

# OpenTheo

## Moving from Milk to Meat



### Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses the concept of moving from milk to meat in Christianity, which refers to transitioning from immature faith to mature faith. Milk refers to basic Christian teachings, while meat refers to deeper and more complex teachings. Christians need to meditate on the Word of God day and night and obey and share it with others to grow and reach maturity in faith. The ultimate goal of reading and studying the Bible is not to become a Bible expert but to know God's mind and will and live a godly life.

### Transcript

Tonight, I was asked if I would speak about moving from milk to meat. That is, it has to do with growing in the faith. And, you know, Paul and the writer of Hebrews both use that dichotomy of talking about babes, Christian babes, can only drink milk.

So, I'd like for us to talk today about how it is that Christians who are immature, of whom the Bible says they can only drink milk, can become mature so that they can eat solid food. Now, the King James Version says meat. The contrast in the King James is milk and meat.

Most modern translations change meat to solid food for the simple reason that in Old English, meat simply meant food. If you were talking about what we call meat, they'd call it flesh. If you eat animal meat, that's called flesh in the King James.

If you hear the word meat, it's really just food. In fact, in the King James Version, even flour is called meat. When you read about the meal offerings, modern translations would say meal offerings in Leviticus.

In King James, it says the meat offerings. It's not talking about animal flesh. In those particular passages, it's talking about flour and cakes and bread and things that you offer.

So, I grew up using the King James Version and therefore I'm very comfortable using the word meat in the passages that we're talking about, but you may have a modern translation that uses simply the word solid food. The contrast is between the food that

babies are restricted to eating and the food that adults can eat. Anyone who's had babies knows that it's a while after their birth before they can eat solid food.

They live on liquid for a long time, sometimes the first year or more before they're weaned. Now, that's not a bad thing. In 1 Peter Chapter 2 and Verse 2, Peter said, As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow by.

So, it's not wrong to desire the milk of the word if you're a babe. As newborn babes, you should be desiring the milk of the word. So, Paul is complaining, and so does the writer of Hebrews, that his readers have not grown up.

That they should be, and he wishes they could, eat meat of the word, but they're only at the stage where they can process milk. Now, of course, we have to understand the concept here is that the word of God, or Christian truth that's found in the word of God, doctrine, which just means teaching, what is taught to the Christians, is like food. And, you know, if people do not take in the word of God after they've become born again, they will not grow.

In fact, they may not even survive as Christians, just like a baby has to eat regularly. So, Peter says, As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow by it. But, if you turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 3, this is one of the places that we find that Christian growth can be stunted.

And Christians who have been Christians for some time may not have progressed. Now, I actually think this is a problem that we encounter too often in the modern church. We have people who've been in church all their lives.

Maybe not you, but I know I grew up in a church, and there were older people in the church who were raised in the church. They've been there all their lives. And, in some cases, you know, when you see them living their lives, they don't seem to be very mature Christians.

They don't seem to be applying what they've heard. In some cases, I think the problem is the churches that they've gone to have not really given them anything more than milk, and so they've never progressed beyond it. But, it is a problem, and if you've been a Christian for a year or two years or something like that, and, you know, you really haven't learned anything deeper or new or more profound than the things you knew and could easily understand when you first got saved, then probably growth has not been all that it should be in your life.

Now, when Paul writes to the Corinthians, he had spent 18 months with the Corinthians before he wrote this letter, and now he had left. He's not at Corinth. He's at Ephesus when he writes this letter, but he's writing back to a church that he had come to and spent 18 months guiding in the... He converted them first.

There were no Christians in Corinth when Paul got there, so all the Christians were his babies. They were all his children. He even said to them, you know, though you may have 10,000 instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you in the Lord.

So he recognizes himself as responsible for bringing these people to Christ and for educating them or nurturing them and hopefully bringing them to maturity. Now, the Corinthians, we don't know if they ever came to maturity, honestly, because he wrote his two longest epistles to this church, and in both of them, he's concerned because they're not stable. They're certainly not stable in 1 Corinthians, and then we write 2 Corinthians.

They've got other issues, and he's got concerns about false apostles and some of the people in the church are being misled by the false apostles. You know, interestingly enough, later in the 1st century, perhaps after the death of Paul, but not very much after the death of Paul, there's a writer named Clement of Rome who also wrote an epistle to the Corinthians. He refers back to Paul's letters that he'd written to them, but Clement of Rome wrote a letter to the Corinthians, and they were still having problems.

In fact, they were so divisive that they had kicked the elders out of their church, and they're really a troublesome church. Corinth was a troublesome city. It was a very carnal city.

It was sin city in the Greek world, so you who live in Las Vegas might be able to relate. Fornication, perversion, as well as philosophy. People thought they were really smart, the Greeks, especially in Corinth.

They were famous through the Roman world for being ostentatious and pretentious about their wisdom. You know, they were such drunkards that in the Roman and Greek plays, especially the Greek plays, there was often a character in the play who was a Corinthian. Now, whenever there was a Corinthian in the play, he was a drunkard, a falling down drunkard.

In fact, they had a phrase, playing the Corinthian, when a person was totally, you know, like a homeless person who's a wino or something like that. They'd say, that person's playing the Corinthian. That's actually the phrase that was used.

So the Corinthian, that's what Corinth was like, and the people who were converted by Paul when he came to Corinth were out of that background. Almost all of them were probably adult converts, which means that they had spent their formative years in Sin City. And they, when they became Christians, of course, they had to renounce their fornication, their drunkenness, and their, you know, pride, and their, all the things that had characterized them.

And yet they didn't really get over those things that easily. When Paul wrote 1

Corinthians, they were still having problems with fornication. In fact, they had a guy in the church who was living incestuously with his father's wife, and they didn't really do anything about it.

They kind of just tolerated it. Of course, today our churches in America often tolerate those things too. They shouldn't.

Paul was aghast that the church would tolerate that behavior in it. But nowadays, there are churches that know, you know, they know that there's people living in fornication and in perversion, and yet they don't address it in many cases. Some do, some don't.

We got some of the same kinds of churches in America that they had in Corinth. But it was a troublesome church, a carnal church, a divisive church. It's the first thing he addressed when he wrote to them.

He said, I hear that you are saying, some of you are saying, I'm of Paul, and some are saying I'm of Apollos, and some are saying I'm of Cephas. He said, what, was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul? He said, you know, come on. Is Christ divided? So they were denominational almost.

They were, they were kind of, that's the earliest witness we have of people beginning to feel like different denominations in the church. Paul believed there's only one church in the world, and it had a representation in each city, and each city had its own one church. They might meet in different congregations for logistic purposes, but they were all one body.

They weren't some of them of Paul, and some of Cephas, and some of Apollos, for example. That Paul thought that was horrible. In fact, that was the sign that he mentions, that they were babes, that they were immature, and that they couldn't eat the solid food yet.

Now, it must have been heart-rending for him, because he had spent 18 months with them. Up to that point, he had not spent that much time in any one church, even his home church. His home church that sent him out on his missionary journeys was Antioch.

