

# The Didache

## TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

The Teaching of the Lord by the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles.



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### What is the Didache?

The *Didache* meaning “Teaching” is the short name of a Christian manual compiled before 300AD. The full title is *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. Some Christians thought *Didache* was inspired Holy Scripture, but the ancient Church rejected it when making the final decision on which books to include in the New Testament.

The *Didache* contained instructions for Christian groups; and its statement of belief may be the first written catechism. It is sixteen chapters long and has four parts: the first is the “Two Ways, the Way of Life and the Way of Death;” the second explains how to perform rituals such as baptism, fasting, and Communion; the third covers ministry and how to deal with traveling teachers; the fourth part is a reminder that Jesus is coming again, with quotations from several New Testament passages which exhort Christians to live godly lives and prepare for “that Day” [when Christ will return and judge the living and the dead].

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### CHAPTER 1

<sup>1</sup> There are two Ways, one of Life and one of Death; but there is a great difference between the two Ways.

<sup>2</sup> Now the Way of Life is this: First, you shall love God Who made you; secondly, you shall love your neighbor as yourself; and all things that you would have done unto you, you shall not do to one another.

<sup>3</sup> Now the teaching of these two words of the Lord [from the Sermon on the Mount] is this:  
**Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you; for what reward is there for you if you only love those who love you? Do not even Gentiles**

the same? But love those who hate you, and you shall not have an enemy.

<sup>4</sup> Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek turn to them the other also, and you shall be perfect. If any one tell you to go with them one mile, go with them two miles; if any one takes away your cloak, give them your tunic also; if any one takes from you what is your, do not ask for it back.

<sup>5</sup> Give to everyone [beggars] that ask of you, and do not ask for anything in return, for the Father wills that from our own blessings we should give to all. Blessed is the person who gives according to the commandment, for they are is guiltless. Woe to them that receive; for if any one receives because they shall be guiltless, but they that do not have a need will have to answer for why they received and for what purpose, and coming into distress they shall be strictly examined concerning their actions, and they shall not be forgiven until they have paid back the last coin that they have taken.

<sup>6</sup> But concerning this [giving to beggars] it has also been said, "Let your alms drop like sweat into your hands until you know who you should give them to."

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>1</sup> And the second commandment of the Teaching is:

<sup>2</sup> You shall not kill. you shall not commit adultery; you shall not corrupt boys; you shall not commit fornication. You shall not steal. You shall not use witchcraft; you shall not practice sorcery. You shall not get abortions, nor shall you kill the new-born child. You shall not covet your neighbor's possessions.

<sup>3</sup> You shall not make false oaths. You shall not give false testimonies. You shall not speak evil; you shall not desire ill will for others or to harm others.

<sup>4</sup> You shall not be double-minded nor double-tongued; for a deceitful tongue is a snare of death.

<sup>5</sup> Your speech shall not be false, nor vain, but fulfilled by actions.

<sup>6</sup> You shall not be envious, nor greedy, nor hypocritical, nor hostile, nor prideful. You shall not take evil advice against your neighbor.

<sup>7</sup> You shall not hate any one, but some you shall rebuke and for some you shall pray, and some you shalt love above your own life and soul.

## CHAPTER 3

<sup>1</sup> My child, flee from every evil, and from everything that has the appearance of evil.

<sup>2</sup> Do not be driven by anger, for anger leads to murder; do not be driven by a party spirit, do not be violent, and do not be quick-tempered; for from all these things come murders.

<sup>3</sup> My child, do not be lustful, for lust leads to fornication; neither be a filthy talker or an eager gazer, for from all these come adulteries.

<sup>4</sup> My child, be not practice divination, for it leads to idolatry; do not be an enchanter, astrologer, or purifier [maker of positions], and do not be willing to look on those things; for from all these come idolatry.

<sup>5</sup> My child, be not a liar, for lying leads to theft; do not have extreme greed or extreme pride, for from all these things come thefts.

