

The Tragedy of Rejecting Full Revelation, Part 1

Hebrews 5:10-14

1612

Turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 5. We are continuing in our study of Hebrews and moving quite rapidly up until this point. We'll get bogged down a little bit here, but there are only 13 chapters in our study, and Hebrews will come to an end really too soon, for it is, indeed, a rich book. We come to a passage that is a real theological battleground. There have been many varied and sundry interpretations of these verses. I would like to add mine to the lot...This has not when...been without great amounts of prayer in an effort to overcome my ignorance, to beseech the Holy Spirit to teach me where I cannot learn, so that I might see and understand; and I trust and pray God that we shall understand these verses. I want you to know that it's going to take your most undivided attention, even as this morning hour did, for you to comprehend; but, fortunately, we will review very carefully next week, both in the morning hour and in the evening hour, so that we'll be able to cover back over these areas.

Now, we're talking in...in chapter 5 at the end here, and to the beginning of chapter 6, about spiritual maturity...As I have repeated many times to you in our study of Hebrews, the theme of the epistle is the immeasurable superiority of Christianity over Judaism. The epistle, as its title indicates, was written to Jews. A little community of Jews who had been led to Christ by some apostles or prophets of the first century church; and since some time has passed, this little community of Jews is not only composed of those believing Jews, but of some other Jews who were intellectually convinced, who had made a profession of faith in Christ, but who had lingered and never really received Jesus Christ. They had come all the way up to the edge. They believe in their minds, and that they had never made a commitment to Christ. They were like so many people who were in church, who will someday stand at the judgment seat, according to Matthew 7, and say, "Lord, Lord, it's us. We, the ones that cast out demons and did many wonderful works." And He will say unto them, "Depart from Me...what?...I never knew you."

There are those who have come up, and they have all the information. They have all the facts, but they've never committed their lives to Jesus Christ...And so there are really these two groups in view, and then in third distant view in the writing of Hebrews is a group of uncommitted Jews who are just being exposed to the new covenant altogether.

So the theme of Hebrews is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. To the saved Jews, he is saying, "You've done the right thing. You don't need to go back. You don't need any of the trappings." To the intellectually convinced Jews who have not received Christ, he is saying, "Come on. Don't stand there in neglect. Don't let yourself get hard. Come on and receive Jesus Christ. Come all the way to salvation. Don't just...don't just get up to the edge and think it's right and believe it. Commit yourself to it." And to the third group, he's simply sharing with them the facts of the new covenant, that they might be exposed to the truth.

Now, as we study Hebrews from chapter to chapter, from passage to passage, from text to text, we must keep this in mind, that it is a contrast between Christianity and Judaism, or we will fall into error in our interpretation. We find that the Biblical writers, if we study the books carefully, have a basic idea. Remember in John, we saw that everywhere Jesus was presented as God, that was John's point; and you could look at any passage; and you could see, now, what in here is John trying to say concerning the deity of Christ.

As we come to this passage, we will say the same thing. What is it that the writer of Hebrews is saying regarding the superiority of Christianity over Judaism? That's the issue all the way through the Book of Hebrews. This is the key that unlocks every section of Hebrews, and to use any other key is forced entry. Now mark this in your minds. The Holy Spirit is not contrasting two kinds of Christianity in Hebrews. He is contrasting Judaism to Christianity. He is not contrasting an immature Christian with a mature Christian. He is contrasting an unsaved Jew in Judaism with a redeemed Jew in the new covenant. That's the basic principle of hermeneutics. He is contrasting the substance against the shadow, the pattern against the reality, the visible against the invisible, the facsimile against the genuine, the type against the anti-type, the picture against the actual.

And if you've been here in any of our studies, you know that the Old Testament are all pictures and types of what is fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament; and all the way through Hebrews, this is the contrast that is made, and this is the only basic hermeneutic...that word means principle of interpretation...that you need in Hebrews to see an overview. So the contrasts are between Christianity and Judaism.

Now if we assume that to be true, then we will assume that that will also be true as we come to chapter 5 verse 10. The emphasis is the superiority of the new covenant over the old covenant as seen in the fact that the new covenant has a better mediator. Now, the old covenant was mediated by whom? Angels, true, and it was mediated also by certain men of God, such as Moses, such as Aaron. We find that the new covenant is better, the one involving Jesus Christ, because Jesus is better than angels, better than prophets, better than Moses, better than Joshua, better than Aaron, better than Melchizedek, better than everybody and everything; and on the basis of the fact that Jesus is better than everything, the new covenant is better than the old; and what he's saying to the Jew is, "Let go of Judaism for Christianity. Let go of the pictures and the types and the...the shadows, and take the substance, the reality in Christ," you see. This the point of the book. Saying to that individual who is hanging onto the former patterns, "Let go, for Jesus is better than all."

