** [into something it is not].

1. “another” (allos) - other, another of the same kind.
2. “There are some” refers to the Judaizing teachers who were seeking to bind the Mosaic law on Christians.
3. Paul did not believe one message is as good as another.

Warning

GAL 1:8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we [apostles, others] gave preached to you, let him be accursed [devoted to eternal punishment].

- “angel” (aggelos) - angel, messenger, one who is sent.
1. The gospel must not be changed.
 2. No one has the authority to change its saving message.

Accursed (anathema) - Rom 9:3; 1Cor. 12:3; 1 Cor. 16:22; Gal. 1:8, 9.

ROM 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh,

1CO 12:3 Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is accursed"; and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

1CO 16:22 If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha.

Paul Repeats Affirmation Of Condemnation

GAL 1:9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received [from us], let him be accursed [devoted to eternal punishment].

1. “We” would refer to apostles and other inspired teachers.
2. Some contend it makes no difference what we teach, but this is absolutely false.
3. We must not change [add to or take away] God’s word. (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Matt. 7:15; 15:9; 2 Jn. 9, 10; 1 Tim. 1:3; Rev. 22:18, 19).

Note:

1. Paul is specifically dealing with false teachers who were seeking to nullify God’s grace by affirming one had to keep certain aspects of the Mosaic law to be saved. He is very harsh with these teachers and those who were receiving their corrupt message.
2. Paul was very harsh with those who corrupted the Lord’s Supper, who made the assembly a place of confusion, who denied the resurrection, who tolerated fornication in the church, who removed their veils, etc. (1 Cor. 11, 14, 15, 5, 6).
3. Peter was also very harsh with false teachers. (2 Pet. 1:1-3).

4. John was very harsh with false teachers. (1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 9, 10).

Paul's Questions

GAL 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant [slave] of Christ.

1. "seeking the favor of" is from "peitho" meaning "to persuade, win over, seek favor."
2. He was not seeking to please men as the other Pharisees did, but God.
3. He was ready to serve and to suffer for Christ.

Note:

- The Greek "doulos" means "slave, bondservant."
- He was called to be an apostle, but he voluntarily gave himself as a slave of Christ.

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