

### *Part 3: A Lesson of God Giving His Word*

#### The Point Introduced

2 Timothy 3:16-7a says "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for | doctrine |, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV). Greek translated "complete" is  $\alpha\rho\tau\iota\omicron\varsigma$  and means "perfectly fit,"<sup>1</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>2</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show of Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). This was written to the New Testament church and describes their Old Testament and their Greek New Testament. However, the Greek New Testament's delivery was spread out over every part of the Christian world. Every part of the church was needed to contribute to the Christian being "entirely suited." Christians need the whole church.

#### North of the Mediterranean Sea

Paul's epistles to specific churches were to places on the north side of the Mediterranean Sea. At Romans 15:28 Paul wrote to the Romans that "when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain" (NASB). 2 Timothy 3:16 has "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (ESV), so we know Paul must have eventually ministered in Spain.<sup>3n</sup>

Paul's general letter is presently called "Ephesians" due to a later addition. Ephesians 1:1 KJV "at Ephesus" was NOT in any surviving pre-399 C.E.<sup>4</sup> Greek manuscripts found on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. The original text without the unauthorized addition can be closely translated as "to the saints | existing and | faithful in Christ Jesus."<sup>5</sup> This epistle was to a general audience.

Most of Paul's letters, however, were to either specific people or specific congregations. Paul's letters in Scripture to specific congregations have the following distribution:

Asia Minor: Galatians, Colossians;  
East Europe: 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians;  
West Europe: Romans.

These have a spread over the east parts and west part of the church north of the Mediterranean Sea.

2 Peter was universal, but 1 Peter was addressed to people in "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (NBV) per 1 Peter 1:1. These were Roman provinces in what is now Asia Minor. These were in the eastern part of the church, and north of the Mediterranean.

<sup>1</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>2</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>3</sup> Not that Scripture needs to be corroborated, but the effects of this then-future missionary journey are visible. First, according to ancient author Strabo, the only language in use in Spain was Latin, and Paul's latest letters, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus used 160 specifically-Latin words or phrases, and compound words, a matter of Latin style, are found in these latest epistles of Paul.\*

A letter of the church of Rome, now called *1 Clement*, was written in the late first century; at what is now chapter 5, it reports Paul's trip to Spain,<sup>†</sup> that he "had preached in the East and in the West, he won the genuine glory for his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world and having reached the farthest limits of the West."<sup>††</sup>

The "farthest limits of the West" would have been the west coast of the province of Spain. A congregation existed in Spain at Tarragona during the first century.<sup>‡</sup>

\* Interpreter's Bible, page 11:362.

† Open Bible, page 1191.

†† Holmes et al, The Apostolic Fathers, page 35.

‡ Fragomeni et al, Blest Are We: The Story of Our Church, Junior High Edition, Parish Catechist's Guide, page 222 map.

<sup>4</sup> Hodges, Farstad, The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text, page 582.

<sup>5</sup> KJV, ASV| translation "and" plus the verb tense per Marshall, Interliner NASB-NIV Parallel New Testament, page 556; verb meaning per Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 289, 131 and Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 119| KJV, ASV.

### South of the Mediterranean Sea

The Epistle to the Hebrews has been enigmatic for centuries. It never identifies its author, and Paul is only a tradition. No one is certain who wrote it, or whom it was to – although it is commonly thought to be Jews outside Israel.<sup>1</sup> We need to consider both of these topics in turn.

There are a number of considerations against authorship by Paul. Paul in all his recognized epistles uses both the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek Old Testament translation while the author of this book used only the Greek translation.<sup>2</sup> The Greek of the epistle is also smoother than in the recognized Pauline letters.<sup>3</sup> Further, Paul always gave his name in his epistles,<sup>4</sup> but Hebrews does not identify an author.

At the turn at the end of the second century C.E., Tertullian in his *De Pudicitia* quoted "an epistle to the Hebrews under the name of Barnabas" and this is the oldest indication of authorship.<sup>5</sup> This seems to indicate that at Tertullian's time and in northern Africa, "Barnabas" was actually the name of the epistle.<sup>6</sup> Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus per Acts 4:36. Jews of Cyprus had Hellenistic backgrounds,<sup>7</sup> meaning Greek cultural perspectives. He would have known Greek from birth and probably would have been raised with use of the Septuagint. He would have been well versed in the Judaic Law since the priesthood was a family matter of the Levites. He would have shown influence of Paul through his extensive travel and work with Paul. G. Edmunson pointed out that "word of |encouragement" (KJV|NBV) at Hebrews 13:22 fits well with Barnabas's nickname "Son of Encouragement" at Acts 4:36 (NASB)<sup>8</sup> – the last words of each translate the same Greek word παρακλήσεως. Barnabas seems to have identified himself as author for posterity by making use of his church nickname. In light of these considerations, we accept Barnabas as author of Hebrews.

