

THE APOLLOS PROJECT

FORWARD

This project would never have happened without the insight of Michael Lilborn Williams. It could be argued, that Mike Williams single-handedly initiated what is now called, amongst many Christians, as the Grace movement, embraced by most of the leading Word of Faith teachers today. Few of them have embraced the gospel of peace in quite the same way, but back in the 1980's, it was all but impossible to find in any Christian bookstore, any book with the word "grace", in its title. Now of course, they are everywhere.

Mike Williams also created the first Grace based Internet Ministry on the World Wide Web. His influence in the Grace movement, can be measured by the effect of his phone calls from Joseph Prince, over the course of a year in 1997, his earlier Ministry with Benny Hinn, and the mandatory listening to his teaching for all of Kenneth Copeland's staff. As Mike Williams taught more of the gospel of peace and the gospel of Grace as he felt the holy spirit was leading him, he became gradually more ostracized from the movement that had once championed him. His message of Grace, was also what initiated the eventual breakup of the Worldwide Church of God, under the leadership of Herbert W. Armstrong. (You may remember it by their glossy high-quality magazine called "The Plain Truth".

There is almost no denomination around the world, that has not been affected by Michael's ministry, until today Mike Williams ministries and the Gospel Revolution have found a home in the hearts of Catholics, Amish, Protestants of all colour, and more. You may discover more, about this unusual man by visiting, www.gospelrevolution.com . I offer my thanks to the following people who assisted me with edits and suggestions; Michael Williams, without whose patient mentorship and friendship, the Gospel of grace might have been lost to me; Melvin Martin; Shean Smith, and Adrienne Billings, without whose assistance I could not have brought this project to a timely and effective conclusion. Finally, my heartfelt thanks to my friend Vic dO'brennan, without whose suggestion over a cup of coffee at the Carriage House Inn in Calgary, Alberta some years ago, I would never have considered myself as a writer.

INTRODUCTION

As I wrote the contents of this book, I attempted to acknowledge all of my sources, and should I have missed any, I would covet your comments, so that corrections can be made in future editions. My email address which has remained unchanged for nearly 3 decades is beresbart@gmail.com.

I ask you to remember, that while the authorship of the biblical book of Hebrews has been possibly the biggest riddle in the Christian religion for the last two millennia, we are not the first ones to posit that Apollos was the writer. What we have done however, is to join some dots, to which nobody else seems to have paid any great attention. It is clearly stated in the Bible, that Apollos was first and fore-mostly, a disciple of John the Baptist. This, taken along with the background, ministry, culture, abilities and education of Apollos, add more than enough to the data stream, in our opinion, as to seal his claim on the authorship of this book.

I trust that you will find our conclusions, both informative and interesting.

Donald Bartlett

2018-09-20

Cullman, Alabama, USA

CHAPTER ONE

Why is this topic so important?

(1) Why Bother?

Anything worth reading is always better understood, if one knows the author. If the author of the book of Hebrews is any one whom we know, through existing historical documents, biblical or otherwise, and if we know something about that person's background, then it is highly likely that we will understand what they wrote, just that much better.

(2) Possible contenders

There is a short list of contenders for the authorship of the book of Hebrews, and they were all considered in the first few centuries of Church History, and for the next 2000 years. It was a short list in the times of the early church fathers, and it's a shortlist today as well. This shortlist is comprised of Paul, Apollos, Barnabas, Luke, Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, Barnabas, and a couple of other hopefuls. Most of these are easy to delete from consideration, leaving the main contenders to be Paul and Apollos. We will explore this shortlist in the next chapter. But if we can accurately pinpoint the authorship of Hebrews, it will inevitably fill in more gaps in the historical perspective and narrative, of the New Testament, and when can that ever be a bad thing? In fact, it may even, in turn, lead to other interesting discoveries.

(3) Dating

“It seems that the scholars have also gone to at least two extremes in their views with regard to the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews. Some would set it as having been written very early. An early date seems very unlikely, in view of the fact that the writer of Hebrews apparently leaned quite heavily upon Paul's Epistles¹ as he wrote his own Epistle. If the author did so depend upon these epistles, then this epistle could not have been written before A.D. 56.

On the other hand, some scholars have attempted to argue for a very late date for the writing of Hebrews. But in view of the fact that Clement of Rome quoted from the book, the date of its writing could not have been later than A.D. 96. Moreover, there is no justification for the suggestion that the writer of Hebrews depended upon Josephus for some of his material.

Whatever date is settled upon, it must fall somewhere between the two extremes of an early and a late period. From the internal evidence within the book, we know that the Christians to whom the book was written were “second—generation” Christians², and we know that the church had been in existence long enough for a somewhat advanced development³.

¹ Galatians, Romans, and I Corinthians

² Heb. 2:3

³ Heb. 5:12

On the other hand, all the references to the Jewish temple and its services are in the present tense, which shows that the book was probably written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70

All things considered, we would therefore date the writing of Hebrews as around A.D. 67—69, after the death of Paul, and before the destruction of Jerusalem.”⁴

(4) Evolution of Disputations as to Authorship

Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is not asserted in the Epistle itself and was already doubted in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It was almost unquestioningly accepted from the 5th to the 16th centuries that Paul was the author of Hebrews, but that view is now almost universally rejected by scholars.

Tertullian (c. 155 – c. 240 AD), was a prolific early Christian author, apologist and a polemicist against heresy, and has been called "the father of Latin Christianity" and "the founder of Western theology.". The Tertullian knew the Letter to the Hebrews as being "under the name of Barnabas".⁵

Origen, in his now lost Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, is reported by Eusebius⁶ as having written ". . . if any Church holds that this epistle is by Paul, let it be commended for this. For not without reason have the ancients handed it down as Paul's. But who wrote the epistle, in truth, God only knows. The statement of some who have gone before us is that Clement, bishop of the Romans, wrote the epistle, and of others, that Luke, the author of the Gospel and the Acts, wrote it".

That Paul is neither directly nor indirectly the author is now the view of scholars almost without exception.⁷

Ligonier Ministries, a leading Calvinist organization, says, "Though we cannot be absolutely sure who the writer was, the letter does give a few hints that help us identify certain characteristics about him. It is likely that the writer was a well-educated Hellenistic Jew (a Greek-speaking Jew) who had become a Christian. He was probably a second-generation believer who had come to faith through the ministry of the apostles (2:3), and he was firmly grounded in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament)."⁸

Third Millennium Ministries has this to say; "From the earliest times, there have been a variety of positions on the authorship of Hebrews".⁹

Clement of Alexandria, who lived from approximately A.D. 150 to 215, and Origen of Alexandria, who lived from around A.D. 185 to 254, acknowledged that there was a variety of

⁴ Dr. John W. McCormick <https://www.fbminstitute.com/McCormick/Hebrews.html>

⁵ De Pudicitia, chapter 20 where T. quotes Heb. 6:4–8

⁶ Hist. Eccl. 6, 25, 13f

⁷ For details, see Kümmel, I[ntroduction to the] N[ew] T[estament], Nashville, 1975] 392–94, 401–03

⁸ <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/writer-hebrews/>

⁹ <https://thirdmill.org/seminary/lesson.asp/vs/HEB/In/1>

opinions on the authorship of Hebrews even as early as in 150 years after Christ. Early on, the apostle Paul was the candidate named most frequently, but scholars also suggested Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, and even Clement of Rome.

