

# The Christian Arsenal

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## The Didache

### THE DIDACHE or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles

Besides the Scriptures the Didache is perhaps one of the oldest documents that was used by the early church as a guide for teaching. There is no firm date assigned to it but many believe that it could possibly date between AD 70 to 130. It was cited by early Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria and Athanasius. Athanasius recognized the fact that it was not part of the inspired writings but maintained that it should be on the list of things a new convert should read. (Festal Letter 39)

Today there is a limitless supply of books that we can use to read, study, research and train with. This is possibly one of the earliest books outside of the scriptures that was widely used in the early church. While it carries no authority as the Holy Scriptures do, it is a fascinating glimpse into the world of the early church and what documents were created to address the teaching needs of the time. Some of the problems sound a lot like what we are facing centuries later.

For example:

Today you can see televangelists begging you to send them money claiming that the Holy Spirit is telling you to give it to them. Did our predecessors have pre-television televangelist problems? See Didache chapter 11 verse 12.

What about the Right to Life vs Right to Choice? Is this something that started a problem in the church in the 1970's with Roe versus Wade? What about partial birth abortions? A subject dealt with in the 1990's? Read Didache 2:2

The following is a basic outline of this ancient teaching document:

Section 1. Chapters 1-6. The Two ways

Section 2. Chapters 7-10. Instructions for worship, the Eucharist and Baptism.

Section 3. Chapters 11-15. Guidance and direction for pastors, evangelists, teachers, officers in the church and the conducting of local church affairs.

Section 4. Chapter 16. Eschatology

### Section 1.

#### Chapters 1-6. The Two ways

#### CHAPTER 1

1:1 There are two paths, one of life and one of death, and the difference is great between the two paths.

1:2 Now the path of life is this – first you shall love the God who made thee, thy neighbor as thyself, and all things that you would not should be done unto thee, do not you unto another.

1:3 And the doctrine of these maxims is as follows. Bless them that curse you, and pray for your enemies. Fast on behalf of those that persecute you; for what thank is there if you love them that love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But do love them that hate you, and you will not have an enemy.

1:4 Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If any one give you a blow on thy right cheek, turn unto him the other also, and you shall be perfect; if any one compel you to go a mile, go with him two; if a man take away thy cloak, give him thy coat also; if a man take from you what is yours, ask not

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for it again, for neither art you able to do so.

1:5 Give to every one that asks of thee, and ask not again; for the Father wishes that from his own gifts there should be given to all. Blessed is he who gives according to the commandment, for he is free from guilt; but woe unto him that receives. For if a man receive being in need, he shall be free from guilt; but he who receives when not in need, shall pay a penalty as to why he received and for what purpose; and when he is in tribulation he shall be examined concerning the things that he has done, and shall not depart thence until he has paid the last farthing.

1:6 For of a truth it has been said on these matters, let thy almsgiving abide in thy hands until you knows to whom you have given.

## CHAPTER 2

2:1 But the second commandment of the teaching is this.

2:2 you shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not corrupt youth; you shall not commit fornication; you shall not steal; you shall not use sooth saying; you shall not practice sorcery; you shall not kill a child by abortion, neither shall you slay it when born; you shall not covet the goods of thy neighbor;

2:3 you shall not commit perjury; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not speak evil; you shall not bear malice;

2:4 you shall not be double-minded or double-tongued, for to be double-tongued is the snare of death.

2:5 Thy speech shall not be false or empty, but concerned with action.

2:6 You shall not be covetous, or rapacious, or hypocritical, or malicious, or proud; you shall not take up an evil design against thy neighbor;

2:7 You shall not hate any man, but some you shall confute, concerning some you shall pray, and some you shall love beyond yours own soul.

## CHAPTER 3

3:1 My child, fly from everything that is evil, and from everything that is like to it.

3:2 Be not wrathful, for wrath leads unto slaughter; be not jealous, or contentious, or quarrelsome, for from all these things slaughter ensues.

3:3 My child, be not lustful, for lust leads unto fornication; be not a filthy talker; be not a lifter up of the eye, for from all these things come adulteries.

3:4 My child, be not an observer of omens, since it leads to idolatry, nor a user of spells, nor an astrologer, nor a traveling purifier, nor wish to see these things, for from all these things idolatry rises.

3:5 My child, be not a liar, for lying leads unto theft; be not covetous or conceited, for from all these things thefts arise.

3:6 My child, be not a murmurer, since it leads unto blasphemy; be not self-willed or evil-minded, for from all these things blasphemies are produced;

3:7 but be meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth;

3:8 Be longsuffering, and compassionate, and harmless, and peaceable, and good, and fearing in all circumstances the words that you have heard.

3:9 You shall not exalt yourself, neither shall you put haughtiness into your soul. Your soul shall not be joined unto the lofty, but you shall walk with the just and humble.

