

# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works



## Slice D1.1

### The Cornerstone and the Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works

#### Slice Content

<b>1</b>	<b><i>Preamble</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b><i>Introduction</i></b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Foundation Principles	2
<b>3</b>	<b><i>The Cornerstone</i></b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	The Stone	4
3.2	The Cornerstone Jesus is King, High Priest, and Prophet	5
3.3	Jesus – all Man, all God	5
<b>4</b>	<b><i>Principle 1. Repentance from Dead Works</i></b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	Salvation	8
4.2	Eternal Salvation	8
<b>5</b>	<b><i>Practical Application – How?</i></b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6</b>	<b><i>Proclamation</i></b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b><i>Prayer</i></b>	<b>10</b>
<b>8</b>	<b><i>Assignments</i></b>	<b>10</b>

# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works

## 1 Preamble

To be equipped in Christ entails one to go Deeper in Christ; we will be covering the following in Foundation Principles – Foundations of the Church:

Slice D1.1: The Cornerstone and the Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works

Slice D1.2: Faith in God

Slice D1.3: Doctrine of Baptisms

Slice D1.4: Laying on of Hands

Slice D1.5: Resurrection of the Dead

Slice D1.6: Eternal Judgements

## 2 Introduction

This Bible study is an introduction to the six fundamental truths that every believer in Jesus should know. These six truths are found in the book of Hebrews, the author saw them as so important he named them the foundation principles of our faith.

In the last verses of chapter five of Hebrews, the author describes the condition of the spiritual immaturity of the Jews in Jerusalem as, arrested development. He writes that each believer needs to move from this state of immaturity, feeding on milk – the food of newborn babies – to the meat of maturity. We are to all go through a maturing process, developing in our understanding of the Bible and learning to apply the principles of the Word to our lives. The author then, at the start of chapter six, lists the foundation principles which will guide a believer to spiritual maturity.

Spiritual maturity is the ability to discern the truths of the Word of God, and to be able to make the correct spiritual decisions in our daily lives. A mature, grounded in the Word believer, will be far more effective within the body of the church, fulfilling their gifting. They will be confident in the daily walk with the Lord, which includes not only being ready to share their faith with others, but also being proficient at disciplining new believers. Also, as the Holy Spirit uses the word of God stored in our minds as a method of communicating with us our relationship with God is improved.

### 2.1 *Foundation Principles*

#### **Hebrews 6:1-2 (NKJV)**

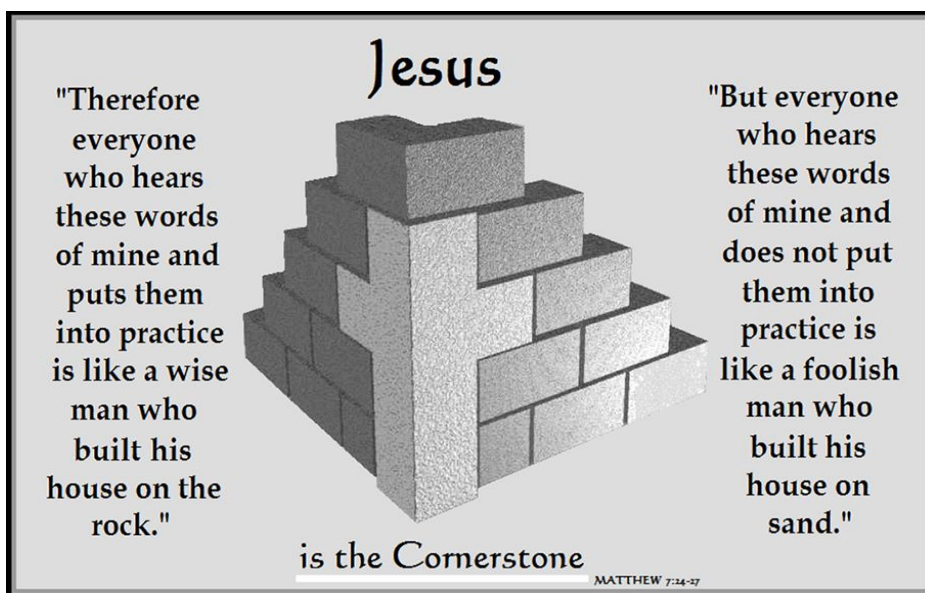
**1** 'Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works **2** and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement.'

# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works

**Foundation principles** (Hebrews 6:1-2):

1. Repentance from dead works.
2. Faith in God.
3. Baptisms.
4. Laying on of hands.
5. Resurrection of the dead.
6. Eternal judgement.

## 3 The Cornerstone



### **Ephesians 2:20 (ESV)**

**20** 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...'

The cornerstone is the principal stone in all construction projects. It is the stone that is placed at the corner of an edifice, to guide the workers as they proceed to erect the walls of the building. The cornerstone is essential in ensuring the correct construction of the building, without this principal stone as a guide for construction, the building will be unstable and in due time will collapse.

The Apostle Paul describes Jesus as the cornerstone that the Church is built upon. He is foundational. So, it is from Jesus that the Church is to determine every measurement in its construction; everything is to be aligned with Him. The first foundation stone laid in alignment with Jesus as the cornerstone were the apostles, who were given the authority of establishing the early Church called "The Way".

# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works



**The Cornerstone**

Another scripture that confirms Jesus as the Cornerstone is recorded by Peter, stating that Jesus fulfills the Isaiah 28:16–17 prophecy:

**1 Peter 2:4-6 (ESV)**

“4 As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame’.”

So, although Jesus was initially rejected, God the Father has made Jesus the Cornerstone of our salvation. There is no other way.

### **3.1 The Stone**

The “Stone,” is an image of the Messiah that is given by God as an explanation as to how “the brand” will “be plucked from the fire” in Zechariah 3.

**Zechariah 3:9 (ESV)**

9 ‘For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day.’

God is speaking as Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of a mighty army, strong to save, and He tells Joshua that he will send Judah a stone. A stone is yet another Messianic title, which is revealed in Isaiah 28:16: “Therefore thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: Whoever believes will not be in haste (disturbed)’.” The symbolism is

# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works

repeated in Psalm 118:22 “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”.

The apostle Peter confirms the fulfilment of Isaiah 28:16-17 prophecy by Jesus, writing: “As you come to him (Yeshua), a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame’” (1 Peter 2:4-6). So, although Yeshua was initially rejected, God the Father has made Yeshua the cornerstone of our salvation. There is no other way.

The stone in Zechariah 3:9 is not only singular, but it is unique in having seven eyes. The number seven is God’s number and represents completeness, and perfection. The seven eyes, therefore, represent the fact God is all-seeing, nothing escapes His attention. It is interesting to note that Jewish sages attach a further meaning to the eyes, saying that it means God pays special attention to this stone. This interpretation should hold special significance for believers, who being moulded into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18) will have the eyes of the Lord paying very special attention to them!

Peter uses the symbolism of Yeshua as the cornerstone to dramatic effect as a warning to what will happen to those who reject Yeshua: “A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. They stumble because they disobey the Word, as they were destined to do” (1 Peter 2:8). When the cornerstone is rejected, the building will firstly fail, and secondly the rejected cornerstone will always be in the way, a physical obstacle, but also a reminder to why the home built without the cornerstone is unstable.

## ***3.2 The Cornerstone Jesus is King, High Priest, and Prophet***

Jesus is the Cornerstone upon which the six foundation principles are laid. He is our:

**High Priest:** Jesus offered a sacrifice to satisfy the Law of God when He offered Himself for our sins (Hebrews 7:26-27). He now mediates before the Father for our forgiveness.

**King:** He is our Lord, our guide, and our protector. He makes war against the forces of darkness that seek to separate us from the Love of God.

**Prophet:** Jesus has prepared the way for the restoration of the earth, for how God originally intended it to be. He also reveals to us the plans that God has in bringing the restoration to pass.

## ***3.3 Jesus – all Man, all God***

**Philippians 2:6-8 (ESV).**

6 ‘who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness

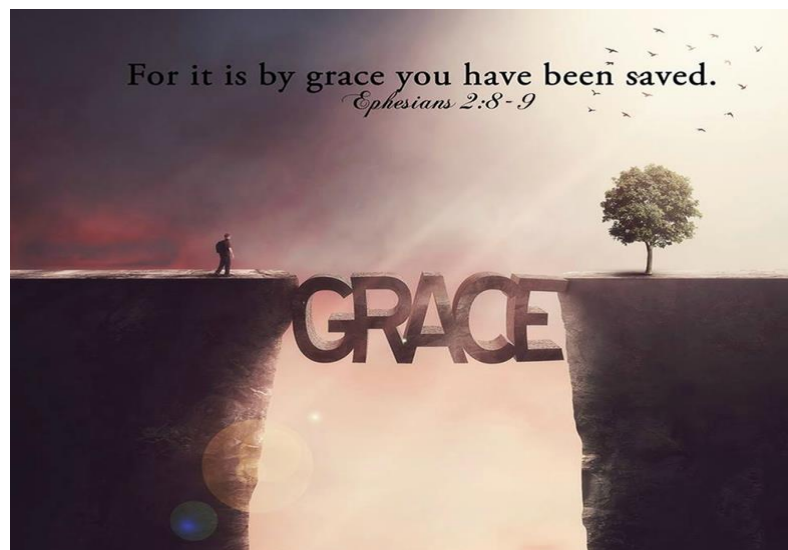
## Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works

