

From the West Meadow
By Pastor Wes Higgins

We are admonished by the author of Hebrews to be able to understand, teach, and perform “the first principles of the oracles of God”, Hebrews 5:12-14, NKJV. These first principles, or doctrines, of Christ are laid out for us in Hebrews 6:1-2. These are laid out in progressive order, detailing the steps a person will go through in their relationship with God. The first step labeled is the “foundation of repentance from dead works”, Hebrews: 6:1, NKJV. It is God the Father who calls us; as Jesus Christ states “I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father”, John 6:65, NKJV. At some point the person being called by God has their conscience pricked and comes to the realization they need to repent and change, which leads to the beginning of their walk in faith. Which is the second step, leading to belief that God is and that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him. See Hebrews 4:6.

The third step once believing faith takes hold is “the doctrine of baptism”, Hebrews 6:2. Baptism is a required step in our journey with Christ. On Pentecost day those who “were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”, Acts 2:37-38, NKJV. Which leads us to the fourth step listed in Hebrews 6: the doctrine of “laying on of hands”, which is how one receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. Notice in Acts, Peter and John were sent to Samaria where there were new believers. The first thing they did was the laying on of hands so that the new believers could receive the Holy Spirit. “For yet it had not fallen upon them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. – laying hands on them – they received the Holy Spirit”, Acts 8:16-17, Faithful Version.

The fifth doctrine sighted in Hebrews 6 is the hope or doctrine of “the Resurrection of the dead”. Paul told the Corinthians that “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. – But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father”, 1 Corinthians 15:19-20, 23-24, NKJV. In Revelation 20, Christ describes those who are His as the Saints who will be in the first resurrection, ruling and reigning with Him. “Over such the second death has no power”. See Revelation 20:4-6. The first resurrection is to eternal life. Then comes a second resurrection to physical life because, unlike those in the first resurrection over whom “the second death has no power”, these can die. See Revelation 20:11-15. This brings us to the last doctrine listed in Hebrews 6: “and of eternal judgment”, Hebrews 6:2.

Peter, in discussing the trials and sufferings of the Saints, tells them they are being judged in this life time. “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God”. And Peter asks “what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?”, 1 Peter 4:17, NKJV. And what will happen to those who have not heard the Gospels? The judgment day for these come at the “great white throne”, when all the remaining dead who are not in the first resurrection are raised to judgment. John writes “I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were opened (describing the Bible). And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. – And they were judged, each one according to his works”, Revelation 20:11-15, NKJV.

And “This we will do if God permits”, Hebrews 6:3, NKJV.