He spent only one year there before he was sent out, but, but when he came to Corinth, he, he spent 18 months, and no doubt that's because the church was a troubled and troublesome church. And up to that point, Paul had not spent that much time in any church, not in Jerusalem, not in Antioch, not in Philippi, not in Thessalonica, not in Berea. You know, the churches that didn't have many problems were the churches that he didn't have to stay very long in, but the church in Corinth was a problematic church, so he did have to stay longer there.

And he had to eventually leave, because obviously there were other, other wars to win,

other, other fields to conquer, but, but he wrote back, as I said, two of his two longest letters to them, because he was afraid for their survival, to say nothing of their maturity. Now, when he writes to them, he's reminding them of the time he had spent with them. How much time had elapsed from the time he left them till he wrote this letter, we don't know, but it's probably a matter of probably no more than months, certainly not a year.

It's fairly soon after he left them. And in chapter three, he begins by saying, and I, brethren, could not speak to you. He means back when I was with you, those 18 months I was with you.

I could not speak to you as unto spiritual people, but as unto carnal people, which is simply a word that means fleshly, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food, for until now you were not able to receive it. And even now you're still not able, for you're still carnal, for where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, I'm of Paul and another, I'm of Apollos, are you not carnal? So the very mark of their immaturity and their carnality, notice he equates carnality with immaturity.

He says, I had to deal with you as babes. I had to deal with you as carnal people. You should be growing into spiritual people, but you're not spiritual.

You're carnal, you're fleshly, you're not grown. And he says, the way I know you're carnal is because I hear that you're dividing up, loyal to Paul, loyal to Cephas, loyal to Apollos. As long as you're talking that way, you're carnal.

Now, how is that different in any way whatsoever from saying, I am a Baptist, I'm a Presbyterian, I'm Episcopalian, I'm a Lutheran? I can't think of any hair's breadth of difference between that mentality that we have today and the mentality Paul was so aghast by. Because, now by the way, if I ask you where you go to church, you say, well, I go to the Baptist church, I go to the Presbyterian church, or the Calvary chapel, or something like that. That's not wrong.

You're just answering a question, which church you go to. That's not the same thing as saying, I am of Calvin, I am of Arminius, I am of Wesley, I am of Chuck Smith, I am of John Wimber, I am of whoever, Kenneth Hagan. He's long dead now, but he's the founder of the Word of Faith Church, and a lot of movement, and a lot of churches are of that group.

You know, if you have a favorite teacher, so you've got a favorite teacher, but you're not of that person. And certainly, it's not healthy to listen to only one teacher. You need to hear from a broad stream.

But we have just kind of taken it for granted that people are in different denominations. Maybe not as much, say, because there's so many non-denominational churches. But in

the age I grew up in, which was half a century ago, almost all evangelical Christians were in different denominations, and felt some measure of loyalty to their denomination, usually.

You know, that's really changed a lot, and I think we've improved. I think even the American church, in that little respect, has improved from the days I was young, because people aren't as likely to say, well, I'm loyal to the Lutheran, or the Baptist, or the Presbyterian, or the Episcopal, or the Methodist Church. They may go there.

They might even identify their theology as the theology of that group. But in most cases, if they move to another town, though they may try to join a church of the same denomination that they came from, if they don't find something they like there, usually they're open to go to a different denomination. People are not so wedded as they once were to their denominational background in general.

There may be still some who are. Yet, there are people who are pretty loyal to a given teacher, and if they hear something contrary to what that teacher says, they can't process it. They can't say, well, let me weigh that.

They're not mature enough to say, okay, I can handle hearing a variety of things, and I can sort them out without destroying my faith, without becoming hopelessly confused. Now, you might say, well, how can you hear different views and not get confused by it? Well, the truth is, you can hear different views and remain undecided as to which one is true as you're sorting it out. And in some cases, in my own case, I have been sorting out varieties of views on certain subjects that I still haven't figured out after decades.

But I'm not confused. You know, so people say, well, how can you know all the arguments for this point of view, and then all the arguments for that point of view, and all the other, and not be hopelessly confused? Because confusion is not necessary. You can refuse to be confused.

You can, you see, confusion is a disordered state of mind, meaning confusion, you're disoriented, you're unstable, you're not, you know, you don't know where your foundation is, right? But if you know your foundation is Christ, then you can be undecided about other issues. You don't have to know whether you're a Calvinist or Arminian, you don't really have to, as long as your foundation is Christ. You don't have to know whether you're a dispensationalist or, you know, a Calvinist, or, I mean, excuse me, a, you know, an amillennialist or something like that.

It doesn't really matter. I'm not saying it doesn't make any difference at all, but you don't, you're not of these other groups, you're of Christ. If Christ is your foundation, then you can be sorting out different views and weighing them for years and years without ever being confused.

You'll only become confused when you feel like, I have to know, I have to know now, and I can't figure it out. And so you get all frantic and frustrated. There's no reason to do that.

You need to just relax, say, okay, you know, Jesus is my teacher. I've taken his yoke upon me, I'm learning from him. I haven't learned some things yet.

I'm learning yet, and I can live with a degree of ignorance about certain things as necessary. I don't have to sort everything out and take a position on everything right now. That's a mature, a more mature position.

And when they're saying, no, I have to be of my favorite teacher, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or you name it, and you feel like, I've got to say pretty much what he says, because I'm more impressed with him than with other teachers. What you're really saying is, I don't really want to think this through. I want him to have thought it through for me.

I've heard what he's come up with, and it sounds pretty good. And so I don't think I'll ever think it through more than he has. So I'll just go with what he says.

I just need to memorize what he says and repeat what he says. Now, I was that way with my early teachers. I'll just tell you, my first real Bible teacher, I sat under for years, was Chuck Smith.

And I imbibed and regurgitated everything he said. And most of what he said was really excellent. I mean, I have to say, I got really well fed in many respects, going to Calvary Chapel and sitting under Chuck Smith.

I knew Chuck, and he knew me, and I was in the church when there was only one Calvary Chapel. And I was a huge fan and a real kind of disciple in a way. And I just learned to say everything he said.

So when I became a Bible teacher when I was 16, I actually just said, I could teach through any book, I can tell you what Chuck said about it. I could just repeat the same illustrations, the same cross references. Why not? It works for him.

You know, look at the crowd he draws. So I figured it can't hurt. It can't be that bad.

It must be true. I remember once when I was first going to Calvary Chapel that I was still living at home because I was a teenager, and my dad and mom were going to Calvary also. And we'd come back from church one Sunday, and my dad, something Chuck had said, my dad said, I'm so sure I agree with that.

And I remember I was indignant. I remember thinking, how dare you disagree with Chuck Smith? He can quote the scriptures forward and backward. He knows the Bible far better than either of us will know it.

And he's spirit-filled. We're Baptists. He's more likely to understand this than we are.

That's why I was out and I really thought, how dare anyone question Chuck? He's my hero, my mentor. Now, I want to say that I still am greatly beholden to Chuck and greatly indebted to Chuck. But I eventually came to a place where I realized that there are other views out there.

And some of the people who hold them are as smart as Chuck, smarter than me. And throughout history, there have been different views. So when I began to realize that, I thought, well, it's not sacrilegious to question what my pastor is saying, as long as I'm not divisive about it.

What's carnal is divisive. I am of this person. You're of that person.