Around A.D. 325 the church historian Eusebius in his History of the Church referred to Origen's outlook on the authorship of Hebrews¹⁰

Origen's comment reflects how uncertain he and many others were in his day. And most biblical scholars today concur.

In the light of how other new Testament books were written with salutations and closing notes identifying their authors, the way the book of Hebrews appears to us, very strongly hints, that the author wanted to be anonymous, and this we shall explore later.

The many questions surround the writing of this book, have moved some notable theologians from the earliest church fathers, to Martin Luther, and dried up to today, to doubt if Hebrews should even be included in the New Testament Canon at all. "Others, like Clement of Rome, who died sometime around A.D. 99, treated Hebrews as equal to other New Testament books. Justin Martyr, who lived from A.D. 100 to 165, did the same, as did Irenaeus.

But Hebrews was omitted from both the Marcionite Canon, written around A.D. 144, and the Muratorian Canon, written around A.D. 170. By the end of the patristic period, the majority of influential interpreters The eastern Orthodox Church that broke away from the Roman Catholic Church in 1100 recognised Hebrews as part of the Canon and written by Paul.

Throughout the medieval period, most leading scholars continued to believe that Paul wrote Hebrews. But during the Reformation, Protestant Reformers questioned many ecclesiastical traditions, including the traditional view of Pauline authorship. Martin Luther suggested that Apollos was the author. John Calvin didn't suggest an alternative, but he insisted that the book could not have come from Paul.

Today, the majority of interpreters reject Pauline authorship. We'll touch on three reasons for this. First, as we've already mentioned, this book is anonymous, and it was Paul's practice to name himself in his epistles. In fact, Paul was deeply concerned that forgeries had spread under his name¹¹. So, it seems unlikely that he would have failed to identify himself had he written Hebrews."¹²

¹⁰ Book 6, chapter 25, section 14.

¹¹ 2 Thessalonians 2:2

¹² Third Millennium Ministries. <https://thirdmill.org/seminary/lesson.asp/vs/HEB/ln/1>

CHAPTER 2

OTHER CONTENDERS

(1) The Generally accepted Contenders

When you consider the wide agreement among biblical scholars about who wrote every other book of the New Testament, it's a little mysterious that we don't know who wrote Hebrews.

Eusebius, the father of church history, thought that Clement himself may have been either the author or translator of Hebrews.¹³

But Clement's other writings bear little resemblance to the polished Greek rhetoric we see used in the book of Hebrews. Tertulian, an early church father fought possibly Barnabas may have authored Hebrews.

A recent theory suggests Timothy; but this is unlikely as Timothy is mentioned by name in the book itself. Another suggestion is Priscilla and or Aquila who were avid supporters of Paul. So who did write this book of Hebrews – was Origen the closest when he said “God only knows.”?. Let us look a little closer to Paul's possible authorship.

(2) In favor of Paul being the author of Hebrews.

One thing is certain. Whoever wrote this book was in lockstep with Paul's gospel,

Consider the following parallels between Paul's writings and the contents of Hebrews.

Hebrews	Pauls Writings
Hebrews 1:3 “The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”	Colossians 1:15 – 17 “The Son is the image of the invisible God. . . . For in him all things were created . . . and in him all things hold together.”
Hebrews 2:4 “God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”	1 Corinthians 12:11 “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”
Hebrews 2:14(– 17) “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death. . .”	Philippians 2:7 – 8 “Being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even

¹³ Hist. eccl. 3.38.2

	death on a cross!”
Hebrews 8:6 “But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.”	2 Corinthians 3:6 “He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”
Hebrews 10:14 “For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”	Romans 5:9; 12:1 “Since we have now been justified by his blood”; “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.”

It’s certainly not unreasonable to conclude Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. Many of the thoughts of Hebrews are similar to those found in Paul’s writings.

The soteriology of Hebrews is quite consistent with Paul’s own teaching. For instance, the statement in Hebrews 10:14 that those who have been “made perfect” are in the process of being “made holy” sounds very much like Paul’s teaching on justification (e.g., Rom. 3:21 – 5:9) and sanctification (e.g., Rom. 8:1 – 17). Moreover, both Paul and the author of Hebrews thought of Abraham as the spiritual father of Christians in similar ways.¹⁴

And then we have the evidence of the King James version itself, in which you’ll find the title translated as it was found in some manuscripts: “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews.”

The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament place Hebrews Right after Romans among the books written by the apostle Paul this was taken as evidence that Paul had written and certainly in the eastern Orthodox Church that idea has continued to this day.

Probably the most compelling evidence that Paul wrote the letter to the Hebrews comes from the apostle Peter who said in 2Peter 3:15, *just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him...* confirming that Paul had also written a letter to the Hebrews; Which Hebrews? We don’t know.

(3) Against Paul being the author of Hebrews.

In spite of all this evidence for Pauline authorship, few New Testament scholars today believe Paul wrote it.

Both John Calvin and Martin Luther shared this judgment five centuries ago.

¹⁴ Who wrote the book of Hebrews , Zondervan Academic <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/who-wrote-the-book-of-hebrews>

Even centuries earlier, ten centuries before Martin Luther, the Roman Catholic Church did not believe Paul wrote Hebrews, possibly retaining a latent memory of the actual author¹⁵. In other words, the rejection of Pauline authorship of Hebrews is a long-standing position in the church, and there are some very good reasons for that.

Salutations

Unlike any of the thirteen letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament, Hebrews nowhere identifies Paul, nor anyone in fact, as its author. Paul always identifies himself in the first verse of every letter he writes. He usually opens with something like, "Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the church at wherever...". In the light of those thirteen other examples, it is unlikely that Paul would have not claimed authorship of this book had he written it. Then there is the fact that the salutations to individual Christians, a common practice of Paul, are missing. In all the recognized books of Paul, he delivered personal greetings to individual believers. Why did he not do this in Hebrews?

Subject Matter

Secondly is the subject matter. Hebrews contains subject matter found nowhere else in the New Testament. It mentions such things as Melchizedek, the high priest, and the Old Testament tabernacle. These are things, with which Paul does not bother himself, in any of the other letters attributed to him.

In the 3rd century, Origen wrote of the letter, "In the epistle entitled To The Hebrews the diction does not exhibit the characteristic roughness of speech or phraseology admitted by the Apostle [Paul] himself, the construction of the sentences is closer to the Greek usage, as anyone capable of recognising differences of style would agree. On the other hand the matter of the epistle is wonderful, and quite equal to the Apostle's acknowledged writings: the truth of this would be admitted by anyone who has read the Apostle carefully... If I were asked my personal opinion, I would say that the matter is the Apostle's but the phraseology and construction are those of someone who remembered the Apostle's teaching and wrote his own interpretation of what his master had said. So if any church regards this epistle as Paul's, it should be commended for so doing, for the primitive Church had every justification for handing it down as his. Who wrote the epistle is known to God alone: the accounts that have reached us suggest that it was either Clement, who became Bishop of Rome, or Luke, who wrote the gospel and the Acts."¹⁶

¹⁵ Eusebius, Hist. eccl. 3.3.5; 6.20.3

¹⁶ A. Louth ed. & G. A. Williamson trans. [Origen quoted in] Eusebius, The History of the Church (London: Penguin, 1989), 202 [book 6.25].

