

Hebrews

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Hebrews 5:11-14

Vs. 11

- So the preacher has laid out his case. Jesus is greater than Moses, greater than the prophets, greater than the angels. In fact, as we think about the Christian church replacing the Temple and the synagogue, the preacher wants us to know that Jesus Christ is our new and perfect High Priest. Now he needs to push on further, deeper, but there's a problem. It seems that the church or churches that are his audience have actually taken a few steps back in their theological growth and development.
- As you read this, it sounds as if a new private tutor has been hired and the tutor believes the job is to come in and teach college level calculus. And what does the tutor find on arrival? A class that is supposed to have gone through high school algebra 1, 2, and 3 and pre-calculus seems to barely grasp the basics of algebra 1. The class has regressed.
- The Greek word for “dull” as in “dull of hearing”, is ***nothros***. It can mean forgetful, or refer to paralyzed limbs, or simply to being as mentally thick as a brick. And the frustrated preacher seems to mean all these things if you suggest the word could mean paralyzed from the neck up.

Vs. 12

- Enough time has passed whereby the church should have matured in their faith, gone deeper in the scriptures, and moved so close to Christ that they should be an entire congregation of teachers and missionaries and evangelists. Instead, the congregation has regressed. The preacher is like a coach late in the season is ready to pull his hair out when his team is still making mistakes that were corrected in preseason. Contrast that to when Cyrus, the King of Persia, was asked what instruction he had for his generals before they went into battle against Babylon. He said he would have been ashamed to give them advice on the night before a battle, so seasoned and trained were his military leaders.

- But its not that the church has remained stagnant, but they have regressed, falling back to needing “milk and not solid food”. This was a common Greek criticism for people who are not progressing. You see this in the writings of teachers and Olympic coaches.
- But the bigger concern here is not simply that the church has been a congregation of poor students, but that they are not prepared for the life and death fight that’s coming. The second half of the first century was a very painful time for the church, with brutal persecution at every turn. This is what Paul is talking about in Ephesians when he commands that church to put on the full armor of God. There’s a battle coming and if you don’t have your armor on and your sword and shield at hand when the enemy attacks, you are in serious trouble.

Vss. 13-14

- When the preacher says in vs. 13 that milk drinkers are “not accustomed to the word of righteousness” the Greek word there means “to be without experience”. So the reason the church has regressed is because they have genuinely neglected their study of the Word.
- The last phrase of vs. 13, stating that the inexperienced milk drinkers are nothing more than infants, speaks to the helplessness and defenselessness of the church against every enemy of Christ and His church. They would be defenseless against the Jews in conflict over scripture. They would be defenseless against the gnostics and gnosticism’s immoral seductions. They would be defenseless against the Roman authorities and the demand to declare the emperor to be their god and save their lives.
- Vs. 14 is the goal for the church and for every Christian. Grow and mature in your faith. Practice The Way of Christ in ever waking moment and learn to be wholly dependent on the Holy Spirit as the disciples did when Jesus sent them out two by two. Doing this will train your senses/faculties and you will discover the spiritual gift of discernment, so you will easily know good and evil, so you will be able to see where to step and know what to do and say.