

# The Elementary, Bedrock Principles of Christ

## This Is the Essential “Milk” We Must Build Upon!

It is tempting to read Hebrews 5:12-14 to 6:1-3 and conclude that these six items, which Paul terms “elementary principles of Christ,” are rather unimportant because they constitute the “milk” fed to a newborn babe in Christ. Nothing could be further from the truth, and you will soon understand why. First, let us read this section in Hebrews.

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first *principles* [*stuicheion* “orderly arrangements”] of the *oracles* [*logion* “an utterance of God”] of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.”

A child requires its mother’s milk to survive and begin its growth towards maturity. Without it the newborn would die. So it is with the “elementary principles”; we need them to first come to the knowledge of our Savior, and begin growing using what Paul calls “solid food.” There is nothing inconsequential about this milk — it is critical — but Paul is admonishing the Hebrew people to build upon the “foundation” that has already been laid. One cannot let his intellect stop maturing once the initiation into the family of Elohim has begun. To slacken one’s efforts in this quest for maturity is akin to death, for to stop growing is to start dying.

Therefore we see the extreme importance of growing, building upon that foundation of the Rock — Jesus Christ (Psalm 89:26; 95:1; I Corinthians 10:4) — which building is termed *meat* or *solid* food here in Hebrews 5:12-14, as the seed that is planted by the sower in “... good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some a hundred” (Mark 4:3-8). We need to be like Jesus, who as a Child “... grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him” (Luke 2:40). Both Paul and Peter admonished the brethren to *grow* ...

“ ... till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ — from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Ephesians 4:13-16).

“Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as

newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby ..." (I Peter 2:1-2).

"You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen." (II Peter 3:17-18).

Notice that I Peter 2:2 states we should desire the "pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." This statement indicates that the milk of the word indicated by Paul in Hebrews 5:13 is not bad in any sense ... but it is the first food we need towards growing to maturity; it is a required beginning, but we must build upon it through rightly dividing the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15).

### The Six "Elementary Principles"

Let us examine each of these six "elementary principles" of the oracles (utterances) of God, and see just how critical each of them is during our walk with God towards His flawless government on earth. These principles are a required beginning as we build the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding of Him within our lives.

#### 1. REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS.

**repent** (Old Testament) = **nacham**, "to sigh, breath strongly, by implication to be sorry." See Joshua 4:2.

**repent** (New Testament) = **metanoeo**, "to think differently afterwards; reconsider; to change the mind, the seat of moral reflection." The word is a contrast to **pronoceo**, which is "to perceive beforehand."

Repent or repentance in the New Testament always indicates a change of mind or of purpose for the better. There are three steps involved with repentance.

**(a) New knowledge, an understanding that your thoughts or behavior are in conflict with the will of God.** This, of course, implies that a person must have a certain knowledge of God's laws that will convict one of sin, for "Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Whatever the source of this new knowledge of one's evil ways, there is a conviction of sin that weighs on the conscience (Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Romans 11:33; II Peter 3:18).



**(b) Regret for the previous behavior and displeasure with the self.** Somehow the person's consciousness is convicted of error, and he is filled with regret of his present course. There is as a result a determination to change the past, and assert obedience to the laws of God which govern behavior to conform to that of Jesus Christ and the Father (II Chronicles 7:14; Ezekiel 33:11; Luke 17:3-4; Acts 3:19).

**(c) A change in action or thought.** Once the knowledge of one's error has come to mind, and he regrets that error, the next step he must take is to correct the error — take action. Yet, changing old, entrenched habits is not easy, but with conviction that the new course is correct, a

person can indeed plot a new course and overcome the error of his past (Psalm 51:13; Ephesians 4:28; II Thessalonians 3:10-13; Acts 3:19).