Source.

Perhaps the strongest reason for doubting Pauline authorship is the way the writer of the Hebrews described how he received the gospel. “This salvation which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him”.¹⁷

Notice here how the author of Hebrews mentioned how salvation was first announced by the Lord – in other words by Jesus himself – and was confirmed to us by those who heard him. This is at serious odds with how Paul says he received the gospel directly from Jesus Christ himself.¹⁸ One cannot have learned the gospel directly from Jesus Christ for the first time and simultaneously have heard it for the first time, from those who heard it from Christ.

¹⁷ Hebrews 2:3

¹⁸ Galatians 1:1, 11 and 12, and 1 Corinthians 11:23

CHAPTER 3

Introducing John The Baptist

John the Baptist is mentioned by the Jewish historian Josephus and revered as a major religious figure in Christianity, Islam, the Bahá'í Faith, and Mandaeism.

On April 22, 2011, The Sydney Morning Herald, a respected newspaper operating out of Sydney Australia, published the following story, which I think the reader will find interesting.¹⁹

Religions and their followers find a safe haven April 22, 2011 — 12.00am

The Mandaeans

Shortly after the (Australian) 2006 census, the Baptists noticed a small rise in their number since 2001. Mostly, it was due to Chinese and Korean immigration, but part of the increase was, possibly, an error. Some members of an ancient but little known faith, the Mandaeans - who are not Christian - had ticked the wrong box. "Some of our people made a mistake," explained a Mandaean spokesman, Dr Amad Mtsasher. "We are followers of John the Baptist from Iraq."

Mandaeans claim a history back to Adam, their first prophet. John the Baptist is their last prophet and teacher. Their roots are in ancient Mesopotamia, but of the estimated 100,000 Mandaeans worldwide, only 5000 to 8000 remain in Iraq and Iran, where they have been a persecuted minority. As strict pacifists, they cannot fight and, as Dr Mtasher, says, "We have no allies or tribes or militias to protect us."

An estimated 6000 live in Australia, many around south-western Sydney, a large percentage having come as refugees since the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. Mandaeanism is, by definition, a shrinking faith. Its adherents cannot marry outside the faith and they do not accept converts.

The central feature of their worship is regular full immersion baptism, undertaken whenever a Mandaean feels the need to wash away sin. The faith requires it be done in running water, and for many years local Mandaeans were baptised in the Nepean River. But recently one group established a worship space in Liverpool and installed a baptismal pool.

Clergy dress in white to symbolise purity and light and are known as tarmidas, although some followers refer to them as rabbis.

Another story here;

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-07-21/meet-the-mandaeans-sydneys-followers-of-john-the-baptist/8727720>

¹⁹ <https://www.smh.com.au/national/religions-and-their-followers-find-a-safe-haven-20110421-1dql8.html>

And here; <https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-10-06/these-iraqi-immigrants-worship-john-baptist-theyre-not-christians>

And on Wiki here; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mandaeism>

Here is the backstory; John the Baptist and Jesus were physically related. Jesus' mother, Mary, and John's mother, Elizabeth, were relatives (Luke 1:36). The old King James Version of the Bible says they were cousins, but the word "cousin" used to mean any relative in the 17th century when the KJV was written. They may have been cousins, or because of the age difference, Elizabeth might have been Mary's aunt.

Nonetheless, John the Baptist and Jesus were closely related.

But there was another relationship between the two, that had to do more with their destinies than their bloodlines. Jesus was destined to be the Saviour of the world, while John the Baptist was destined to introduce Jesus as the Saviour of the world. "Saviour of the world" is no small title, but in Jesus eyes, John the Baptist was far more than just a forerunner; In a discourse about John the Baptist, Jesus honored the prophet with these words: "Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist.²⁰ John certainly did not see himself as "great"—he did not see himself as worthy enough to baptize Jesus²¹ or even to carry His sandals²².

These are simple facts, as recorded in the New Testament Gospels. But the most intriguing things about John the Baptist, were yet to be seen.

The first disciples of Jesus were in fact converted from being disciples of John the Baptist as we see in the following passage;

John 1:35-42 (NRSV) The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!"³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?"³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed[a]).⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

Peter's brother was a convert from John the Baptist, so there is good reason to think that Peter was also an earlier disciple of John the Baptist. In fact it is entirely natural to suppose, that much of Jesus' early support, came from disciples of John the Baptist, after they heard and witnessed John's baptism of Jesus.

Now comes the curious part.

²⁰ Matthew 11:11a

²¹ Matthew 3:13-14

²² Matthew 3:11

The Luke account of the first meeting of the yet unborn John and Jesus sees John jumping inside the womb of Elizabeth, presumably as she greets and hugs her relative Mary. Next meeting between Jesus and John, appears to occur when John the Baptist baptizes Jesus. He makes no outward recognition of Jesus as his blood relative, and only observes that he is the anticipated Messiah.

Matthew 3:13-17 (NIV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"¹⁵ Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

After this, the next time we see them meet again, is when John sends his disciples, to enquire of Jesus, who he really is. Again, there is no indication that John actually recognized his close relative Jesus. This has led to some conjecture, that the two in their younger years, had to have lived sufficiently apart, to not recognize each other. There is evidence to suppose, that during the teenage years of Jesus, he became, after the death of his father, Joseph, the ward of his uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, the Minister for mining for the whole Roman Empire, and quite wealthy in his own right, with tin mines in Britain. There is even evidence to suggest, that Jesus spent much time in Britain, and even the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges, that one of the first places to be evangelized by the gospel of the risen Christ, was Britain itself. However, that must wait for another book.

As we have said, the next time they John and Jesus were entangled, was when John sent his disciples to ask Jesus who he really was.

Here is the account of that meeting.

Luke 7:18-24 (KJVA) And the disciples of John showed him of all these things.¹⁹ And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?²⁰ When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?²¹ And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.²² Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.²³ And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.²⁴ And when the messengers of John were departed,

Here we see that those disciples of John the Baptist, returned to a Google in the alarm three hours time three hours from now to the victims of John the Baptist. And there is no record, of them ever returning to Jesus. And so to this day, we see the disciples of John the Baptist, still practice their religion in the Middle East and elsewhere, as Mandaeans.

Then we only see John the Baptist's disciples mentioned a couple of times in Acts, after which they disappear from the purview of the Bible.

Acts 18:24-25 (KJVA) And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. ²⁵This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

And then again in chapter 19;

Acts 19:1-5 (KJVA) And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, ²He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. ³And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. ⁴Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. ⁵When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Apollos, it is clear, before his encounter with Priscilla and Aquiler in chapter 18 of acts

had been a disciple of John the Baptist,

was very eloquent in philosophical and rhetorical Greek,

was exceptionally equipped in the Jewish scriptures, and upon meeting Priscilla and Quiller, learned the gospel of grace and the gospel of peace that Priscilla and Aquiler had learned from Paul. There is another tell-tale phrase in this account, and that is that Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord. In the opening verses of Mark chapter 1, we read of one crying in the wilderness, "prepare ye the way of the Lord." The similarities between the mantra of John the Baptist and the fact that Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord, are rather too great for us to ignore. And after all, we are told in the Acts 19 passage that Apollos was a disciple of John the Baptist, knowing only the baptism of John the Baptist. There is a little bit of "like father, like son" in play here.