You go over there. I'll go over here because we can't fellowship together because we don't have the same guru that we're following. That's divisive.

That's childish. That's immature. Now, Paul said that the Corinthians were like that.

And he was unable to give them anything he said except milk. But he doesn't tell us here what milk is. And this is no doubt the question that comes to your mind when you read this.

Well, what is milk? What is meat? I mean, what's the difference? How do you define the two? Now, someone might think milk is just the basic doctrines like the Trinity, Jesus is God in the flesh, Jesus died for our sins, rose again, you know, a certain justification by faith. You know, the basic doctrines that all Protestants pretty much agree with. And that must be the milk because I learned that when I was a brand new Christian and I could understand that.

So, you know, if a baby can't process solid food, that must not be the solid food because I can process that. So I guess, you know, the meat must be really sophisticated theological concepts and things like that. Well, if you think that way, you're not really entirely far from the truth, but it's not the way Paul would have defined the difference.

If you look at chapter two of Corinthians, he's writing to the same people and he's also reminding them of when he came to them. Remember, he had been with them. And he's already said in chapter three that when he was with them, he could not give them solid food, he could only give them milk.

Okay, remember that. Now he's in chapter two, he's also talking about when he was with them and what he did and did not teach them. In other words, we can get an idea of what he's calling milk.

I was calling solid food because he tells us in both chapter two and chapter three, what



he did teach them and what he didn't. In chapter three, he called what he did teach them milk. And what he didn't teach them, he called it solid food.

What's he saying? Chapter two, verse one. And I brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not with the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature.

Now notice the difference. When I was with you, I didn't speak to you with, you know, anything very profound or sophisticated. I didn't use persuasive words and wisdom.

In fact, I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus and him crucified. But he says, we do speak something differently when we're talking to mature people. In verse six, however, we do speak wisdom to the mature, which he obviously does not include them under that heading.

They are not mature. They're babes. They're carnal.

So now he's telling us what he did teach them and what he did not. And what he does teach to mature people is different. Now, let me just say, first of all, what did he teach them? He said, I determined to know nothing among you, meaning you carnal, immature people.

I didn't, I couldn't concern myself with anything more than the very basic Jesus Christ and him crucified. Now, of course, some churches feel that that's really the most faithful you can be, is just always preach only Jesus Christ and him crucified. And, and some churches almost boast that they don't get beyond that.

Because if you go beyond that, you know, you may get into heresy. Let's stick with the basic Jesus Christ and him crucified. I've been in churches that have had a big banner over the front of the platform said, we preach nothing but Jesus and him crucified, which sounds very virtuous, except they might as well put, we only serve milk here.

We only have babes in this church. We don't, we don't let them grow up. We only do what Paul did with the babes, give them milk, limit everything to just the subject of Jesus and him crucified.

Now, of course, Jesus and him crucified has many ramifications. And Paul is not really saying that he only talked about those two subjects because later on, if you put your finger in first Corinthians two, turn over to first Corinthians 15 to the same people in chapter 15, he said in verse three, for I delivered to you. First of all, that which I received

that Christ died for our sins, that's Jesus and him crucified according to the scriptures.

And he was buried and that he rose the third day. Oh, that's more than just Jesus and him crucified. He also taught the resurrection and probably other things too.

But you see that when he says, I only taught Jesus and him crucified, that's not really comprehensive. He tells us, he also taught that Jesus was resurrected, which is not in his summary in chapter two. Of course he would teach the resurrection of Christ and other things too, but not very many other things.

Apparently he felt like I had to pretty much stick with the most basic things that you learned the first day that you become a Christian, that the same milk that you the day of your birth, you've never been weaned. You've never moved on. I, even though I was with you for 18 months, I never gave you anything but this milk among you.

I determined I can't, I can't go further with these people. I determined to know nothing among them, but Christ and him crucified. But he says in verse six of chapter two, however, among those who are mature.

Now he's trying to hold this out like a carrot on a stick. You are not mature. You may feel that what I gave you is all there is, but there's more.

I just couldn't, I couldn't teach this to you. You never grew to the point where I could do this with you. But there are Christians in other towns who are mature and when I'm with them, I don't do the same thing I did with you.

I don't stick only with the milk. I do have solid food, but I reserve it for those who can chew, for those who have developed some teeth and who can digest and process something more than milk. But he says in verse six, however, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. Now the meat, he says, is the wisdom of God that's in a mystery. What's a mystery? It doesn't mean something that's, you know, that has to be solved.

It's rather something that has to be revealed. In the Bible, a mystery is not something where you get a bunch of good minds on it and they take the clues and try to sort it out and try to solve the mystery like you do with the mystery novel or mystery movie. A mystery was something that was simply not accessible to people until it was later revealed.

We know that because Paul uses the word mystery frequently of his teaching. In Ephesians, in Colossians, the last verses of Romans, just like this passage here. In Romans 16, in Ephesians 2, in Colossians 1, the word mystery is used and basically what

Paul says in those places is, what I'm preaching was not revealed to the sons of men in former generations, but it's the mystery that was revealed to the holy apostles and prophets through the Spirit.

Now that's what he says about his preaching to the Ephesians and the Colossians who were definitely, I mean, most people recognize Ephesians and Colossians are written to considerably more mature Christians than the Corinthians. It goes into much deeper stuff. But he tells them that what he teaches is a mystery that was not made known before and it's now been made known or revealed to the apostles and prophets.

So no one could have figured it out, no matter how smart they were before. It just was not made known. Now it is and it was made known through the Spirit.

Now that's what he's going to say here also about what the wisdom he teaches. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have even crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, I have not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him, but God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.

That's like he said in Ephesians and Colossians, the mystery has been revealed to the apostles and prophets through the Spirit. Now this quotation from the Old Testament, I have not seen nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those who love him. I've never heard that verse quoted except when someone's applying it to heaven.

You know, no one has ever seen what we're going to see when we go to heaven. No one has ever heard. These things are unknown to us, but those are the things that God has prepared for those who love Him after they die, is the implication.

He doesn't say after they die. This is food. It's preparation of a meal.

God has prepared food for those who love Him, but it's not stuff that human minds and eyes and ears could contrive or figure out. It's got to be revealed by the Spirit. That's why he says, but God has revealed them to us by His Spirit.

He's not talking about heaven here. He's talking about what He presents in His teaching to the mature. Now by the way, we never read of Paul in any of his epistles describing heaven.

To the mature or the immature, we never find Paul describing heaven. We never find any writer in the Bible describing heaven except the book of Revelation, which has some visions of heaven, but how literal and how symbolic any of that is, we would be at a loss to really determine, nor do we need to know. The point is, though, that heaven and the details of heaven, that's not what the meat is.

The meat is what he teaches to mature people, but it's stuff that God revealed by His Spirit. It's stuff that you wouldn't figure out alone. Now fortunately, some of that is in Paul's epistles, because he wrote some epistles like Ephesians and Colossians to somewhat more mature Christians, and he says much more about the things that were revealed to him by the Spirit.

He doesn't get into that much in the Corinthian epistles, because that's just not where the audience is at. Now let's look at Galatians chapter 4. In Galatians 4, Paul is talking about pretty much humanity under the law versus under the new covenant, and the Galatians are Christians, but they're in danger. Some of them are already past danger.