Now, here we come to chapter 5 and verse 11. We'll back up and consider verse 10 briefly, but basically in verse 11, to the third parenthetical warning in Hebrews. Now you know as well as I do if you've studied this, that the Book of Hebrews, as I just said, is written to show the...that...that Christianity's better than Judaism; but primarily it's written to Christians to show them, to give them confidence that they made the right move, see. But interspersed within Hebrews are certain warnings to these intellectually convinced non-Christians who are on the edge of decision but haven't come to Christ. Interspersed through this...this information that is given to these believing Jews to assure them that they've done the right thing in receiving Christ, for, you know, as soon as they received Christ, they were persecuted, and they were told to get back to Judaism, and so they were being pulled; and so he's writing to them saying, "Don't go back. You don't need those trappings. You stay right there. You've got it in Christ. You have a high priest. You have everything you need. A perfect sacrifice, the whole thing is all laid out." But periodically through the book, he gives very pointed warnings to those who've come all the way up in intellectual belief and never committed themselves.

In the first warning, for example, he simply said, "How shall we escape if we...what?...neglect so great salvation?" If you don't come, you're not gonna escape judgment. And then he said in the second warning, which was in chapter 3, he said, "Don't harden your hearts. You've come all the way up there. Now don't stop there and get a hard heart and depart from the living God with an evil heart of unbelief. You've come this far, come on all the way." So he's speaking to the intellectually convinced Jews.

Now, I believe there is no reason in the world to assume that the third warning won't follow the very same pattern as all the others. The beginning in chapter 5 verse 11, he is again speaking to the same group of individuals, only this time he is saying, "You better grow up to the mature truths of the new covenant. You better not fool around any longer with the ABCs of the old covenant, for you are in danger...verse 4 of chapter 6... of falling away after you've once been enlightened; and, if you do that, you can be lost eternally. Don't do that. You've come all the way up."

And then in 6:1 and 2, he says, "Then go on...you see...come on all the way lest you fall away and be lost eternally." And I see no reason that we should not assume that this is a very identical pattern to the other warnings. The question here then is not whether one is a baby Christian or a mature Christian. The pattern is whether one is still locked in Judaism, or whether one has come all the way to Christ.

Now notice verses 11 to 14. I'm going to read them. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered seeing you're dull of hearing. I can't you what I wanna tell you. For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you've become such as of need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he's a babe. But solid food belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil."

Now, what he's saying here is...is just very simple. Some have said that this is talking to Christians, and he's saying to Christians, "You shouldn't be immature Christians. You should be grownup Christians." That's a good principle. That's terrific principle. That's a Biblical principle. I don't think that's what being taught in Hebrews chapter 5. I think he's talking here to Jews who are intellectually convinced, but still hanging onto Judaism and, incidentally, folks, Judaism is the ABCs of the new covenant, is it not? And he is saying to them, "Come on to maturity in the new covenant."

Now, I'm gonna try to defend that thesis, because it is a little foreign to most interpretations; but I think it's consistent. So we say then that the question is not a question of whether one's a baby Christian or a mature Christian. The issue is...is an evangelistic appeal. Come on to Christ. Come all the way. Many of these readers have professed to believe, but they're still hanging onto the patterns of Judaism. They wouldn't let go. They weren't saved, and they're in great danger, chapter 6 verse 4, of falling back and then finding it impossible to be renewed to salvation again. So when we're talking about maturity here, we're talking about the maturity of accepting Christ, you see, and coming into all the full-grown truths of the new covenant.

Now, for next three weeks, I'm gonna defend that... throughout this entire passage, because we're not gonna go very far tonight. I'm just...you've been bombed all week, and I'll just give you a little bit

of an introduction; and then you'll love me more...

You see, now, the old covenant, the old covenant was the alphabet. The old covenant was the baby talk. The letters and the sounds, the child's vocabulary. You know, when you teach a child, you don't teach a child by giving him an encyclopedia. You show him pictures, right? Whenever you teach a child, you say, "Now look at the picture. This is a ball," and there's a ball. "This is a daddy, and this is a stick," and sometimes there's no difference. No, but, anyway...You show the child pictures, and you show him pictures all the way along, and then later on you give him full material. This is exactly what the Old Testament is. God spoke to them in pictures. "Here's a feast, and here's a sacrifice, and here's a certain kind of clothes, and here's a ceremonial washing, and here's a this, and here's a that," and it's all pictures of that full thing that's going to come. So the Old Testament is baby conversation. God's speaking in simple terms, in pictures.

Now, lemme give you an overview of the passage very quickly. In 5:11 through 6:3, the Holy Spirit says, "Grow up from the...the ABCs of Judaism, and come all the way to maturity. Leave the milk of the Old Testament. Come to the solid food of the new covenant. Come to Christ. Leave Judaism." That's exactly what he's saying. Then in 6:4, he says, "If you don't, you're in serious danger of coming all the way up, hearing all of the truth, then falling away, and being lost forever." Because, my friends, if a man hears all the truth of Jesus Christ, considers it carefully, and walks away, he's hopeless. What else can God do once he's known the truth?...

