

Mark, Luke, Acts, & Hebrews

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Introduction: All of the books in the New Testament were personally written by Apostles with the exception of Mark, Luke, Acts and Hebrews. How do we know these books are authentic?

I. We established in our lesson on the New Testament:

A. The Apostles were inspired writers of God's will (2 Cor. 13:10; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). This authority was given by God for edification.

B. Only those writings that are associated with the Apostles' teachings are authorized by God (Gal. 1:8-9).

C. Are the books of Mark, Luke, Acts, and Hebrews authentic teachings of the Apostles?

II. Mark

A. Historical testimony

1. Papias (about 140 A.D.) - "This also the Elder [John] used to say. Mark, having become Peter's interpreter, wrote accurately all that he remembered, though he did not [record] in order that which was either said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed Him; but subsequently, as I said, [attached himself to] Peter, who used to frame his teaching to meet the [immediate] wants [of his hearers], and not as making a connected narrative of the Lord's discourses. So Mark committed no error as he wrote down some particulars just as he recalled them to mind. For he took heed to one thing - to omit none of the facts that he heard and to set nothing falsely in [his narrative of] them."

2. Justin Martyr (lived within 50 years of the Apostle John's death) mentions the changing of Peter's name was found in Peter's memoirs. The only book where the changing of Peter's name was recorded was in the Gospel of Mark.

3. Irenaeus (180-192 A.D.) - "After their [Peter and Paul] death Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, also himself committed to us inscripturated the things being preached by Peter."

B. It was common practice to use scribes who wrote the words onto paper.

1. Tertius wrote the book of Romans for Paul (Rom. 16:22).

2. Silvanus (Silas) was Peter's scribe for 1 Peter (1 Pet. 5:12).

3. Paul rarely wrote in his own writing (Gal. 6:11).

C. The only real difference with the book of Mark is that Mark wrote it without the personal supervision of an Apostle.

D. Mark collected the stories told by Peter and put them together. It appears Mark did not finish the task before Peter's death. However, the book was accepted because it was recognized as an accurate record of Peter's stories.

II. Luke & Acts

A. Likewise, Luke's writings were accepted because of his close association with the Apostles Peter and Paul.

B. In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul quotes Christ in Luke 10:7. "The Laborer is worthy of his wages." It seems Paul considers the book of Luke as an inspired writing.

C. Much like the book of Mark, Luke seems to have written the book on his own. However, it is obvious that the Apostles had the opportunity to review it.

D. It should not be forgotten that disciples like Mark and Luke lived in a time of spiritual gifts. Luke alludes to his "perfect understanding" in his writings (Luke 1:1-4).

III. Hebrews

A. The author is never named but hints are given in the text.

1. The author wasn't with Christ while He lived (Heb. 2:3; 1 Cor. 15:7-8).

2. The book of Hebrews was written in Italy by a close associate of Timothy (Heb. 13:23-24; 1 Tim. 1:1-2).

3. The author was in prison and hoped to be released soon (Heb. 10:34; 13:19; Acts 28:16).

4. Having been originally written in Hebrew to Hebrews (hence its name), the author had to know Hebrew (Acts 21:40; 22:2; 26:14; Phil. 3:5).

B. Historical testimony

1. Origen (3rd century) - "If I gave my opinion, I should say that the thoughts are those of the apostle, but the diction and phraseology are those of someone who remembered the apostolic teachings, and wrote down at his leisure what had been said by his teacher. Therefore 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 knows."

2. Clement (2nd century) - "The epistle to the Hebrews is Paul's." He believed it was written to the Hebrews in the Hebrew dialect and subsequently translated into Greek by Luke.

3. Tertullian (3rd century) believed Barnabas was the scribe who wrote the words for Paul. He called it the Epistle of Barnabas.

C. It is significant that the only candidate ever offered as the author of the book of Hebrews is Paul. The real debate seems to question who wrote the words.

Conclusion: All of the books in the New Testament were either written by an apostle or someone closely associated with an apostle. The books of Mark, Luke, Acts fall into the category of works closely associated with an apostle. Yet, the Apostles Peter and Paul were directly involved in their production. For all practical purposes the Book of Hebrews was also authored by Paul.