

{Read Passage}

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?

Of course, an ancient letter didn't have a stamp, a return address – or even a mailing address. Letters of antiquity (NT epistles) were structured differently. For example ==>

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

PAUL, an apostle . . .

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

to the churches of Galatia:

Greeting (vv. 3-4):

Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, 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, to whom be the glory forevermore. Amen.

Body of the letter (1:6 – 6:10)

Concluding thoughts (begin in 6:11):

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

Valediction – “yours truly” (6:18)

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

We are only using a more modern letter, including t/envelope and stamp, as an analogy.

In that regard - Last week ==>

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

Spent our time reviewing the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul.

Answering t/? ==>

A. Who was the Apostle Paul?

1. He was born Saul of Tarsus right around 5 AD (about 10 years after the birth of Christ)

He didn't become Paul at his conversion. Paul is the Greek form - Saul the Hebrew. He was born to Jewish parents of t/Tribe of Benj., likely named after t/Benjamite King Saul, Isr. 1st King, who ruled over t/united KD of Israel during t/11th century B.C.

Saul/Paul born in t/city of Tarsus – sw Asia Minor – around 350 mi. N. of Jerus.

Tarsus itself was a Roman colony – Paul had t/adv. of Roman citizenship.

It seems that his family was prominent. Likely a leading family in the local synagogue. Young Paul had t/best of everything: Not only a keen mind, but a top-notch education as well.

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

Paul, as a Christian, would refer to that as recorded by Luke in Acts 22:3.

B. It's in the Book of Acts - Chapter 7 - that we first hear of 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 the authority of t/Sanhedrin, took charge of a movt. to systematically persecute and suppress Xns. He pursued them as if they were animals // threw them into dungeons // watched w/great satisfaction as they were publicly flogged – and he voted in favor of their deaths.

All that changed. We read t/account of his conversion in Acts 9.

C. Paul Tells the Story Himself in Acts 22

1. Story begins in Acts 21

After the 3rd and last Missionary Journey in t/BOA, Paul is back in Jerusalem.

17 And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

They were away on a long perilous journey. No doubt it was good to be back home.

As I read this I thought of our trip to Honduras in 2011. I kept a personal journal related to our trip. As to our journey home, I wrote: The ride to Rochester (from Atlanta) was only 90 minutes. I was dozing off in the middle of the flight when the flight attendant drove the service food cart right into my right aching knee. I awoke with a start and she didn't even look at me. That was the second time that day.

. . . Between that and constantly having my right shoulder bumped by passenger and crew, riding in the aisle can be treacherous.

A nice surprise was when we deplaned. About a dozen from CCC were there to greet us. We hugged and smiled and shared stories.

18 And now the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.

“with us” = Luke (who wrote t/BOA) and the rest of t/group that were on t/missionary trip.

They arrived in Jer. had a good night's rest, and then met with James (head of t/Jerusalem CH) and t/elders.

BTW – there are at least 3 men named “James” in t/NT (confusing).

1. An apostle of Jesus; James the son of Zebedee, the elder brother of John. Jesus referred to James and John as “sons of thunder”, probably an indication of their rather brash disposition. (They were t/ones who wanted to call fire down from heaven to consume a Samaritan village.)

This James was the first of the 12 to be martyred (about A.D. 44), by order of King Herod Agrippa I of Judea (Acts 12:2).

2. Another apostle - James the son of Alphaeus, commonly called James the Less (or James the Younger). He's t/most obscure of t/3.

3. James, the brother of Jesus (Gal. 1:19). Early Xn writers refer to him as Jesus' brother (1/2). Later on, most of the ancient Church rejected this because of the belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary.

This is t/James who wrote t/epistle bearing his name // referred to here in v. 18.

19 And after he [Paul] had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20a And when they heard it they began glorifying God;

Here's where t/story turns a corner ==>

20b and they said to him, “You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the Law; 21 and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.