And, finally, in verse 9, he turns to Christians and says, "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things which accompany salvation." And, at that point, he turns to Christians and lays on them the need to grow spiritually and to make sure they, too, don't fall back into old patterns. So the passage, then, is directed primarily as a warning to the unsaved. Now, someone is bound to ask me, "Do you think that the passage has anything to do with Christians?" Well, in an indirect sense, very definitely. If spiritual ignorance and fooling around with the ABCs is a serious problem for an unsaved person, how much more serious would it be for a Christian? How much more tragic for a Christian who never really grows up to fully understand the new covenant. But the direct issue is to the unsaved. Each warning in Hebrews is directed to the intellectually convinced who are on the edge of decision, but haven't yet responded to Christ. So we believe it to be a warning to them.

Now, let's begin, first of all, I'm looking at the non-Christian. We'll divide the passage into two sections - the non-Christian from 5:11 to 6:8, and the Christian from 6:9 to 12. The non-Christian in the first section; the Christian starting at verse 9 of chapter 6. The first part dealing with the non-Christian; and we'll divide that section up a little bit. Don't worry about the outline. I'll have it all printed for you next week.

But in talking to the non-Christian, he first...he first talks about the problem. Then he gives the solution. Then he gives the power for the solution. Then he gives the warning. Then he gives the illustration. All that is here, but we'll just get to the problem; and you'll have to come next week, or you'll never know how to solve the problem.

All right, the Holy Spirit has just begun, now stay with me on this. It won't be long, but I want you to get it. The Holy Spirit has just begun to discuss the real heart of this epistle; and the heart of this epistle is the priesthood of Christ, is it not? Because the centrality of the whole Judaistic system was a great high priest. They had to have a high priest in their contact with God; and that's exactly what the writer says in Hebrews 4:14, "We have a great High Priest. Ours is Christ. He's greater than any

other high priest." And then he's gonna get into talking about the priesthood of Christ; but this is heavy stuff. You get into talking about the high priesthood of Jesus Christ and, unless these people are plugged in, they're gonna get lost in the fog, you see.

The first thing he said is, "Now, I want you to understand that Jesus is a greater priest than Aaron," and Aaron was the greatest high priest that ever lived in the Levitical system; and he is saying, "Jesus is greater than Aaron," to prove that Christianity's greater than Judaism. Now only is He greater than Aaron, he then says, and remember this one, he says in verse 6, brings it up, "That Jesus is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek." Now, this is a very unusual guy that pops up way back in Genesis. Now, he wants to go into explaining the relation between Jesus and Melchizedek, and you're already saying, "Oh, that's difficult to understand." You're right, but it's really simple if you understand Jesus Christ, if you know Him, and love Him as your Savior. When we get into that in chapter 7, you'll just breeze right through it. It's not that hard.

But he wants to do is, "I wanna talk to you," in effect, the Spirit is saying, "about Jesus' priesthood and about how it is that He's a priest after the order of Melchizedek." Notice verse 10, "Called of God and high priest after the order of Melchizedek." Now, I'd like to talk to you about that, people, but, verse 11, "Of whom..." To whom does that refer? Right back to Melchizedek. "Of whom we have many things to say." I've got a lot to tell you about Melchizedek. I've got a lot to tell you about how Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek, "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered seeing ye are dull of hearing." See? I would so like to tell you about Melchizedek, but you're dull of hearing; and that's the problem. He can't tell them what he wants to tell them knowing they'll understand it, because they're dull of hearing. He feels it very important to convince the Jews that Jesus is a priest greater than Aaron, that He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. This is a fantastic subject, a thrilling subject. The whole comparison to Melchizedek and the priesthood of Christ is rich and meaningful, but it can't be understood by...by these intellectually convinced ones, because they're dull of hearing...

Now, it's gonna be especially hard, because they're not saved. The Bible says, "The natural man understandeth not the things of God." To not know God and to try to understand the mysteries of God is impossible. So he's saying to you, "I can't get this stuff across to you at this point, because you're dull of hearing.

Now, I want you to see what the word dull of hearing refers to, or the phrase. Dull comes from nothras. It means, well, it really comes from two Greek words. One is no, and the other is to push. It means no push. No push. Slow, sluggish is the indication. One writer used it to speak of the numbed limbs of a sick lion, whatever that is. Somebody else it was stupidity. It's...it's thick, you know? Intellectual thick, you understand? It's just slow, sluggish, stupid, numbness in terms of apprehending truth...

So he says, "You people have a problem. You are stupid."...And we use that not in a derisive sense, but in a definitive sense, dictionary sense. You are sluggish, and that makes it very difficult to teach you. You have become intellectually lazy; and if I'm gonna give you rich, deep truth that's going to have to come into your mind when it's keen and alert, you're gonna have to be awake; but you have been lulled to sleep by neglect and the hardening of your heart.

