



"FOR HE IS A BABE"

"For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe" (Heb. 5:13).

And to their embarrassment such described the state of the recipients of the great letter of Hebrews. James and the elders stated that there were thousands of Hebrews who had believed in Jesus (Acts 21:20). Yet, to their detriment, they had not grown sufficiently. It is not shameful to be a babe; it is shameful to remain one. We all enter the kingdom as babes but are expected to grow into adults (Jn. 3:3–5; 1 Pet. 2:2). The milk of the word is to be received so that we may grow to receive the meatier parts of the word. Adam Clarke aptly stated regarding their situation, "Your souls do not keep pace with the doctrines and exhortations delivered to you" (*Adam Clark's Commentary*).

We know why there was insufficient growth among these Hebrews:

"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest 'according to the order of Melchizedek,' of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing" (Heb. 5:9–11).

Their dullness impaired them from receiving "much" of Christ. Make no mistake about it, there is *much to say*. If Christianity were only concerned with the "Man" and not the "plan," if it were concerned only with "Christ" and not "the church," or if it were concerned only with His "death" and not the "covenant" which came from His death, then there would not be so "much to say." Likewise, if the religion of Christ was "Come as you are," and "Leave as you please," then there would be virtually nothing to say.

One wonders what the Hebrew writer would say today if he panned across the kingdom of believers. Would he see a people exercising good Bible sense discerning between good and evil (Heb. 5:14)? Would he see a people who could leave the elementary principles of Christ and go on to perfection, or would he see a people who needed to be retaught the foundation of repentance, faith, baptism, etc. (Heb. 6:1, 2)? Would he see a people who are given to forsaking the assembling of the saints (Heb. 10:24, 25)? When people willingly ignore and only lightly esteem the meeting times, their growth is stunted and they learn less than they should have. In short, they show themselves to be dull of hearing, and rather than glorifying the Son, they crucify Him afresh (Heb. 6:4–8; 10:26–29).

The solution once again is to diligently heed the word, fully grasp the elementary doctrines of our Lord, *and then move on to the state of maturity*. Babies cannot even wield a spoon, let alone the sword of the Spirit (Heb. 4:12; Eph. 6:17).

"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14).



—Steven J. Wallace