

INTRODUCTION TO *HEBREWS*

I. Its CANONICITY

A. Early testimony to the book's EXISTENCE

1. Quoted by CLEMENT of ROME in late FIRST century
2. Used by Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Theophilus, Pantaenus and Clement of Alexandria in the SECOND century
3. Attested by Origen and Eusebius in the THIRD century

B. Early testimony to the book's AUTHORITY

1. INITIALLY accepted by those who assumed PAUL wrote it
2. EVENTUALLY accepted as an ANONYMOUS work

II. Its CONTEXT

A. WHO wrote it?

1. Book is UNSIGNED, making attribution UNCERTAIN
2. Evidence is INCONCLUSIVE that it was written by PAUL
- *3. Tertullian suggested it was written by BARNABAS
4. Martin Luther suggested it was written by APOLLOS
5. SEVERAL others have been suggested

B. WHEN was it written?

1. Since quoted by Clement, could not have been later than AD 96
2. Since assumes OT sacrifices were CONTINUING, pre-dated AD 70
3. Since audience included SECOND-generation believers who should have been MATURE, probably no earlier than AD 60 (5:12)
4. Since he sends greetings from TIMOTHY but not from PAUL, probably after AD 65 (13:23)

C. TO WHOM was it written?

1. Entitled "To the HEBREWS"
 - a. So identified in EVERY EARLY citation
 - b. So stated on EVERY EXTANT manuscript
2. No particular LOCATION is indicated
 - a. Some think JERUSALEM is likely (cf. 2:3; 6:10; 10:34; 12:4)
 - b. Others think ROME is more likely (13:24)
3. Evidently a PARTICULAR Jewish community KNOWN to the writer
 - a. Probably not a group of UNBELIEVERS
 - b. Almost certainly a group of Jewish CHRISTIANS
 - c. May have included several converted PRIESTS