You see, somebody hears the Gospel, and it stirs them, and it's fresh, and it's exciting, and they don't commit themselves to Christ, the longer they hear it, the more sluggish they get. True? And that

the easier it is to say no and to say no, and pretty soon they're very dull of hearing, and they can sit there. It's water off a duck's back, and the rich stuff doesn't get 'em anymore, because they've neglected it so long...

It often happens this way, and he really wants to teach them, and I like this. I admire somebody who wants to teach the heavy stuff. That's part of it. You know, and it's so easy to do this. I thought about it even in studying for this message. I thought, "Well, I can dodge all of this," because it's difficult, and I don't really have to get into an exposition of all this. They won't even know it's there in most cases if I don't; and it's easy to rationalize and to figure that people won't get it all anyway, but that's a tragedy, because the Lord has said that we are to teach His Word, and the Apostle Paul, in looking at his own ministry said, "I have not failed to declare unto you the whole counsel of God," and to miss one part of it is to miss something that God wrote for us, so we wouldn't do that.

So we never teach the me...the lethargy of the lazy mind. We never teach, either, to meet the prejudice of the shut mind. We teach, as Paul declared, "The whole counsel of God, for God gave it to us to be learned." So he says, "I'm gonna teach it, but you're dull of hearing." Then he says this, notice it, in the indication of verse 11, "Ye are dull," is the Greek "Ye are become dull." They weren't always so. They weren't always so sluggish. Over in chapter 6 verse 4, it says, "You were once enlightened." At one time, the light came on. They understood the Gospel. They were really hep to the thing. They understood it. They read it. It looked good. Their hearts were stirred. They were excited. They were eager. They came to the edge of salvation. Then chapter 2 verse 4, they began to neglect. Chapter 3 verse 15, their hearts began to be hard. Chapter 6 verse 11, they're getting sluggish and slow and stupid. Chapter 6 verse 6, they have fallen away, and that's the end of the tragedy.

At one time they were excited about it. They received the pre-salvation ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit leading them step-by-step up to faith in Jesus Christ. They got it all the way up to the edge; and then they neglected it; and then they just stood around; and they felt the pressure of their...the Judaistic friends pulling on them, pulling on them, persecution was threatened; and they were hanging on the edge; and the literal meaning of the Greek is that they arrived at a settled state of spiritual stupidity. So far as their ability to apprehend the New Testament and the fullness of Christ's priesthood was concerned; and if they didn't move on to salvation, if they didn't sharpen their senses and move on, they would fall away and be lost forever...And that's what he speaks of.

Now notice verse 12, "For when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food." Now notice the little phrase for the time...For the time, because of the length of time in which they were under instruction by teachers teaching New Testament truth, they knew enough that they should be teaching it, but they hadn't even accepted it yet.

Notice chapter 6 verse 7 defines this problem. "For the earth is an illustration which drinketh in the rain that cometh often on it and bringeth forth herbs fit for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected and near unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." And it's the same earth, you know, that gets the same rain; but some brings forth herbs; other brings forth thorns and briars; and he's saying, "You're like earth that has soaked it up and soaked it up, and you oughta be bringing forth herbs; and, instead, you're not," and that's a disaster. "For the time you oughta be teachers," they knew enough to teach the thing they hadn't even yet committed themselves to...

I've met...I've met liberal theologians like that. I've met liberal theologians who knew the Scriptures. They knew where everything was located. They knew the theology of Paul in and out. That...I've read books from one end to the other teaching the doctrines that Paul taught, and, yet, those men who write those books have no relationship with Jesus Christ whatever. For the time and study, they oughta be teachers of the Word of God. They don't even know Jesus Christ; and you heard an illustration night after night last week of people who've got all kinds of Bible verses, who've heard all kinds of truth, who've read it over and over again, but haven't got the faintest idea what it all means. For the time, they oughta be teachers, but they don't even know the truth themselves...

The apostles that labored hard and long among this group of believers and these who were intellectually convinced, the New Testament truth was in their hands. Look at verse 4 of chapter 6, "They were enlightened. They tasted the heavenly gift. They even were partakers of the Holy Spirit." We'll see what all this means next time. "They were tasting the good Word of God." Verse 5, "They tasted the good Word of God." It was dropped on 'em. They took a part of it. They absorbed some of it. "They received it like earth drinks in the rain," verse 7 says; but the results weren't right, verse 8 says. So, as a result of that, what had begun so well was going to end in tragedy because they were becoming sluggish, stupid, dull of hearing; and they needed to be taught all over again.