<sup>6</sup> My child, be not keep whisper your complaints, for this leads to blasphemy; do not be arrogant or evil-minded, for from all these things come blasphemies.

<sup>7</sup> But you must be meek, for the meek shall inherit the earth.

<sup>8</sup> You must be patient, merciful, harmless, quiet, good, and continually heed the words which you have heard.

<sup>9</sup> You shall not exalt yourself, and you shall not have an arrogant soul. Your soul shall not fellowship with the prideful, but with the just and lowly.

<sup>10</sup> You shall accept all circumstances in your life as good, knowing that nothing happens without God.

## CHAPTER 4

- <sup>1</sup> My child, you shall remember night and day they [Church leaders] that speak to You the Word of God, and you shall honor them as the Lord, for where the Lordship is spoken of, there is the Lord.
- <sup>2</sup> And You shall seek out day by day the faces of the saints, that you may rest upon their words.
- <sup>3</sup> You shall not desire or make divisions, but shall make peace between those in conflict. You shall judge justly; you shalt not show favouritism when rebuking others for transgressions.
- <sup>4</sup> You shall not be double-minded while judging and rebuking others.
- <sup>5</sup> Do not by one that stretches out their hands for receiving, but draws them in for giving.
- <sup>6</sup> If you have anything, you shall give with your hands as a recompense for your sins.
- <sup>7</sup> You shall not hesitate to give, and you shall not grumble while giving, for you shall know Who is the Good Recompenser of the reward.
- <sup>8</sup> You shall not turn away those in need, but shall share all things with your brothers and sisters, and you shall not say that they are your own; for if you are fellow-sharers in imperishable (eternal) things, how much more are you fellow sharers in perishable (non-eternal) things?
- <sup>9</sup> You shall not take away Your hand from Your children, but from their children to adulthood You shall teach them the fear of God.
- <sup>10</sup> You shall not in bitterness give commands to your any servants (male and female) that you have who hope in the same God; to do this will make them not fear Him Who is God over you both; for He comes not to call people according to their outward appearance or condition, but He comes on those whom the Spirit has prepared.
- <sup>11</sup> But you, servants, shall respect your masters as to the image of God in modesty.
- <sup>12</sup> You shall hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.
- <sup>13</sup> You shalt not forsake the commandments of the Lord, but you shall keep what you have received, neither adding to it or taking away from it.
- <sup>14</sup> In the Congregation [Church] you shall confess your sins, and you shall not come to your Prayer or place of prayer with an evil conscience.
- <sup>15</sup> This is the way of life.

## CHAPTER 5

- <sup>1</sup> But the way of death is this. First of all it is evil and full of wicked things; murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, witchcrafts, sorceries, robberies, false-witnessings, hypocrisies, double-heartedness, deceit, pride, wickedness, self-will, covetousness, filthy-talking, jealousy, presumption, haughtiness, boastfulness.
- <sup>2</sup> Persecutors of the good, hating truth, loving a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not holding to that which is good nor to righteous judgment, watchful not for that which is good but for that which is evil; far from whom is meekness and endurance, loving vanity, seeking after reward, not pitying the poor, not supporting those who are troubled not knowing Him that made all people, murderers of children, destroyers of the handiwork of God, turning away from the needy, burdening the afflicted, advocates of the rich, lawless judges of the poor, wholly sinful.
- <sup>3</sup> May you, children, be delivered from all these.

## CHAPTER 6

- <sup>1</sup> Take care that no one lead you astray from this way of teaching, since there are those who teach apart from God.
- <sup>2</sup> For if indeed you art able to bear the whole yoke of the Lord you shalt be perfect; but if you are not able to bear it, do what you can.
- <sup>3</sup> And in regard to food, bear what you can, but for food that has been offered to idols always be on guard, for it is a service of dead gods.

