

Title: Introduction to Galatians (Part 2)

Text: Galatians 1:1a

Central Idea: Paul was transformed by same Jesus as we!

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[i] Scripture Reading and Prayer

1 Paul, an apostle—neither sent from men, nor the agency of man—but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead, 2 and all the brethren 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 in order that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of God our Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever, amen!

[ii] Our Outline: parts to a mailed letter

I. The Return Address

A. Who Wrote the Letter?

II. The Address Proper

A. Who Were the Recipients of the Letter?

III. The Post-Mark Date

A. When and Where was the Letter Written?

IV. The Contents of the Letter

A. What Is the Letter About and Why was it Written?

V. The Text of the Letter

A. What is the Style and Structure of the Letter

VI. The Stamp

A. Are there Issues Pertaining to Authenticity and Canonicity?

[iii] Ancient letters were different

Ancient letters didn't have a stamp / return addy – or even a mailing addy. Letters of antiquity (NT epistles) were structured differently.

For example ==>

Author put his name first – not last like we do today (v. 1):

1a PAUL, an apostle . . .

Followed by t/recipients of t/letter – in this case, a geographical group (note the plural — v. 2a):

2a . . . to the churches of Galatia:

Greeting (vv. 3-5):

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

Body of the letter (1:6 – 6:10)

Concluding thoughts (beginning in 6:11):

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

Valediction – “yours truly” (6:18)

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

We are only using a modern letter, incl. t/envelope & stamp, as an analogy.

Last time we looked at ==>

I. The Return Address – Παῦλος ἀπόστολος (Paul, an apostle)

Spent our time reviewing t/life & ministry of t/Apostle Paul.

A. Born Saul of Tarsus

1. He was born Saul of Tarsus sometime between 5 BC to AD 5

a. Tarsus was in SW Asia Minor – some 350 miles N. of Jerusalem

(1) Tarsus itself was a Roman colony

Paul had t/adv. of Roman citizenship which he used to his advantage to escape a beating (Acts 22:25).

2. Contrary to popular belief — He didn't become Paul at his conversion

Paul was his Grk. name taken from t/Latin “Paulos.” In a Heb. context: Saul; Gk.: Paul (practice was common then).

3. Saul was born to Jewish parents of the Tribe of Benjamin

Likely named after t/Benjamite King Saul, Isr. 1st King, who ruled over t/united KD of Israel during t/11th century B.C.

4. It seems that his family was prominent

Likely a leading family in t/local syn. Young Saul had t/best of everything: He had great intelligence coupled w/a top-notch education ==>

Acts 26:24 While Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad."

5. That education including the special privilege of personal tutelage under the famed Rabbi Gamaliel in the city of Jerusalem

Paul would later refer to that education (cf. Acts 22:3).

B. It's in the Book of Acts - Chapter 7 - that we first encounter him

1.Connection with the stoning of Stephen

As the mad crowd rushed to put Stephen to death, they laid their outer robes at the feet of this young lawyer (Acts 7:58).

a. After the death of Stephen (the church's first martyr)

We read ==>

8:1 AND Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. . . .

And ==>

8:3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Paul under t/authority of t/Sanhedrin, took charge of a movt. to systematically persecute & suppress Xns. He pursued them as if they were animals // threw them into dungeons // watched w/great satisfaction as they were publicly flogged – & he voted in favor of their deaths.

C. All that changed

(saw account of his conversion in Acts 9).

Word “conversion” indicates “change” ==>

1. Ephesians 2:1–10

1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Paul was transformed by same Jesus as we!

Next 2 points ==>

II. The Mailing Address

Who were the recipients of the letter?

III. The Post-Mark Date

When was the letter written?

II. The Mailing Address

A. The audience and date go together

For t/most part, t/dating of t/letter depends on which Galatians are in view.

B. “Galatia” could refer to 2 different areas (North & South)

Ethnic Galatia (north of Asia Minor)

Provincial Galatia (south Asia Minor)

Which group of CHs was t/letter written to? It is a relevant ?

Volumes have been written on this matter over t/years. Largely more recent years (recent as far as CH history goes). Wasn't much of an issue until t/19th c.