## Three Steps of Repentance

New Knowledge → Regret of the Error → Change of Action

Another Greek word sometimes used for repentance is *metamellomai*, meaning “an emotional change,” which reflects the second stage of the repentance process. The state of mind of repentance is thus seen to be crucial to the process of becoming a new creature in Christ. It is the first step in which the Father draws a person to Christ (John 6:44). Without this regret and stress upon realizing one’s past errors, it is impossible to begin the process of redemption. All of us who are among the elect have experienced this time of profound change in our lives. It is the beginning of our renewed walk towards life in the footsteps of the Savior.

A few scriptural references you can refer to regarding repentance are Matthew 3:2; 4:1; 17; 12:41; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; and Revelation 2:5; 9:20-21.

### 2. FAITH TOWARDS GOD.

**faith** (Old Testament) = **emwn** and **emwnah**, “firmness, security, trustworthiness.” These words are used only twice in the entire Old Testament.

**faith** (New Testament) = **pistis**, “conviction of the truth of anything, or belief respecting man’s relationship to God, with the trust and favor born of faith, and joined with it.”

The Greek word *pistis* is related to...

(a) God the Father, with the conviction that He exists, that He is the Creator and Ruler of all things, and that He is the Provider and Bestower of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ.

(b) Christ, with a strong conviction that Jesus is the Messiah through whom we obtain eternal salvation.

**Faith** (*pistis*) also can include all of the spiritual beliefs of Christians ... “the faith,” as noted in I Timothy 1:2 and 4:1. The word implies trust that our heavenly Father and His Son Jesus are who they say they are, and they can be totally relied up on — guarantors, as it were — of our entire living today, as well as on into the future for eternity.



**Abraham, the father of the faithful, has set an example for us of faith towards the Creator that will help us move into lands and situations we may think are unconquerable.**

What are some of these things that our great Elohim does for us? These things are indicated by His several names, a few of which are mentioned below.

**Elohim.** God the Creator, mighty and strong (Genesis 1:1; 17:7; Jeremiah 31:33).

**El Shaddai.** God almighty, the mighty One of Jacob (Genesis 49:24; Psalm 132:2,5).

**Yahweh.** God as immediately present, accessible, and near to those who call for deliverance (Psalm 107:13), forgiveness (Psalm 25:11), and guidance (Psalm 31:3).

**Yahweh-Rapha.** The Lord who heals, in body, mind, and spirit (Exodus 15:26).

**Yahweh-Jireh.** The Lord will provide (Genesis 22:14).

**Yahweh-Nissi.** The Lord our banner, or rallying place (Exodus 17:15).

**Yahweh-M'Kaddesh.** The Lord who sanctifies and makes holy (Leviticus 20:8; Ezekiel 37:28).

**Yahweh-Shalom.** The Lord is our peace (Judges 6:24).

**Yahweh-Elohim.** The Lord God, or He is Lord of Lords (Genesis 2:4; Psalm 59:5).

**Yahweh Tsidkenu.** The Lord is our righteousness (Jeremiah 33:16; II Corinthians 5:21)

**Yahweh-Rohi.** The Lord is our Shepherd (Psalm 23:1).

**Yahweh-Shammah.** The Lord is there, or He resides at the temple (Ezekiel 48:35).

**Yahweh-Sabaoth.** The Lord of hosts, or hordes of angels and men, in heaven and on earth, of Israelites and gentiles, rich and poor, master and slave (Isaiah 1:24; Psalm 46:7).

**El Elyon.** The most high God, the One who is exalted and who has the absolute right to lordship (Deuteronomy 26:19).

**El Roi.** The God who sees all things (Genesis 16:13).

**El Olam.** The everlasting God, who always was, is, and ever will be, from everlasting to everlasting (Psalm 90:1-3).

**El-Gibhor.** The mighty God who can function as a mighty warrior, the Messiah, who will destroy the enemies of God and rule with a rod of iron (Isaiah 9:6; Revelation 19:15).

