



“appear a second time. . . for salvation.” Four chapters after our text, the writer promises those who turn back to sin after learning the truth, **“a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries”** (Heb. 10:26-27). Is this describing some physical act of judgment? No. We must remember 6:2 calls this **“eternal judgment.”** In the chapter before this, the writer declares

the writer declares, **“it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment”** (Heb. 9:27). Does this mean final judgment happens at death? No. We noticed above that Jesus promised a resurrection at the **“last day”**—He also said, **“the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48). The Hebrew writer began 9:27 with the words, **“And as”** then continues into the next verse saying, **“so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation”** (Heb. 9:28). So, the **“judgment”** of verse 27 occurs when Christ will

Jesus is **“the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him”** (Heb. 5:9). This is the salvation which comes when Christ appears a **“second time”** (Heb. 9:29). We noted above Jesus’s description of the **“resurrection of life”** or **“resurrection of condemnation”** (John 5:29) that will take place on this judgment of the **“last day”** (cf. John 6:39,40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48). This is more than a physical judgment: it has eternal consequences. Obedience to Christ promises **“eternal”** or **“everlasting life”** (Matt. 19:29; John 3:16, et al.), entrance into His **“everlasting kingdom”** (2 Pet. 1:11), an **“everlasting home”** (Luke 16:9), **“a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”** (2 Cor. 5:1), an **“eternal weight of glory”** (2 Cor. 4:17; cf. 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:10), **“everlasting consolation”** (2 Thess. 2:16), **“eternal salvation”** (Heb. 5:9), **“eternal redemption”** (Heb. 9:12), and an **“eternal inheritance”** (Heb. 9:15). Rejecting Christ promises **“eternal”** or **“everlasting fife”** (Jude 7; Matt. 18:8; 25:41), **“everlasting punishment”** (Matt. 25:46), **“eternal condemnation”** (Mark 3:29), and **“everlasting destruction”** (2 Thess. 1:9). Belief in the reality of the final eternal judgment that will come at Christ’s coming on the last day is an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ.



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Faithful Sayings Issue 22.21 May 24, 2020



ISSUE

22.21

May 24, 2020

Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
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Kyle Pope

“Elementary Principles”

By Kyle Pope

In Hebrews 5:12-6:3, the Hebrew writer rebukes his readers for their spiritual immaturity that prevented him from being able to explore meatier issues with them. In this rebuke, he urges them to move beyond **“elementary principles of Christ”** (6:1, NKJV), going on to list several things he includes among these **“first principles”** (ASV). Let’s explore the six things he lists here as literally **“the word of the beginning of the Christ.”**

1. Repentance from Dead Works. Three chapters later, as the writer discusses the superiority of Christ’s sacrifice compared to Mosaic sacrifices, he asks: **“how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”** (Heb. 9:14). Christ’s blood can cleanse us **“from all sin”** (1 John 1:7). While God’s word teaches **“good works”** (Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; etc.), it also defines **“wicked works”** (Col. 1:21), **“evil”** works (1 John 3:12), **“works of darkness”** (Rom. 13:12), which are **“unfruitful works”** (Eph. 5:11), and **“works of the flesh”** that disqualify one from inheriting the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21). Any of these may be considered **“dead works.”** In order for Christ’s blood to cleanse from such works one must **“repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance”** (Acts 26:20). Repentance from dead works is an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ.

2. Faith toward God.

Five chapters later, the Holy Spirit leads the writer to declare: **“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him”** (Heb. 11:16). Faith **“toward God”** means belief in the One sent from God (John 17:21). Jesus said, **“you believe in God, believe also in Me”** (John 14:1). Belief in Jesus is in fact belief in God, because Jesus is **“Immanuel”** meaning **“God with us”** (Matt. 1:23). In Christ, **“dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily”** (Col. 2:9). Paul wrote, **“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”** (Rom. 10:10). Faith in Christ is an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ.