1. Northern Galatia = Ethnic Galatia

a. These Gallic, or Celtic tribes (ref. to as Gauls / Galatians by Gk. & Lat. writers) fought eastward thru Europe in the 3d c. BC

Finally settling in t/north central plateau – an area they designated Galatia (“The Country of the Gauls”).

Rom. historian Livy describes them (Gauls) as having ==>
“. . . tall bodies, long reddish hair, huge shields, very long swords; . . . in addition, [they sing] as they go into battle [with] yells and leapings and the dreadful din of arms as they clash shields according to some ancestral customs—all these are deliberately used to terrify their foes.” [Livy Hist. 38.18.3-9]

These Gauls, typically tall, fair skinned, reddish hair share ethnicity w/the Celts of t/UK. – some of you may share that ancestry.

2. So . . . Northern Galatia = Ethnic Galatia

Settled by Celtic tribes (called Celts, Gauls, or Galatians).

a. Following the Battle of Actium (31 BC)

T/Roman Octavian Augustus expanded Galatia into a large area in southern A.M. – an area than had never been ethnically Galatian. He reorganized the region as a Roman Province under t/authority of a Roman gov.

3. The question is ==>

Did Paul write to CH's in t/N. Galatian region, t/area which was ethnically Galatia Proper?

Or did he write to southern Galatia, t/Roman Province?

a. Really wasn't much of a question until the 19th c.

From t/Church Fathers to the Reformers, it was assumed that when Paul writes “to the churches in Galatia” (v. 2) he is writing to t/Celts or Gauls of t/north.

b. In the 1890s a scholar name Sir William Ramsey published two books

1. A Historical Commentary on the book of Galatians
2. The Church in the Roman Empire

In these he contended that Paul didn't write t/Galatians to CH's in t/northern Galatian region (ethnic G.) but to those CH's in t/southern region (provincial Roman G.).

c. The prevalent view today is that Paul wrote to churches in southern / provincial Galatia (six reasons)

1. No record of CH's being established in the northern Galatian cities (Tavium, Ancyra, Pessinus).
2. There is a record of CH's established in the southern Galatian cities.

Within provincial (southern) Galatia we find towns which the apostle Paul evangelized on his first missionary journey: Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe (Acts 13–14).

3. The common way to refer to t/cities in the southern region was by t/name “Galatians.”

Greek geographer Strabo describes this southern province as mixed consisting of Greeks, Romans, Gauls, Jews. But all within this Roman Province were considered Galatians. Inscriptions bearing the name of slaves refer to them as “Galatians” even though none has a Celtic name. A 1st c. inscription outside t/city of Pisidia in t/S. refers to it as “the city of the Galatians.” Inscriptions on tombstones in t/southern region refer to the dead as Galatians. [Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, s.v. Galatians, Epistle To]

4. The 3 other occurrences of ‘Galatia’ in the NT (2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Pet. 1:1; and 1 Cor. 16:1) almost certainly refer to the Roman province in t/S.

5. In this letter (Galatians) Paul mentions Barnabas 3x (2:1, 9, 13). Barnabas was His traveling companion during t/1st Missionary Journey when these Galatian CHs were being est. The way his name comes up in t/letter assumes that t/Galatian Xns knew him. (Barnabas was not with Paul on his other M.Js.)

6. Southern Galatia was much more accessible than the northern region. System of Roman roads made travel much easier. Seems much more likely that the false teachers that Paul addresses t/o t/letter (Jewish Xns) would have a foothold in t/south (closer to Jerusalem with more Jews than the north).

As Guthrie notes in his classic NT Introduction ==>

“. . . it is more readily conceivable that Judaizers had dogged Paul's steps to the regions of Pisidian Antioch than that they trailed him across the more obscure districts of the north. In any case, Acts makes abundantly clear that such Judaizers had been at work in the southern district and that their activity was the immediate cause of the council at Jerusalem.”

II. The Mailing Address

Roman Province of South Galatia.

With that in mind ==>

III. The Post-Mark Date

A. When and Where was the Letter Written?

1. If indeed he was writing to the churches of Southern Galatia

This means that Paul est. t/Galatian CH's during His 1st M.J. w/Barnabas. He then wrote Galatians right afterward in AD 48/9 making it t/earliest of his letters.