3:10 Accept the things that happen to you as good, knowing that without God nothing happens.

## CHAPTER 4

4:1 My child, remember both night and day him that speaks unto you the Word of God; you shall honour him as you do the Lord, for where the teaching of the Lord is given, there is the Lord;

4:2 You will seek out day by day the favor of the saints, that you may rest in their words;

4:3 You will not desire schism, but shall set at peace them that contend; you shall judge righteously; you shall not accept the person of any one to convict him of transgression;

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4:4 You will not doubt whether a thing shall be or not.

4:5 Be not a stretcher out of thy hand to receive, and a drawer of it back in giving.

4:6 If you have, give by means of thy hands a redemption for thy sins.

4:7 You will not doubt to give, neither shall you murmur when giving; for you should know who is the fair recompenser of the reward.

4:8 You will not turn away from him that is in need, but shall share with thy brother in all things, and shall not say that things are yours own; for if ye are partners in what is immortal, how much more in what is mortal?

4:9 You shall not remove yours heart from thy son or from thy daughter, but from their youth shall teach them the fear of God.

4:10 You will not command with bitterness your servant or your handmaid, who hope in the same God as yourself, lest they fear not in consequence the God who is over both; for he comes not to call with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit hath prepared.

4:11 And servants, submit yourselves to your masters with reverence and fear, as being the type of God.

4:12 You will hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to God;

4:13 Do not abandon the commandments of the Lord, but shall guard that which you have received, neither adding to them nor taking from them;

4:14 Confess your transgressions in the Church, and do not come to prayer with an evil conscience. This is the path of life.

## CHAPTER 5

5:1 But the path of death is this. First of all, it is evil, and full of cursing; there are found murders, adulteries, lusts, fornication, thefts, idolatries, soothsaying, sorceries, robberies, false witnessings, hypocrisies, double-mindedness, craft, pride, malice, self-will, covetousness, filthy talking, jealousy, audacity, pride, and arrogance;

5:2 there are they who persecute the good -- lovers of a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to the good nor to righteous judgment, watching not for the good but for the bad, from whom meekness and patience are afar off, loving things that are vain, following after recompense, having no compassion on the needy, nor laboring for him that is in trouble, not knowing him that made them, murderers of children, corrupters of the image of God, who turn away from him that is in need, who oppress him that is in trouble, unjust judges of the poor, erring in all things. From all these, children, may ye be delivered.

## CHAPTER 6

6:1 See that no one make you to err from this path of doctrine, since he who doeth so teaches you apart from God.

6:2 If you are able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you are not able, what you are able, that do.

6:3 But concerning meat, bear that which you are able to do. But keep with care from things sacrificed to idols, for it is the worship of the infernal deities.

## Section 2.

### Chapters 7-10. Instructions for worship, the Eucharist and Baptism.

## CHAPTER 7

7:1 But concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water;

7:2 but if you have not running water, baptize in some other water, and if you can not baptize in cold, in warm water;

7:3 but if you have neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

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7:4 But before the baptism, let him who baptizes and him who is baptized fast previously, and any others who may be able. And you shall command him who is baptized to fast one or two days before.

## CHAPTER 8

8:1 But as for your fasts, let them not be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth days of the week, but do ye fast on the fourth and sixth days.

8:2 Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord hath commanded in his gospel so pray ye: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil: for yours is the power, and the glory, forever.

8:3 Three times a day pray in this fashion.

## CHAPTER 9

9:1 But concerning the Eucharist, after this fashion give ye thanks.

9:2 First, concerning the cup. We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine, David thy Son, which you have made known unto us through Jesus Christ thy Son; to you be the glory for ever.

9:3 And concerning the broken bread. We thank thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge, which you have made known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to you be the glory forever.

9:4 As this broken bread was once scattered on the mountains, and after it had been brought together became one, so may thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth unto thy kingdom; for yours is the glory, and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever.

9:5 And let none eat or drink of your Eucharist but such as have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for of a truth the Lord hath said concerning this, Give not that which is holy unto dogs.

## CHAPTER 10

10:1 But after it has been completed, so pray ye.

10:2 We thank thee, holy Father, for thy holy name, which you have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which you have made, known unto us through Jesus thy Son; to you be the glory forever.

10:3 Thou, Almighty Master, didst create all things for the sake of thy name, and have given both meat and drink, for men to enjoy, that we might give thanks unto thee, but to us you have given spiritual meat and drink, and life everlasting, through thy Son.

10:4 Above all, we thank you that you are able to save; to you be the glory forever.

10:5 Remember, Lord, thy Church, to redeem it from every evil, and to perfect it in thy love, and gather it together from the four winds, even that which has been sanctified for thy kingdom that you have prepared for it; for yours is the kingdom and the glory forever.