I had an illustration of this. This is earlier this week. I spoke at a convention up in the Oakland area, the Christian Missionary Alliance Churches for the United States, their conference. After speaking to the young people on one occasion in the afternoon, a young girl came up to me and sat on the steps of this huge auditorium. She said to me, she said...I had talked about a Christian, the Christian young person's relationship to another Christian young person in terms of choosing the right life partner and sex and all of these things; and, after I got done, she came up, and she said, "Well, my boyfriend says whatever you do is all right. He said, 'Sex is like baseball, and the whole object is to make a home run.'"...That's what she said.

I said, "Well, that's interesting. How old's your boyfriend?" "Twenty-one." "How old are you?" "Fourteen." Oh, uh-huh. Well, lemme tell you about your boyfriend. She said, after that opening statement, I said...I explained to her what God thought of that attitude. She said she was...dropped her head, and she said, "I know that," and she said, "You know what I need?" she said, "I need to be saved." So we sat down on the steps of this huge auditorium while all these people were coming in, and I said to her, "Well," I said, "been raised in the church?" Said, "Yes, my father's a pastor." I said, "All your life he's been the pastor?" "Yes." I said, "Then you know how to be saved, don't you?" She said, "No." I said, "Does he ever preach on how to be saved?" She says, "Yeah, but I don't understand any of it."

Now there was a perfect illustration of spiritual sluggishness. A person who, for so long had rejected Jesus Christ, even to the time she was 14 years old, that the Gospel was so foggy, she couldn't even understand it anymore; and so I sat there; and I carefully delineated what the Gospel was; and right there on the steps we were praying together as all these people came in, and she invited Jesus Christ into her life. She said, "All that I can remember is my father's boring sermons... that made no sense." And I'm sure that would break her father's heart to hear her say that; and, yet, because of constant rejection, she became totally indifferent.

I had another person say to me this very week, "I don't know what I believe or if I believe anymore." You ever heard anybody talk like that? Sure you have. You get into a state where it's all kind of a

bunch of gop, and you can't discern it anymore. That's exactly what's happened here. I can't teach you the sharp, clear truths to take you from Judaism to the new covenant, because you're too spiritually stupid. You've been standing there rejecting it so long, you're getting thick. Thick, thick, thick...

"For the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you again...what?" Now watch, here's what he want... what they need to be taught again. I'm gonna explain this, and this is a crucial point. You have one teach you again, the first principles of the oracles of God. That's what they need to learn again. Now, if we can figure out what that is, then we'll know they are. You buy that?...What are the first principles of the oracles of God? Well, let's take the word principles. It means simple elephants....el...elements...Nothing wrong with me, blubbleblubble.

Simple elements. That's the word principles, stoikaya. Now, it's an interesting word. In grammar, it's used to speak of the ABCs. In physics, it's used to speak of the four basic elements of earth. In geometry, it's used to speak of the basic of proof like the point and the straight line. In philosophy, it's used to speak of the elementary principles for beginning students. The word stoikaya always refers to very basic principles. Now notice the word first, the first principles. In the Greek text, it refers to the first in a series. The very beginning of something. So what is he saying? "You need to be taught the very beginning elements of the oracles of God."

What are the oracles of God? You say, "That's the Gospel." I say, "No, it's not the Gospel." To whom is he speaking? To Christians in the 20th century who understand the Gospel? No. He is speaking to Jews who will hear that phrase in a Jewish frame of reference, and I would show you how they would respond by reading you Romans chapter 2...chapter 3 verse 1 and 2. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? What good is it to be a Jew?" Listen. "Much every way; chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." And there it is a direct reference to the Old Testament law, to the Old Testament law.

I show you one other passage that comes to my mind, if it's the right one. Lemme check it...Yes, Acts 7:38. "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness...or the eklaiceain in the wilderness, not literally the church...with the angel who spoke to him in Mount Sinai." Who was that now? That's Moses getting the law, and "With our fathers...watch it...who received the living oracles." The Jew knew what the oracles of God were, and they were the Old Testament laws...Now the Jew would know that...

In the Old Testament, Samuel, 2 Samuel 16:23 says this. "And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God." The oracles of God were the laws of God. The mind of God revealed in the Old Testament. So when the writer is saying, "You need to be taught the very beginning elements of the oracles of God," he is saying, "You don't even understand the meaning of your own law." That's what he's saying. "You need somebody to go back and show you the pictures again." Get the point? "I can't give you the book to read. You need to go back and see ball, father. You need the pictures again. You've become so spiritually stupid, sluggish."

The elementary doctrines are the types and pictures of the Old Testament. Ordinances, ceremonies, feasts, sacrifices, holy days, washings, the whole thing. All of which foreshadowed Christ, and they couldn't really see who Christ was unless they understood the pictures. So he needed to show them the pictures again. Friends, the law was the ABCs. The New Testament is the mature knowledge;

and so when he's saying to this group, "Grow up," he's saying to those who were hanging to the Jewish ABCs, "Let go, and come on up to the mature revelation."