## CHAPTER 7

- <sup>1</sup> Now concerning baptism, baptize like this: Having first taught all these things, you must baptize candidates in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water [a cold flowing river or stream].
- <sup>2</sup> And if you do not have living water, then baptize candidates in still water [a pool]; and if you cannot baptize them in cold water, then do so in warm water.
- <sup>3</sup> But if you do not have any of these types of water (living, still, cold, or warm), then pour some water on the candidate's head three times in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
- <sup>4</sup> But before baptism let the baptizer and the candidate fast, and any others who can join them; but you shall command the candidate to fast for one or two days before they are baptized.

## CHAPTER 8

- <sup>1</sup> Do not let not fasts like the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth day of the week; but you shall fast on the fourth day, and the preparation day (Friday).
- <sup>2</sup> Also do not pray like the hypocrites, but pray as the Lord commanded in His Gospel: "Our Father, Who is 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 bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the power and the glory for ever."
- <sup>3</sup> Pray this prayer from the Lord three times a day.

## CHAPTER 9

- <sup>1</sup> Now in regard to the Eucharist [Communion], give thanks or celebrate it in this manner:
- <sup>2</sup> First for the cup: "We give thanks to You, our Father, for the holy vine of David Your servant, which You have made known to us through Jesus, Your servant: to You be the glory forever."
- <sup>3</sup> And for the broken bread: "We give thanks to You, our Father, for the life and knowledge which You have made known to us through Jesus, Your servant: to You be the glory forever."
- <sup>4</sup> "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and gathered together became one, so let Your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom, for Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever."
- <sup>5</sup> But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, except those baptized in the name of the Lord; for in regard to this the Lord has also said: "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

## CHAPTER 10

- <sup>1</sup> Now after taking the Eucharist, give thanks in this manner:
- <sup>2</sup> "We thank You, Holy Father, for Your Holy Name, which You have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which You have made known to us through Jesus Your Servant, to You be the glory forever."
- <sup>3</sup> "You, O, Almighty Sovereign, made all things for Your Name's sake; You gave food and drink to humanity for enjoyment that they might give thanks to You; but to us You have freely given spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Your Servant, Jesus."
- <sup>4</sup> "Before all things we give thanks to You for You are mighty; to You be the glory forever."
- <sup>5</sup> "Remember, O Lord, Your Church to deliver her from all evil and to perfect her in Your love; and gather her together from the four winds, sanctified for Your Kingdom which You have prepared for her; for Yours is the power and the glory forever."
- <sup>6</sup> "Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy let them come, if anyone is not holy let them repent. Maranatha [Come, our Lord]. Amen."
- <sup>7</sup> But permit the Prophets to give thanks after taking the Eucharist as much as and in whatever words they wish.



## CHAPTER 11

- <sup>1</sup> Whoever comes and teaches you everything that has been mentioned, receive them.
- <sup>2</sup> But if the teacher gives you another teaching that is contrary to what has been mentioned, do not listen to them, but if they teach that the righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord might increase, then receive them as the Lord.
- <sup>3</sup> Now in regard to the Apostles and Prophets, according to the decree [command] of the Gospel, do these things:
- <sup>4</sup> Let every Apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord.
- <sup>5</sup> But they shall not stay with you longer than one day; and, if need be, let them stay with you a second day; but if they remain with you three days they are a false prophet.
- <sup>6</sup> And when the Apostle leaves you, let them take nothing except enough bread to last them until they reach their next lodging. But if they ask you for money, they are a false prophet.
- <sup>7</sup> And every prophet who speaks in the spirit you shall not test or prove; **for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin [blasphemy of the Holy Spirit] shall not be forgiven.**
- <sup>8</sup> Not everyone that speaks in the spirit is a Prophet, but only if they have the behavior of the Lord. By their behavior you shall know the false prophet from the true Prophet.
- <sup>9</sup> And no Prophet that orders a table in the spirit keeps all the food to themselves or eats it alone, unless they are a false prophet.
- <sup>10</sup> And every Prophet who teaches the truth and does not practice it, is a false prophet.
- <sup>11</sup> And every approved, genuine Prophet, who gathers people for a worldly mystery [false doctrine], but does not teach them to do as they do, shall not be judged by you; for their judgment is in the hands of God as it was with all of the ancient Prophets.
- <sup>12</sup> But whosoever says in the spirit [the Spirit of God or an ungodly spirit]: Give me money or any other thing, you shall not listen to them; but if they encourage you to give to others who are in need, let no one judge them.