B. The Chronology Starts in Antioch

In Acts 13 – Paul & Barn. are sent out from Syrian Antioch (looked at that last time). 1st Missionary Journey

Acts 13:1–3 1 NOW there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.² And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”³ Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Paul and Barn. went to Cyprus and from Cyprus to the Galatian cities in and around Pisidian Antioch / S. Phrygia-Galatia region.

Read about that in Acts 13-14.

Go to t/synagogues to evangelize. They were rejected by t/Jews in each city and turned to evang. t/Gentiles.

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this [Gospel], they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Cf. v. 49: “The word of the Lord was being spoken throughout the entire region” <--- S. Galatia.

Afterward some Jews from Judea who claimed to believe in Jesus began to proclaim that it was necess. for t/Gentiles to be circumcised & keep t/Law of Moses.

Around this time Paul writes Galatians.

Again, Galatians was written right around AD 48/9. Rem: Highly probable that it was written B4 t/Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 (significant). We'll take a look at t/J.C. in a bit.

IV. The Stamp

A. Stamps Are Big Business

No only collectables, but t/run of t/mill stamps that you stick on a letter & drop in t/mail. Any big business is subject to corruption, in this case counterfeiters. They don't only counterfeit collectable stamps, but also first class postage stamps.

An article written several years ago claimed that t/US postal service loses nearly 135 million dollars per year in mail fraud. [www.foxnews.com/us/2010/12/06/counterfeit-stamps-giving-postal-service-lickin/#ixzz2cK5gY7MC]

Counterfeiting is big business. Not only is money counterfeited, but collectable coins, sports cards & other valuables are as well.

I have a replica of an 1800s liberty silver dollar that is so realistic that I can't tell t/diff. — even w/a magnifying glass.

1. What does this have to do with Galatians?

There's no evidence historically that t/CH ever thought that t/Epistle was anything but a genuine inspired letter of TAP.

NT scholar Richard Longenecker writes==>

“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. The letter begins by naming him as its author (1:1). Furthermore, the nature of its theological argument, its distinctive use of Scripture in support of that argument, the character of its impassioned appeals, and the style of writing all point to Paul as its author. If Galatians is not by Paul, then no NT letter is by him, for none has any better claim.” [Galatians, lvii-lviii]

Galatians was recognized by t/early, post-apostolic CH as belonging to t/canonical Scriptures very early and its cited by church fathers and apologists extensively.

V. The Text of the Letter

A. What is the Style and Structure of the Letter

1. Epistle (letter)

As we mentioned earlier, it follows t/customary form of ancient letters. Defense letter. It's an apologetic for t/authenticity of Paul's Apostleship as well as defense of Justification by Faith alone. Polemic.

2. As for the writing of the letter

a. Paul would have used an amanuensis (perhaps Barnabas)

An amanuensis was a scribe or secretary who penned t/letter as it was dictated.

Paul used a man named Tertius to pen Romans ==>
Rom. 16:22 I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

2 Thess. 3:17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.

1 Cor. 16:21 The greeting is in my own hand—Paul.

Colossians 4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

Galatians 6:11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

b. These scribes were often paid professionals

(1) A 3d c. AD Latin payment schedule:

“To a scribe for best writing, 100 lines, 25 denarii; for second quality writing, 100 lines, 20 denarii. To a notary for writing a petition or legal document, 100 lines, 10 denarii.”

[cited by Longenecker, lix]

Time of t/NT 1 Den. = 1 Days wage.

But this document is from t/3d c. when a denarri was worth significantly less. Inflation.

I read an article which said that t/Amer. Dollar has declined at t/same rate t/Rom. Denarius did while America has declined morally at t/same rate as Rome. We all know how Rome ended up.

VI. The Contents of the Letter

A. What Is the Letter About and Why was it Written?

1. Already noted that Galatians is a defense of justification by faith & Paul's Apostleship

Addresses matters of legalism and antinomianism.

It speaks much of the law (M.L. / and law in general).

