

# Who Wrote This?

*(And Why It Matters)*

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In general, whenever you read books, you should always know who the author is and what he/she is like because the way they write sometimes is reflective of the environment that the author was in the middle of at the time of writing. The Bible was written by many different authors, all of whom were in different situations when they wrote their books. If you read the Bible without knowing who wrote it, you might misinterpret certain passages.

Some tips:

- (1) If you have a study bible, before every book should be an information section. If you don't have a study bible, consider getting one. My favorite is the TNIV Study Bible (the one with a yellow/red cover) or the NIV Study Bible (the one with a blue cover). If you don't, you might want to ask Pastor Ben, or someone with a study Bible.
- (2) When you find out who the author of a book is, you should ask yourself what happened in the world of the author when the book was written. For example, in the New Testament, Paul wrote books to different churches. What was happening in Thessalonica when he wrote Thessalonians? What was happening in Colossae when he wrote Colossians?

There are some books in the Bible where we still don't know who wrote it. However, they've been included in the Bible because their message is consistent with the other books that were written.

## **Example: Hebrews 6:20**

where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Things to note:

- (1) You should not be interpreting yet! You should be reading the verses BEFORE this! (remember: context!)
- (2) Why bring up Melchizedek?

In the following passage, circle words/phrases you don't understand, and underline the sentence you believe is the main point of the passage.

## Psalm 137

- 1 By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.
- 2 There on the poplars  
we hung our harps,
- 3 for there our captors asked us for songs,  
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
- 4 How can we sing the songs of the LORD  
while in a foreign land?
- 5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,  
may my right hand forget its skill .
- 6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not consider Jerusalem  
my highest joy.
- 7 Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did  
on the day Jerusalem fell.  
"Tear it down," they cried,  
"tear it down to its foundations!"
- 8 O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction,  
happy is he who repays you  
for what you have done to us-
- 9 he who seizes your infants  
and dashes them against the rocks.

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(1) Do we know who wrote this Psalm? If so, who? If not, what can we say about the author?

(2) Remember from last week: when we read Psalms, what should we be doing? (hint: should we be finding out what lesson we learn?)

(3) What do you think happened when this Psalm was written?