The person who is called by the Father and repents, and has faith in Him to leave the world behind and embark on a new course, will not understand all of these awesome functions of the Creator at first, but they will be revealed in time. Note some more excellent scriptures that reveal the nature of faith: Matthew 9:2, 22, 29; 14:31; 17:20; 21:21; 23:23; Luke 8:25; Acts 6:7; Romans 1:17; 3:27; II Corinthians 13:5; I Thessalonians 5:8; Hebrews 11 (the faith chapter).

### 3. BAPTISM

There are no Old Testament scriptures directly relating to baptism, although the washing of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) may be a foretype of baptism.

**baptize or baptism** (New Testament) = **baptizo** or **baptisma**, "to baptize or make fully wet, to overwhelm (with water or something else).



This event is a most important one in the process of entering into the presence of our heavenly Father, for it symbolizes an initiation to that total commitment to serving one's Creator. The symbolic washing away of one's sins in a watery grave (Acts 22:16; Hebrews 10:22), to arise in newness of life free of all sin (II Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Psalm 51:2), makes it possible to approach the very throne of the Father and bask in His presence (Matthew 6:9; Psalm 140:13). It is a procedure

that also symbolizes dying in a watery grave, thus partaking in the death of the Savior who surrendered His life for the sins of all mankind that they may walk in newness of life, pure and free (Revelation 1:5; Romans 6:4). Baptism is a requirement, along with the laying on of hands, to receive the gift of the holy spirit, which is absolutely essential to be one of His (Romans 8:9).

Use of the word baptism (*baptizo*) in scripture has several nuances, some of which are mentioned below.

(a) Washing oneself (Luke 11:38).

(b) Immersion in water, as by John the Baptist for the remission of sins (Matthew 3:1-6).

- (c) Immersion in water of believers in Christ, witnessing their identification with Him to His death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 19:5; I Corinthians 1:13-17).
- (d) Baptism into the name of Jesus Christ, indicating that the person is closely bound to, and becomes the property of, the one into whose name he is baptized (Acts 2:38).
- (e) Those in the ark during the Flood were “overwhelmed” in a similar way to the death, burial, and resurrection typified in baptism (I Peter 3:21).
- (f) The nation of Israel was figuratively baptized while crossing the Red Sea (I Corinthians 10:2).
- (g) Baptism by the holy spirit on Pentecost, and at other times (Acts 1:5; 11:16).
- (h) Baptism by fire through divine judgment for disobedience to God (Luke 3:16).

In the context of Hebrews 6:2, point (d) above is the meaning of baptism, an essential bedrock act that the elect willingly submit to. Jesus Christ set the example for us when he was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, after which the spirit of the Father descended on Him like a dove (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34).

#### 4. LAYING ON OF HANDS.

**lay, laid** (Old Testament) = **shiyth**, “to place.”

**lay** (New Testament) = **epitithemi**, “to impose.”

**hand** (old Testament) = **yamiyn** “right hand”; **yawd**, “open hand”; **smowl**, “left hand.”

**hand** (New Testament) = **cheir**, “the hand.”

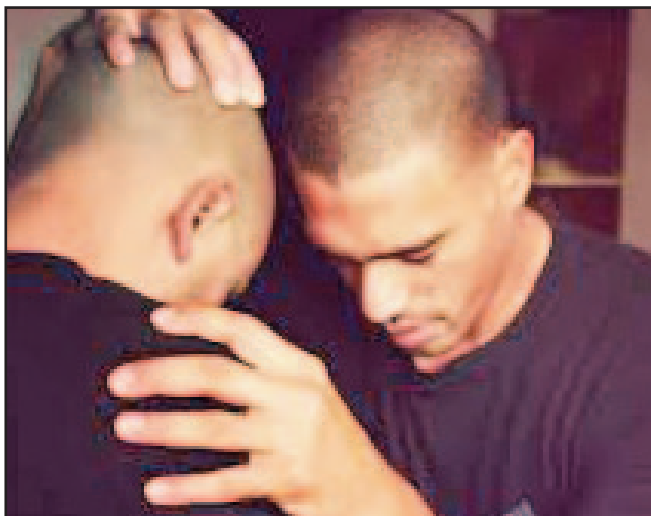
Placing a hand, or hands, on the head of a person or animal for a specific function was commonly done in Old Testament times. Hands were laid on a person’s head to confer a blessing or charge, or a covenant. Israel laid his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh in the process of declaring blessings to them (Genesis 48:14), and presumably Isaac laid his hands on Jacob when he blessed him (Genesis 27:26-29). The priest or elders would lay his hands on the head of a sacrificial animal such as a goat, ram, lamb, or bull to figuratively transfer the sins of people unto the animal, before sacrificing the animal (Leviticus 3:13; 4:4, 15, 24; Numbers 8:12; 27:18). These sacrifices with the sins transferred, as we know, pictured the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of all mankind (Hebrews 7:26-27; 9:11-14, 28; 10:12).

