

HEBREWS INTRO

NOVEMBER 5, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

What are some things we can infer about the original recipients of this epistle?

Consider: specific or general audience, religious / cultural background, relationship with author, newer or older Christians, circumstances, problems and challenges.

5:11-12 –

6:9-10 –

10:32-36 –

12:3-4 –

13:19, 23-24 –

Read the following passages and summarize the primary exhortations of the book:

2:1; 3:12-13; 4:1, 11; 6:1-2, 11-12; 10:23-25, 35-36; 12:1, 12-15, 25; 13:9, 12-14

Read the following passages and summarize the primary theme of the book:

1:4; 2:2-3; 3:1-3; 4:14; 7:18-19, 22; 8:6; 9:11-14; 11:13-16, 39-40

AUTHORSHIP

Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 AD) suggests that Hebrews was the work of Paul, originally written in the Hebrew language and then translated into Greek by Luke. Clement further claims that Paul did not include his name in the epistle to avoid prejudice from his Jewish audience.

Tertullian (c. 200 AD) from Carthage suggests that Hebrews was written by Barnabas.

While these are among the earliest recorded statements regarding the book's authorship, they both are likely just speculation. The question of authorship cannot be settled by external evidence.

Internal evidence would strongly indicate that Hebrews was not a translation from Hebrew as Clement claims. It is among the most eloquent and exceptionally crafted Greek documents in the New Testament.

CANONICITY

Hebrews is quoted by Clement of Rome (c. 95 AD), Polycarp (c. 125 AD), Justin Martyr (c. 155 AD), Irenaeus (c. 180 AD), Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 AD), Hippolytus (c. 210 AD), Origen (c. 230 AD), and many others in the early church. While its anonymous authorship made some in the early church question its canonicity, by the third Synod of Carthage in 397 AD it was universally recognized as Scripture.

DATE

It seems the Jewish sacrificial system and temple service were still in place, dating the book sometime prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (**8:13; 10:1, 11**). Yet, the readers seem to be second generation disciples (**2:3**), and not new converts (**5:12; 10:32-33**). This would likely place the writing of Hebrews in the mid to late 60s.

WORKS CONSULTED

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McClister, David. *A commentary on Hebrews*. Temple College Press, 2010.