

Orienting Data for Hebrews

Author:

- Unnamed, probably a Jew of the Diaspora--extensive knowledge of Old Testament
- Writes with a fast paced, persuasive style in sophisticated Greek.
- Assumes the role of teacher/preacher—passionately concerned that the readers see the urgency of his message for their daily life.
- A sensitive scholar—aflame with the apostolic message—moves easily from doctrine to exhortation and warning.
- Written by a “second-hand” Christian (Heb. 2:3)
- Most probable candidates: Apollos or Barnabas

Audience:

- Most likely written to Jewish Christians residing in Rome who were under pressure to renounce the faith and return to Judaism.
- No reference is made to Gentiles in these chapters.

Time Frame:

A.D. 49 - Emperor Claudius persecutes Jews which included Jewish Christians - loss of property and imprisonment--expelled from Rome
"Since the Jews were constantly causing disturbances at the instigation of Christ, he (Claudius) expelled them from the city (Rome)." Suetonius

A.D. 64 - Possible date for the writing of *Hebrews*

A.D. 66 - Martyrdom of Apostle Paul

A.D. 64-68 - Emperor Nero pursued persecution of Christians following a fire in the city of Rome – torture and loss of life..

A.D. 68-95 - Period of peace and prosperity - spiritual fervor fades

A.D. 95 – Emperor Domitian – wanted to be worshipped as “Deus et Dominus” - “God and Lord”- began new persecution of Christians

Significance:

- Argues for the Superiority of Christ over all things – His eternal divinity, His supreme government.
- Develops and teaches a biblical view of the priesthood—nowhere else addressed in Scripture. (new revelation and new doctrine)

Key Theme: Christ is Supreme -Therefore, *“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”*

Hebrews 10:23