In that regard ==>

1. The First Council

It was written in response to an issue that later became such a big problem it demanded t/first ever church council to convene: The Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Paul makes no mention of the Jerus. Council in Galatians which strongly implies that Galatians was written before the council. Why? Because t/Jerus. Council of Acts 15 & t/letter to Galatians address t/same problem. Yet Paul never mentions t/Council which he would have if Galatians was written after t/decisions reached there.

Judaizers.

In Acts 15 we read that ==>

15:1 AND some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

These Jews claimed to believe in Jesus, but they also contended that keeping t/Law of Moses was essential—namely for Gentiles.

They came to Antioch at t/concl. of Paul & Barnabas’ 1st M.J. and attempted to cause a schism.

In Acts 14:27-28 Paul and Barn. reported to t/CH in Antioch (their sending CH) about t/success they had evang. Gentiles. Clearly, these new Gentile converts weren’t circumcised or these Judaizers wouldn’t have objected.

“No evidence exists that these Gentiles had been circumcised or required to live by all the Mosaic Law. In fact, the Spirit had come on them without such an act as Peter will argue.” [ESV Study Bible]

These false teachers made their way to Jerusalem where Paul & Barnabas were headed along w/a contingent from Antioch

15:4-5 4 And when they [Paul, Barnabas & group of representatives from Antioch] arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

They shared how God blessed and how CH’s were est.

5 But certain ones of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed, stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”

These were Jews who contended that belief in Jesus wasn't enough (that seems to be t/common MO of false teachers). Faith in X was insufficient; Gentile believers had to be circumcised & keep t/M.L.

It was men like these that Paul was contending against in Galatians. Like 2:12==>

2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he [Peter] used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

The council (AD 49) reached a decision.

6 And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

Rabbis often used t/word "yoke" to refer to t/entirety of t/Law [ESV Study Bible]

So it seems to be more than just about Salvation as t/Fathers weren't trusting in t/Law for salvation, as Acts 13:32 indicates: "We preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers." (cf. Rom. 4). Salvation was central (v. 11) ==>

11 “But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

James, t/central leader of t/Jerus. CH & 1/2 bro. of Jesus thru t/Spirit comes up w/a solution.

He alludes to Isaiah and concentrates on Amos 9:11-12 where Amos looks beyond Israel to a salvation offered to t/entire world.

He concludes ==>

Acts 15:19–20 19 “Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

Gentiles, in order not to offend t/Jews were to focus on 3 things:

1. Abstain from food offered to idols in pagan temples;
2. Abstain from fornication (goes with Lev. 18:6-20 which forbids incestual relationships but goes beyond that to immorality in general which was rife among t/Gentiles;
3. Abstain from blood—eating meat w/blood, basically t/same thing as “what is strangled”. Goes back before t/Law to Genesis 9:4.

No mention of observing days / feasts / food restrictions / 613 laws.

Those 3 things: 1) Food offered to idols—Paul later modifies this in 1 Cor. 8-10; 2) Fornication; 3) Blood.

We see t/contents of t/letter in vv. 22-31 ==>

Acts 15:22–31 22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas— Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, 23 and they sent this letter by them, “The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings. 24 “Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls, 25 it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 “Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28 “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.” 30 So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

The decision was reached; letter written; Gospel went forth w/greater clarification and conviction.

Never stops false teachers who find all sorts of ways to pervert truth.

What we see today we've seen t/o history. Those who deny who God is in His Triunity // Person and Work of JC // Deny t/Gospel of grace.

Legalists on one hand and libertines on the other.

"The Gospel, like its blessed Master, is always crucified between two thieves -- legalists of all sorts on the one hand and Antinomians on the other; the former robbing the Saviour of the glory of his work for us, and the other robbing him of the glory of his work within us." [James Henley Thornwell, Antinomianism]

See that in Galatians. Both factions. Judaizing legalists and the Lordless antinomians.

Covered two words: Paul and Galatians. Now ready to actually dig into t/text which we will do, if t/Lord allows, next time.

Luther – Galatians. “My own epistle to which I have plighted my troth; my Katherine Von Bora.”

Galatians has been called “the book of Romans in miniature”

Galatians is where t/Gospel is central. Where all of salvation by grace is defended.

1:8–9 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

That’s how much is at stake.

What is the Gospel?