

## A Study Guide of the Principles of Apostolic Doctrine

### Chapter 1

#### Introduction

**This Study Guide of the Principles of Apostolic Doctrine will deal with the Principles of the Doctrine as outlined in Hebrews 6:1-2, *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment "***

In the study of Apostolic Doctrine, it is especially important for young converts to become acquainted with the Doctrine, we as Apostolics, believe. The fundamentals of the basics of Apostolic teachings are treated with considerable detail. Going on to perfection and Holiness are part of this study along with a chapter on "Eternal Security" as opposed to "Unconditional Eternal Security". Also contained in this book is a section giving answers to many of the questions asked by those new to The Faith.

Let us first define the word "Principle". Principle comes from a Latin word, principium, which means beginning; it includes the comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine or assumptions. Doctrine simply refers to something that is taught. The Principles of the Doctrine are those beginning, fundamental, and foundation teachings taught by the Apostles which were to be passed on to future generations. They are the starting point of a path that leads to perfection. All Apostolic doctrines are founded on these principles.

There are six principles listed in Hebrews 6:1-2.

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. Doctrine of baptisms
4. Laying on of hands

5. Resurrection of the dead
6. Eternal judgment

These six principles are the basics of what we are to believe and are important for any growth toward staying saved. There is a seventh principle, "Going on to Perfection". It takes us beyond the first six, for without the first six, there is no foundation for the seventh. As we move through each of these principles the goal of perfection or maturity is in view. Our objective is to become full-grown, mature children of *God* with the ability to reflect the character of His righteousness and Holiness in this world, preparing for the world to come. Each of these principles are progressively linked to each other. If we look at the six principles as an ascending stair-case, it becomes apparent that before the second principle can be acted upon, the first one must be achieved etc. For example, before one can have Faith toward God, there must be a turning away from the dead works of our present life coupled with a change of attitude toward God.

Water baptism would be an exercise of futility if there did not exist a belief in God and an expectation to receive something from Him (Heb.11:6). Water baptism is a cleansing process which requires faith in the shed blood of Jesus who died that whosoever believes might receive forgiveness and remission of *sins*. This step points toward a power received from God, which is the Holy Ghost, and enables one to live free from sin. It is also the assurance of eternal life after death. If our hope was centered only in this life, we are most miserable indeed (1 Cor.15:19). Therefore the Doctrine of the resurrection is the next step to take. Our proof and hope is centered in Jesus Christ, who we must believe, rose from the grave and is alive forever more. Without this principle, nothing for the future is relevant. Before we grow into mature children of God, the Principle of Eternal Judgment must be firmly in place as the final step of the stair-case. Eternal judgment establishes the actions of God against sin and provides part of our motivation to be saved. Living to please God will have its reward, because at the final judgment a separation will be made between good and evil and the righteous and wicked. The righteous and good will be rewarded with life, while the wicked and evil with eternal damnation. Finally,

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Eternal Judgment exemplifies the Righteousness of God, who will not destroy the righteous with the wicked, when all will have their appropriate reward, life or death. (Gen.18:23 -25).

Remember, these principles are the basis of our faith and our faith cannot be expanded until these become the fundamental beliefs of the heart. Other aspects of the faith or goal of perfection, hinge on the believing of these things. Notice the Apostles statement, "*Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection*" (full-growth). He is not saying let us forget this foundation, but the greater doctrine of belief is in the "Doctrine of Christ". To know Christ one must first believe these fundamental principles. Christ is involved with each one, but there is more to knowing Christ than repentance, faith toward God, baptism etc. The Apostle is saying, believe these first, stand on them, do not be moved from them but don't stay just on the foundation of the house, go on and build the house (perfection, maturity) for there are greater things to be learned of the knowledge of Christ.

Paul lets us know that his and our main objective is to "Know Him and the power of His resurrection" (Phil. 3:8-12). The goal of the ministry is to bring us into the full knowledge of His will and to know the "Hope of His calling, and the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph.1:17-19) and again "to acquire the knowledge of the son of God" (Eph.4:11-16). Before this can happen, these fundamentals must be believed.

For each of these six principles, Jesus Christ is the focus of importance. When the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached AND believed, repentance is the result as one decides to turn from sin toward Christ. Jesus is the Name and His shed blood is the means by which sins are remitted. The whole process is started because of our Faith Toward God's son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the giver of the Holy Ghost which is the Spirit of Christ sent down from heaven on the Day of Pentecost. It is the same Spirit received by believers when the Apostles laid hands on them and is the same Spirit received by believers today. The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides the reason for one to believe in the resurrection as a fact.

At the final judgment, it will be Jesus sitting on His throne to judge all the souls of mankind ever born. (Acts 17:31 / John 5:22-30), If we believe these principles then we MUST believe in Jesus as the scriptures declare Him to be (John 7:38).

Since these Principles are the basic teachings of Christ, who is the foundation Rock the church is built on, it is absolutely essential that this foundation be firm and unchanged if it is to *be* victorious over the assaults of the gates of Hell (Maft.7:24-27 / Matt.16:18). These principles need no up-dating, revisions or additions, but must remain as they were first taught by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, the Doctrine on which we stand (Eph. 2:20-22). This is the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude vs 3). New generations may change them to suit their fickle needs, but to do so would give our enemy, Satan, a sure victory.

Having set forth these six principles of the Apostolic Doctrine, let us now proceed to examine each one in some detail, followed by "Going on To Perfection".