Listen as I read the words of Paul from Galatians 3:23. "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith with should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law as our schoolmaster." Pidegogas, which means a child trainer or discipline. "The was a schoolmaster." Now what does a schoolmaster do? He shows the children the pictures. The law was the picture book to bring us to Christ, who was the reality.

Verse 25, "But after faith has come, we're no longer under a schoolmaster." You see, there's been a great change in the new covenant. We don't...we're not still under the...the schoolmaster anymore. We've grown up. Now, that's exactly the point that he's making here in Hebrews. Christ has arrived. The shadows are replaced with substance. The picture book is replaced with great writings that we can read. The alphabet is replaced with great composition...The types have given way to the great anti-type. They had the truth. Their faith and affection should've followed the knowledge of the truth; but, instead, they were holding to Judaistic patterns, and they would not let go. They had been taught enough to be teachers by now; but, because of rejection, indecision, continuous hardness, they had become sluggish, dull; and they kind of drifted back to that spiritual stupor where they needed somebody to go back to the Old Testament and show them the feasts, and say, "This is what they meant. This is what they pointed to before they could ever take them to an understanding of Jesus Christ." They had to relearn the alphabet...

How could he speak to them of Christ, a High Priest after Melchizedek, when they didn't understand anything? They should've been teachers. They weren't. Isn't it interesting how in Romans 2, the Jews were arguing, and Paul's argument about the fact that they were teachers. Romans 2:17, "But if thou art called a Jew and resteth in the law and makes by boast of God, and knowest His will..." This is what the Jews...this is what Paul says the Jew claims. "You approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law. You are a conf...you're confident that you are a guide of the blind, a light to them who are in darkness. You are an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law."

In other words, they prided themselves. They were great teachers, and in Hebrews, the Holy Spirit says, "You can't teach. You need to go back to kindergarten. You don't understand the ABCs of your own identity." Now, you'll notice also, at the end of verse 12, he says, "And you are become such as have need of milk and not of solid foods." Characteristic of a little baby that he can only handle milk, and there was no way he was gonna be able to handle them...to hand them Melchizedekian priesthood proof...

Notice again, it says that, "You are become _____." In other words, it was a slipping, you see? And then they...if you don't progress, you regress, you see. By neglect and hardness, they had come to the place where they could only handle milk again...

Oh, it's so easy, dear ones, for people to come and hear the Gospel, and then they hear it and hear it and hear it, and it becomes common; and, rather than pursue the truth of Christ and give their life to Christ, they just stand around and stand around. They become sluggish. They become dull, and you've gotta go to 'em and go back over the same ground again. How many times we've seen that happen. The issue here is simply this. Spiritual stupidity in the light of enlightenment. That's the issue. And you say, "Well, what about the milk?" Well, that's just the first baby elements of the

oracles of God.

Now notice verse 13, and we'll get this a little more defined. "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness, for he's a babe." Now this is so important. Unskillful, ahperas, and that word means - that's ahat the beginning of a word is what we call a negative, and what it does is negate the word. It means without experience. It's a strong negative. He is saying, "Watch this. Every one that uses milk is without experience in the word of righteousness." You haven't really experienced righteousness is what he's saying. The word, the revelation, the disclosure of righteousness...

Babies are weak and ignorant, spiritually stupid; and he says, "Use it." That means constantly living on nothing else. The one who constantly lives on nothing else but the Old Testament is gonna find himself without experience in the word of righteousness. You say, "What is the word of righteousness?" Well, in the first place, there's no definite article in the Greek. It's just a word of righteousness or, better yet, logos, teaching about righteousness. Get it this way. "For every one that uses milk is without experience in teaching about righteousness, in teaching of righteousness." In instruction that has to do with righteousness, you're without experience.

Give it to you another way, so you'll understand it. "Every one who is continually on a milk diet is completely without experience in the teaching about righteousness. He's a babe." Now you analyze that. You analyze it. He uses the milk diet here to refer to those who are without experience in the matter of righteousness. Now that can't be a Christian, can it? Can a Christian be without experience in the matter of righteousness? Of course not. If you're a Christian, do you have righteousness before God? Whose righteousness is it? The righteousness of Jesus Christ. You cannot be a Christian and be without experience in the matter of righteousness. You're in...you're totally righteous positionally in Christ.

So, you see, this is all he's saying; and the term babe here doesn't have to refer to a Christian. It can refer to anybody who's immature. Now notice verse 14, and we'll close with verse 14. "But solid food or meat belongs to them that of full age." Grownup people like meat, solid food. "Even those who by reason of use have their senses discerned...exercised to discern both good and evil." Grownup people, they are sharp. They're sharp, mature people. They know what's good. They know what's bad. They can be discerning. You sluggish ones, baby ones, you can't discern. You know how a baby does. Goes along the floor and sticks anything its mouth. Hasn't got the faintest idea of what the effect is gonna be. Doesn't know what's good and what's bad. You let your kid eat all he wants to eat, and he'll die. Ice cream, popcorn, peanuts, and candy bars. That's all...