of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.'

This scripture by Paul in his letter to the Philippians describes the hypostatic union of Jesus, which means He was all man, and all God. Jesus humbled Himself, leaving His position as the Son of God in heaven to be born as a man. Then although being all God, he lived his life in obedience to the Father's will, even to the extent of giving His life on the cross.

Jesus having become human and shared our humanity, died in our place. Then, having been resurrected, Jesus has once more taken His position at the right hand of God the Father. Being the first resurrected of the dead (1 Cor 15:20), He is still all man and also all God. Jesus then, being the perfect Godman, is the ideal cornerstone.

### 4 Principle 1. Repentance from Dead Works



To understand the first principle, it is first necessary to define dead works: Dead works are efforts of self-justification. In other words, anything you do to attain salvation by your own efforts. Christianity is the only religion that does not require works to attain eternal salvation. In all other religions, you can never be sure that you have done enough to reach that religion's version of heaven.

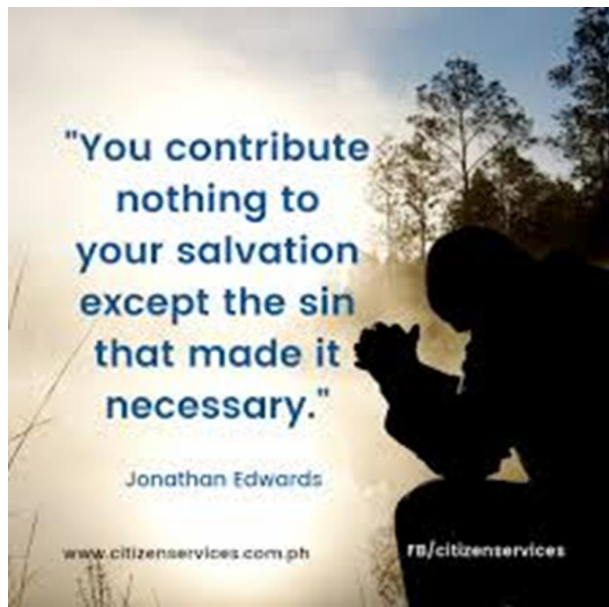
In Christianity, faith in the complete work of Jesus is all that is required. To add anything to this is called self-righteousness, and then negates the sacrifice of Jesus. Paul made this clear in his letter to the Ephesians, "for it is by grace are you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

## Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works

Paul in his letter to the Galatians compares dead works to being a slave in chains: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Galatians 5:1). While Paul is writing about grace not works, it may be seem that James contradicts Paul when he writes "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). What James is saying is that once we have attained salvation, we have a responsibility to serve others. There is a difference between dead works and good works:

**Dead works** are based on pride and consist of the works being a duty that the individual believes will make them righteous.

**Good works** are based on humility, giving up your time, needs, and wants to help others. Dead works serve self, good works serve others. Often, because the motivation is hidden in the heart of the person, only God can distinguish between the two. However dead works is sin, it needs to be recognized and the individual needs to go before God and repent.



The most common form of dead works is religion. For example, when a person practises the sacraments of a church such as baptism, communion, and confirmation without a saving Knowledge of Jesus. There is a vast difference between religion and true salvation. Religion with all its trappings is man-made, salvation may only be attained by believing in God's provision of a Saviour.

### **John 3:36 (ESV).**

**36** 'Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.'

Being a member of a church does not mean that you have a free ticket to heaven, believing that Jesus, the Son of God, died for your sins does.



# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works



## 4.1 Salvation

### Summary of what salvation is not:

- Knowledge is not salvation.
- Sincerity is not salvation.
- Religion is not salvation.
- A moral life is not salvation.
- Church membership is not salvation.
- Baptism is not salvation.
- Confirmation is not salvation.
- Salvation is being born again by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.

