

## “JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO...” SERIES

### MILK OR STEAK?

#### HEBREWS 5:10-14

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*10Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. 11Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. 12For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. 14But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

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#### Introduction

The writer of Hebrews hasn't come right out and said it until now, But there is something wrong with the Christians he is writing to.

- In 2:1 he said, Pay close attention to the message you've heard lest you drift away.
- In 3:1 he said, Consider Jesus.
- In 3:8 he said, Don't harden your hearts like Israel did in the wilderness.
- In 3:12 he said, Take care, lest you have an evil heart of unbelief.
- In 4:1 he said, Fear, lest you fail to enter God's rest.
- In 4:11 he said, Be diligent to enter God's rest lest you fall by disobedience.
- And in 4:14 he said, Hold fast to your confession.

The writer is very concerned about what is going on in the churches. Up until this point, He has spoken about the superiority of Jesus. He has had to re-lay the foundation of Jesus Christ

In the previous verses we learned that Christ learned “*obedience through what he suffered*”, was the perfect “*source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.*” As such, Christ was designated by God a “*high priest after the order of Melchizedek.*”

In this section, we find the culprit that has taken him four and a half chapters to confront.

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*Hebrews 5:11 About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. (ESV)*

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The writer has “*much to say*” to his readers. But he is having a hard time in expressing the issues as his readers. The writer can’t get his point across because his readers have become *dull of hearing*.

Let us review the list of exhortations so far: Pay close attention! Consider! Don't harden your heart! Fear! Be diligent! Hold fast!

Dull of hearing is not a term that we use in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What exactly did “dull of hearing” mean to these 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians?

“Dull” means slothful, sluggish or lazy. “Hearing” means understanding, not seeming to listen. So the audience is lazy in attempting to understand or spiritually dull and don’t seem to listen.

Hebrews 6:11-12 identifies the opposite of dullness.

*[11] And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, [12] so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. (ESV)*

Notice the words “full assurance of hope”, “not sluggish”, and “patience”.

Therefore, those that are not dull of hearing, hear with their ears but are unresponsive in the heart. They do not embrace the Word of God in faith. They will not have full assurance of hope producing patience and obedience.

"Dullness of hearing" is hearing the Bible or the preaching of the Bible the way you hear the freeway noise on US Highway 190, or the television monitors at the gas pumps encouraging you to buy a fuel additive or the recorded warnings at the airport to not leave your bags unintended. You hear them, but you are not focused on those sounds. You have grown dull to the sound. It does not awaken or produce anything.

The Apostle John, in writing the Revelation, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> chapters include a warning to each of the seven churches: “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;” It is imperative that the reader or hearer, be active in listening to the message being presented.

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*12For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

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Each person should consider the time that has elapsed from the time of their salvation to where they are today. The longer the period of time, the more knowledge and responsibility are required. A person getting a degree in accounting is expected to be able to fully understand accounting after a four year degree. In much the same way, Christians should be learning more and applying it to their lives as time has transpired from their conversion.

It would be silly for a person taking four years of college courses to have to go back and take the courses again before they could graduate, and yet that is the condition of the “Hebrews”, in the sight of the writer.

The writer introduces milk and meat as a form of comparing the Hebrews: Teachers are those that understand the material and are able to teach others. Teachers are able to eat meat. Dull of hearing are the opposite of teachers. They do not understand the material nor can they eat meat. They stay on milk.

Now I don't know about you, but give me a T-bone steak in the place of a glass of milk any day. The writer proclaims that the Hebrew's are on a baby food diet.

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*13For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.*

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He compares this to the maturing of a baby into manhood. As a baby, the only food that was good for consumption was milk. Their bodies were not fully developed or ready to chew on meat.

The apostle has in view here those Christians, who resemble children in this respect, which they are not capable of receiving the stronger food adapted to those of mature age.

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*14But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

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Meat is only appropriate if the person has the teeth to chew the meat. Look at the requirements of eating meat.

- Mature
- Experienced
- Able to discern between good and evil.

Some Christians are consistently stuck drinking milk, in the baby stage of their Christianity?

Dull hearing is slothful and lazy. They never make it out of the protection and security of their cribs. They don't live by faith, they live by sight.

The problem is that babes are not exercising with the milk they have. The Gospel message should be enough to set your soul on fire this morning. The Gospel is what led you to eternal life. The ministry of Jesus on this earth set the place at the table of the Supper of the Lamb. BUT...we are not to just be satisfied with the teachings of the Gospel. The ministry of Jesus continues today, after His resurrection. He is at the right hand of the Father, interceding for you today.

### Conclusion

As in the first century, some Christians are on the baby food diet. Milk is predigested food. Milk represented what Christ accomplished on the earth...the Gospel: His birth, ministry, teaching, death, burial and resurrection.

Meat is only offered to those that have teeth. Meat is represents the work of Christ in heaven.

We begin the Christian life on the basis of His finished work on earth. We grow in the Christian life on the basis of His unfinished work in heaven.

Of course, even the maturest adult never outgrows milk. As believers, we can still learn much from our Lord's work on earth. *But we must not stop there!* We must make spiritual progress, and we can do this only if we learn about Christ's priestly ministry for us in heaven.<sup>1</sup>

The most urgent question this morning is: Do you have this disease, and if so, how can you get well?

*Bob Crowder*

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 295). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.