

Galatians

Galatians answers a crisis over whether Gentile believers must adopt circumcision and other boundary markers in order to belong to God's people.



Interpretive reconstruction. The exact room and assistant are reconstructed. The papyrus is intentionally blank so the illustration does not invent the letter's words.

Date · Confidence: Inferred
c. AD 48–49

A North Galatian destination or a later South Galatian date moves the letter into the 50s, and neither destination nor writing city is explicit in the letter.

Place · Confidence: Inferred
Syrian Antioch (debated)

A North Galatian destination or a later South Galatian date moves the letter into the 50s, and neither destination nor writing city is explicit in the letter.

Before and after

- 1 **c. AD 46–48** Many disciples at Derbe; return strengthening churches and appointing elders.
Derbe → Lystra → Iconium → Pisidian Antioch · Established
- 2 **c. AD 48** Returns to Antioch; reports God opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.
Perga → Attalia → Antioch · Established
- 3 **c. AD 48/49** Up to Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus; gospel set before the leaders; right hand of fellowship.
Jerusalem · Established
- 4 **c. AD 48/49** Confronts Peter over withdrawing from table fellowship with Gentiles.
Antioch · Established
- 5 **c. AD 48/49** Likely writes Galatians (early-date / South Galatian view).
Antioch · Inferred
- 6 **c. AD 49** The Jerusalem Council: Gentiles need not be circumcised.
Antioch → Jerusalem · Established
- 7 **c. AD 49** Returns with the council letter; the church rejoices.
Antioch · Established

What the text establishes

Established

Galatians answers a crisis over whether Gentile believers must adopt circumcision and other boundary markers in order to belong to God's people.

The audience is a group of churches called "Galatians," but the letter does not list the individual recipient towns.

Leading reconstruction

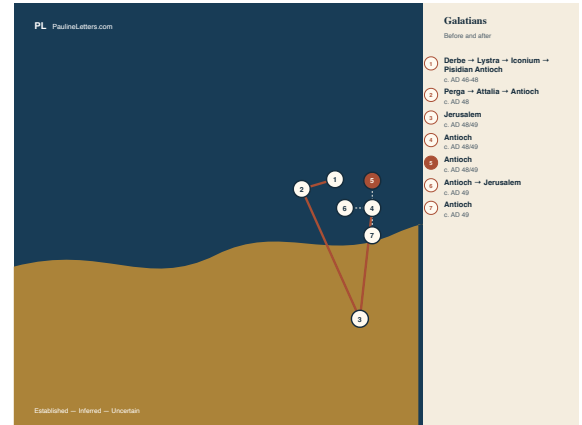
An early South Galatian reconstruction dates the letter around AD 48–49, after the first journey and near the circumcision dispute. Its writing place is not stated; Antioch is a proposal within that reconstruction.

A North Galatian destination or a later South Galatian date moves the letter into the 50s, and neither destination nor writing city is explicit in the letter.

Other credible readings

A North Galatian reading identifies the recipients with communities in the ethnic Galatian region reached during later missionary activity.

A South Galatian destination does not require an early date; the letter may address the first-journey churches after Paul's later activity.



A ten-minute teaching plan

1. Galatians answers a crisis over whether Gentile believers must adopt circumcision and other boundary markers in order to belong to God's people.
2. On the early view, Galatians follows the first journey and Antioch conflict and stands near the Jerusalem Council; later views place it after further mission work.
3. An early South Galatian reconstruction dates the letter around AD 48–49, after the first journey and near the circumcision dispute. Its writing place is not stated; Antioch is a proposal within that reconstruction.
4. A North Galatian reading identifies the recipients with communities in the ethnic Galatian region reached during later missionary activity.

Primary texts

Romans through Philemon, World English Bible (public domain).

Acts 7–28, World English Bible (public domain).

Sources

Raymond E. Brown, An Introduction to the New Testament (Doubleday, 1997). — Chapter 19, "Letter to the Galatians," "General Analysis of the Message" Brown surveys Galatians' argument and occasion.

F. F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text, NIGTC (Eerdmans, 1982) — the fullest modern case for the South Galatian destination and early date. — Introduction II.3, "The 'South Galatian' hypothesis"; V, "Date and Related Questions" Bruce argues for a South Galatian destination and early date as a reconstruction.

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Paul: A Critical Life (Oxford University Press, 1996). — Chapter 1, "The Chronological Framework," "The Evidence from the Pauline Letters" and "The Evidence from the Acts of the Apostles"

Murphy-O'Connor explains why chronology must weigh the letters and Acts without treating either as a complete timetable.

Scripture references only; no protected Scripture body is included.

<https://paulineletters.com/explore/galatians>

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