We hear very little else about Apollos in the new Testament but that which we have we will introduce directly.

CHAPTER 4

Internal Evidences from the Book of Hebrews itself.

You will have guessed by now, that it is the opinion of this writer, that this book of Hebrews was written by none other than Apollos himself. When examining the internal evidences from the book of Hebrews, we need to remember that John the Baptist was a precursor to Jesus himself. Jesus was always the focal point of creation, of history, of redemption, and of all the eternal councils of God, established before the foundation of the world. To this, John the Baptist was simply a landmark, or a street sign, or a forerunner, pointing to Jesus.

Once we recognise Apollos as the writer to the Hebrews, many of the phrases and teachings contained in Hebrews, take on a new light.

The writer to the Hebrews says, “though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!”²³

Notice how the writer emulates Paul , when Paul said, 1 Corinthians 3:2 (NIV I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

What exactly is the milk and what exactly is the meat to which these two writers are referring?

There is nothing inherently wrong with the modern Christian view that these writers are referring to baby food versus adult food. But to leave it there Mrs are far deeper point about the abhorrence of mixing Mosaic Law and the Grace that flowed from Calvary. Mixtures of milk and meat are strictly forbidden according to Mosaic Law. This dietary law is based on two verses in the Book of Exodus, which forbid boiling a goat in its mother's milk, and a third repetition of this prohibition in Deuteronomy²⁴. Thus, consuming meat and dairy products together is forbidden in the law of Moses, and even today in kosher dietary rules, which even go so far as to stipulate, that a proper space of time should pass between eating dairy foods and animal meat.

In English, we became brainchained to the thought that we are distinguishing between babes and grown adults. This is true in a sense, but there is also a darker side to this simile.

²³ Hebrews 5:12 (NIV)

²⁴ Exod 23:19 (KJVA) The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Exod 34:26 (KJVA) The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Deut 14:21 (KJVA) Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

Both Paul and Apollos are using the Jewish dietary rules to point out how horrendously antithetical it is to mix law and grace. Paul writes a whole book about this abhorrence, namely, the Epistle to the Galatians. When we see Apollos as the writer of this book, it suddenly becomes clear, that for him, the milk of the word were the teachings of the law as taught by John the Baptist. For when we examine some of these teachings, the first thing that we see is that the writer is comparing the inferior worth of the Mosaic Law with the superlative forever planned but now completed work of Jesus. As the writer of the book of Hebrews points out, is not only is the Mosaic Law hard work, but compared to the superior achievements of Jesus as a great high priest, any work under the law, was not only futile but also abhorrent in the eyes of God.

An excellent example of just how Apollos rejects the Mosaic Law in favour of Calvary's grace can be appreciated in the following passage

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, ²Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.²⁵

Some years ago I discovered that it was nearly impossible to see the filters which we have inherited from what we have been taught. Generally speaking, we cannot see our filters, but can only see through them. So let us try and read that passage again, and attempt to understand how it would have been taken by a first century ethnic Jew, and not a white Western Christian 2000 years later.

Because of how religion has trained us to think, we learned that these were the basic doctrines of the religion of Christianity. We were told that repentance, faith towards God baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment, was that in which we were expected to believe, and to which we were expected to adhere. The problem with this line of thought though, is a particularly problematic little phrase we often ignore, and it never hear taught, which is "let us leave these things behind and move on to perfection". That phrase is telling us unmistakably, that if by leaving these things behind, we can move on to perfection, then by that very fact, practicing and teaching those things is practicing and teaching imperfection.

I want you to stop and think about that the just one moment. Hebrews 6:1-2 contains a specific list practices which are imperfect.

Teaching people to repent from dead works, is leading people towards imperfection.

Teaching people to have faith towards God, is leading people towards imperfection.

²⁵ Hebrews 6:1-2

Teaching people the doctrine of baptisms, is leading people towards imperfection.

Teaching people to lay hands on others, is leading people towards imperfection.

Teaching people about resurrection from the dead, is leading people towards imperfection.

Teaching people about eternal judgement, is leading people towards imperfection.

OK! So I think that in simply quoting the Bible itself, we have blonde some minds, and probably lost some readers, but before you leave us, please come to www.gospelrevolution.com and tell us how we have misconstrued the simple English of Hebrews 6:1-2. One thing that the Gospel Revolution stands for is this, we don't want you to think like us necessarily, we just want you to think.

Every one of these things was celebrated and traditionalized, under the law in ancient Israeli practices and beliefs, and Hebrews chapter 6 tells us to leave them behind and move on to perfection. The comparison could not be starker. Sometimes we need to stop, take a breath, and ask ourselves, what exactly did the cross achieve? If all we are left with after Jesus' life, death and resurrection are exactly what the ancient Israelis had, by what are we advantaged?

What we find in Hebrews 6:1-2, are all ancient Jewish rituals which Christianity tells us we still need to practice today.

Types And Shadows

Jesus said, that the Psalms, the Law and the Prophets, all spoke of him.²⁶

A fascinating study for any Bible student, is that of the types and shadows of Jesus, contained in the Old Testament. A good example would be the Old Testament description of the Arc of the Covenant. It contained, the stones upon which were written the ten Commandments, the staff of Aaron which budded, manna collected during Israel's sojourning in the wilderness a hardwood lid and golden angels on top of the lid. When in travel, this was overlaid with gold and then ugly badger skins. The whole was a picture of Jesus. He contained in himself and took to the cross the law which spoke of death, the manna which spoke of life, Aarons Rod which budded and spoke of resurrected life. It was all contained in hardwood, speaking of the everlasting nature of the eternal plans of God, covered in gold, depicting everything about Jesus that was precious and beyond value. That in turn was covered in animal skins so that as Isaiah said, "He had no beauty or comeliness that we should desire him". The old Testament is absolutely littered with such types and shadows.

Hebrews 6:1-2

²⁶ John 5:39

Now with the value of types and shadows in mind, and that word principles, or arche in the Greek, now let us relook At Hebrews chapter 6 verse one.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ"... There are two things in play here one is a doctrine of Christ, and the other is the principles, or rudiments, of the doctrine of Christ. That word translated as "principles" is the Greek word "arche", and it means that which was a commencement. It is the same word from which we get the English word "arch", and a good picture of it remains to this day, in arched bridges we see throughout Europe, wherein the very center and top of the arch, is a capstone or that last piece put in place that holds all the other stones in place by itself, and in that respect, supports the whole bridge. In every respect, the plan of God for humanity has proceeded in an orderly and predestined fashion. In the New Testament, we come across many phrases and terminologies, which 2000 years later, do not rest upon the modern Western ear, as they would have on the first century Jewish ear. All of the New Testament books, if not written exclusively to Jews, At least included Jews in their audience. This book of Hebrews, of all the New Testament books, was almost hyper focused on Jewish behavior. And so, its audience knew very well, what the doctrines of Christ (the Messiah), and the rudiments (principles) of the doctrines of the Messiah were. The doctrines of Christ were all those types and shadows in the Old Covenant which foretold a coming Messiah, including all of these things mentioned in Hebrews 6:1-2.

