

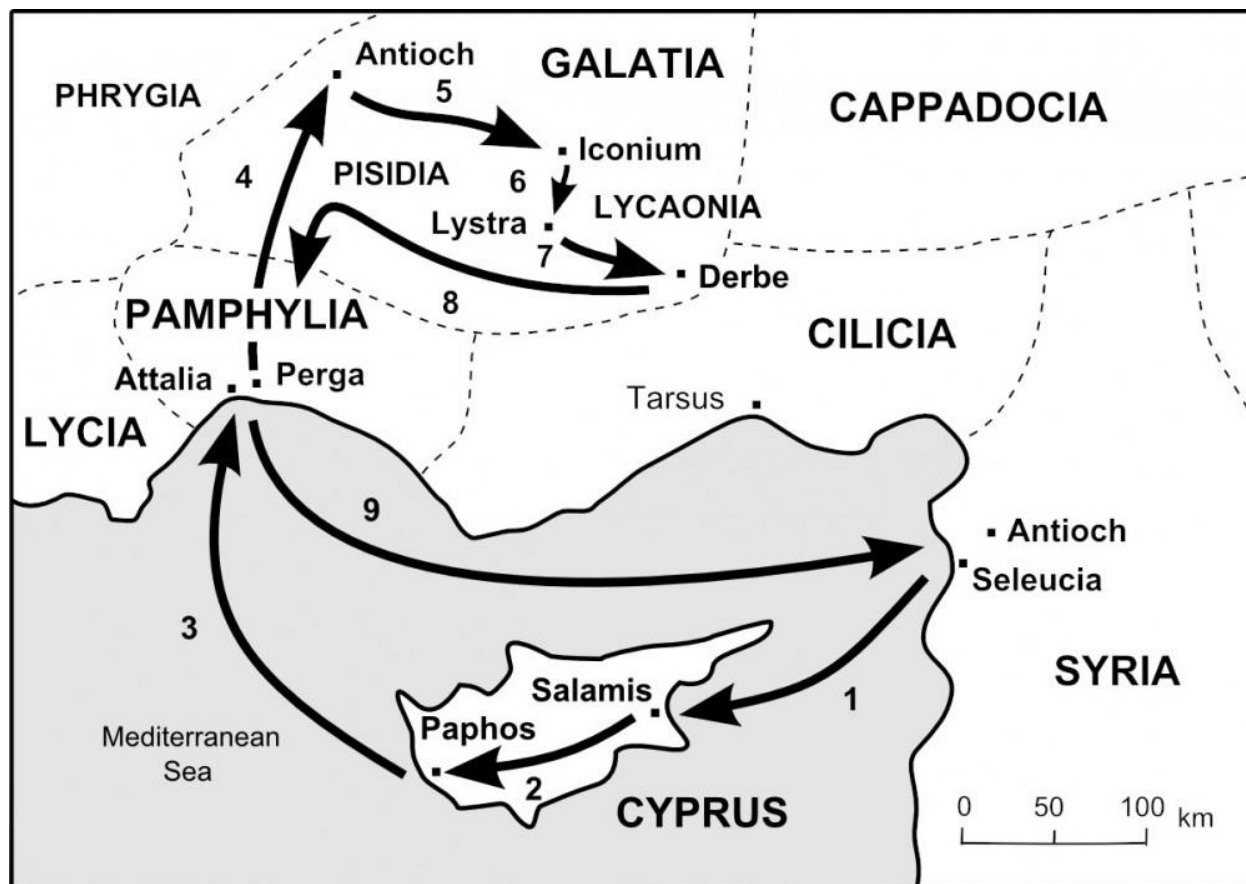
Sunday, July 10, 2022—Introduction to Galatians: Author, Readership, & Date

