

# Hebrews

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# Authorship of Hebrews

# Variety of Views on Author

## ◆ Paul

- Paul & Luke
- Paul & Clement of Rome

## ◆ Luke

## ◆ Barnabas

## ◆ Apollos

## ◆ Other Less Likely Suggestions

# Internal Evidence on Author

- ◆ Explicit indications
  - Associate of Timothy
  - Not one of the original 12 apostles
  - Appears to be one author, male
- ◆ Content
  - Similarities to Paul
  - Differences from Paul

# Internal Evidence on Author

## ◆ Style

- More Hellenistic than (other) Pauline letters
- Differences in phrasing

# External Evidence on Author

- ◆ Hebrews is attested as early as any NT work.
- ◆ The Alexandrian fathers all refer to it.
- ◆ Tertullian (c200) assigns it to Barnabas.
- ◆ Generally:
  - The W churches denied Pauline authorship.
  - The E churches favored it, w/ qualification.

# Summary on Author

- ◆ Not Timothy!
- ◆ Most likely named candidate is Paul.
  - But have to make special assumptions re/ its style
- ◆ "Not Paul" more likely, but no single candidate would gain more votes.
- ◆ God allowed knowledge of its author to be lost.

# Recipients of Hebrews



# The People

- ◆ Surely Jewish.
- ◆ Professing Christians.
- ◆ We can say a good bit about their circumstances.
  - See under Background, later.

# Their Location

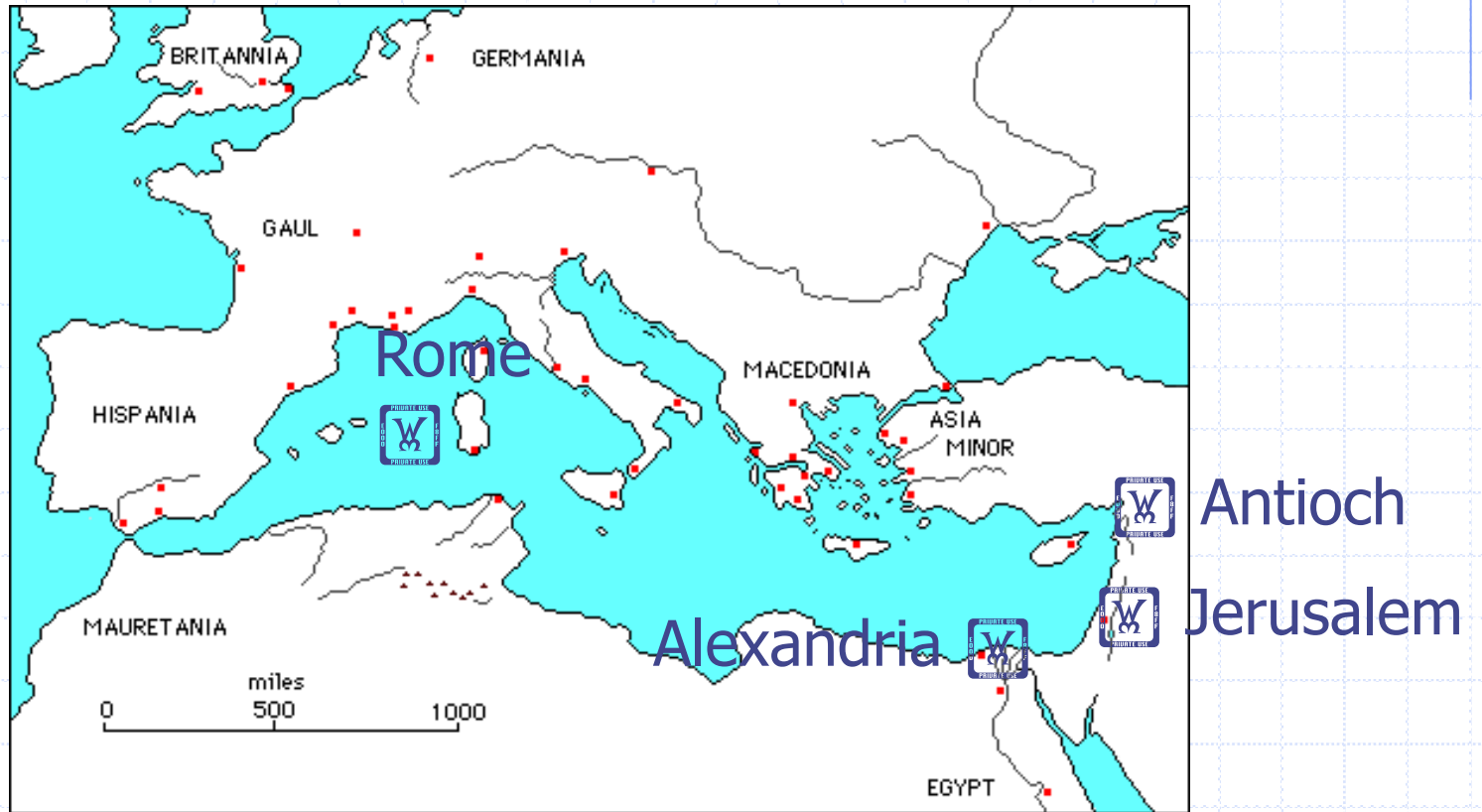
## ◆ Usual suggestions:

- Rome
- Jerusalem
- Alexandria
- Antioch

## ◆ Critical passage (13:24) ambiguous

- "Those from Italy greet you"

# Their Location



# Their Location

- ◆ Following Lenski, I favor Rome as the letter's destination.
- ◆ Probably written to a Jewish house church in Rome facing Nero's persecution.
- ◆ In any case, the remark to greet all the other leaders (13:24) favors a subgroup within a larger whole, such as a house church in a city with many such.

# Date of Hebrews

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- ◆ Latest possible – 95 AD
  - Must precede 1 Clement
- ◆ Earliest possible – well after 30 AD
  - "heard" (2:3) implies church has secondary sources of information
  - "considering the outcome of their lives" (13:7) sounds like original leaders have died, though possibly martyred

# Date of Hebrews

- ◆ More refinement attempted
  - The temple is still functioning, so before 70 AD
  - If the Timothy is Paul's companion, not till after 50 AD
  - Apparently not safe (where recipients are) to be a Christian, but still safe to be a Jew
  - If Rome, probably between 64 and 66 AD
  - Other locations might have wider window

# Background of Recipients



# Their Conversion

- ◆ Apparently converted by immediate disciples of Christ (2:3), who had confirmed truth of their message by miracles (2:4)
- ◆ The writer is confident that they (most of them) are saved (6:9), in spite of his warning for their need to hold on (3:14)

# Their Christian Life & Ministry

- ◆ Had seen some persecution earlier
- ◆ Had been Christians long enough for their first leaders to die
- ◆ But recently they had stagnated

# Their Problem

- ◆ Knew the basics of Christianity, but were backsliding
- ◆ Were in severe danger of apostasy
  - Not into paganism or some other heresy
  - But into returning to Judaism
- ◆ Writer argues that Xy supercedes OT
  - Jesus is the final mediator
  - He typologically fulfills the OT sacrifices

# Outline of Hebrews

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- ◆ Prologue: God's revelation climaxes in his Son (1:1-4)
- ◆ Superior to the OT mediators (1:5-7:28)
  - Angels (1:5-2:18)
  - Moses (& Joshua) (3:1-4:13)
  - Aaronic Priests (5:1-7:28)

# Outline of Hebrews

- ◆ Superior to the OT provisions (8:1-10:39)
  - Better covenant (8:1-13)
  - Better sanctuary (9:1-12)
  - Better sacrifice (9:13-10:18)
- ◆ Exhortation & Final Plea for Faith (10:19-12:29)
- ◆ Concluding Exhortations (13:1-25)

# The Argument of Hebrews

See text in Course Notes

# The End

Hebrews deserves a lifetime of repeated study