Another thing of great interest here is the fact that the writer says that the principles of the doctrines of Christ are imperfect. After saying, "let us therefore leave these things behind us", he then says "let us go on to perfection". If he says, that we are to go on to perfection, he is saying that if we keep practising the things he is about to mention, we are playing around in imperfection. This word perfection means completion or altogether finished. He is saying that when we play around in imperfection we are still unfinished. Christianity at large, teaches and preaches all of the things that this writer's about to call unfinished. Let's have a closer look at what they are.

At this point, let me quote Hebrews chapter 6 verses 1-3 from the Mirror Bible translated by François Du Toit.

¹ Consequently, as difficult as it may seem, you ought to divorce yourselves from sentimental attachment to the prefiguring doctrine of the Messiah, which was designed to carry us like a vessel over the ocean of prophetic dispensation into the completeness of the fulfilled promise. A mind shift from attempts to impress God by your behavior, to faith-righteousness in Christ, is fundamental. There is no life left in the old system. It is dead and gone; you have to move on. (Rom 3:27) 6:2 All the Jewish teachings about ceremonial washings (baptisms), the laying on of hands (in order to identify with the slain animal as sacrifice), and all teachings pertaining to a

sin consciousness, including the final resurrection of the dead in order to face judgment, are no longer relevant.²⁷

Therefore leaving the commencement of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection. If the principles of the doctrine of Christ were perfection, why would he say let us go on from them to perfection? And then he says how we do this; we achieve this by not laying again the foundation, or the commencement. We do this by not going back to repentance from dead works, faith towards God, baptisms, laying on of hands, and of resurrection from the dead, and of eternal life.

How much clearer can it be? The writer to the Hebrews is saying, "understand that these doctrines were all wrapped up in the law, and are not what you should be believing , practicing, or teaching now, in the light of the superior work of Jesus as our great high priest.

There are a couple of interesting keys here. One key is that this was a Jewish person writing to Jews, so we know that these things were well known in the religion of the Jews. The writer has penned this book to those who have come out of mainline Judaism and into what was called "The Way of Christ" or just "The Way".

Another important implication is that if any one of these things are obsolete, then, logically, they are ALL obsolete. as they are bundled together between the bookends of "let us leave behind" and " we should be brought on to maturity (fully finished)" Somehow the statement is clear, that clinging to the rudiments of the doctrines of Christ is immature.

So again, what ARE these rudimentary doctrines of Christ that were familiar to all Jews and needed left behind as they left those who practiced them as immature?

Repentance from dead works. The whole purpose of the sacrificial code of ancient Israel was purification and repentance from dead works. In fact, the apostle Paul describes trying to keep any of the law, as dead works. When the writer references repentance from dead works, he is remembering the words of John the Baptist, who preached repentance from the dead works of the Law. If repentance from dead works was in the least bit effective, why did Jesus need to die. After all, repentance from dead works, would have been working fine with no need for Jesus to die. Repentance from dead works was clearly a loser, and calls for a more perfect work to replace it.

Faith towards God; Israel's experiences in the wilderness, were time and again, exemplified by miracles. Did any of those miracles ever induce faith in the Israelis? Jesus said, "if one even come back from the dead, people still would not believe". Was he right? The most impossible thing we can think of, is somebody coming back from the dead. Jesus did it, and still even that miracle, fails to produce human faith. Faith towards God was clearly a loser, and called for a more perfect faith to replace the faith of any human on record. We must never forget that in Hebrews Chapter 11 all of the great heroes of faith are paraded before our eyes; almost every one of them were not moved by faith, but were moved by fear. Why was Moses placed in a

²⁷ Francois Du Toit A selection of key New Testament texts paraphrased from the Greek . Mirror Word Publishing (Kindle Edition by Ten10 Ebooks). Kindle Edition.

basket? Fear! Why did know build the Ark? Read it in Hebrews 11 it is blindingly clear when it says that no I was moved by fear.

And anyway if, the faith of those old covenant heroes was so effective, why does it say at the end of this chapter that they without us could not be made complete?

Doctrine of baptisms; The word “baptisms” in the Greek, means exactly what it was, in the Hebrew ... That is to say, “washings”. In the travelling tabernacle of the agent Israelis, there was the outer court, the holy place or an inner court, and even beyond that, the holy of holies. In the outer court, before one could approach the inner sanctum, one must necessarily have undertaken ritual washings in what was called, “the Laver made of brass”. The labor looked a bit like a wok, only it was made of brass, which in the Scriptures denotes judgment, just as the brass serpent in the wilderness did. These ritual washings need to be left behind, and have nothing to do with the concept of Christian baptism. These washings were clearly ineffective and called for a more perfect baptism. Paul said “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”²⁸ Those Old Testament washings were sadly insufficient. Thank Christ for the perfect baptism of Calvary.

Laying on of hands; Once a year, the ancient Israelis would celebrate, as they do to this day, Yom Kipur. This was an annual day of repentance and cleansing of sin. On this day two goats would be selected; the first goat would be sacrificed, while a second goat had the high priests hands laid on it, and was sent off into the wilderness as the scapegoat. Today, the laying on of hands doctrine depends entirely on the denomination to which you belong. For Baptists and Catholics, you lay hands on people when they are set apart for an office or a function, such as a priest or pastor. Pentecostals on the other hand see the laying on of hands, as a way to impart healing, tongues, and whatever else the latest revelation demands. Paul says that we were forcibly constrained and corralled by love.²⁹ Thank God that Christ laid hands forcibly on us.

All of these old Testament practices are a Ministry of incompleteness. This writer of Hebrews says at the end of Chapter 11 that it didn't matter how good these old Testament saints were, they were incomplete or imperfect without us. Here he is saying that all of their revered ritualistic practices were likewise imperfect and incomplete without the work of Christ. This may be a good place, to point out that many of our readers have never been Jews, and were never under the law to begin with.

²⁸ 1Cor 12:13 (KJV)

²⁹ 2Cor 5:14 It is well worthwhile to do a word study on the word would be “constrained” in the New Testament.

CHAPTER 5

The Secret Revealed

We the writers of this book, posit that the author of the book of Hebrews is none other than Apollos, who is mentioned in Acts chapter 18 and 19³⁰ as well as in the salutations of Paul to Titus, and in the early chapters 1 Corinthians. Following are our reasons for reaching this conclusion.

SOURCE FOR THE GOSPEL

In the author's own words "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;"³¹ Here the writer clearly states, that he heard the gospel from the mouths of those who had previously heard it from Jesus Himself. Paul on the other hand, tells us that he heard the gospel directly from Jesus during his three years in the desert. This writer identifies himself as a second-generation believer.

THE WRITERS SALUTATIONS AND STATUS.

We have previously alluded to the lack of salutations at the beginning and at the end of this book. No author is referenced whatsoever, which is in and of itself a huge red flag, particularly, when compared with Paul's writings. Moreover, we see the writer alluding to Timothy as a contemporaneous peer, while Paul referenced Timothy, as a beloveds son.

