



Module : The Foundation Doctrines of Christ

Session 1 : Introduction

Focus : The Outline and Context of the Elementary Doctrines of Christ

This writing seeks to set forth as plainly as possible, a set of fundamental doctrines central to the Christian faith and essential as a foundation for progression and development in one's relationship with God. These represent the first principles that should be understood by all of God's sons. These are also the first set of principles I would teach to new believers. In my experience, there are many long-standing believers whose understanding and practical subjective experience of these doctrines is seriously lacking. This results in serious gaps or deficiencies in their understanding and hence in their representation of God as His sons. These deficiencies, according to Scripture, would impede the path to spiritual maturity.

These doctrines are commonly referred to as 'Foundation Doctrines', or 'Elementary Doctrines', since the terms 'foundation' and 'elementary' are used in describing them in the book of Hebrews. The term 'elementary' does not in any way imply unimportant, but rather that which is 'first' established - the most fundamental or foundational truths which ultimately are vital and indispensable to understanding that which is to come. God, in His sovereign wisdom, has very clearly identified what He considers 'elementary' or 'foundational' to our spiritual development. These principles are located in Hebrews 6:1,2, cited in the passage here below. Read the text carefully, noting the context in which they are listed.

Hebrews 5:12 - 6:3 (NKJV)

- 5:12 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.
- 5:13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.
- 5:14 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.
- 6:1 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,
- 6:2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.
- 6:3 And this we will do if God permits.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews contrasts two positions that relate to two specific levels of spiritual development. The first, I describe as a 'foundation' position, and the second, the 'mature' position. Here below, these two positions are contrasted using phrases in our text quoted above

FOUNDATION POSITION

'A babe' (5:13)
'Milk' (5:12)
Students: 'Teach you' (5:12)
'First or Elementary Principles' (5:12; 6:1)



MATURE POSITION

'Full Age' (5:14)
'Solid Food' (5:14)
Teachers (5:12)
'Going on to Perfection' (6:1)

As sons of God, we are never to stagnate spiritually, but to always progress toward ultimate perfection in God. The Hebrew believers seemed to have plateaued out at a specific level of spiritual growth indicated by the 'foundation position' in the illustration above. The writer of the Book of Hebrews exhorts them to reinforce the foundation of the elementary or basic principles of Christ and then to consciously LEAVE this position to proceed to maturity.

There cannot be a 'going on to perfection' unless the proper foundations are laid. In building terms, the foundation of a building is probably the most important aspect of the building and must be laid carefully. The strength of the foundation determines the weight and magnitude of the building. Many sons of God cannot grow to their God-determined height and stature because they have weak foundations laid in terms of their understanding and practice of what Hebrews calls 'elementary principles' or 'foundation doctrines'. These principles are listed in Hebrews 6:1,2 as follows:

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| 1. Repentance from Dead Works | c. Baptism into Christ/the Body of Christ |
| 2. Faith Towards God | d. Fire Baptism |
| 3. Doctrine of Baptisms. i.e. | e. Baptism into the Father, Son and Spirit |
| a. Water Baptism | 4. Laying on of Hands |
| b. Holy Spirit Baptism | 5. Resurrection from the Dead |
| | 6. Eternal Judgement |

My prayer is that as you meaningfully engage in the study and practice of these principles, that your foundation in God is established and strengthened so that your 'going on to perfection' will be accelerated, that you may become all that God has intended for you to be and accomplish every aspect of His will for your life specifically. New and older Christians alike will find that a study and practice of these principles is extremely beneficial and enriching. Consolidate and strengthen your foundations in God so that you will not easily be moved in difficult times. If you, the reader, have not seriously committed your life to serving God wholeheartedly, then I encourage you as well to study this manual and be inspired and empowered to get to know HIM intimately and personally.

May Grace be yours in the fullest measure! (2 Peter 1:2)

In Christ, the Rock of our Salvation, a Sure Foundation

Randolph Barnwell

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