They have already fallen from grace. Paul says to them, you who wish to be justified by the law, you're estranged from Christ. You've fallen from grace.

Okay, some of these people have already fallen from grace. How? By wanting to be justified by keeping the law. Now let me clarify what Paul is and is not talking about here in Galatians.

Lots of people just assume when he talks about you can't be justified by the law, that he's saying, you know, you shouldn't ever be concerned about doing the right thing or doing good works or being a righteous person, because, you know, you can't be saved by law. And by law, sometimes people take this to be virtually anything that's a rule imposed. Paul is writing about a more specific problem, and he makes it very clear.

Among the Christians in Galatia, there were Judaizers. That's people who called themselves Christians, though Paul called them false brethren. And they had come, and they were teaching the Christians that while it is a good thing to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, you have to be Jewish to do it.

And the Galatians were not Jews. Now, throughout history, from the time of Moses on, or even from the time of Abraham on, a person could become one of the people of Abraham. Even if they weren't born of his family, they could be circumcised.

A Gentile could be circumcised. Under the Old Covenant, a Gentile could become a Jew. They called him a proselyte.

We would call him a convert. You know, converting to Judaism would be becoming a proselyte. The effort to make someone become a Jewish convert would be proselytizing.

Now, throughout the Old Testament, it was always possible for a Gentile to become a Jew. If he wanted to get circumcised and keep the law and become a Jew, he changes identity from the Gentile that he was born into something he is now newly Jewish. That's not new in the Bible.

That's not the New Testament, merely that's the Old Testament. Now, the controversy in

the early church was these Gentiles who've gotten saved through Paul's ministry, and this was very early, probably Paul's earliest epistle. I believe it was written before the Jerusalem Council.

Now, the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 was convened to decide whether Gentiles who get saved have to get circumcised or not, because that was an unsettled question at first. Paul was converting these Gentiles, but they weren't getting circumcised, and there were Jewish believers who thought, wait a minute, this is a new phenomenon. We don't mind Gentiles coming to worship our Jewish Messiah, Jesus, but they have to be Jews.

As always, they need to be circumcised. So, the question here that the Galatians were wrestling with is not, are there any rules we're supposed to keep as Christians? The question was, do we have to become Jewish to become Christians? It was the issue of circumcision that was at stake here, and Paul goes so far as to say, if you get circumcised, you've renounced the faith. Well, why? Because you've chosen a different religion.

Judaism is a different religion than Christianity. You've renounced Christ, now you've gone back to Moses' law, which was good when it was good, but it's an old covenant that's been replaced by a new covenant. It's defunct now, so you don't go back there.

Now, the Galatians were confused about that, as many modern Christians are. We have a Hebrew roots movement in the modern church that is confused over the very same issues, but Paul was very clear on this. You don't have to keep the Jewish laws to be saved.

Now, did Paul think you don't have to avoid murder and adultery and stealing? No, he made it very clear you can't do those things. We're talking here about the special laws that only the Jews had that distinguish them as Jews. All nations outlawed murder and theft.

In any pagan nation, you can go to jail or worse for stealing or for murdering. Those are not the laws that were specially given to the Jews. That was to all people.

The laws that were specially for the Jews would be circumcision, Sabbath keeping, keeping the festivals, abstaining from certain foods that God said were unclean. Those are special laws that only the Jews were told to do and that distinguished them. That's why Jews were so proud of themselves, because they had these laws and none of the Gentiles had them, and therefore they were clean and the Gentiles were unclean.

Not because the Jews lived a better life, but because they were circumcised and they kept Sabbath and they didn't eat unclean foods. That doesn't make you a better person, but it makes you Jewish, and Jewish is better than Gentile. That's the whole Jewish mentality, and the Jewish believers were coming to the Gentiles and Galatians and

saying, you're Christians, now you need to become Jewish Christians.

You have to become Jews like us, and Paul said, no you don't. Now that's a very important thing, because it means that one of the marks of immaturity is going to be trying to, you know, get points with God by keeping Jewish ceremonies and things like that, because that's what the Galatians are. Look what Paul said to them in Galatians 4, 1 through 7. Now I say that the heir, he's speaking generically of the heir of a household, any household.

The heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from the slave, though he is the master of all. He's talking about a situation where the oldest son in any given household was in line to inherit the estate of his father when his father would die, or when his daughter would, his father, his father might assign it to him at a certain point when his father gets old. He might just say, okay, now you take over.

You're the lord of the mansion here now, but there were slaves in the household too, and he said, you know, the slaves, they don't have any rights, but neither does the son, even though he's the heir. When he's a child, he's no different than a slave. He's really the master of the house eventually, but he's, when he's a child, he doesn't have any special privileges.

He's under governance, just like he was a slave. He says, he's under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by his father, even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world, by which he means the law of Moses, but when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those who are under the law, so that we might receive the adoption as mature sons. The word sons he uses here is not just little sons.

There's two Greek words for sons. Teknon would be the word for a little son, a child son, and huiois is the word for a mature son, and he used the huiois here, so we were children when we're under the law, but now Christ is coming. We're now, we're adult sons, just like the child in the house who was like a slave when he was a child.

We were enslaved under the law, but Christ's coming has brought us to a new stage of our life. Now we are adult sons, heirs of everything that God has, and we're not children anymore in that sense. Even if we're baby Christians, in a sense, we're not children in the same sense the Jews were who just had the law.

The idea is under the law, just like in childhood, a person has to be externally controlled. He doesn't have it in him to know what's right and wrong or to make himself do it. A child may wish to control his bowels, but he doesn't know how to control his bowels.

The child doesn't know to clean his teeth. He has to be told to do that. He doesn't know to go to bed at a reasonable hour or to eat good, solid, healthy food instead of junk food.

Children don't know that. They have to be controlled from the outside by their parents, but when they are mature, you know they're mature because they've learned some of those things. They control themselves now.

They are potty trained, and they make wiser choices in what they eat, when they go to bed, and things like that. They have the internal controls. Now, the Jews under the law didn't have the internal controls because they didn't have the Holy Spirit living inside them.

They didn't have the fruit of the Spirit, which Paul later talks about in the next chapter of Galatians 5, but they had the law to govern them like children are governed by laws. But when they become mature, when they pass a certain threshold, then they have the internal controls, and they're not like children anymore. Now, they can be assigned responsibilities in the household.

Now, Paul says when Jesus came in the fullness of time, we were children before that, but now we've received the adoption as sons, adult sons. Verse 6, And because you are sons, God has sent forth his Spirit of his Son, which is the Holy Spirit, into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Therefore, you're no longer a slave, but a son.

And if a son, an heir of God through Christ. So, he's saying you're in a different category as a Christian than a Jew is under the law. A Jew under the law is acting like a child, thinking like a child, speaking like a child.

He only, he has to look at the rules before he knows what to do, and he has to have sanctions of the law to make him do what's right. But when you're mature, God has now given us the Spirit of his Son. Inwardly, we cry, Abba, Father, as we recognize our relationship as sons of God, and of course, the responsibilities attached to that.