Next, we consider to whom it was written. According to the fourth century *Church History* by Eusebius at 2:16:1, "they say that this Mark was the first that was sent to Egypt, and he proclaimed the Gospel which he had written, and first established churches in Alexandria."<sup>9</sup> The date of Eusebius's *Church History* is 326 C.E..<sup>10</sup> A possibly opposing tradition is found in the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, specifically *Homily 1:8ff*. This tradition holds that Barnabas was the first preacher in Alexandria.<sup>11</sup> The date of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* is 313-25 C.E..<sup>12</sup> Such traditions likely reflect material as old as at least the late third century C.E. or before. We would likely hold both traditions to be unreliable if the following two things had not occurred:

1. There is Scriptural evidence for both of them;
2. They are reconcilable.

Barnabas and Mark did travel together per Scripture, and they may have headed to Egypt together if they continued in a direction they are shown in Scripture taking together. At Acts 15:35-41, Paul and Barnabas were together in Antioch, and then wanted to start another missionary journey together.

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<sup>1</sup> In O'Day, Petersen, The Access Bible, page 338 NT.

<sup>2</sup> Open Bible, page 1211.

<sup>3</sup> Open Bible, page 1211.

<sup>4</sup> Open Bible, page 1211.

<sup>5</sup> In Barker, NASB Study Bible, page 1781.

<sup>6</sup> Matching this, a 300's list of books in 500's Codex Claromontanus has an "Epistle of Barnabas" that Theodor Zahn suggested was actually Hebrews\* as no "Hebrews" is listed. According to the line counts reported, it was shorter than Romans. An anonymous treatise later called "Epistle of Barnabas" is longer than Romans. Claromontanus came from western Europe,\*\* so evidently in that area Hebrews was ascribed to Barnabas.

\* In Hennecke, Schneemelcher, New Testament Apocrypha, pages 1:45-6.

\*\* Lightfoot, How We Got the Bible, page 59.

<sup>7</sup> McDonald, Porter, Early Christianity and Its Sacred Literature, page 521.

<sup>8</sup> Robinson, Redating the New Testament, page 218.

<sup>9</sup> In Schaff and Wace, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, page 1:16.

<sup>10</sup> Goodspeed, A History of Early Christian Literature, page 310.

<sup>11</sup> Bigg, The Christian Platonists of Alexandria, page 136.

<sup>12</sup> Goodspeed, A History of Early Christian Literature, page 127.

However, Barnabas was intent on Mark coming along, and Paul was unwilling. They split up. Paul instead chose Silas to make a journey and Barnabas took Mark on a journey. Paul and Silas went toward Cilicia per Acts 15:40-1, and Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus per Acts 15:39. On a map, it is shown that they went in literally opposite directions: Paul and Silas went a northeast route, while Barnabas and Mark started a southwest route.<sup>1</sup> Had this continued, Barnabas and Mark would have gone into Egypt, as apparent third century church legend indicates. Thriving Jewish Christian communities did come to exist during the first century in Cyprus and in Alexandria, Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

Alexandria in Egypt had the largest Jewish community outside Palestine<sup>3</sup>; Philo wrote of varying forms of Judaism there including "extreme allegorists."<sup>4</sup> Evangelism could have yielded a community of Jewish Christians. We recall what Barnabas used for Old Testament Scripture: the Greek Old Testament Septuagint translation exclusively. This would less-likely happen for an audience in Aramaic-speaking Palestine; Barnabas would likely have done at least some translating of the Semitic Old Testament into Greek like Paul did. The Greek Old Testament Septuagint translation was made in Egypt. All this favors a target audience of Egyptian Jewish Christians.

We also consider popularity of applying Greek philosophy to Scripture interpretation among Alexandria-area Jews; its popularity there prompted influential Philo to urge restraint.<sup>5</sup> Hebrews 8 and 10 parallel the shadow image of Plato's *Republic*.<sup>6</sup> Such use of Greek philosophy and allegory in Old Testament interpretation would have suited an audience of Alexandria-area Christian Jews.

