**Rebuke of the Babes in Christ!**

***Hebrews 5:11-12***

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Introduction: In a land long known for its wars, an interesting battle took place some 4,100 years ago. A tent-dwelling sojourner, together with 318 armed servants, took on a much larger army representing four city-states. The vastly superior army was quickly conquered by the small band of well-trained body-guards, who also took back the captives, including the victor’s nephew. While returning the prisoners

of war to their homes, the victorious leader is greeted by one of the grateful kings whose citizens had been captured & were now returned. This king’s name means “King of Righteousness” & he resided over the city of Salem (later known as “Jerusalem”). This mysterious king, who had no recorded parentage or place of birth, is used both in Psalm 110 & here in Hebrews (chs. 5-7) as a type of Christ. This story is recorded for us in Genesis 14, & the king’s name is *“Melchizedek.”* (The victorious leader is Abraham, who has rescued his nephew Lot). The writer to the Hebrews would like to explain just how it is that this king typifies Christ. But he interrupts his exposition to give an exhortation to his readers: “Don’t be a baby!” This book of Hebrews is a treatise on the God-man Jesus Christ. The writer of the book, who remains anonymous to us, sets forth the contrast between the O.T. sacrificial system of the law, conducted by a long series of priests, with the N.T. one supreme sacrifice, made by the King-Priest, Jesus Christ. Ryrie suggests the book can be divided into: (1) the superiority of Christ’s Person, chs. 1-4; (2) the superiority of Christ’s Priesthood, chs. 5-10; & (3) the superiority of Christ’s Power, chs. 11-13. I take you now back to our text, found in chapter 5:11-14, & relay the author’s challenge. Consider this serious rebuke of the believers of his day, who had yet to mature in their Christian faith. Note with me tonight the declaration & the definition of this rebuke of the babes in Christ & then next Wednesday we will consider the demonstration of this rebuke for the babes in Christ.

I. The rebuke of the babes in Christ is **declared** (:11).

A. The basis for their rebuke - *"many things to say, and hard to be uttered"* - [simple ignorance??]

1. *"Many things to say"* -- about Melchisedec (N.T. spelling); Melchizedek (O.T. spelling).

a. He was a King-Priest (see Genesis 14:17-24).

b. He was a type of Christ (see Psalm 110; Hebrews 5 & 7).

2. *"Hard to be uttered"* -- application from Melchisedec.

a. “Hard of interpretation” or “hard to explain.”

b. Have need of a background in Old Testament teaching (the small capacity of his

audience?).

3. Implied: it was not simple ignorance (like making an apple pie or repairing an engine).

a. Compare > "Ignorance is bliss" [see Webster’s definition of ignorance: (1) having little

knowledge, education, or experience; uneducated, inexperienced; lacking knowledge & (2)

caused by or showing lack of knowledge or education].

b. Consider > “Ignorance of the law is no excuse" (cf. I Cor. 10:1 & Rom. 10:2 & see *“no ye*

*not”* passages in 6:3, 9, 15, 16, 19 = 5 times in one chapter).

B. The boldness of their rebuke - *"dull of hearing"*

1. Not simple ignorance, but spiritual indifference. “A condition of spiritual apathy & laziness

that prevents spiritual development” (Wiersbe).

2. Not a physical disability, but rather a spiritual inability (not “hard” of hearing but rather no

“heart” in hearing). “Through spiritual sloth & neglect they had become dull of hearing”

(Newell).

3. Note: *“dull”* - made up of 2 words, “no” & “push” - hence, “no push” or “slow, sluggish”

[used in LXX, Pro. 22:29, *“slothful”* & only one other time in N.T., Heb. 6:12, *“slothful”*].

Application: Those who do not act on the truth they know become hardened to it & unable to

benefit from it. “If the dark things do not become plain, then the plain things will become dark.”

(1) For hearers > those who hear but do not trust or act upon the truth heard, being satisfied with

the “basics,” become insensitive to the deeper truths of God’s Word.

(2) For teachers > those who refuse to teach the deeper truths of Scripture (the whole counsel of

God) because of their own lack of understanding or accommodation to dull & lazy hearers.

II. The rebuke of the babes in Christ is **defined** (:12).

[“They knew what the first principles were, though they did not know them” (Wescott.]

A. They were inactive - *"ye ought to be teachers"*

1. They were passive rather than active.

2. They were content with hearing rather than concerned about teaching.

Summary: Every believer should be a teacher: as a witness to others; as a parent of children; or as

an example before others.

B. They were immature - *"such as have need of milk"* (through their own neglect they had become

young children again).

1. Babies are expected to feed upon milk (I Pet. 2:2).

2. But babies are expected to mature and grow up (I Cor. 13:11 – “Grow up!” & “Look deep!”).

Application: 4 principles here: (1) Opportunity - God takes notice of the time & helps one has for

gaining Scripture knowledge; (2) Accountability - “To whom much is given, much shall be re-

quired” (see Luke 12:48); (3) Responsibility - To teach others privately, if not publicly; &

(4) Spirituality - To teach others requires a certain level of spiritual maturity, always growing.

Summary: “The important matter is, not how long one has been a Christian, but how earnest he has

been in his Christian profession – without exercise, there is not the needful progress either in

Christian knowledge or in Christian life” (Lange).

Conclusion: Would you be considered a babe in Christ? Are you ignorant of the Word of God? Have you become indifferent to the things of God? Or have you matured to the place where you can be a

teacher? Are you still dependent upon the milk of the Word, or are you growing in discernment with the meat of the Word? We will look more at the need for discernment next week. These Christians (babes in Christ in Heb. 5) knew at least this much (6:1-2). How well could you define or explain or teach concerning the milk of the Word listed in Hebrews 6:1-2? By God's grace, may we build upon the foundation of the milk of God's Word and go on to perfection. Chapter 6:1 says, *“...let us go on unto perfection.”* The verb here is passive, meaning, “let us be moved along.” “Maturity will not be attained by personal effort as much as by personal surrender to God, Who alone can accomplish the needed perfection” (Hindson). *“And this will we do, if God permit"* (Hebrews 6:3).