## CHAPTER 12

- <sup>1</sup> Let everyone that comes in the name of the Lord be received, and then after testing them you shall know if they are fellow believers; for you shall have understanding in these things.
- <sup>2</sup> If a traveling stranger comes to you, help them as much as you can; but they shall not stay with you longer than two or three days, unless it is necessary that they do.
- <sup>3</sup> If they wish to settle among you, being a craftsman or artisan, let them work and earn a living with their trade or skill.
- <sup>4</sup> But if they do not have a trade or skill then help them to find one so that no Christian should be living idly among you.
- <sup>5</sup> And if they will not work or learn a trade or skill then they are a “Christ-trafficker”. Beware of such people.

## CHAPTER 13

- <sup>1</sup> But every true Prophet who wishes to settle among you is worthy of food and support.
- <sup>2</sup> Likewise a true Teacher is worthy, like a worker, of their food.
- <sup>3</sup> Therefore you shall take and give all the first-fruit of the produce of the wine-press and threshing-floor, of oxen and sheep, to the Prophets; for they are your chief-priests.
- <sup>4</sup> But if you have no Prophets, give these things to the poor.
- <sup>5</sup> If you are making some bread, take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment.
- <sup>6</sup> Likewise when you open a jar of wine or oil, take the first-fruit and give it to the Prophets.
- <sup>7</sup> And of silver, clothing, and every other possession, take the first-fruit, as may seem good to you, and give according to the commandment.

## CHAPTER 14

- <sup>1</sup> And on the Lord's Day [Sunday] come together, and break bread, and give thanks, having confessed your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure.
- <sup>2</sup> Let no one who has a dispute with a fellow believer come together with you until they are

reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled.

<sup>3</sup> For this is what was spoken by the Lord: "In every place and time offer Me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles."

## **CHAPTER 15**

<sup>1</sup> Elect for yourselves Bishops and Deacons worthy of the Lord, meek, not lovers of money, truthful, and approved; for they too minister to you the ministry of the Prophets and Teachers.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore, do not despise your Bishops and Deacons, for they are those that are the honored among you with the Prophets and Teachers.

<sup>3</sup> And do not correct one another in wrath, but in peace, as you have been taught in the Gospel; and with everyone that sins against another let no one speak, nor let them hear a word from you until they repent.

<sup>4</sup> But so do your prayers and alms and all other actions according to the Gospel of our Lord.

## **CHAPTER 16**

<sup>1</sup> Watch over your life; do not let your lamps be quenched and do not let your robes be unloosed, but be ready; for you know not the hour in which our Lord will come.

<sup>2</sup> But be frequently gathered together, seeking the things that are profitable for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you except in the last season when you are found perfect.

<sup>3</sup> For in the last days the false prophets and destroyers shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate.

<sup>4</sup> For when lawlessness increases, they shall hate and persecute, and deliver up one another; and then shall appear the world-deceiver as the Son of God, and he shall do signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands, and he shall commit iniquities which have not yet come to pass from the beginning of the world.

<sup>5</sup> And then humanity will come into the fire of trial, and many shall be offended and shall perish; but they who endure in their faith shall be saved from the curse itself.

<sup>6</sup> And then shall appear the signs of the truth: first the sign of opening in heaven; then the sign of the voice of the trumpet; and the third, the resurrection of the dead.

<sup>7</sup> Not the resurrection of all, but as was said, "The Lord shall come, and all the saints with him."

<sup>8</sup> Then the world shall see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.