In New Testament times, hands were laid on the head of a person for the following reasons.

- (a) Healing (Matthew 9:18; 19:13).
- (b) Blessing children (Matthew 19:15).
- (c) Public recognition for a function (I Timothy 4:14; 5:22; Acts 13:3).
- (d) Granting the spirit of God at baptism (Acts

8:14-17).

Point (d) is the issue with Hebrews 6:2. We see in Acts 8:14-17 that hands were laid on people who had been baptized, who then received the holy spirit. Further, in Acts 19:1-6 some people had been baptized by John with a baptism of repentance, not into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, as the disciples declared must be the case at Pentecost (Acts 2:38). They were rebaptized in Christ’s name and had hands laid on them, after which they received the holy spirit; they then spoke in tongues and prophesied, evidence that indeed the spirit of God had entered



them.

We can assume that those who were baptized at the first Pentecost also had hands laid on the, since they did receive the gift of the holy spirit, even though the text of Acts 2:38 does not explicitly say so. So, we see that the laying on of hands in New Testament times — which includes us in this 21st Century — is essential for obtaining the holy spirit, without which we are none of His (Romans 8:9). This act forms a bedrock principle of the process of salvation to which each of us in the ecclesia has been called.

## 5. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

There are no Old Testament words for resurrection.

**resurrection** (New Testament) = **anastasis**, “a standing up against, a resurrection from death”; **egeersim**, “a resurgence (from death)”; **exanastasis**, “the state from which one was raised.”

The resurrection — the change from death into life — is the hope of all of the elect, the promise given to those whom the Father calls into a brotherhood with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29). The body dies, but the spirit returns to God who gave it ... is not active as so many think, but sequestered in a “sleep” state on the earth, awaiting the last trumpet and the return of Jesus Christ.



“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the

dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 4:13-17).

“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:30-31).

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

This resurrection is termed the “riches of the glory of this mystery among the gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27; KJV). It is the promise voiced by Paul in Romans 8:11.

“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit which dwells in you.”

As a foundational precept for all believers as revealed in Hebrews 6:1-2, it is in reality the culmination of the repentance, faith, baptism, and laying on of hands already discussed. It is the hope that Job espoused when he exclaimed,

“Oh, that You would hide me in the grave, that you would conceal me until Your wrath is past, that You would appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands” (Job 14:13-15).

Jesus called death “sleep” (John 11:11; Matthew 9:24), as did Moses (Deuteronomy 31:16), Job (Job 7:21), Daniel (Daniel 12:2), David (Psalm 13:3), and Paul (Acts 7:60; I Corinthians 11:30; 15:18, 20, 51; I Thessalonians 4:14; 5:10). It is from this “sleep” that the spirit — call it the “spiritual hard-drive” that is the fulness of the person — is revived, but this time in perfection and sinlessness (I John 3:9), to live forever and ever.

