

Lecture 3 – Introduction to Hebrews

Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.
Hebrews 13:22

Key Terms

Sermon; unknown author (to us); known author (to readers); Christology; persecution; Jerusalem or Rome; first or second generation; rodent, fatalist, or skeptic?

Objectives

- Identify and describe major issues associated with the origin of “Hebrews”
- Describe possible historical context of original addressees
- Explore connections between context of original addressees and our own context

Preliminary Questions

- What do you know about the themes of Hebrews? How have you understood those themes to work together? How have you understood their intended effect in the lives of believers?
- What are some major issues facing your church in your culture which threaten the spiritual life of your church? Issues within the church family? Issues in the church neighborhood? Issues in the church’s society at large? What are some biblical responses to some of these issues?

Introduction to Hebrews

I. Introductory Comments

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

II. A Sermon?

A. 13:22 – “Exhortation” (*parakalēō*)

B. _____

C. Style of Hebrews is sermonic

1. Signs of oratorical origin

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

2. Known to his addressees

- a. Intimate tone: very personal language
- b. Refers to common experiences
- c. Mix of warmth and intensity

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

3. Pastoral approach

4. Model sermon

- a. Doctrinal material interspersed with application
- b. _____

III. The Anonymous Author

A. Known to his addressees

1. Apostolic circles
2. Calls them brothers

3. Speaks in first person plural
4. Refers to shared experiences
5. Does not insist on his authority.

B. Know much about him

1. Well-educated
2. Knew the Old Testament well; probably Jewish
3. Familiar with Paul; a preacher

IV. Occasion

A. The matter of persecution

1. First round:
2. Second round:
 - a. Getting intense
 - b. Some withdrew from assembly due to pressure
 - c. Stagnated as Christians
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - d. Some consider returning to Judaism
 - 1) Why return? Place of Judaism and Christianity in Rome
 - a) Judaism tacitly recognized
 - b) Christianity out of favor:
 - (1) novelty
 - (2) intolerant of other religions
 - (3) cannibalism
 - (4) rapid growth
 - (5) _____
 - (6) _____

B. The matter of destination and date

1. Jerusalem?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. Rome? (see Lane)
 - a.
 - b.
 - c. Problem with Roman destination: the persecution does not seem to fit the known travails.

C. The matter of Nero's persecution?

1. Fire in Rome in 64 A.D.
2. Anti-Neronian rumors
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

D. Summary of background:

1. Second generation Christians
2. Facing persecution for second time
3. Progressing slowly in faith
4. High degree of knowledge of the Old Testament

So the questions are: What should we do? How should we respond? What should be our perspective: Rodent? Fatalist? Skeptic?

V. Hebrews' Perspective on Persecution: "The Perspective of God's Son, Jesus Christ"

A. Overview of perspective

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. A call not to falter

C. Locates suffering properly in this world