And the Holy Spirit within us produces, as Paul will go into the next chapter, saying, the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, and joy, and peace, and gentleness, and self-control, and faithfulness. He lists these nine things, at the end of which he says, against those things there's no law. What's he saying? He's saying, if you're led by the Holy Spirit, then internally the Spirit's gonna be producing these traits in you, self-control, patience, faithfulness, love, gentleness.

Well, if you've got an internal, indwelling Spirit producing these traits in you, well, guess what? There's no laws against those things, so the law can't touch you. You're not under the law. You're actually gonna live better.

The standards of the Holy Spirit are gonna be higher than the standards of the law. You'll be way above the law. The law can't touch you.

It's just like when you're driving within the speed limit, you don't have to worry about the cop behind you, because you're within the law. And you might be driving that way, not

because you saw a speed limit sign saying, oh, I gotta go that speed, but because you've got some good sense about how to drive safely, and you kind of intuitively just were going this speed, and you know, see the cop, you look at your speedometer, you say, well, I'm within the speed limit, no problem. But I was already doing that.

I didn't do it because the cop was there. I didn't do it because there's a speed limit sign, not because there's a law, but because that's the safe way to drive on this particular road. And so, when the Holy Spirit is in you, and you're walking in the Spirit, then He is producing in you the traits that the law could not produce, but would have gladly found in you.

The whole purpose of the law was what? To get you to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, and love your neighbors yourself. Jesus said all the law and the prophets hang on those two duties. But to be told to do that, only from an external law, doesn't make you do that.

It makes you maybe want to do it, or it makes you might want to rebel against it, depending on your reaction to laws. But the truth is, the coming of the Holy Spirit has moved us from infancy to adult responsibility, because there's now the Spirit of God. Now it's the babes that need milk.

The mature are supposed to be able to eat solid food. As a Christian, you should be able to eat solid food very shortly after you become a Christian. It's okay to need to be told the most basic things at the beginning of your Christian life, but you're supposed to grow up.

It's okay when Peter says, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word in 1st Peter 2.2. But in 2nd Peter 3.18, he says, but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. Now when we do, that fits us for understanding other kinds of teaching that we wouldn't otherwise be able to handle, because these are things that eyes have not seen, ears not heard, and hasn't even entered into the minds of men, but are revealed by the Holy Spirit, Paul said.

Now if you look at Hebrews chapter 12, excuse me, Hebrews chapter 5, beginning at verse 12, the writer of Hebrews, who is anonymous, and we don't know for sure who it was, many people think it's Paul. Yeah, in the early church, the church in the east believed Paul wrote it, but the church in the west did not, and even to this day many scholars are divided on the point. But in in verse 2, 12, excuse me, for though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Well, there's that terminology again. That's Paul's terminology, though someone who knew him could have picked it up for this letter. For everyone who partakes only of milk



is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

So a babe is described here as someone who's unskilled in the word of righteousness. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, who are mature. That is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Now, that's an interesting verse that has quite a few subordinate clauses. I'm going to come back to that, but read a little further. Chapter 6, therefore, because of what he just said, that they're babes, they can't be taught deeper things, they need to be taught again the first principles over again, which is a shame because they should have gone beyond that point by now.

He says, therefore, because of that, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, or a better translation in this case would be maturity. This word perfection is the same one that is also translated maturity in certain other passages. And obviously he's talking about them being babes, so he's talking about maturity.

Let's go on to maturity. How? By leaving behind this focus and obsession on the elementary principles and apparently learning something new. He says, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

And this we will do if God permits. Now, is Paul saying these six things he names repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrines of baptisms, the laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Is he saying those things we shouldn't be teaching? No, he's just saying we need to go beyond those things.

He's not saying we should forget them, or maybe never ever be reminded of them from time to time. After all, every time you take communion, you're reminded of the fact that Jesus died for you. That's one of the most basic things.

A lot of times we do need to be reminded about things we already know. In fact, when I go to church and hear a sermon, if it's a good one, I never hear anything I haven't heard before. But I do hear things that I need to remember.

You know, things that might be a word in season, might be a timely reminder. There are times we need to go over this material again, but not just languish there, you know, not growing beyond it. Now, notice he says we don't need to lay the foundation over and over again.

Anyone ever, anyone here a builder or been a builder? Anyone hired a builder and watched them do something, build something? Well, obviously the first thing a builder does is lay a foundation, and that is usually concrete in many places, or they might put

up cinder blocks, but the point is, you know, they lay a slab. That's the foundation. Why do they do that? So the building won't move or sink or anything like that.

So then they start building onto the foundation. But what if the builders came on Monday and they laid the slab, and they said we'll be back tomorrow when it's dry. Came back Tuesday, they laid another slab on top of that.

Came back the next day, laid another slab on top of that, and did so every day for weeks. You just have a big concrete block. You'd have a monolith.

You wouldn't have a house. You just have the foundation laid over and over and over again. It'd be an unusable structure.

It wouldn't even be a structure. It'd be more like a block of concrete. And the writer of Hebrew says, let's not just keep laying the foundation over again.

There's a reason for laying the foundation, so you can go beyond it, so you can build on it. And he says, this is the foundation. He lists those six things.

Now, I'll tell you something. I don't know if you've listened to my lecture series on foundations. The series is called Foundations.

It goes over these six things in detail, and the reason I do is because even though the writer says we need to go on beyond this, we need not keep going over these things, what I have found is in the modern American church sometimes even these things people can't. Christians can't tell you what. How many of here give it off the top of your head a Bible study on the laying on of hands, its purpose? Most Christians can't.

I wouldn't be able to if I haven't prepared a Bible study on it myself. Years ago. But most Christians have never heard a Bible study on the laying on of hands.

Many would be at a loss to answer many of the questions that arise over baptism. You know, is it okay to be infant baptized? If it's not okay, do you have to be baptized again later? Or was your infant baptism enough? Is it okay to sprinkle? Do you have to immerse? What name? The name of Jesus or the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? I mean, these are all controversies that exist in the present church over baptism. There's obviously confusion over the issue, even of baptism, but that's one of the foundational things.

Repentance? I've known churches that never say a word about repentance. Faith toward God? Some are all about that. You know, the word of faith, people.

But then they don't understand faith. They think faith is a power that you use to manipulate God. And that's not what it is.

So they talk about faith, but they don't understand faith. Resurrection of the dead,

eternal judgment, that's eschatology. But some churches talk all about that all the time.

And sometimes what they're teaching isn't even true, but it's their forte. You know, when you look at this list of six things, you think, you know, most churches I've been to, they spend almost all their time talking about these things, and not even all of them. Some of them, they don't, they've never really given me a clear idea of what it's even about.

But, you know, two or three or four of them, that's all I ever hear about. They just lay again the foundation over and over again. Now this is what the writer is calling milk.

This is what he's calling the elementary principles. I have some friends who've been studying the Bible for 20, 30 years, and all they've studied is the book of Revelation and eschatology. And they are experts on their brand of eschatology.

And they don't know much of anything else about the Bible, as it would seem. I mean, they might know some other things vaguely, but what you ask them a question about eschatology, they're all about it. But that's milk.

That's not meat. That's milk. That's elementary principles.

