

## Hebrews: Immature Saints? (Hebrews 5:11–6:3).

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (12/04/2016)

### Introduction

1. The text that we approach today is the third and longest warning in the book (2:1–4; 3:12–4:13; 5:11–7:9; 10:19–39).
  - a. These warnings are designed to make the reader uncomfortable, and rightly so. Eternity is at stake.
  - b. We need to recognize that Jesus Christ is the ultimate High Priest who alone can save us, but *how* are we trusting Him?
2. Jesus is a priest, not “of” but “after” the order of Melchizedek (Psa. 110:4; 5:6; 7: 17, 21).
  - a. Jesus was not a priest *in* Aaron’s priestly line because He was of the tribe of Judah. However, Jesus fulfilled the Aaronic *typology*.
  - b. Neither was Jesus a priest in Melchizedek’s line (if he had one) but after his order so that Jesus might fulfill the *type* he represents.
3. The Melchizedek typology is demonstrated in the following ways:
  - a. This declaration (5:6) is not applied to Jesus until *after* He suffered for the sins of His people (5:5; 6:8–10; comp. 7:27; 9:24).
  - b. After Christ suffered, He begins to fulfill the typology of Melchizedek, in the words of John Owen, “Because of the resemblance there was between what Melchizedek was and what Christ was to be.”
    - 1) Melchizedek met Abraham *after* his victory over the Shinar confederation of kings (Gen. 14:17).
    - 2) Melchizedek is identified as a king/priest (Zech. 6:12–14; Matt. 28:18).
    - 3) Melchizedek “*brought forth bread and wine,*” typical of the *memorials* that speak of Christ’s great sacrifice (Gen. 14:18).
    - 4) Christ’s present work in Heaven is declared to be not after Aaron but after Melchizedek (5:9, 10).
4. Tragically, Paul was forced to move into his rebuke of these Hebrew believers because they had become dull of hearing. Thus, before us is a parenthesis in his exposition of Christ’s priestly function to warn us against apostasy.

### I. Continuing Immaturity

1. The gift of Christ to His body are men qualified to teach and shepherd His people to maturity (Eph. 4:11–16)
  - a. The goal is spiritual *maturity*—to “*attain unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.*”
  - b. Maturity is defined as “*the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*”

- c. The evidence of maturity: *“speaking the truth in love,”* growing up into Him to promote the growth of the body as it edifies itself in love
2. A sad reality of many “believers”
- a. The fact of continuing immaturity: older “saints” acting like *“children carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness of deceitful schemes”*
  - b. The cause of continuing immaturity: *“you have become dull of hearing”*—literally “lazy in the ears.” If *hearing* the Word is necessary to maturity in Christ, then laziness in hearing is self-destructive (Matt. 13: 9–13).
  - c. The evidence of continuing immaturity:
    - 1) Failure to function beyond the *“basic principles of the oracles (Word) of God”* (5:12)
    - 2) This failure is the consequence of one *“unskilled in the word of righteousness”* who should have his *“powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil”* (5:13, 14).
    - 3) They are “children” in adult bodies.
3. The pattern for maturity (5:7–10)
- a. For the saint, Jesus is both the example for and the power of the Christian life—*“In the days of His flesh.”*
  - b. His practice—offering up *“prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears”*
  - c. The vital key—*“He was heard because of His reverence”*—reverent submission to God.
- What areas of your life are off limits to God?

## II. The Remedy Explained

1. The remedy against immaturity is determined decision not to remain in the realm of *elementary* (beginning) doctrine but to press on to Christ-like maturity.
  - a. The implication (*“not laying again”*) is that these people were desiring to reestablish the foundation repeatedly instead of building on it.
  - b. It would further appear that there is a vacillation over whether certain sins are really sins that require repentance or whether God cares or not.
  - c. The remaining issues relate to past experience in Jewish rituals—washings, laying on of hands, resurrections (plural), and judgments.

Many professed believers get caught up in rituals and repetitious religious expressions, seeing these as proper spiritual behavior.
2. This determination to advance in maturity is based on God’s permission, which is rhetorical, for He does desire us to advance to full likeness to Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:17, 18).
  - a. Only He is able to promote our true spiritual growth through the Word and Spirit.
  - b. Nevertheless, all believers have the responsibility to “prove themselves” to be true saints by evaluating the progress they are making in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5).