Further support of this is P46, found in Egypt. P46 comes from the late first century to early second century,<sup>7</sup> or c. 100. What is of note is that it contains Hebrews, and this is the only New Testament writing it contains which does not have Paul for secretary-author. For Hebrews to have been attached to this Egyptian papyrus despite authorship, it was likely of local character.

When we see the target audience of Hebrews to be among Egyptian Jewish Christians, some first century church history of Egypt can be derived. In Acts 2, Peter taught Jews to believe first and then repent, but Hebrews 6:1-2 has "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us | press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from | acts that lead to death | and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment" (NKJV|NASB|ICB|NASB). This suggests that the audience's conversion experience was to repent of sin first and then to turn to faith.<sup>8n</sup> This supports evangelism by Mark, who may have followed the method of Mark 1:15 "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (KJV).

The main point of this study of the origin of Hebrews is this: one New Testament epistle was written specifically to Christians south of the Mediterranean Sea.

### The Point Made

2 Timothy 3:16-7a says "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for | doctrine |, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete" (ESV|KJV, NKJV|ASV). The Greek word translated "complete" is *απτιος* and means "perfectly fit,"<sup>9</sup> "entirely suited; complete"<sup>10</sup>; the relevant phrase in 3:17a can be translated to show regarding Scripture "It is God's way of preparing us in every way" (NLT 1996). This was written to the New Testament church and describes their Old Testament and their Greek New Testament. This Greek New Testament was also to make the servant of God "entirely suited; complete."

<sup>1</sup> Per map and arrows in Barker, NASB Study Bible, page 1604.

<sup>2</sup> Life Application Study Bible, page 2186.

<sup>3</sup> David M. Scholer in Yonge, The Works of Philo Complete and Unabridged, pages xi-xii.

<sup>4</sup> In Coogan, Oxford History of the Biblical World, page 498.

<sup>5</sup> Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought: The Jewish Experience in History, pages 207, 238.

<sup>6</sup> Ehrman, The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings, page 381.

<sup>7</sup> In Comfort, The Origin of the Bible, page 186.

<sup>8</sup> The author invites others to try to glean more about early Egyptian Christianity.

<sup>9</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>10</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

However, the Greek New Testament's delivery was spread out over every part of the Christian world. Part of it was directed specifically as initial audience to Christians in the eastern Christian world north of the Mediterranean, part was directed to Christians in the western Christian world north of the Mediterranean, and part was directed south of the Mediterranean. Palestine/Syria and Parthian-held Mesopotamia already had the Old Testament delivered to them. This Old Testament and the Greek New Testament are those Scriptures that can make the Christian "entirely suited" per 2 Timothy 3:16-7. For those Scriptures to be put together for this purpose, every part of the Christian world was needed to provide the portion delivered to it.

Noting 2 Timothy 3:16-7, it seems God had a plan in how He delivered Scripture. Every portion of the ancient Christian world had something to contribute for the whole church to have "All Scripture" (ESV) so that the Lord's servants could be "complete" (ASV). Without every portion of the church, we would not have "All Scripture" to make us ἀρτιος "perfectly fit,"<sup>1</sup> "entirely suited; complete."<sup>2</sup> If every portion of the church was needed to collect the deposit of the written Word of God, it suggests that the same is true in using those Scriptures to serve the Lord "enteramente instruído para toda buena obra" (RVR 1909) = "entirely instructed in-order-for all good work."

### The Lesson of the Point and 1 Corinthians 12

At Matthew 16, the Lord Jesus asked His disciples Who people were saying that He is. After they answered this, the following occurred at Matthew 16:15-8

"`But what about you?' he asked. `Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, `You are the |Christ|, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied, `Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of death will not overcome it'" (TNIV|ASV|TNIV).

It is commonly known that "Peter" is an Anglicized transliteration of one Greek word for "rock" and "rock" translates another Greek word and that this was a Greek word play.<sup>3n</sup> "Peter" is Πέτρος and "rock" is πέτρα. Πέτρος means "a small stone" and πέτρα means "a foundation boulder."<sup>4</sup> In Greek lexicons, the words have separate entries. Jesus said that He would build "my church" upon the πέτρα. What is the πέτρα? The πέτρα was what was said shortly before: "'You are the |Christ|, the Son of the living God.'" This is the premise which Christ's one church is built on: that truth that Jesus Christ is the Christ and the Son of the living God.