STYLE

Anyone who has taken enough Greek and is able to read the Greek New Testament can tell a difference between various NT Greek texts. For example, the writings of John (his gospel in particular) are very easy to read. Luke's writings (Luke and Acts) are noticeably written in better Greek than almost all the other NT texts, certainly better than the letters of the Apostle Paul. Paul's letters are decent Greek, but if you compare Paul's Greek with the text of Hebrews you see a real difference. In fact, ANY NT scholar will tell you that the Greek text of Hebrews is the best Greek in the New Testament.

When one reads the Greek text of Hebrews it is closer to classical Greek than anything in the NT³²: "The language of the Epistle is both in vocabulary and style purer and more vigorous than any other book of the NT....It includes a large number of words which are not found elsewhere [in the NT]"³³"The style is even more characteristic of a practiced scholar than the

³⁰ See Appendix #2

³¹ Heb 2:3 (KJVA)

³² Brooke Foss Westcott

³³ The Epistle to the Hebrews: the Greek texts with notes and essays (London 1892), p.xliv]

vocabulary." ³⁴ And that is saying something, because in fact, the vocabulary is sophisticated, and it includes 150 Greek words that are not found elsewhere in the New Testament and 10 that do not occur in any other Greek writings that have survived for our study. In keeping with the style of a person well educated in formal rhetoric, the Greek of Hebrews is highly literary and very ornate.

Almost every scholar from the very earliest of the church fathers, up to the present, are all in agreement on this one thing; the language, vocabulary, and style of writing in the book of Hebrews, identifies the writer as being clearly a native Greek speaker, educated in the Greek style of Rhetoric utilised by Philo and other Greek philosophers and orators.

ALEXANDRIA, THE CITY.

At the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, Alexandria was a second largest city in the Roman empire and it was a Greek city in Egypt. It housed the great library of Alexandria, which no longer exists. This was the home also of Philo and it is very reasonable to think that the author of the Hebrews, Had more than brushed shoulders with Philo himself. The writer himself would have had access to a library of antiquated histories, multiple copies and versions of the Old Testament Scriptures, and so much more than we can even imagine, pagan practices, Jewish practices, as well as the embryonic Christian religion. Alexandria with its multiple seaports was also a hub for trade throughout the Mediterranean area. Alexandria and Rome were the first places to which scraps of news from outlying areas of the Roman Empire found their way.

Philo of Alexandria was an ethnically Hellenistic (Greek) and religiously Jewish philosopher who was a contemporary of Apollos. He spoke expensively of the Logos, and is probably the source for the apostle John's writings on the Logos.

In conclusion, scholars are united in claiming that the author of the Hebrews must have had the following attributes;

- he was highly educated, probably formally trained in rhetoric; – Apollos qualifies.
- he did not speak/write in Aramaic/Hebrew; – Apollos qualifies.
- he quotes from the Greek OT (LXX) ; – Apollos qualifies.
- he was probably from Alexandria, Egypt; – Apollos almost certainly qualifies.
- he was familiar with the apostle Paul and maybe Philo; – Apollos qualifies.
- he appears to share the intellectual background of Philo; – Apollos qualifies.
- it is likely that he knew some of Philo's writings; – Apollos qualifies.
- he was originally a disciple of John the Baptist; – Apollos qualifies.
- he wrote anonymously; – Apollos qualifies.
- he was in lockstep with the Gospel as preached by Paul; – Apollos qualifies.

We conclude that the only possible candidate for being the author of the book of Hebrews, in the light of all available historical and biblical clues, is Apollos. Why he wrote anonymously we will never know, however, it is not unreasonable to suppose that having seen the trouble Paul got into with the church in Jerusalem, he decided to keep his identity secret.

³⁴ The Epistle to the Hebrews: the Greek texts with notes and essays (London 1892), [p.xlvi]

APPENDIX 1³⁵

The author of Hebrews wrote to exhort his audience to reject the teachings of James Peter and John, "and to remain faithful to Jesus.

This letter was not, as some claim, a sermon recorded by either Luke or others, but a letter of exhortation as described by the author

Listen to the way the author himself characterized his book in Heb 13:22 (KJVA) And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

The words "I beseech" derive from the Greek verb parakaleo, the verbal form of the Greek noun translated "exhortation" in the same sentence.

The terminology of exhortation implies "to summon to the speaker's side" or "to call for someone to take the speaker's point of view." The same expression is used to describe John the Baptist's urgent, persuasive call for repentance in Luke 3:18.

Rhetorical Style

The book of Hebrews has often been characterized as highly rhetorical. By this we mean that it employs many literary devices that were associated with persuasive oratory or urgent debate in the first century. Many of these rhetorical devices appear now and then in other New Testament books, but we find them far more often in Hebrews.

Hebrews is probably the best example in the New Testament of an author who has strong literary and rhetorical skills, and those rhetorical skills really help to accomplish the author's purpose. He's trying to demonstrate the superiority of Christ and the new covenant over the old covenant, and he does so in part with a very convincing strong literary argument.

Listen to what the author of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 13:9:

Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them (Hebrews 13:9).

In this verse, the author contrasted being "strengthened by grace" with being strengthened "by ceremonial foods." This specific focus sounds familiar enough. But notice also that this was just one example of what he called "all kinds of strange teachings." In other words, unusual or strange teachings taught by local Jewish communities. So, what were these "strange teachings" that the audience was tempted to follow?

In the second half of the last century, a number of helpful insights into this question came to light with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran. This long-lost collection of

³⁵ The Background and Purpose of Hebrews, study by Thirdmil.org <https://thirdmill.org/seminary/lesson.asp/vs/HEB/In/1>

documents included Old Testament texts, but also extra-biblical writings that represented the distinctive teachings of a disenfranchised Jewish community living near the Dead Sea. It contained books like The Rule of the Community, The Damascus Covenant, the War Scroll, The Midrash on Melchizedek, as well as sections of 1 Enoch called "The Book of the Watchers" and "The Book of Dreams". These books have a number of teachings that closely parallel the theological issues addressed in Hebrews.

Now, it's important to note that these teachings were not exclusive to this community. Other Jewish groups in the Mediterranean world held to similar views. In fact, the books of Ephesians and Colossians deal with comparable issues in their locations. Yet, it will help us understand many of Hebrews' exhortations against local Jewish beliefs if we note some of the similar subjects found in both Hebrews and the books found at Qumran.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are fascinating documents found, of course, in the desert in Qumran, and they are the works of a radical Jewish sect who defined themselves over and against the Jewish mainstream, particularly the temple complex. And so, somewhat analogously to the book of Hebrews, the sectarians at Qumran seem to have regarded themselves as a new temple under a new covenant. Now, there are just as many dissimilarities particularly because some of the more ritual aspects of the old covenant, the Qumran group really wanted to revitalize those rather than let them obsolesce in the way that the writer of Hebrews suggests.

[Dr. Sean McDonough]

For this lesson, we'll briefly mention just four topics found in both the book of Hebrews and the documents at Qumran.

Ceremonial Foods. In the first place, we've already noted that in Hebrews 13:9, the author spoke against a particular example of eating ceremonial foods.

Many practices at Qumran are described in the book entitled The Rule of the Community. Among many other things, the community at Qumran regularly held sacred communal meals in which they ate specially consecrated food.

Basic Teachings. In the second place, an assortment of basic teachings addressed in the book of Hebrews also appears in texts at Qumran.

