

## DULL OF HEARING

Hebrews 5:11–14 — *“Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For 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. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even to those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”*

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A question regarding the “whom” that this is referring to: Is the “whom” of verse 11 referring to Christ, or to Melchisedec?

I think that Christ as high priest after the order of Melchisedec is the answer here, and it will fit the next few chapters of the epistle. When we get into chapter 6, we will see that the emphasis is on leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ and going on to perfection. It speaks about moving on even while others of the company might fall away — and speaks seriously of the awful truth if they do!

Then chapter 7, after this, we do see a full chapter about Christ as the high priest after the order of Melchisedec, and how there is a changing of the law, and that Christ lives forever, therefore He can be and is a priest forever, but of a different order.

A few important passages to help to understand what is meant about the recipients of this epistle and their dullness of hearing:

- Romans 2:17 – 3:2
- Acts 28:17 – 28
- John 12:36 – 40
- Isaiah 6:9-10
- 2 Corinthians 3:13 – 4:6

This is an Epistle that is directed toward the Hebrews, or the House of Israel. We see from these many passages that the Israelites are said to be dull of hearing. There is another one too that is of interest, and that is 2 Peter 3:15 – 16, where Peter is speaking about the delay of our Lord’s coming and that His longsuffering is the reason. He also makes the statement here that the things that Paul wrote to Peter’s audience, and wrote much in all of his epistles things that are hard to be understood.

Why are they hard to be understood?

Could the answer be that these people were hard of hearing?

The perspective on this helps clear it up a bit.

“For when ye ought to be teachers” — These were not so much Christians who were saved for a long time but have not grown. These are the people of the Covenant who have been God’s people for 2000ish years. They are just as Paul spoke of them in Romans 2:17-20. He also said that “unto them were committed to the oracles of God” (Romans 3:2). They should be those that teach the Gentiles, or

we could say the rest of the world. But they needed one to teach them “the first principles”, or we could say the fundamentals. They needed that milk diet that is great for a baby, but not sufficient for an adult.

The former pagans in Corinth, along with their Jewish fellow Christians, were also called babes because of their immaturity.

What made the Hebrews immature?

These are the people that had the Scriptures but did not keep them. They had the prophecies, but when the Object of their prophecies and their hope was in their presence, they missed Him. The evidence was fully on display and undoubtable, but they refused to accept Him.

*Romans 10:1–4 — “Brethren, my heart’s desire fand prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”*

This, incidentally, should be every Christian’s view of the Jews. There is a spectrum among “professing” Christians, of overemphasis on Israel and the Jewish people, to absolute hatred of them. But the Biblical, Christian, and may I say apostolic view is what the Apostle Paul expressed here in Romans 10. The people of Israel, like all other peoples of the world, need to be saved. They need Jesus Christ.

*Acts 4:8–12 — “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

In the next chapter, one of the most difficult for those of us that hold to the believer’s eternal security in Christ, we will learn about graduating from the childish things of the schoolmaster, and going on to the perfection that is found in Christ. This is Christ as high priest, as the mediator and fulfiller of the New Covenant, and the author and finisher of our faith. Remembering where we are in context is the key to understanding what is being said in chapter 6.