HEBREWS – A BETTER WAY

**DATE: 5/15/2013 Wed.**

**I. THE “WRITER”**

Who wrote Hebrews?

This question has puzzled believers for generations

- Although the name is not indicated -

There is evidence that the writer was definitely known to his readers

- Even though there is frequent quotation of the OT -

Not once does the author refer to any OT writer by name

- In order to remain consistent with his literary style -

The author perhaps chose to remain anonymous

In this way his readers would be motivated by the impact of his message …

Rather than by the influence of his personality or position

- Scholars have suggested several names as possibilities for the authorship of this book -

Among them are Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, Priscilla, Silas, and, of course, Paul

- Generally, the debate centers on Paul –

Did he or did he not write the book?

Quite often, more effort is spent in trying to prove Paul didn’t write it than in proving he did

Even the early churches had problems over the authenticity of the book

The Eastern Churches accepted it as Pauline

Whereas the Western churches denied it

To be fair, let’s look at both sides of the argument

**A.** **Arguments ‘Against’**

What are the arguments used against the view that Paul wrote the book?

**1.** Since Paul opened all thirteen of his epistles with a salutation including his name …

For example - **II Thessalonians 3:17 – *“The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write”***

So, the absence both of his name and the salutation is first cited

**2.** The critics also claim that the literary style is different from that of Paul’s other writings

**3.** Since Paul was the self-acknowledged Apostle to the Gentiles …

So why would he write such a lengthy treatise to a Jewish assembly?

[**Acts 9:15**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+9%3A15) **– *“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name***

***before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:”***

[**Galatians 2:7**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Gal+2%3A7) **– *“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;”***

**4.** Paul claimed that his message and apostleship were given to him directly by Christ

[**Galatians 1:1**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Gal+1%3A1)**,**[**11,12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Gal+1%3A11-12) **– *“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead;)”***

***“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man”   
“For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ”***

*But,* this writer seems dependent upon others for his knowledge of salvation –

**Hebrews 2:3 – *“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?”***

Like Luke, he seemed to identify himself as a second-generation Christian

[**Luke 1:1,2**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Lk+1%3A1-2) **…**

**5.** The central theme of the book …

*“The High Priesthood of Christ” …*

Is not found explained anywhere else in Paul's writings

And there are others …

Honest inquiry must admit that these arguments considered together do appear impressive

**B.** **Arguments ‘For’**

On the other side, what are the proofs cited to support the Pauline authorship of this book?

**1.** The author was in prison, and Paul suffered many imprisonments

**Hebrews** [**10:34**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+10%3A34) **– *“For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance”***

**II Corinthians 11:23 – *“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft”***

This one does not have to be equated with his second Roman captivity

In all previous confinements he did expect to be released

**Hebrews 13:23 – *“Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you”***

**Philippians 2:23,24 – *“Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me”   
“But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly”***

**Philemon 22 – *“But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you”***

**2.** Contrary to critics -

There are several doctrinal connections between Hebrews and Paul's writings

For Example

- The Preeminence of Christ

**Hebrews** [**1:1-3**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+1%3A1-3) vs. [**Colossians 1:14-19**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Col+1%3A14-19) **…**

- The Authentication of apostles by divine gifts and miracles

**Hebrews** [**2:3,4**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Heb+2%3A3-4) vs. [**II Corinthians 12:12**](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=2Co+12%3A12) **…**

- The Humiliation of Christ

**Hebrews 2:9-18** vs. **Philippians 2:5-11 …**

- The Use of Israel's wanderings as examples to believers

**Hebrews 3:7-4:8** vs. **I Corinthians 10:1-11 …**

- The Temporary Nature of the Old Covenant

**Hebrews 8:1-13** vs. **II Corinthians 3:6-18 …**

- The Emphasis of Faith

**Hebrews 11:1-40** vs. **Romans 1:17**

In fact, Habakkuk's declaration that the just shall live by faith

**Habakkuk 2:4** is quoted three times in the NT

**Hebrews 10:38** vs. **Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11**

This quotation seems to have been a distinctive of Paul’s

**3.** The close companionship of Timothy is also cited

**Hebrews 13:23 -  *“Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you”***

**4.** Although Paul saw himself as an apostle to the Gentiles …

He preached to the Jews first, wherever he went

**Romans 1:16 – *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”***

He went to Jerusalem on many occasions

**Acts 9:26, 12:25, 13:13, 15:2, 21:15 …**

He had a deep spiritual concern for his people

**Romans 9:1-5, 10:1-4 …**

**5.** His training as a Pharisee under Gamaliel in Jerusalem would have provided him with a thorough knowledge of the history and the rites of the Jewish sacrificial system

**Acts 22:3 – *“I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day”***

Few others would have had the background to compose such a book heavy with allusions to Exodus and Leviticus

**6.** The closing section bears a great resemblance to Paul’s concerns

- He requested prayer in his behalf

**Hebrews 13:18** vs. **Ephesians 6:19**

- Desired a good conscience

**Hebrews 13:18** vs. **Acts 24:16; II Timothy 1:3**

- Identified the Father as the God of Peace

**Hebrews 13:20** vs. **Romans 15:33; Philippians 4:9; I Thessalonians 5:23**

- Pronounced a Benediction of Grace

**Hebrews 13:25** vs. **Philemon 25**

- Some have even suggested that Peter's allusion to Paul's writings is a specific reference to Hebrews

**II Peter 3:15,16**

What conclusions can be drawn from this debate?

In the final analysis, only God knows for sure who the author is

Although the book is nameless,

This fact does not detract from the authenticity or inspired authority of its contents

If the book was not written by Paul,

It was still written by God

For men are only God’s penmen

**II. THE “RECIPIENTS”**

**III. “TIME AND PLACE”**

**IV. “PURPOSE”**

**V. “DISTINCTIVE FEATURES”**