The word "church" translates εκκλησια. To New Testament Greek-reading/hearing Christians, one meaning of the word<sup>5n</sup> is this: in ancient Greek culture, the word was used similarly about the community of followers of Pythagoras.<sup>6</sup> This parallels how Christians are followers of Jesus Christ. Before the time of Acts 11:26, Christians were called "disciples"; "the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (NASB). Greek μαθητας translated "disciples" is also translated "followers" (ICB). Hence, at Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus Christ was establishing His one community of followers. Per Acts 2:47, the Lord Himself is "adding to | them" (NASB | ASV)<sup>7n</sup> each newly-saved convert.

<sup>1</sup> Friberg et al, Analytical Lexicon of the New Testament, page 76.

<sup>2</sup> In Perschbacher, The New Analytical Greek Lexicon, page 54.

<sup>3</sup> We will not consider speculations about conjectured Aramaic conversations. Greek was common in Palestine, 2 Peter shows Peter knew Greek, and Jesus is God in flesh and could speak any language. Further, those speculated conversations are not written Scripture, described as "God-breathed" (ESV) in 2 Timothy 3:16.

<sup>4</sup> MacArthur, The MacArthur Study Bible, page 1423.

<sup>5</sup> For more discussion, see *Part 5/The Bible Meaning of "Church"*.

<sup>6</sup> Arndt, Gingrich, et al, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, page 240.

<sup>7</sup> It is a good thing for many that a person's membership in Christ's church is done by the Lord. If people who wish to be separate from others in Christ's church could actually make that happen, they would exclude themselves -- to their own peril.

Jesus Christ's church had not been instituted at Matthew 16:15-8, as He said "I will build My church" (NBV). He instituted His church at Matthew 28:19-20 "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations |. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have taught you, | and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (NASB|NCV|NASB). Note use of a past tense "I have taught you" - the church was to be doing the things Christ had taught up to then, recorded in the gospels and Acts 20:35. These teachings were mostly about godly living and good deeds in regular life.

1 Corinthians 12:13 says "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (ASV).<sup>1n</sup> Per Acts 2:47, the Lord is "adding to | them" (NASB|ASV) and does the baptizing in this sense. 1 Corinthians 12 describes the church as a body, and uses the human body to make some points, and 12:20-5 says:

"As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another [ESV].

This passage teaches that no one part of the body can say 'I have no use for you' or 'I have no need of you.' The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is one body. One part of the Lord's church cannot rightly say to another 'We have no need of you' or 'We have no use for you.'

The passage also says that the body's members should "have the same care for one another" (ESV). A part of the Lord's body should not care more for one other part than for another part. This means that parts of the church should not care more for some parts and less for others.

2 Timothy 3:16-7 says of Scripture

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for [doctrine], for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness: so that the person who serves God may be complete, | entirely instructed for all good work."<sup>2</sup>

Scripture is given "so that the person who serves God" can be "entirely instructed" to do "all good work." Such good works were the primary component of Jesus Christ's preaching.

The church, which is the community of followers of Jesus Christ, is one body. We have observed how the whole church was needed to assemble the Scriptures together so that everyone "who serves God may be complete, entirely instructed for all good work." Likewise, the whole church is needed for the church to do what Scripture tells it to do for Jesus Christ. ■

<sup>1</sup> We have discussed the Epistle to the Hebrews some here in *Part 3*. It is worthy of note that while it says Christ offers a "better covenant," it never suggests a "better law."\* Not once is it suggested that Jewish Christians stop living as Jews.

James said at Acts 15:19-20 during the Jerusalem Council "So I think we should not bother the non-Jewish people who are turning to God. Instead, we should write a letter telling them these things: Stay away from food that has been offered to idols (which makes it unclean), any kind of sexual sin, eating animals that have been strangled, and blood" (NCV). The letter was then began at Acts 15:23 "From the apostles, and elders" (NCV). Jewish-Christians continued to follow the Law of Moses. At Acts 21:20 James said to Paul "Brother, you can see how many thousands of Jews have become believers. And they think it is very important to obey the law of Moses" (NCV), and later "you follow the law of Moses in your own life" (NCV) at Acts 21:24.

Some Christians followed the Judaic Law; others did not. Christians did not share identical worship styles\*\* during the New Testament-era. We are not made one church by common worship events; rather, we are made one church by the Lord.

\* From Daniel Juster quoted by Rausch, *Messianic Judaism*, page 134.

\*\* Noted in Lucado, *The Inspirational Bible*, page 1265.

<sup>2</sup> ESV|KJV, NKJV|NBV|ICB|ASV|RVR 1909 "enteramente instruído para toda buena obra" translated.