Author

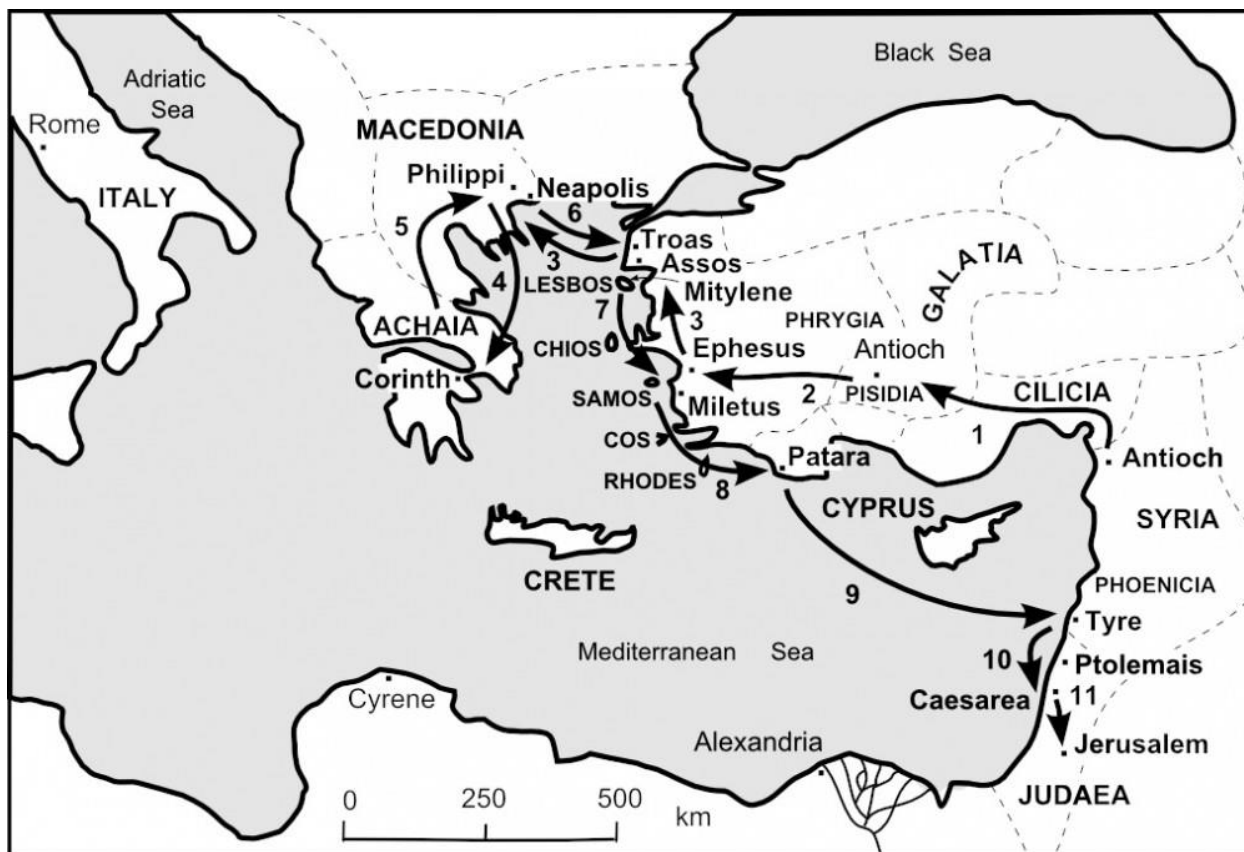
- Paul clearly was the author of Galatians. He claims that he wrote it in book in Gal. 1:1. There is no reason to believe that this is not the case.
- Galatians 6:11—in the case of Galatians Paul wrote the entirety of the epistle himself. This was not Paul’s normal practice. Most of the time he would dictate his epistles to an “amanuensis” or secretary who would record/write down what Paul said.
 - Romans 16:22—Tertius was the amanuensis or secretary who wrote down what Paul dictated.
- Paul would normally dictate his epistles to a secretary and sign them in his own hand.
 - Colossians 4:16
 - II Thessalonians 3:17—this verse states that Paul’s hand-written salutations were a “token” of all his epistles. In short, Paul’s hand-written salutations were a mark of authenticity and apostolic authority.
 - II Thessalonians 2:1-2—indicate that the Thessalonians had received and were troubled by false letters “as from” Paul. It is therefore fitting that Paul would point out the significance of his salutations at the end of II Thessalonians
 - The lack of such a salutation in the book of Hebrews is one reason that I do not believe that Paul wrote Hebrews.