If you get it right, you've gotten the elementary foundation down. If you got it wrong, then you haven't even started laying that foundation yet. You know, you can see that the writer of Hebrews is frustrated at the level this church is at.

How frustrated would he be with the American church, where even these six things, most people don't know much about them. You know, he at least assumed his readers knew these things well, well enough not to have to be told them again. Let's go on from there to maturity, because you're only drinking milk, and you need to have solid food.

Okay, so how do we, what do we call this? The milk is, of course, the things that the early Christians were taught early on. Probably the first things they had to get under their belt when they were saved. Now, you notice the Trinity doctrine is not even listed there.

The deity of Christ isn't listed there. Specifically, justification by faith isn't, though the word faith is, but faith can refer to justification or other functions of faith. But a lot of things we consider the basic foundations are not even listed there.

Maybe those things are more, more meaty, I don't know. But the fact is that they are things that the early Christians knew, and many of us don't even know. And if they only knew those, the writer thought they'd never even started growing up.

So he might not think we've even been born yet, or at least we haven't. The milk we drink is, is, is not, it doesn't have all the nutrients that it needs for healthy growth. And once we get that, then there's more.

There's the meat. Now, I, I, I want to avoid making the meat sound very mysterious,

because there's a certain kind of teacher that would like to say, no one's teaching the meat except me, because no one knows it but me. I've got the revelation.

The Holy Spirit showed me this, and I've, I've run into teachers like that, and I want to run away from them as fast as I can. I don't even want to find out what they think the meat is. I just, their attitude scares me to death.

I don't want to suggest that the meat is something that I know and no one else knows. It might be that because we've read Ephesians and Colossians, no doubt the meat is in there, and it's possible that we know. We might have learned some of the meat before we've even gotten the milk down.

I don't know. But the truth is, the writer here tells us how to advance from milk to meat, because he describes the milk drinkers as babes, and he says the one who's a babe is one who's unskillful in the Word of Righteousness. Now, it's not just talking about becoming a theologian here.

Becoming a theologian is fine, but it's not the same thing as what the early Christians were doing. It's, you know, if you go to theological seminary, you'll learn a lot of really interesting and maybe important things, but much of it will not be the things that they were taught, because most of what the early church taught was how to live a godly life. You read, well, in Paul's letters, in many cases, about an equal part of theology and practical living.

Ephesians, the first half is theology, the second half is practical living. Colossians, first half is theology, second half is practical living. Galatians, the first two chapters are just autobiography of Paul, but the next two chapters are theology, and the last two chapters practical teaching.

At least half of Paul's teaching seems to be about how to live, and that's something that many times churches leave out. How am I supposed to live? Now, Paul says, or excuse me, the writer of Hebrews, which may have been Paul or someone else, he says in verse 14, the solid food belongs to those who are of full age, those who by reason of use, use of what? Well, he's just said that the babes are not skillful in the word. By contrast, the mature ones have made use of the word, and by reason of use, they have developed something in themselves.

They've exercised their senses so they can discern, he says, both good and evil. Now, the point here is, remember what Paul called milk and meat in first Corinthians 2. The milk was real basic things, but the meat was what he taught that was revealed by the Spirit. A person who does not have the Holy Spirit can learn the morality and the doctrines of the Christian faith.

There are non-Christians who've memorized whole books of the Bible, but they're not

believers. There are theologians who are experts in their field of theology who are simply not converted. They're not even born again.

There are some. Obviously, there's a lot of people who are born again who are expert theologians too, but the point is, being an expert theologian doesn't make you godly or mature necessarily, or even saved. And even living a good life doesn't.

Neither the theology nor the practical living of Christianity is what makes you or marks you off as mature, but rather it's a spiritual thing. Knowing theology is good, but knowing theology can be entirely in the head. Theology has to be learned by making use of the truth in your life.

Put it into practice. By reason of use, the mature people have exercised their senses. Now, by senses, he's not talking about your five senses.

Your eyesight, your hearing, your smell, your taste, and your touch. Those are not senses that you develop by use. As a matter of fact, the more you use them, the more you wear them out, as many of us find out when we get older.

They worked perfectly well when we're older, but he's talking about spiritual senses. There are spiritual counterparts to seeing. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.

You know, in Hebrews says, we see Jesus, who is made a little lower than the angels. So, you know, we see him. Hearing, there's spiritual hearing.

Jesus said, he that has ears to hear, let him hear. He didn't mean these objects, appendages on the side of your head. He's talking about if you can hear spiritually what I'm saying.

He that has ears to hear, let him hear. Feeling, Paul said that God desires that we would feel after him and find him. Many people talk about feeling the spirit, and that's a possibility.

Sometimes you do feel the presence of God. But the thing is, there are spiritual senses, and just like the taste, taste and see that the Lord is good. That's a spiritual taste that's talking about.

And you can discern by taste whether something's, whether something is fresh or gone bad. Right? I mean, milk. Okay, let's talk about real milk, ordinary milk.

When it's fresh, it tastes fresh. When it's gone sour, you can tell. You can smell it.

You can taste it. You can discern it. You don't even have to taste it, because your smell will tell you, oh, don't want to drink that.

Because you know, you can discern good from evil by your senses. So also, the writer of

Hebrews said, there are spiritual senses. They're developed by reason of use of the Word of God.

As you put the Word of God to use in your life, you mature to the plane where you can sense between good and evil. Why is that important? Because the meat is that which is revealed by the Spirit of God. Now, the problem I have with many people who are very spiritual in their own estimation, is that everything they believe, they believe was revealed to them by the Spirit of God.

In fact, every opinion they have, they believe the Spirit of God revealed to them. God showed me this. God told me this.

You know, I had a guy who used to call me all the time on the air, and he disagreed. We disagreed on something. I forget even what it was.

It was a number of things, actually. It was a guy in Oregon, and he'd call up and he'd disagree about something, which is fine. I don't mind he disagrees.

But the problem was, he'd ask it in the form of a question. I'd give the scriptures that I believe, I base my view on, and he'd say, yeah, but I was reading that, and the Holy Spirit showed me that it means this. Well, in many cases, what the Holy Spirit showed him that it means, was not at all what it means.

He's taking it totally out of context. He's not taking into consideration other passages on the same subject that would contradict what he's saying. He was just totally subjective.

So, just because someone says the Spirit showed me, doesn't mean he did. He didn't have his senses exercised to discern between good and evil. When something was presented to him that he thought was from the Holy Spirit, he couldn't tell if it was or not.

He assumed it was. But some of the stuff, he would have known better if he just knew the Word. If he'd been more skillful in the Word, he would have been able to discern between the impressions that he thought were the Holy Spirit and those that are not.

And this is the point. The balance of the Christian life, the maturity of the Christian life, is when you know the Word well enough and have become adept in it, so that you can now receive insight and revelation from the Holy Spirit and recognize it for what it is, or recognize the counterfeit. You have to have your spiritual senses developed to a place where you can discern good and evil, or else you can't be... you're in trouble.

If the Holy Spirit wants to reveal stuff to you, you won't know if it's Him or not. How do you know? By becoming skillful in the Word of Righteousness. Now, babes, he said, who drink only milk, they're not skillful in the Word of Righteousness.