10:6 Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David. If any one is holy let him come (to the Eucharist); if any one is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.

10:7 But charge the prophets to give thanks, so far as they are willing to do so.

## Section 3.

**Chapters 11-15. Guidance and direction for pastors, evangelists, teachers, officers in the church and the conducting of local church affairs.**

## CHAPTER 11

11:1 Whosoever, therefore, shall come and teach you all these things aforesaid, him do ye receive;

11:2 but if the teacher himself turn and teach another doctrine with a view to subvert you, do not listen to him; but if he come to add to your righteousness, and the knowledge of the Lord, receive

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him as you would the Lord.

11:3 But concerning the apostles and prophets, do this according to the doctrine of the Gospel.

11:4 Let every apostle who comes unto you be received as the Lord.

11:5 He will remain one day, and if it be necessary, a second; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet.

11:6 And let the apostle when departing take nothing but bread until he arrive at his resting-place; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet.

11:7 And ye shall not tempt or dispute with any prophet who speaks in the spirit; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.

11:8 But not every one who speaks in the spirit is a prophet, but he is so who hath the disposition of the Lord; by their dispositions they therefore shall be known, the false prophet and the prophet.

11:9 And every prophet who orders in the spirit that a table shall be laid, shall not eat of it himself, but if he do otherwise, he is a false prophet;

11:10 and every prophet who teaches the truth, if he does not practice what he teaches, he is a false prophet;

11:11 and every prophet who is approved and true, and ministering in the visible mystery of the Church, but who teaches not others to do the things that he does himself, shall not be judged of you, for with God his judgment lies, for in this manner also did the ancient prophets.

11:12 But whoever shall say in the spirit, Give me money, or things of that kind, listen not to him; but if he tell you concerning others that are in need that ye should give unto them, let no one judge him.

## CHAPTER 12

12:1 Let every one that comes in the name of the Lord be received, but afterwards ye shall examine him and know his character, for ye have knowledge both of good and evil.

12:2 If the person who comes be a wayfarer, assist him so far as ye are able; but he will not remain with you more than two or three days, unless there be a necessity.

12:3 But if he wish to settle with you, being a craftsman, let him work, and so eat;

12:4 but if he know not any craft, provide ye according to your own discretion, that a Christian may not live idle among you;

12:5 but if he be not willing to do so, he is a trafficker in Christ. From such keep aloof.

## CHAPTER 13

13:1 But every true prophet who is willing to dwell among you is worthy of his meat,

13:2 likewise a true teacher is himself worthy of his meat, even as is a .

13:3 you shall, therefore, take the first fruits of every produce of the winepress and threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, and shall give it to the prophets, for they are your chief priests;

13:4 but if ye have not a prophet, give it unto the poor.

13:5 If you make a feast, take and give the first fruits according to the commandment;

13:6 in like manner when you open a jar of wine or of oil, take the first fruits and give it to the prophets;

13:7 take also the first fruits of money, of clothes, and of every possession, as it shall seem good unto thee, and give it according to the commandment.

## CHAPTER 14

14:1 But on the Lord's day, after that ye have assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having in addition confessed your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure.

14:2 But let not any one who hath a quarrel with his companion join with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be polluted,

14:3 for it is that which is spoken of by the Lord. In every place and time offer unto me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles.

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## CHAPTER 15

15:1 Elect, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not covetous, and true and approved, for they perform for you the service of prophets and teachers.

15:2 Do not, therefore, despise them, for they are those who are honored among you, together with the prophets and teachers.

15:3 Rebuke one another, not in wrath but peaceably, as ye have commandment in the Gospel; and, but let no one speak to any one who walks disorderly with regard to his neighbor, neither let him be heard by you until he repent.

15:4 But your prayers and your almsgivings and all your deeds so do, as ye have commandment in the Gospel of our Lord.

## Section 4.

### Chapter 16. Eschatology

## CHAPTER 16

16:1 Watch concerning your life; let not your lamps be quenched or your loins be loosed, but be ye ready, for ye know not the hour at which our Lord comes.

16:2 But be ye gathered together frequently, seeking what is suitable for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall profit you not, unless ye be found perfect in the last time.

16:3 For in the last days false prophets and seducers shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate;

16:4 and because iniquity abounds they shall hate each other, and persecute each other, and deliver each other up; and then shall the Deceiver of the world appear as the Son of God, and shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unlawful things, such as have never happened since the beginning of the world.

16:5 Then shall the creation of man come to the fiery trial of proof, and many shall be offended and shall perish; but they who remain in their faith shall be saved by the rock of offence itself.

16:6 And then shall appear the signs of the truth; first the sign of the appearance in heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet, and thirdly the resurrection of the dead

16:7 not of all, but as it has been said, The Lord shall come and all his saints with him;

16:8 then shall the world behold the Lord coming on the clouds of heaven.