A false report had gone out concerning Paul. Yes, Paul taught Gentiles that circumcision was inconsequential –

Galatians 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

He did not go out of his way to teach them Jewish customs. However, he never taught Jews ... not to circumcise their sons or to disregard Jewish customs.

However, t/damage had been done. Reminder of t/dangers of gossip and slander & listening to rumors.

22 “What, then, is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come.

So James and the elders suggest that Paul join in the purification rites of four men who had taken a vow. Object lesson to prove that the rumors were false.

The 4 men appar. had a Nazirite vow. Goes back to Numbers 6.

A man or woman could make this vow of special dedication to God. He or she was to abstain from alcohol, vinegar, grape juice, even eating fresh or dried grapes.

The men were to let their hair grow and they were to remain undefiled (couldn't go near a dead body – even if it was your own father or mother).

Once that period of separation was over (usually about 18 months), the person under the vow had his hair cut and presented a special offering to t/Lord.

We see this in Acts 18:18 -

[Paul] he had his hair cut (Cenchrea), for he was keeping a vow.

23 “Therefore do this that we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; 24 take them and purify yourself along with them, and pay their expenses in order that they may shave their heads; and all will know that there is nothing to the things which they have been told about you, but that you yourself also walk orderly, keeping the Law.

These 4 men evidently didn't have enough \$ to provide their required offerings. Paul is underwrite their expenses as an expression of his affirmation that what they were doing was ok w/him.

25 “But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.”

That goes back to the decision of the Jerusalem Council in chapter 15.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purifying himself along with them, went into the temple, giving notice of the completion of the days of purification, until the sacrifice was offered for each one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost over, the Jews from Asia, upon seeing him in the temple, began to stir up all the multitude and laid hands on him,

This was supposed to be a demonstration for believing Jews.

What happens? There's great opposition – not from t/believing Jews but from t/unbelieving Jews from the province of Asia, where the gospel had enjoyed great success.

They were there for t/feast of Pentecost, they see their old foe Paul, and they instigate a riot against him.

This marks t/6th time a crowd was incited against Paul.

28 crying out, “Men of Israel, come to our aid! This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people, and the Law, and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”

29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, & they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.

False accusation. Parallels those leveled against Stephen (ironic) ==> Acts 6:11–14 11 . . . “We have heard [Stephen] speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” 12 And they stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and dragged him away, and brought him before the Council. 13 And they put forward false witnesses who said, “This man incessantly speaks against this holy place, and the Law;”

These Jews from Asia falsely accuse Paul of bringing Greeks into the temple area. That was be defiling to t/holy place.

W/i t/Temple complex there was t/court of the Gentiles. Non-Jews were permitted there, but no farther.

Inscriptions have been discovered on a fixture that separated the court of the Gentiles from the rest of the temple area. These “no trespassing” signs warned Gentiles that they would only have themselves to blame for their deaths if they crossed beyond the barrier.

So deep was this feeling that the Romans gave permission to Jews to fulfill this death sentence, even if the intruder was a Roman citizen.

[Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, Dallas Theological Seminary. The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.]

30 And all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together; and taking hold of Paul, they dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut.

31 And while they were seeking to kill him, a report came up to the commander of the Roman cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion.

Roman troops were stationed at the Fortress of Antonia which adjoined the temple area to the northwest.

Extra troops would have been added to control t/crowds there for t/FOP. They were part of the Roman Tenth Legion.

The commander of the troops at the fortress, Claudius Lysias at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd.

32 And at once he took along some soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them; and when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

This was no small group. Est. that upwards of 200 soldiers would have been immediately on-hand.

33 Then the commander came up and took hold of him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; and he began asking who he was and what he had done. 34 But among the crowd some were shouting one thing and some another, and when he could not find out the facts on account of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. 35 And when he got to the stairs, it so happened that he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob; 36 for the multitude of the people kept following behind, crying out, "Away with him!"

37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, “May I say something to you?” And he *said, “Do you know Greek? {Heb., Aramaic, and some Latin!}”

38 “Then you are not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?”