Readership & Date

- Galatians 1:2—the epistle is addressed to the “churches of Galatia.” Notice that the word church is plural. Paul is writing to multiple churches in the region of Galatia. The epistle was a circular letter intended to be read in all the churches of the region.
- The word Greek work rendered “Galatia” in verse 2 means “Land of the Gauls,” according to *Strong Concordance*.
- The Roman province of Galatia was established in 25 BC. This territory included Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, all of which Paul visited on his first apostolic journey recorded in Acts 13-14.



- When Paul departed Antioch in Acts 13 there were no gentile churches in this region.
 - Romans 15:14-20—when Paul left Antioch in Acts 13 he endeavored “to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation” (Rom. 15:20).
 - Acts 13 & 14—record the history of Paul’s first apostolic journey. Paul’s movements during this journey are charted on the map above.
 - Acts 15:36-41—Paul goes through the region of Galatia a second time on his second apostolic journey. Please see the map of Paul’s second journey on the next page.



- There are two different views as to who Paul's original readers were, according to theological literature. *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts* summarizes these views on pages 399 and 400.
 - North Galatian View: “. . . holds that Paul was speaking about Galatia in its earlier, more restricted sense. According to this theory, the churches of Galatia were located north of the cities Paul visited on his first missionary journey. Paul visited ethnic Galatia for the first time on his second missionary journey, probably while he was on his way to Troas (Acts 16:6). On his third missionary journey, Paul revisited the Galatian churches he had established (Acts 18:23) and wrote the epistle either from Ephesus (53-56 AD) or Macedonia (56 AD).” (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 399)
 - South Galatian View: maintains that “Paul was referring to “Galatia” in its wider political sense as a province of Rome. Accordingly, the churches addressed were located in the cities he evangelized during his first missionary journey with Barnabas (Acts 13:13—14:23). This was just prior to the Jerusalem Council, so the Jerusalem visit described in 2:1-10 would have been the Acts 11:27-30 famine-relief visit, and the book of Galatians would have been written in 49 AD.” (*Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, 399-400)

Date

- Various commentaries and study Bibles offer dates ranging from 51-58 AD for when Galatians was written. We know based on the content in Galatians 2 that the book was written sometime after the Jerusalem council meeting recorded by Luke in Acts 15.
- Brother David Reid of Columbus Bible Church believes that Galatians was chronologically the first book Paul wrote. Brother Reid's *The Chronological Order of the Pauline Epistles* makes the scriptural argument that Paul wrote Galatians shortly after he was beaten in Philippi in Acts 16.
 - Acts 16:22-23—Paul and Silas are beaten in the City of Philippi.
 - Galatians 6:17—Paul bears in his body “the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ” when he wrote Galatians.
 - Acts 16:6—Paul was just in Galatia earlier in the chapter during his second apostolic journey.
 - Galatians 1:6—the Galatians departed Paul's gospel shortly after he left the region thereby promoting the writing of the epistle. This first perfectly with the book having been written around the time of Paul's beating recorded in Acts 16:22-23. This accounts for the proximity in time between when Paul was in the region (Acts 16:6) and when he wrote the letter (around Acts 16:22-23). Paul could not have written Galatians after his first apostolic journey because it occurred before the Jerusalem council of Acts 15.
 - Acts 18:23—records the beginning of Paul's third apostolic journey. This is too late for Paul to have written Galatians. Therefore, we must conclude that the both the North and South Galatian views are incorrect.
- It is our contention from scripture that Paul wrote Galatians during his second apostolic journey shortly after he was beaten in Philippi in Acts 16:22-23. This of course would make Galatians the first book Paul wrote seeing that he did not even visit Thessalonica until Acts 17.

Works Cited

Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1993.