For instance, in Hebrews 6:1-2, the author mentioned repentance, faith, cleansing rites (or baptisms), laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. Interestingly enough, The Rule of the Community and the War Scroll at Qumran give a great deal of attention to these and similar matters in ways that differed from the mainstream of Palestinian Judaism.

Angels. In the third place, the literature at Qumran helps us understand the focus on angels in the book of Hebrews. The book of Hebrews addressed beliefs about angels in a number of passages. This focus was in response to the kinds of beliefs that were similar to teachings in books like The Rule of the Community, The Damascus Covenant, and the War Scroll, as well as the sections of 1 Enoch called "The Book of the Watchers" and "The Book of Dreams." These books extolled the powers of good and evil angels, their roles as messengers of divine

revelation, and the influence they had on inferior human beings. Apparently, the original audience of Hebrews had become attracted to these kinds of teachings.

Melchizedek. In the fourth place, the documents at Qumran help us understand the unusual interest that the author of Hebrews had in the Old Testament character Melchizedek.

For the longest time, interpreters had difficulty explaining why the comparisons between Melchizedek and Jesus were so important to the author of Hebrews. But one text found at Qumran, often called 11QMelchizedek or The Midrash on Melchizedek, falsely taught that Melchizedek was a heavenly figure who was going to appear in the last days to proclaim the Day of Atonement and make final atonement for God's people. From all appearances, the original audience of Hebrews was tempted to hold these or similar false beliefs.

Identifying the kinds of false teachings that circulated within Jewish communities helps us to understand why the author of Hebrews exhorted his audience to resist these teachings and remain faithful to Jesus.

There's a number of interesting parallels between the teaching of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the teaching in Hebrews. The most significant would be perhaps that both communities recognized that they were, or believed they were, living in the end times, that God's final salvation was about to take place. Of course, the difference is in Hebrews we see that God's salvation has arrived, whereas at Qumran — or the Dead Sea Scrolls — they're expecting it to happen at any time. But perhaps the most interesting comparison between the two is the role of the figure of Melchizedek. Melchizedek, of course, in Hebrews, the author develops this theology of Melchizedek as Jesus' high priesthood is not according to the order of Aaron, not the traditional Old Testament one, but according to the order of Melchizedek, because we see Melchizedek was a legitimate high priest who met Abraham in the book of Genesis — and so, this Melchizedek comparison. Well, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is one of the Dead Sea Scrolls — known as 11Q Melchizedek because it was discovered in cave 11 of the Dead Sea Scrolls — portrays a figure, this Melchizedek, as a mighty heavenly, glorious, Messiah-like figure who brings salvation. So, it's an interesting comparison since, of course, Melchizedek is a type of Christ in the book of Hebrews, that in the Dead Sea Scrolls he becomes a messianic figure. And so scholars puzzle over this relationship between the Melchizedek figure in Hebrews and Melchizedek as he appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Interesting comparison. [Dr. Mark L. Strauss]

The goal of Hebrews' exhortations was not only to urge the audience to reject the local Jewish teachings. Even more, the author wanted them to remain faithful to Jesus as the Messiah.

APPENDIX II

Tracking Apollos

Date	Verse	Activity
AD51	Acts 18:1	Paul leaves Athens
AD51	Acts 18:1	Paul goes to Corinth
AD51	Act 18:2	Paul meets Aquilla and Priscilla who are tentmakers.
AD51	Act 18:2	Aquilla and Pricilla had been expats from Pontius near Galatia who had just arrived from Italy, as part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius.
AD51	Acts 18:3	Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tent making.
AD51	Acts 18:4	Every Sabbath Paul preached in the Synagogue convincing both Jews and Greeks about Jesus.
AD51	Acts 18:5	Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia and join Paul
AD51	Acts 18:5	Paul is "pressed in the spirit" to go the whole hog and teach the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah.
AD51	Acts 18:6	The Jews bridle at Paul teaching and resist and blaspheme it according to the Greek text.
AD51	Acts 18:6	Consequently, Paul ceases preaching to the Jews with a flourish of his garments, saying he will preach to the Gentiles instead
AD51	Acts 18:7	Paul goes to stay in the house of Justus, who, NOTE IT, lived right next to the synagogue.
AD51	Acts 18:8	Crispus, leader of the synagogue, believes on Jesus, he and his household
AD51	Acts 18:8	Many Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized
AD51	Acts 18:9-10	The Lord speaks to Paul, "Do not be afraid!"
AD51	Acts 18:11	Paul stays in Corinth one and one half years
AD51	Acts 18:12	Jews take Paul to the judgment seat
AD51	Acts 18:13-15	Gallio does not listen to the Jews
AD51	Acts 18:17	In retaliation it seems, Greeks beat the ruler of the synagogue - Gang War!
AD51	Acts 18:18	Sometime later, Paul sails for Syria with Aquilla and Priscilla
AD52	Acts 18:19	Paul goes to Ephesus with Aquila and Priscilla, and leaves them there while he continues alone.

- AD53 Acts 18:24 Apollos shows up in Ephesus
- AD53 Acts 18:24 Apollos was born in Alexandria
- AD53 Acts 18:24 Apollos was eloquent - practiced in Greek rhetoric debating style
- AD53 Acts 18:24 Apollos was powerful in teaching the Scriptures - the Old Testament.
- AD53 Acts 18:25 Apollos was instructed in the way of the Lord
- AD53 Acts 18:25 Apollos was fervent in the spirit
- AD53 Acts 18:25 Apollos spoke and taught diligently the things of the Lord,
- AD53 Acts 18:25 Apollos knew only the baptism of John
- AD53 Acts 18:26 Apollos spoke boldly in the synagogue
- AD53 Acts 18:26 Aquilla and Priscilla Connect with Apollos
- AD53 Acts 18:26 A & P expound unto Apollos the way of God more perfectly
- AD53 Acts 18:27 The brethren there wrote Apollos glowing recommendations to others in Achaia.

- AD53 Acts 18:28 Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ

- AD54 Acts 19:1 Paul goes to Ephesus and Apollos goes to Corinth
- AD55 Presumed Apollos teaches in Corinth
- AD56 Acts 19:3 Paul in Ephesus meets some disciples of John the Baptist
- AD56 1 Cor 1:4:6 Paul deals with sectarianism in Corinth
- AD66 Titus 3:13 Paul and Apollos and Zenas still friends after at least a decade

APPENDIX III

Some observations on religion in general.

(1) Insight as to Canonical validity.

There is another important reason for identifying the author of Hebrews. Both the Roman Catholic Church and almost all Protestant churches offer a wide range of criteria, in order to determine what books should be either included or excluded from the Canon of the Bible. Even going back into antiquity, the Syriac Church, the Ethiopian Church, and all of the splinters of the Eastern Orthodox Church also have their own criteria for what is Canonical and what is not.

According to one major Baptist site, Lifeway, those criteria are³⁶

1. Apostolic origin;
2. Recognition by the churches, at the time;
3. The content of the book;

Another website, Blue letter Bible, has the criteria as;³⁷

1. Prophetic authorship
2. Witness of the spirit (For this we are probably better off reading, "what falls in line with our pre-existing theology.)
3. General acceptance at the time

Yet another website, BibleSprout.com, use these criteria:-³⁸

1. 1 A book should be written by an apostle or the close intimate of an apostle
2. The contents must be revelatory
3. Universal recognition by churches
4. That they bore the marks of inspiration

As you can see there is dizzying disagreement between Bible teachers of different sects, schisms, and denominations on this subject. But it is fair to say, that almost all faith factions would agree on the following:-

For inclusion in the Canon, a writing had to be

1. Produced by an apostle or the close intimate of an apostle;
2. In general usage throughout the churches in the first couple of hundred years of church history, and
3. agree with the established orthodoxy.