3. The Doctrine of Baptisms. The Greek word used here is *baptismos*, used in Mark of the Pharisees’ traditions of **“washing”** of pots and cups (Mark 7:4, 8) and three chapters later of Mosaic ceremonial **“washings”** (Heb. 9:10). It is related to the Greek word *baptisma*, used of a specific type of washing commanded by Christ. Jesus taught, **“He who believes and is baptized will be saved”** (Mark 16:16a). He commanded His apostles to make disciples **“baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”** (Matt. 28:19). In baptism one is buried with Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), puts on Christ (Gal 3:26-7), and has sins washed away (Acts 22:16). It is **“the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit”** (Titus 3:5). Baptism is an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ.

4. Of Laying on of Hands. To “lay hands” on someone is used in different ways in the New Testament. Often it refers to seizing someone for punishment or imprisonment (Matt. 18:28; 21:46; 26:50; Mark 12:12; Luke 20:19; John 7:44; 8:20; Acts 4:3; 21:27; perhaps 1 Tim. 5:22, cf. 5:19-21). It can refer to the manner in which Jesus promised the apostles could heal the sick (Mark 16:18) and to an affectionate approval of a work begun (e.g. at the appointment of the seven—Acts 6:6; and the sending off of Paul and Barnabas—Acts 13:3). However, there was a very special application of this term to the role and work of the apostles. Following the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon them in power (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4), the apostles could lay hands upon those to whom they chose to grant different miraculous spiritual gifts (Acts 8:17, 18, 19; 19:6; 2 Tim. 1:6; perhaps 1 Tim. 4:14).

Simon tried to purchase this ability and was rebuked (Acts 8:19-24). The New Testament doesn’t teach that this ability could be passed on, so it passed away with the completion of revelation and with the death of the apostles and those upon whom they had laid hands. When the Hebrew writer wrote, this ability still operated within the living apostles and those who had received the **“laying on of hands.”** It served to complete revelation and confirm that their teaching was from God. Understanding the nature of the laying on of hands and what it revealed about the teaching of the apostles is an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ.

5. Of Resurrection of the Dead. We might initially think that this refers to the resurrection of Christ, but the word translated **“of the dead”** is plural in the Greek. This is not equated with **“repentance from dead works”** or the **“doctrine of baptisms,”** so it is not referring to the spiritual renewal that comes from repentance and baptism (cf. Acts 3:19; Rom. 6:3-7). Five chapters later, the writers speak of Old Testament examples of faith, declaring: **“Women received their dead raised to life again. And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection”** (Heb. 11:35). This contrast is interesting. Unlike Old Testament examples of resurrection in which one was raised only to die again (cf. 1 Kings 17:22-23; 2 Kings 4:32-37), the **“better resurrection”** of the faithful, as Jesus explained it for those who attain the **“resurrection of the dead”** means they cannot **“die anymore”** (Luke 20:36). This does not happen at the point of death. Jesus promised in four passages that He will raise up the faithful **“at the last day”** (John 6:39,40, 44, 54) and He accepted without rebuke Martha’s statement that her brother, **“will rise again in the resurrection at the last day”** (John 11:24). At this time there will be a **“a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust”** (Acts 24:15). Jesus explained, **“the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice**

and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29). Jesus said the, **“Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection”** (Mark 12:18) were **“greatly mistaken”** (Mark 12:27). Paul taught that those who claim **“the resurrection is already past”** actually **“overthrow the faith of some”** (2 Tim. 2:18). Although this is not talking about Jesus’s resurrection, He is described as the **“firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”** (1 Cor. 15:20), suggesting that this resurrection will be similar to His in nature. Like Jesus, our corruptible bodies will be **“raised incorruptible”** (1 Cor. 15:52). Paul explains of **“the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption”** (1 Cor. 15:42). Like His resurrection, **“Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming”** (1 Cor. 15:23). Belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead is an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ.

6. Of Eternal Judgment. Three chapters later