They don't go far enough. They don't search. They don't meditate.

And so, they don't learn more. I'll tell you an example of what I'm thinking of. And this has happened to me a lot over the years, because I've... as you know, I started teaching when I was young, but I started teaching by parroting everything I'd heard from other teachers.

What else are you going to do when you're 16 years old, you know? You got to... you don't know much on your own, but you follow people who you think know more than you do. And frankly, my teachers did know more than I did. Parroting them probably meant that I taught things more profound than I would have taught from my own head.

But what was very helpful to me was that I was fascinated with everything in the Word of God. Not because I wanted to be a Bible expert. It's never been my goal to be a Bible expert.

I was on the Bob Ducos show yesterday, and he kept introducing, Steve Gregg, a Bible expert. I think, oh, I don't like that term. I don't think I'm a Bible expert.

I'm a learner, like everybody else. We're all learning, you know, to, you know, an expert is somebody that when you ask them a question, they give an answer. You know it's the right answer because they're an expert.

I don't claim to know the right answers. I just tell you what I think is true, and I'll tell you what some other people think is true, and you can sort it out for yourself. You discern.

You make up your own mind. I'm not an expert, but the thing is I'm not a Bible expert. It was never my goal to be a Bible expert.

It was always my goal to know the mind of God, to have a relationship with God where I knew what He wanted from me. The same is when I get married. I meet my wife.

I marry her. Now my primary goal is to find out what she wants, and that's something that I'll find out everything about God before I find out everything a woman wants, but it's a mystery. It has to be revealed.

The truth is, but a husband who's got any sense, his highest priority is to find out what does she want anyway? What pleases her? How can I keep her happy? Not that keeping her happy is your only goal in life, but it's high on the short list, and doing so requires that you figure out. Well, you need to do what your wife wants you to do, which is read her mind. Now men, that's, I have to just say if you're a woman here, men don't know how to do that, but they try.

If they're smart, they try, and that's why I wanted to know the Bible. Not because I wanted to impress people I could quote the Bible or knew the Bible. I want to know

what's on God's mind.

I figured that's where it's found, and I wanted to read it. I wanted to think about it, and when I wasn't, I was reading it all the time when I could, and when I couldn't, I was thinking about it. I made a living in secular work for the first 12 years before I was in full-time ministry, in part-time ministry, and worked for a living, and I always chose jobs that were mindless.

Janitorial work, washing windows, assembly line, driving, delivering. I did those kind of jobs because I thought I don't have to think much about what I'm doing. I can do it without thinking.

Then I can think about what I want to think about, which was always the Scripture. I wanted to meditate day and night on the Scripture. Somebody was asking me about, yesterday or the day before on the radio, somebody mentioned a bunch of people who study the Scripture.

He wondered, can you study the Scripture too much? Well, I don't know that you can study the Scripture too much, but you can do so to the exclusion of something more important even than that, and that is meditating on the Scripture. Meditating on Scripture is how you, that's how the Holy Spirit shows you new things. Now, I'll tell you, I want to give an example of this.

I won't give all the examples that could come to mind, but one very typical example. I was driving a delivery truck when I was in my early 20s, and that's what I was doing for a living, as I was teaching also on the side, and I was just driving on the freeways in LA, and I was thinking about the Bible, and a thought came to my mind, which I'd had while reading the Bible, but it had left my mind. It came back to my mind because I was thinking about these things, and this is just an example of the kind of thing I'm talking about.

I remember thinking, why does Jesus say, as the lightning flashes from the east even to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be? I thought, lightning doesn't necessarily flash from the east to the west. Generally speaking, we think of lightning as moving vertically, not horizontally, and even if it sometimes does go from east to west, that's not a given. That's not axiomatic, and Jesus is not arguing for the proposition that lightning flashes from the east to west.

He's assuming you know that. As the lightning flashes from east to west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. That's like the premise.

He's not trying to prove it or argue for it. He's just saying that's our starting point. We know the lightning flashes from east to the west.

Now you need to know that like that, the Son of Man's coming will be. I remember



thinking, why does he say it that way? And I've always wondered that, but I was thinking about it, thinking like Pooh Bear, a bear with very little brain, think, think, think, and I do that all the time, and I remember thinking, well, lightning, I don't know about the Greek. I do now because I looked it up, but when I was thinking, I didn't know about the Greek, but I thought in the English, the word lightning can mean like the illuminating, like the lightning of this room is the result of these lights, okay? And I thought, I wonder if the Greek word that is here in this text means something more like that, like the illumination or the light in general that lightens the sky.

And I thought if it means that, I could make more sense of the because if he said, as the light that shines from the east even to the west does so, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Well, I do know of a light that shines from the east to the west every single day. It's the sunrise.

The sunrise begins in the east and travels to the west. And I thought, I wonder if he's comparing his coming to a sunrise rather than a lightning bolt. Now, I didn't know.

I was thinking about it. And so when I got home, and this is what I do, I mean, I would now say, I think the Holy Spirit revealed that to me. I don't require you to agree with me, but that's what I would say now.

But I didn't want to assume I was right because I didn't know if it matched up with what I was going to find if I looked it up. So I got home and looked up in the Greek. Interestingly enough, the word lightning in that passage, which is Matthew 24, 27, is *astrapi*, the Greek word *astrapi*.

In the concordance, in the lexicons, it says *astrapi*, meaning number one, lightning, meaning number two, bright shining. And it gave references. One was Matthew 24, 27, and the other was in Luke, in which Jesus said, if the light of your body is your eye and it's dark, then your body is full of darkness.

But if it's light, then your whole body is full of light. As when the bright shining of a lamp illuminates a room. The word bright shining, referring to the bright shining of a lamp, is the word *astrapi*, the same Greek word.

So I thought, okay, so the word can mean lightning, or it can mean bright shining. The translators just have to make up their mind in the context, which it is. Every translation of the Bible in English I've seen, I've seen dozens of them, they translate Matthew 24 to 27 as lightning, as the lightning flashes from the east to the west.

But the other time the same word appears in Luke, they translate bright shining. I think they're following a precedent back from the King James, and no one's willing to change, because we have this verbal image in our mind of lightning coming down, and it'd be like Jesus coming. But it sounds to me like he's talking about, it's like a sunrise, not like a

lightning bolt.

Now, again, I don't really know that anyone's going to be hurt by having the right or the wrong view about that particular subject. But that's an example of the kind of things that's happened to me hundreds of times over the past half a century, really. That I'll be meditating on the Bible, some verse that I had questions about, or that I'm familiar with, but I've always thought of a certain way, but I haven't been totally satisfied with my understanding.

It'll come to mind, I'll turn it over, I'll think about it, and I'll feel like the Holy Spirit will reveal something to me about it. I won't assume that because I got a hunch that that's God, because I could get hunches that are just goofy. But I'll always check it out in Scripture, and because I'm committed to the use of Scripture, I can test those things that are revealed.

Some of them probably aren't really from God, and some are, but the ones that are, test out. You can test them from Scripture. The point here is, you have to have a foundational knowledge of Scripture first.

