

Galatians

Introduction to the Book

- The Region of Galatia
 - Historically, the term Galatia referred an area of north central and east central Asia Minor.
 - This was an area settled by the Gauls after migrating from western Europe.
 - Its principal cities were Ancyra, Pessinus and Tavium.
 - In 25 B.C. this kingdom was converted to a Roman province.
 - As part of becoming a province, territory was added to the south.
 - This southern region included the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.



- A debate has gone on for centuries about whether Paul sent this letter to churches in the northern cities or the southern cities.
 - During his 1st missionary journey, Paul visited Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe [Acts 13-14].
 - Some postulate that Paul established churches in northern Galatia during his 2nd missionary journey.

- During his 2nd missionary journey, Paul did indeed travel through northern Galatia [Acts 16:6-8].
 - An additional visit to northern Galatia is apparently described in Acts 18:23.
 - From the account in the book of Acts, we know that churches were established in southern Galatia.
 - However, there is no account in Scripture of churches being established in northern Galatia.
 - Additional evidence that favors southern Galatia...
 - The main roads from Paul's hometown of Tarsus pass through southern, not northern Galatia.
 - The Judaizers were not likely to bypass the southern cities to visit the northern cities.
 - A large Jewish population, which the Judaizers would have targeted, lived in the southern cities.
 - Gaius from Derbe accompanied Paul in the offering for the poor in Jerusalem [Acts 20:4].
 - Barnabas, who is mentioned in this letter but never introduced [Gal 2:1. 9, 13], would not have been known by the saints in the northern cities since he went with Paul on his 1st missionary journey only.
 - For these reasons (and others), many New Testament scholars now favor the view that Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in churches of the cities of southern Galatia.
- The Letter to the Galatians
 - Authorship
 - The letter itself attributes the authorship to the Apostle Paul [Gal 1:1; 5:2].
 - The autobiographical content in chapters 1 and 2 harmonizes quite well with the events of Paul's life as recorded in the book of Acts.
 - The theology of Galatians lines up perfectly with Paul's teaching in the book of Romans.
 - In the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Galatians was attributed to Paul by Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria and Origen.
 - Even the higher critics of the 19th century regard this epistle as Pauline.
 - Conclusion: The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians.
 - Date of Writing
 - As we will see when we consider the occasion and purpose of this letter, Paul wrote to the churches of Galatia prior to the Jerusalem Council.
 - This would have been after Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch following Paul's 1st Missionary Journey.
 - That puts the date of writing at roughly A.D. 48.
 - Occasion and Purpose
 - The Judaizers in the Galatian region were disputing Paul's apostolic authority and proclaiming a false gospel.

- Because of their influence, the Galatian believers had abandoned grace in favor of legalism.
- It became necessary for Paul to defend his apostleship and his message of God's grace.
- Paul addressed these issues in this letter...
 - In chapters 1 and 2 Paul defends the authority of his apostleship.
 - In chapters 2 through 4 Paul defends the grace gospel.
 - In chapters 5 and 6 Paul declares Christian liberty and the responsibility that goes with that.
- Importance
 - In combination with the book of Romans, this letter to the Galatian churches establishes the doctrine of justification by faith.
 - In addition, the book of Galatians declares freedom from all forms of legalism.
 - Therefore, this letter clarifies the distinctions between Judaism and Christianity.
 - Centuries after it was written, this letter played an important role in the protestant reformation.
 - Luther lectured on the book of Galatians and his *Commentary on Galatians* was widely read.
 - Today, this letter continues to proclaim that salvation comes not by works, but by grace through faith in God's provision.
- Outline
 - Introduction [1:1-10]
 - Salutation [1:1-5]
 - Admonishment [1:6-10]
 - Personal: Defense of Apostleship [1:11-2:13]
 - Divine Origin of Paul's gospel [1:11-17]
 - Received Directly from God [1:11-12]
 - Paul's Conversion [1:13-17]
 - Relationship to Other Apostles [1:18-2:13]
 - Paul's Early Years of Ministry [1:18-24]
 - The Trip to Jerusalem [2:1-5]
 - Paul's Sanction [2:6-10]
 - Rebuke of Peter [2:11-13]
 - Doctrinal: Defense of the Gospel [2:14-4:31]
 - Justification by Faith Stated [2:14-21]
 - The Law and Faith [3:1-25]
 - Works vs. Faith [3:1-5]
 - Example of Abraham [3:6-9]
 - The Curse of the Law [3:10-14]
 - Promises Over Law [3:15-18]
 - The Purpose of the Law [3:19-25]
 - A Practical Argument [3:26-4:7]

- Heirs According to the Promise [3:26-29]
 - Adopted as Sons [4:1-7]
- A Sentimental Argument [4:8-20]
 - Fear of Return to Bondage [4:8-11]
 - Past and Present Dealings [4:12-20]
- An Allegorical Argument [4:21-31]
- Practical: Defense of Liberty [5:1-6:10]
 - Excludes Circumcision [5:1-6]
 - Hindrance to Liberty [5:7-12]
 - Liberty and Fulfilling the Law [5:13-15]
 - Bearing Spiritual Fruit [5:16-26]
 - Liberty and Responsibility [6:1-10]
- Conclusion [6:11-18]
 - Paul's Authorship [6:11]
 - The Cross vs. Circumcision [6:12-15]
 - Christ's Mark on Paul [6:16-17]
 - Salutation [6:18]