So another valuable purpose may be achieved, in establishing certainty as to the validity of the canonization of the book, especially in view of Martin Luther' assertion that Hebrews should be discarded altogether from the Bible.

³⁶ <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/bible-study-establishing-new-testament-canon>

³⁷ <https://www.thesaurus.com/browse/understanding?s=t>

³⁸ <https://www.biblesprout.com/articles/bible/canon-books/>

(4) *The problem with orthodoxy.*

It is impossible to take orthodoxy seriously.

Firstly, At the time the Bible was first formalised orthodoxy was established, at the point of a sword.

Secondly, the very word “orthodoxy” is antithetical to the practice of orthodoxy.

“Etymology” is the study of the evolution and derivation of everyday words. The word “orthodoxy” has come to us via the ancient Latin language, and in turn, from the even more ancient Greek Language. The **Online Dictionary of Etymology** says this, about the word “orthodoxy”; “1620s, from French *orthodoxie* and directly from Late Latin *orthodoxia*, from late Greek *orthodoxia* “right opinion,””³⁹

Wictionary says, “From Late Latin *orthodoxus*, from Ancient Greek *ὀρθόδοξος* (*orthodoxos*), from *ὀρθός* (*orthós*, “straight”)+ *δόξα* (*dóxa*, “opinion”).”⁴⁰

Here is the way that **Merriam-Webster** describes “orthodoxy” – “conforming to established doctrine especially in religion”⁴¹

Today we have multiple thousands of competing brands of Christian religion, and one is forced to ask, “if orthodoxy means “right opinion”, then why isn’t there just one orthodoxy”? Honestly, is that really too much to ask? The only problem with common sense is that it seems to be so UNcommon.

If history is always written by the victors, denominational history is no different. It is endlessly fascinating, to see the evolution of denominational history within churches. If I may draw a parallel, it would be with the formation of the United States of America. Here we see an example in modern history of a nation that was born essentially, out of rebellion. If you are American I apologise, as I know that you call it revolution. When you rebelled against the British, you called it revolution, and every July 4, celebrate it above any of your other national celebrations in. However, when the South did it to the North in what we now call the American Civil War, it was now no longer revolution, but rebellion. Oh, I know that there are multiple self-serving explanations, but the simple facts are there for us all to see.

Likewise when Protestants rebelled against Roman Catholicism, while the Roman Catholics called it rebellion, heretical and the like, Protestants called it freedom from oppression, or if you like, a revolution. You can trace this in multiple lines of denominations, starting with the Marcionites in the first couple of centuries right down to today, and it never varies. If you examine the multiple lines of Baptist denominations, or Presbyterian denominations just in the USA, you will see this phenomenon time and again, in the histories and belief statements of all those various sects and schisms. Only they couch it in much more nauseating language, by claiming that the Holy Spirit led them to a different place from their parent organization. Would the REAL Holy Spirit please stand up??!!

(2) *The Nature of Religion.*

Religion is, by its very nature, divisive. Jesus was God’s way of reaching man, and bringing humanity to its full stature. Religion, by comparison, is man’s way of reaching God, and because it relies on man’s understanding and wisdom, instead of God’s eternal plan and

³⁹ <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=orthodoxy>

⁴⁰ <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/orthodox>

⁴¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/orthodox>

wisdom, it can never understand the big picture. The Bible makes it very clear, that God's plan for humanity was firmly planned out before the foundations of the world.⁴² Inevitably, man's religion splits into thousands of versions, each one of them claiming that the selfsame Holy Spirit, led them to their divergent positions. This is, besides being a non-answer to the prayer of Jesus, that we be one, is simply preposterous. Does Jesus get his prayers answered? In order to turn Jesus prayer for unity into a lie, we only ever needed two competitive brands of Christian religion, unless of course the Holy Spirit is schizophrenic. And we actually see this in the book of Galatians.⁴³

In modern Western civilisations, it is very common for doctors to administer drugs to cure medical ills. Very often, these drugs can have damaging side-effects. Many times, this results in the patient being administered more drugs, in order to combat the negative side-effects of the drugs they received in order to fix the complaint. In rare cases, the side-effects of the second dairy drugs require even more drugs to stabilise the patient. The foolishness of this can be readily seen on a daily basis. Religion is the same. Once we depart from what is clearly stated in the Bible, we then have to invent explanations, as to why our previous explanations don't quite walk on all fours. And thus, honest questions, are often dismissed by teachers, until in desperation, they will tell you that it is all a big mystery. God's mysterious don't you know? And if you question the mystery you are questioning your past is authority, and thus it goes, flying in the face Paul's claim that he told us the whole council of God⁴⁴ and explained to us the whole mystery of the gospel⁴⁵

(3) Questions about the validity of the accepted Canon

It is plain to see that not only is there little agreement between Bible teachers, as to what the criteria was for including anything in the Canon of the Bible, but it must also be seen that these simple rules are broken time and again. For example, we are told, that to be included in the Biblical Canon, a book or a letter had to have been written by an apostle, or the close confidante of an apostle. Out of the eleven possible James' in the New Testament, which one wrote the book bearing that name? Nobody knows. In fact, for the first 400 years of church history, the book of James was not even known in the African churches, who produced some of the earliest church fathers.

Who wrote the book of Hebrews? Was it an apostle? Or was it the close confidante of an apostle? Again nobody knows, although by the end of this book, we trust that you will have come to your own persuaded conclusions.

⁴² Matt 13:35 (KJVA) That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

2Tim 1:9 (KJVA) God...Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

⁴³ Gal 1:6-7 (KJVA) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

⁴⁴ Acts 20:27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

⁴⁵ Eph 1:9 (KJVA) Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

Eph 3:9 (KJVA) And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

As for the generally accepted rule, that for a book to be included in the Canon, it had to of been in general acceptance throughout the churches at the time, was James in general acceptance throughout the churches at the time? James was unknown in the North African church, whence came many of our early church fathers.

There was however, another book, called the Shepherd of Hermas⁴⁶. This book was by all accounts generally accepted by all the early churches: why is it not in the Biblical Canon. And then it is generally concluded, that the Canon we have was the first Canon ever produced. Again history is written by the victors. Neither the Marcionite⁴⁷ nor the Muratorian⁴⁸ canons, which preceded the canon we now have, by centuries, included the book of Hebrews. We tend to forget that our current accepted Christian Canon was forged in the blood of those who disagreed with, and opposed it. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but in this instance the sword won.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the authorship of Paul for the book of Hebrews is undisputed. In the western church, Paul's authorship is disputed in both the Roman Catholic Church, and Protestant churches generally.

Why such disputation? Because history is always written by the winners.

⁴⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shepherd_of_Hermas

⁴⁷ <https://www.westarinstitute.org/store/the-first-new-testament/>

⁴⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muratorian_fragment