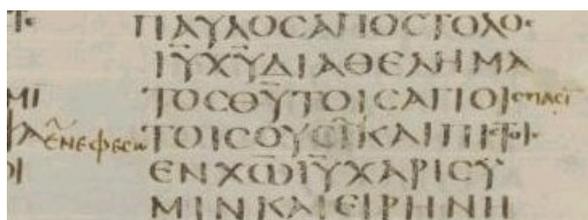


Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians



Codex Sinaiticus Ephesians 1:1 with
'in Ephesus' as a gloss

Introduction

Historical Evidence

The evidence for the Pauline authorship and authenticity is firmly rooted and grounded in the writings of the ancients of the Church. From the later 1st century Clement of Rome and Polycarp knew of it and the author of the 1st Epistle of Peter quoted from this Epistle, as did Ignatius. In the 2nd century it appears in the works of Justin (c. 100-165), the heretical Marcion (110-?) and Irenaeus (c. 120-200). In the Muratorian Canon (late 2nd century) it is listed as the second Epistle after Corinthians. This canon also states '*There are extant also a letter to the Laodiceans and another to the Alexandrians, forged under Paul's name to further the heresy of Marcion.*' Tertullian (c. 160 – 220) and Basil (329 – 379) recorded that 'ἐν Ἐφέσῳ' was not in their copies of the Epistle.

Purpose in Writing

Paul's purpose in writing this epistle was quite different from any of the other of his works – it appears not to have been to a specific church, neither does it contain any advised corrections to misdemeanours of church members or whole churches, nor is there any development of his doctrines concerning Law and Justification, and it was not addressed to friends. The probability is, that it was not, in the first instance, intended only for the church in Ephesus. The words 'ἐν Ἐφέσῳ' do not appear in the earliest MSS, and, as can be seen above it was added as a gloss sometime after the middle of the 4th century when the Codex Sinaiticus was written. There is a similar situation in the Codex Vaticanus, however, here the manuscript is entitled – 'To the Ephesians'. The words are omitted from p⁴⁶ (c. 200), and were not included in the copies of Marcion, Tertullian or Origen (c. 185 – 232). It would appear, therefore, to have been an encyclical letter to churches set up in Asia after Paul's last visit to Ephesus (see Acts 19:1, 17-21, 20:17). The Epistle is much more a sermon than a letter – in it he considers the doctrine of the Christian Church in an uncharacteristically elegant fashion, with long and completely coherent sentences, then he continues in the last three chapters with numerous commands – imperative after imperative!

Where and When Written

The Epistle is from Paul's time as a prisoner and so must be from the times of the imprisonments in Caesarea or Rome. Rome is the more favoured and the date – c. 61-63.