*Anastasis*, as we have learned, means to literally “cause to stand on one’s feet again,” and was used by Simeon when he prophesied to Mary that the Christ child was “set for a fall and *rising up [anastasis]* of many in Israel, and for a sign that would be spoken against” (Luke 2:34). It is used to indicate the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:22), the raising of the “rest of the dead” after the 1,000 years (Revelation 20:5), and also of those who were raised in Old Testament times (Hebrews 11:35). In the context of Hebrews 6:2, however, *anastasis* refers to the raising up of the saints at the last trumpet (Revelation 11:15). It is the beginning of a totally new life for the imagers of God, now spirit, with Christ and Father forever (I Thessalonians 4:17).

## 6. ETERNAL JUDGMENT.

**eternal** (New Testament) = **aionios**, “perpetual time past and future.”

**judgment** (Old Testament) = **mishpat**, “a verdict”; **shephat**, “a sentence”; **krisis**, “a decision for or against”; **diakaima**, “a statute or decision.”

The Greek work *aionios*, an adjective, indicates a duration of time, and in the New Testament the word signifies different nuances depending on context.

(a) Undefined but *not endless time* (Romans 16:25; II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2).

(b) Undefined but *endless time* (Romans 16:26).

(c) Eternal (*aionios*) things that are not seen, versus temporal things that are seen (II Corinthians 4:18).

(d) To Show things that are endless, including the following:

God (Romans 16:26)

His power (I Timothy 6:16)

His glory (I Peter 5:10)

The holy spirit (Hebrews 9:14)

Redemption (Hebrews 9:12)

Salvation (Hebrews 5:9)

Life in Christ (John 3:16)

The resurrected spirit body (II Corinthians 5:1)



**Judgement will continue forever — the discernment of good versus evil —but within the government of the Eternal, Mercy triumphs over judgement” James 2:13). Lawful living will remove the penalty of sin, which is death, giving true liberty.**

investigation (Mark 12:40; Luke 23:40; I Timothy 3:6; Jude 4). This decision can relate to people judging other people (Matthew 7:2), God’s judgment upon man (Romans 2:2-3; 3:8; 5:16; 11:33; 13:2; I Corinthians 11:29; Galatians 5:10; Hebrews 6:2; James 3:1), or even judgment by men upon Christ (Luke 24:20).

Discerning good from evil and right from wrong, that which uplifts and that which tears down, is thus shown to be an ongoing process throughout eternity for all of us, the last of the six elementary or bedrock principles of our Christian living. This matter, in fact, is emphasized in Hebrews 5:44.

“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

For all of us in this age who are a part of the ecclesia, only the first four items have been realized: repentance, faith towards God, baptism, and the laying on of hands to receive the holy spirit. These form the foundation for our future vivification as eternal spirits at the resurrection, so they are anything but trivial. The KJV says it better in Hebrews 6:1: “... let us go on unto perfection ...,” which the margin says, “... the word of the beginning of Christ ....”

These bedrock principles are indeed the beginning of our adventure along the difficult pathway that leads to eternal life, which few find (Matthew 7:14). That path is *strait* [*stenos*, “narrow from obstacles standing close about”] and *narrow* [*thlibo*, “to crowd, suffer tribulation and trouble”]. Yet it is the right and only road for the one who is called and chosen by the Creator to be His son forever.

These six points form the immovable starting point from which we are to build our house upon a rock, adding the solid food after being fed the milk that begins our spiritual lives. Let us build mightily upon that solid rock, today and every day until the return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

The future rule of Christ (II Peter 1:11), without end (Luke 1:33)  
The judgment of God (Hebrews 6:2)

It is apparent that for God’s people this judgment is endless. The discerning of right from wrong, good from evil, and righteousness from unrighteousness is a process that will continue throughout the eons, and of course judgment cannot be exercised without the basis of laws and statutes. We know that sin, evil, and unrighteousness spring forth from the transgression of God’s bedrock laws (I John 3:4), so judgment rendered can be of various types. It can be a sentence pronounced, a verdict, or a condemnation resulting from an investigation