Josephus wrote of this, an Egyptian impostor who claimed to be a prophet. He said this Egyptian had gathered thousands of followers (Luke sets t/# at 4,000). In A.D. 54 this false prophet brought his followers to the Mount of Olives boasting that the walls of Jerusalem would collapse at his command. The Roman army promptly marched on him and his followers, killing some and capturing others, while the rest were scattered.

The Egyptian escaped.

That wasn't long before. When Lysias saw the riot in the temple, he assumes that t/man Paul was this escaped Egyptian.

39 But Paul said, “I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city;

Tarsus was a city w/a good reputation – particularly for education. Paul assures t/commander that he is a Jew & has a right to enter t/Temple.

and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.”

40 And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned to the people with his hand; and when there was a great hush, he spoke to them in the Hebrew dialect, saying,

Chapter 22:1

“BRETHREN and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer to you.”

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“BRETHREN and fathers = same titles Stephen used to address t/Sanhedren in chapter 7. (wonder as to t/parallel – impression S. made on P.)

Paul gives a 3 part defense: (a) his conduct before his conversion; (b) his conversion; (c) his commission as an Apostle.

2 And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew dialect (Aramaic), they became even more quiet; and he *said, 3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated under Gamaliel, strictly according to the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, just as you all are today. 4 “And I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons, 5 as also the high priest and all the Council of the elders can testify. From them I also received letters to the brethren, and started off for Damascus in order to bring even those who were there to Jerusalem as prisoners to be punished.

Paul’s point is obvious. Much like what he wrote in Philippians 3:

5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

6 “And it came about that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, 7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ 8 “And I answered, ‘Who art Thou, Lord?’ And He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.’9 “And those who were with me beheld the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me.

10 “And I said, ‘What shall I do, Lord?’ And the Lord said to me, ‘Arise and go on into Damascus; and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.’11 “But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.

12 “And a certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing near said to me, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very time I looked up at him. 14 “And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 15 ‘For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard.

Here we have Ananias described as a devout observer of the Law and highly respected by all the Jews living there - facts not given in Acts 9.

The reference to seeing X - “the Righteous One” (v. 14) qualified Paul to be an apostle.

The term “Righteous One” was also used by Stephen (Acts 7:52).

16 ‘And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

Two questions revolve about this verse.

- 1) When was Paul actually saved?
- 2) Is this baptismal regeneration (water baptism being req. for salv.)?

Stanley D. Toussaint (formerly of DTS) ==>

Several factors suggest he was saved on the Damascus Road:

- (1) The gospel was presented to him directly by Christ (Gal. 1:11–12), not later by Ananias.
- (2) Already (Acts 22:10) Paul said he had submitted in faith to Christ.
- (3) Paul was filled w/the Spirit before his baptism w/ water (9:17–18).

(4) The Greek aorist participle, *επικαλεσαμενος* translated calling on His name refers either to action which is simultaneous with or before that of the main verb. Here Paul’s calling on Christ’s name (for salvation) preceded his water baptism. The participle may be translated, “having called on His name.”

Acts 2:38 and the Accusative of Cause.

Second, what then do the words wash your sins away mean? Do they teach that salvation comes by water baptism? Because Paul was already cleansed spiritually (see comments in preceding par.), these words must refer to the symbolism of baptism. Baptism is a picture of God’s inner work of washing away sin. [Toussaint, Stanley D. “Acts.” In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, edited by J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.]

That's what we saw in our study of 1 Peter 3:21 – Metonymy of Effect. Bapti was so closely I.D. w/prof. X in t/first c. that it could be used in place of t/salv. event. “Blood” = “Death”. “Cross = Salvation”.

17 “And it came about when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I fell into a trance, 18 and I saw Him saying to me, ‘Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me.’ 19 “And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves understand that in one synagogue after another I used to imprison and beat those who believed in Thee. 20 ‘And when the blood of Thy witness Stephen was being shed, I also was standing by approving, and watching out for the cloaks of those who were slaying him.’

So far, so good.