The contrast here is simple. One who is fooling around in the baby things has no discernment, has not experienced righteousness. For the standard of righteousness is Jesus Christ and Him alone, according to Romans. The one who's full-grown, he knows the solid food, and he knows what righteousness is, because he can discern what is good and what is bad, and that's the essence of righteousness. These unsaved Hebrews then were lazy, sluggish, dull of hearing, like babies, but they should've been like grown men with their senses finely tuned to really perceive good and make the right decision. The good would've been to choose Jesus Christ. The good would've been to choose the new covenant; but they were too sluggish to really be adult enough to make that right decision...

Maturity comes through exercise, being alert, being aware, using your thinking processes, not being

sluggish, indifferent, neglecting, and hard in your hearts. Jesus said to the Jews in John 5:39, "I'll tell you what you do. You go and search the Scriptures. For in there, you'll find out about me. Get your senses sharp. Go to the Word of God and find the answers." They were babes by neglect of what they knew. Spiritual stupidity is the issue at this point...

Now, the word babe in itself, and just with a couple of comments about this word, the word babe itself is only used here as a sign of immaturity in spiritual knowledge. It does not imply salvation. It's kind of an historical thing that we all say babe in reference to a new Christian, don't we? We say so-and-so's a babe in Christ. That's interesting, because that's one way that it's never used in Scripture. Look at Romans 2:20. I show you a statement that I just read you, to show you that the Jews also had an understanding of the concept of a babe. Paul says that the Jews were teaching, and so forth, and claimed that they were "instructors of the foolish and teachers of babes." Now, to the Jew, a babe was anybody who was uninstructed. It had nothing to do with salvation, necessarily, in Romans 2:20, does it? Is that talking about a new Christian in 2:20? No. It's just talking about some individual who's immature in his...in his knowledge, an uninstructed individual. That's babe in Romans 2:20.

Now, stay with me. Lemme say this. A babe, if you'd like to use that analogy, certainly can refer to a new Christian. Sure, it's a nice illustration. A babe can refer to a new Christian. We could draw some wonderful parallels, couldn't we? We could say that a...a new Christian is like a baby. It's undiscerning, and it has to be spoon fed, and so forth, or bottle fed. You know, there's a lotta wonderful comparisons, and if you chose to use that metaphor, certainly a wonderful metaphor.

But the Bible doesn't choose to use it, none of the writers do. It's just a matter that they didn't use it. You say, "What about 1 Corinthians chapter 3? It says right there, 'I couldn't speak unto you as unto babes.'" Yeah, well, that's good. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 3. We'll find out. In 1 Corinthians 3:1, Paul says, "I, brethren, couldn't speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for to this time, you're not able to bear it, neither are you now able." You say, "See, it proves right there. New Christians are called babes."

Beloved, those aren't new Christians. One-and-a-half years Paul taught 'em. Four-and-a-half to five years later, he wrote 'em this. They've been Christians at least six years. They are not new Christians. He says, "You are babes...in verse 3...for you are yet...what?...carnal." That's the reason you're a babe. Why are you carnal? Divisions, envy, strife, and so forth and so on. "One of you is saying, 'I am of Paul,' 'I'm of Apollos,'" so forth. Picking sides.

They had ample time to be mature. The problem was not that they were new Christians. The problem was they were carnal, and they had been Christians six years...So the metaphor simply doesn't necessarily refer to new Christians. There it happens to, but would you notice something very important? In 1 Corinthians, Paul says, "Babes," but he doesn't put a period then. He gives two more words. What are they? "Babes in Christ." That's to make sure you understand that here the babes are Christians; because, elsewhere, they may not be. Babes in Christ, and he must put that there so we understand that he's referring to Christians...and Paul says, "You know what your problem is? You're on the milk. You've gotta get off the milk."

You know what Peter says? "Hey, you mature Christians, get on the milk." What? First Peter 2:2, are you kidding? That's a contradiction. No, it's not. Peter just chooses to use the same metaphor in a different way. Now, these are not new Christians either. Chapter 1 verse 1 says these are the strangers that have already been scattered. Evidently, they came from around Judea and Jerusalem.

They've been Christians a long time. Later on, he says that...that, verse 22 of chapter 1, "You have purified your souls in obeying the truth, and you experience unfeigned love of the brethren. You love each other with a pure heart fervently." This is a mature group, and to this mature group, he says in 1 Peter 2:2, "As newborn babes, you desire the milk of the Word, that you may grow by it."

You say, "Paul says, 'Don't mess with the milk.' Peter says, 'Go get the milk.'" You say, "That's a contradiction." No, it's not a contradiction. Paul simply uses the metaphor of a baby and milk in one way. Peter uses it in another way. That's the only difference. What Peter is saying is, "You know how a baby goes after milk, milk, and nothing but milk? That's the way a Christian oughta go after the Word. Word, Word, and nothing but the Word." That's Peter's analogy. Paul's analogy is he's taking a baby as a baby and saying, "You oughta grow up." Peter is saying, "The desire of a baby for milk is what you oughta have." It's simply, do you see, a different way to use the same metaphor.

