

Introduction to Hebrews

- The author of the Book of Hebrews is unknown to us, although the predominate view is Paul. There are some credible arguments for other authors, but we will not dwell on the point. The more important question is, "If we don't know for certain who wrote the book, why should we accept it into the canon of Scripture?"
- This begs a further question, "How did Hebrews, or the Gospels, or Paul's letters, or the Revelation, or Genesis for that matter, or any other book make the cut?" There was no Council of the Church that secretly gathered together to pick and choose which books made the cut and which didn't. Roman Emperor Constantine had nothing to do with it. There was no formal process. Rather, whenever the leadership of the Church gathered, it was evident to them which books were considered a part of the canon based upon multiple criteria:
 - Did the individual churches around the known world accept a book as divinely inspired? The Doctrine of Inspiration is the understanding of how a text of Scripture was written.
 - Neo-Orthodox - The Bible contains the Word of God, but also contains historical, scientific, and theological error and should be regarded as a book of human origin wherein its meaning is ascribed by the reader.
 - Liberal or Modernist - Good men wrote sacred texts which are not the Word of God per se, but rather ancient literature that contains historical, scientific, and theological error as well as kernels of truth which must be extracted from their texts.
 - Natural Inspiration - Men of remarkable religious insight expressed their understanding of God and mixed with it their own experiences and views, thus producing texts which contain some historical, scientific, and theological errors.
 - Verbal Dictation - All of Scripture is dictated by God to human stenographers, and is thus fully authoritative, sufficient, and without errors.
 - Verbal Plenary Inspiration - All of Scripture is inspired by God through human personalities, and is thus fully authoritative, sufficient, and without errors. This is the orthodox view of inspiration.
 - Was the book written by a prophet of God? If it was written by a person who spoke for God, then it was His Word.
 - If a Gospel (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), was it written by an eyewitness or based upon verifiable eyewitness accounts?
 - Was the book truthful about God? If it could be impeached (as a witness in a trial), it was rejected. Deut 18:21-22
 - Was the book attended by miracles? Miracles validated a message. Matt 11:1-15, Mark 2:1-15
 - Was the book attended by God's power? If a book did not carry the life changing power of God's Word, it was rejected. Heb 4:12
- The Book of Hebrews makes the cut. It was broadly accepted by the Church as inspired. It is a prophetic writing. It is truthful about God in extreme detail. Its self-declaration of power (4:12) is evident in its detailed presentation of the gospel of redemption through faith in Christ.
- Hebrews has three targeted groups in its audience:
 - Messianic Jews-to strengthen their faith that Jesus was their promised Messiah.
 - Unregenerate Jews-a). to convince them that Jesus was their Messiah; and b). to remove their salvation through the sacrificial system of the law. Heb 10:26-31
 - Unbelieving Gentiles-to present the Gospel for their salvation.