

Hebrews 5:11-14

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/heb/heb-5/hebrews-511-14/>

Paul has much to say about Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek, but since the recipients of this letter have not gone on to maturity it will be difficult for them to understand.

Paul would like to say more about the priesthood of Jesus after the order of Melchizedek, but it is hard to explain to his audience because they have not been pursuing their spiritual growth in Christ and *have become dull of hearing*. It is now difficult for them to understand concepts of maturity because they have stalled out and even reverted in their faith. Paul says that at this point these believers *ought to be teachers*, they ought to be mature in Christ but instead, they are like babies who are not able to eat *solid food* but still need *milk*. These believers still need to hear about *the elementary principles of the oracles of God* and their faith; they are not ready to move on to more mature concepts. The more mature concepts, or *solid food* are only for mature believers.

Paul defines maturity in Christ as having *their senses trained to discern good and evil*, because of practice. Children are not good at discerning between good and evil, they think that whatever they want is good and whatever they don't want is bad. As adults, we know this is not a good way to discern between good and evil because we've had practice and experience. In the same way, mature Christians are skilled at discerning correctly between good and evil, being more *accustomed to the word of righteousness*.

Throughout Hebrews, Paul tells his audience to press on toward growth, strive for maturity, and learn to be obedient to the Father. Mature believers are skilled at discerning between good obedient choices and bad sinful choices, making these correct determinations is the key to growing in Christ and obtaining the inheritance the book of Hebrews speaks of so often. In Chapter 10, Paul will exhort his audience to *stir one another up to love and good works*. This is where maturity rests, in loving actions toward others and in obedience to God.

Since Paul proceeds to fully explain Melchizedek, it seems reasonable to conclude that Paul believes his audience is fully capable of understanding

(*ought to be teachers*) but has grown lethargic or intellectually lazy. It appears that Paul is chastising them to “wake up” and will now proceed to explain a concept they need to understand: that Jesus is a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, and accordingly is available to intercede for us when we need help to faithfully endure all God asks us to do.

Biblical Text:

¹¹ Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.