Now when you come to Hebrews, here's another way to use the metaphor. "You spiritually stupid ones, grow up to spiritual understanding. Get off the ABCs of Judaism and arrive at the truth of Christianity, full-grown." That's the point. Peter's word for babe is different than Paul's anyway. Peter uses brafos, which means newborn, and it's very definitely a newborn concept. The concept of milk and babe in Peter is of a newborn baby desiring milk, and that's all they want, and they scream if they can't get it; but when we come to Hebrews, it's not the word brafos. It's not the word that has to do with a newborn baby, so that it indicates that somebody's been born again. Not at all. It's different word completely, nepios; and all it means is an immature individual as compared with mature. That's all. It's not even technon, which is the other Biblical word for an infant or a child. It's nepios, and it simply means immature...

In fact, in Ephesians 4:13, listen to this. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." And it's talking about maturity in contrast there; and you have the form of nepios appearing again. In there it's referring to Christians. Verse 14, "That we henceforth be no more nepios." Grow up in verse 13, "Don't be anymore nepios." What does that mean? Immature; and here it refers to Christians. You say, "Aha, if it referred to Christians there, it must refer to Christians in Hebrews." Not necessarily, because in Galatians chapter 4, it refers to non-Christians. Verse 3, "Even so, when we were nepios, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

Before you were saved, you were a nepios there, too; and you could translate it babe just as easily as it's translated babe in Hebrews chapter 5. What are we saying? We're saying, "Sometimes babe is to a Christian. Sometimes it's to a non-Christian. Sometimes you shouldn't be a babe. Sometimes you should be a babe." You cannot develop a theological babe of...baby theology. It doesn't go together. It's used differently through the New Testament. So you can't say, "Well, because babe always refers to Christians, Hebrews 5 has to refer to Christians." Doesn't. In this point, nepiosis spiritually indicating ignorance. That's all. So I believe that this text refers to the unsaved, but unenlightened Hebrews who were intellectually convinced, but had not yet received Jesus Christ; and he warns them, verse 6, or chapter 6 verse 1, "You better go on," or chapter 6 verses 4 to 6, "You may fall away and be lost eternally."

Now that is basically the problem the Holy Spirit faces in communicating to His readers. Your spiritual perception will not allow you to apprehend what I wanna say. Watch this point. In chapter 7, he says it anyway. You know what that assumes? That assumes that they could get mature from chapter 6 to chapter 7. The only way that's gonna happen is by an instantaneous act of maturity, and

that's exactly what he's asking 'em to do, is get mature by getting saved.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in chapter 3, "I can't give you the meat, 'cause you're too carnal." You know what? He never did give 'em the meat. He kept on giving 'em the milk to the end of the book, because that kind of stuff, when a Christian is a baby, that takes a time period for him to grow; but here he's saying, "Leave Judaism, and in an instant of salvation, grow up."

Dr. Feinbergsaid, and I quote, just so you'll have another source, "Judaism is the infancy which they are to leave and go to the maturity of manhood by faith in the new covenant Messiah."... So what are we saying here? To the unbeliever, I say to you, don't neglect Jesus Christ. Don't come to the edge and harden your heart and become dull of hearing and become lethargic and neglecting. Come to Christ while it's still fresh, while the excitement is still there, while the draw is still there.

Say, "Is there any message in this at all for Christians?" Sure there is. The message to you is this. If it's intolerable for somebody who knows the truth to be ignorant, how much more intolerable is it for someone who not only knows the truth, but knows the Son to be spiritually ignorant?...Immaturity is the issue; and verse 1 of chapter 6 says, "Let's go on to maturity." We'll stop there. Let's pray.

Our Father, we're thankful tonight that you have spoken to us through Your Word; and, Lord, we believe that, indeed, this has been Your message for this hour, as You have brought it to pass; and, Father, we would know that there are perhaps some here who have been considering Jesus Christ; and in their hearts, they know that it's true. They know that Jesus Christ is the Savior that He claims to be. Their hearts are soft toward Him. Their hearts are open and responsive. Father, we would pray right now that they would not neglect, that they would not let that har... that heart become hardened by indifference or rejection. That they would not still linger in the doldrums of the past, but that they might come all the way to Jesus Christ. Father, maybe there are some who are still clinging to Judaism. Maybe there are some who are clinging to other forms of religion. Father, may they drop everything to come to Jesus Christ tonight. Father, we know that for someone who has heard the truth to go out of here without Jesus Christ is inexcusable. They stand in the horrible danger of falling away and being lost forever as their minds and hearts become more and more sluggish and indifferent. So, Father, while hearts are still warm and tender toward Jesus Christ, draw them to Yourself, even tonight.

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