

Introduction to NT Books

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VIII. The Book of Galatians

A. The Authorship of Galatians

1. The External Evidence: it has enjoyed universal attestation through the patristics, including arch-heretic Marcion.
2. The Internal Evidence
 - a. Paul claimed authorship in 1:1 and 5:2.
 - b. It harmonizes with Paul's ministry recorded in Acts.

B. The Date of Galatians

1. The date hinges around Paul's audience in Galatia.
2. If written to churches in S. Galatia founded on first journey, then the date is AD 49. If it was written to N. Galatian churches, then date would be during his third journey (AD 55-56).
 - a. Paul seemed to use *Γαλατία* in political (southern) rather than an ethical (northern) sense.
 - b. He did evangelize S. Galatia but it is merely conjectured that he evangelized N. Galatia.
 - c. His reference to Barnabas (2:1, 9, 13) assumes the audience was familiar with him from first journey.
 - d. Paul did not appeal to the Jerusalem Council (AD 49) to clinch his argument about Gentile salvation because he wrote prior to the council meeting.

C. The Origin and Destination

1. Paul probably wrote from Ephesus or Macedonia as he was prohibited from going to them (4:20).
2. He wrote to the Galatian churches started on first missionary journey.

D. The Purpose of Galatians: to vindicate his apostleship and to expound justification by faith in refuting Judiazers.

E. The Characteristics of Galatians

1. It defends Christian liberty in Christ from legalism (salvation by law-keeping)—(3:11).
2. Paul wrote to united NT assemblies that he had started (1:2; 3:27-28). He was fearful that they might apostatize by following another gospel (of works). Some apparently did apostatize, and ultimately became the foundation of the catholic church movement ultimately united with the Roman Empire (Roman Catholic Church) in AD 313.
3. The apostle defended his apostolic authority as coming from Christ (1:15 ff.).

4. He publicly rebuked the Apostle Peter for his hypocrisy of eating with the Gentiles until Jerusalem Jews came. His “*dissimulation*”¹ impacted Barnabas who did the same thing (2:11-18).
5. Paul rebuked the Galatians for returning to their pre-conversion paganism and consequent bondage to “*beggarly elements*” (πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα).²
6. He gave instructions on how to restore and erring brother (6:1-5).
7. The Apostle concluded the Book with his own handwriting. He wrote in large letters (probably uncials or capitals), probably to emphasize his authorship and sentiments, although some think he was nearly blind.

¹Hypocrisy or ὑπόκρισις (7x).

²Literally, the words mean “impotent elemental beings” (i.e., demons) which are “*no gods.*” (v. 8).