### ARE YOU SAVED?

## 4.2 Eternal Salvation

Salvation is a gift from God, it cannot be earned, and because it is a gift you have the security of knowledge that it cannot be taken away. In Romans 11:29 Paul confirms that the gift of salvation is eternal when he writes “For God’s gifts and His calling are irrevocable”.

The Holy Spirit is the one who supernaturally makes alive (regenerates) our dead spirits and who thereby imparts to us eternal life and causes us to be “born again” (John 3:3-8; Eph. 2:1-5; Tit. 3:5; 1Pet. 1:3; 2:23-25). This act is instantaneous (justification). It imparts a new nature (2 Cor. 5:17; Phil. 1:6); a new capacity to serve righteousness and grow into the image of God – although the old nature and its fruits are not yet eradicated (sanctification). On accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour the person is marked with “a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.” (Eph. 1:13b).

The apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, pens the most quoted portion of scripture on salvation, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from



## **Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works**

yourselves, it is a gift of God – not by works so that no one can boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9; emphasis added). Paul makes it very clear that salvation is through the grace of God, by faith. Salvation cannot be earned by good works, and our righteousness is like filthy rags to God (Isa. 64:6). If salvation can be lost, this means a believer’s salvation is dependent on good works.

The apostle Paul, in Romans 8:15, gives one of the most wonderful revelations in scripture – that we, on accepting the Lord Jesus as Lord and Saviour, become the sons and daughters of the living God: “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship (adoption). And by Him, we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" The gospel of John confirms this stating that “All who receive [Jesus], to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12). Both these scriptures describe a covenant agreement, where those who receive Jesus as their Lord and Saviour become Children of God. You cannot divorce a child.

God’s Love is so great that nothing can come between His love for us, not “trouble or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword.” (Rom. 8:35). Paul goes on to say that he is convinced “that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:39).

Of the 21 New Testament scriptures that promise salvation to those who accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, one warns that their salvation can be lost for any reason, (Matt. 19:29; Mark 10:29-30; Luke 18:29-30; John 3:16, 3:36, 5:24, 6:39, 6:40, 17:2-3; Acts 13:47-48; Rom. 5:20-21, 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:1; Gal. 6:8; 1Tim. 1:16, 6:12; Tit. 1:2, 3:5-7; 1 John 2:24-25, 5:11-13; Jude 1:21).

The Bible also indicates that believers are chosen by God: “In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.” (Eph. 1:11-12). God in His foreknowledge knew we would choose Him and so He chose us. It is therefore totally illogical to believe that a person can be chosen by God for salvation, only for that person to later lose their salvation through backsliding. The unacceptable implication of this is that God is not all-knowing and cannot determine who will remain faithful to Him.

Those who reject eternal salvation are making the dangerous error of requiring works for salvation. For if salvation can be lost, it requires us to work to keep it!

# Foundations Principles: The Cornerstone and Repentance from dead Works

## 5 Practical Application – How?

Understanding the relationship between faith and works is essential. Salvation comes by faith in Jesus alone, and the good works performed by believers are not the basis of salvation. They should be understood as the necessary evidence of that salvation: “Faith without works is dead” (James 2:26).

## 6 Proclamation

I humbly come before you now Lord and recognise that I contributed nothing to my salvation, but the sin that required your great sacrifice. I seek to honour you and build on your foundation of love by following your example of selfless service.

## 7 Prayer

I recognise that my righteousness is but filthy rags when placed under the light of your scrutiny. I, therefore, thank you for the wonderful provision of my salvation which was not earned but given freely in love. May my life now be a pleasing sacrifice to you as I strive to add service to my faith. Guide and direct me on the path you have established for my life.

## 8 Assignments

### Foundation Stone

1. In your own words interpret Ephesians 2:20, explaining the meaning within the verse that the author is putting across to the reader. **(4)**
2. You have interpreted Ephesians 2:20 revealing a general definition of Jesus as our Chief Cornerstone. Now in your own words, from your knowledge of Scripture, give other details that adequately define who Jesus is. **(6)**

### Dead Works

1. In your own words define Dead works in the Church. **(2)**
2. In your own words interpret Romans 10:1-4, explaining the message the author is putting across to the reader. **(4)**
3. Look up the following scriptures and answer the related questions. **(4)**
  - a. Jeremiah 17:5-8. What should the man do who wishes to be blessed?
  - b. Romans 3:20-28. What do all who believe receive freely from God?

**TOTAL 20**