Many times an impression will come to mind briefly, and I think, oh no, but the Scripture says over here, something of that rules that out. In fact, you know I've changed my views about eschatology over the years. One of the first things I really began to change my views about was eschatology, and it was gradual.

I first changed my mind about the rapture, after thinking about it really hard for a few years, and studying it out. And then I changed my view on the millennium a few years later, and then on the tribulation a few years later. Again, I'm not going to argue that everyone has to agree that that's been revelation from God in my life.

You have to sort that out and make up your own mind for yourself. To my mind, I believe God led me in that direction, because objections to the way I was using Scriptures about these subjects came to my mind when I was meditating on Scripture. And I began to think, well maybe that Scripture doesn't mean what I'm using it to mean.

And then another Scripture would come up that kind of makes a different point, that's more like what I would now think. And in other words, when you're bathing your mind in Scripture, you're meditating on Scripture day and night, the Holy Spirit will correct you. He'll reveal things to you.

You're not going to get any bold new doctrines that no one's ever had before. If you do, run away. Because there are no doctrines that are true, and which Christians have never ever known.

When you get a Joseph Smith coming along saying, oh the truth was lost after the Apostles died, and an angel just revealed it to me. And it's been 1,800 years since

anyone knew this, but now I know it. Actually, John Darby said the same thing about his eschatology.

He said, you know, the Apostles knew this, but after they died, it was lost to the Church, and I've just rediscovered it. I mean, there are people who claim to be teaching things that no Christian since the Apostles have ever known. I don't trust anything that no Christian has ever known.

But there are things that I have not known, and some other Christians have. And so it's always, whenever I get a new idea about something, if I wonder if it's the Holy Spirit, I want to at least find out if there's any other Christians who've ever believed it, and if it matches up with Scripture. If I don't know of any other Christians that have believed it, I'll just keep looking, because I hope they have.

But the point is, we want to check things out. We have to discern between what's right and wrong. And there are people who want to just trust every impression they get and say, well, that's the Holy Spirit showed me that.

Well, maybe He did, but you won't know if He did or not, unless you're more skillful in the Word than some. You need to be able to make use of the Word. Now making use of the Word is not just reading it and studying it, though that's an important part.

It's also meditating on the Word of God. It's also, insofar as you have the ability to do so, sharing it with other people. That's making use of it, too, because you often find in the process of sharing something you've heard or thought from the Word of God, that you either, it either is more cemented in your mind, or it you begin to see the flaws with it when you verbalize it.

This is the first step that I took out of pre-tribulationism. That is, I taught pre-trib rapture for years. And what happened is, some guy who had heard me teach it, and he believed it, came to me and said, I'm going to Bible college now.

My professor doesn't believe in the pre-trib rapture. I need some ammunition. I want to teach the pre-trib rapture and prove it to him.

And I wanted to prove it to him, too, because I believed it, too. So I sat down with him, and I went through 19 or 20 passages of scripture which I used to prove it. And for the first time in my life, I saw that these particular passages didn't say anything at all about the subject.

I had 19 or 20 scriptures, what I had learned from my teachers, to defend the pre-trib rapture. They had worked for me, as long as I was not skeptical, but as I was now looking at them through the eyes of the skeptical man that I was trying to convince, and thinking, how is he going to be convinced by this? Suddenly, I saw the weakness of my own views. And it was in the process of sharing them.

You know, one of the best things you can do, as far as solidifying what you know about the Bible in your own mind, is share with someone else. Now, if you're a Bible teacher like me, you get to do it all the time with groups of people. But before I was really teaching groups of people, I'd come home from Calvary Chapel or wherever, been in a Bible study, and I'd share with my parents, because I lived at home with my parents, and my sister was there, too, my brother.

So I'd just share what I'd heard, not because I wanted to be a teacher, but because I thought it was interesting and insightful. And in sharing it, it became mine more, you know. And that's putting to use the Word of God.

It's not just reading it casually. When you read it casually, you're putting it in your head. To get it into your heart, you need to chew it up.

And that's what you do when you ruminate or when you meditate on it. As you meditate on it, all the nutrition of that that's available tends to filter down into your heart and your life and your spirit. And that's how you grow.

You need to grow beyond infancy. You can see examples of infancy in a divisive person. Now, why is a divisive person immature? It's because they have learned something, and they find someone else hasn't learned the same thing.

And they have it in their head, but they don't have a heart to have the right perspective on it. So they think, somebody has to agree with me or else, or they're bad. They're wrong.

They need to go somewhere else to church. I can't fellowship with them because they don't agree with me. But they haven't internalized.

They haven't really, they don't own it. They borrowed it from whoever taught it to them, but they don't own it yet because they haven't meditated. They haven't absorbed it.

If you have absorbed it, then you're not threatened by someone disagreeing. If you're just holding it in the front of your brain because you heard someone say it, that makes sense to me. I like knowing that.

I like to see it that way. But you haven't owned it yet because you're just borrowing it from someone else. Someone else comes along and challenges because they see something else.

Suddenly you're threatened. I don't know if that's true or not, but I want it to be true. Stay away from me.

You scare me because you hold a different view than I do. But if you meditate day and night on it, then the things you've heard either get eliminated because they're not true

because you've sorted it out while you meditated on it, or you begin to see more and more reasons how it is true and why it is true and what you should do about it. See, obeying it is another part of making use of the Word.

You have to do it. James said, whoever is a hearer of the Word and not a doer of the Word is like a... he's deceiving himself. So to become mature so that what God reveals by His Spirit is something that you can discern between what's good and evil, what's right and wrong, having your senses exercised by reason of use of the Word of God, it involves... of course you've got to read the Word of God.

You've got to familiarize yourself with it in your head. You've got to meditate on it. You've got to obey it because your growth is going to stop as soon as you're not obeying what you know you're supposed to do.

You may grow while you're still doing something wrong if you don't know it's wrong, but you'll grow to know it's wrong and then you'll stop. If you know something's wrong and you're not giving up on it, you're not going to grow any beyond that. You're not using the Word of God.

The Word of God is not something you're supposed to use to prove other people wrong or to just be the most intelligent Christian in the block. You're supposed to use it by recognizing it's there to tell you how to change, how to live. You need to apply it.

You need to obey it and then you need to of course as much as possible share it with other people because that really completes it. It kind of makes it yours and that's how you grow. It's the Spirit of God that has to reveal to you, me.

And it may not even be the most profound things. It may be Jesus Christ and Him crucified suddenly means something to you much deeper. You get an insight into why the Atonement works or you know something like that or about you know how Jesus could be God.

You know maybe you've just held that as a doctrine. Jesus is God. I believe in the Trinity.

But then you're meditating and suddenly a whole conceptualization of it that you never thought of before that makes it all totally clear comes to you. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. But again in order to really safely be taught by the Spirit you have to be bound and trained by what the Holy Spirit has already said to earlier generations because He didn't change His mind about any of it.

So knowing the Word of God, having meditated on it, obeyed it, shared it with others, that grows you up to the point where when something comes to your mind you're in a position to discern. Your spiritual senses have been exercised and developed so that you can trust what God says to you and know that it's true and not something that you have to be aware of. Anyway that's just kind of a general overview of what the Bible I think is

talking about when it talks about growing up so we don't only drink milk but eat solid food.