But ==>

21 “And He said to me, ‘Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”

22 And they listened to him up to this statement, and then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live!” 23 And as they were crying out and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air,

Think again of Stephen . . .

24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, stating that he should be examined by scourging so that he might find out the reason why they were shouting against him that way.

“We're going to get to the truth even if we have to beat it out of you.”

This beating by t/Romans was similar to that received by X.

As one writer notes ==>

“The Roman scourge was inflicted with [short] whips embedded with pieces of metal or bones and attached to a strong wooden handle. It could kill a man or leave him permanently crippled.” Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 419.

25 And when they stretched him out with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?”

26 And when the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and told him, saying, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman.” 27 And the commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman?” And he said, “Yes.” 28 And the commander answered, “I acquired this citizenship with a large sum of money.” And Paul said, “But I was actually born a citizen.”

29 Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the commander also was afraid when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains. [to be flogged] 30 But on the next day, wishing to know for certain why he had been accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Council to assemble, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Some time afterward, Paul is lawfully put in chains (lawfully according to Rome).

He's freed for a time.

Later, under the persecution of Roman Emperor Nero, Paul is again arrested and imprisoned in Rome. Right around AD 66. Paul is in his early 60s – an old man in those days.

He was condemned. Abandoned by many of his friends.

At t/end of his last letter (2 Tim.) – Loneliness & Confidence / Mixture of Joy & Sorrow ==>

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

9 Make every effort to come to me soon; 10 for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. 12 But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 When you come bring the cloak which I left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15 Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching. 16 At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth.

18 The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. . . . 21 Make every effort to come before winter.

Finally beheaded w/the sword.

I know that's a lot on TAP t/past few weeks, but I believe it will be helpful in understanding much of his thought as we move forward in this letter.

Next 2 points ==>

II. The Address Proper

Who were the recipients of the letter?

III. The Post-Mark Date

When was the letter written?

We noted are closely related. We only have time to get our feet wet (maybe just our toe nails).

II. The Address Proper

A. Who Were The Recipients of the Letter?

1:2 – “churches in Galatia.”

3:1 – he refers to them as “Galatians”

Galatia and *Galatians* could refer to 2 different areas

1. One of the biggest questions as far as any study of Galatians is concerned: North or South?

When they hear you mention Galatians: All of t/seminarians – graduates and otherwise – love to ask the question:

“North Galatia Theory or South?” Like when you're studying Phil. 2 –
“What's your view on the Kenosis?” STH.

What's this all about?

Here's t/issue: Back in Paul's day there were 2 different ways to understand t/term “Galatia.”

Ethnic Galatia (north of Asia Minor)

Provincial Galatia (south Asia Minor)

“Did Paul write to CH's in t/N or S.?” It is a relevant ?

Volumes have been written on this matter over t/years. Academic works, theological journal articles, doctoral dissertations.

I'm not going to attempt to get too deep into all this.

But it is relevant. So I think it's good that you get a basic understanding of t/issues involv.

2. Northern Galatia = Ethnic Galatia – Southern Galatia = Provincial Galatia

a. Northern Galatia = Ethnic Galatia

Certain Gallic, or Celtic tribes (Celts are called Gauls / Galatians by Gk. and Lat. writers) fought eastward thru Europe – 278-277 BC. They pillaged/plundered A.M. and finally settled in the north central plateau – an area designated Galatia (“The Country of the Gauls”).

They were of the same ethnic origin as the Celts of France and Britain.

Provincial Southern Galatia roughly 200 mi. east to west; 100 mi. north to south. In Paul's day it was inhabited by a mixed pop. Majorities were Greeks, Romans and Jews. It was under Roman control. The churches of the southern part of this province were the ones he visited during the 1st missionary journey.

Did Paul write to churches in the northern Galatian region? The area which was Galatia Proper? Or did he write to southern Galatia, the Roman Province? Tough question that we will tackle next time.

Bring it back to the Gospel // Cross . . .

Letter is book-ended as if by those two subjects

1:8–9 **8 But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed.**

Galatians 6:14 **But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**