

The Didache, or Teaching of the Apostles

Our present version of the ancient Didache is a reliable guide to help us understand the conduct code of the earliest Christian community.

It represents the teachings Jesus gave to the apostles to tell the early Christians.

Chapter 1

Teaching of the Two Ways

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

The "Teaching of the Two Ways" has roots in Jewish tradition, which is not remarkable because most early Christians had Jewish backgrounds. Parallels to this "Teaching of the Two Ways" are found in the General Epistle of Barnabas and The Shepherd of Hermas, but are believed to have developed independently of one another -- that is, none is quoting the others, but each reflects a common tradition.

1:2 The way of life is this.

1:3 First of all, Love God who made you;

1:4 Secondly, Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

Compare Mark 12:30,31

1:5 Do not do anything to another you would not want to befall yourself.

This negative statement of the "Golden Rule" has its source in the Torah and even in non-Jewish sources.

1:6 Now of these words the doctrine is this.

1:7 Bless those who curse you, pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you;

1:8 For what thanks do you deserve, if you love them that love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But do love those who hate you, and you will not have an enemy.

Compare Matthew 5:44,46, but note the added admonition in verse 1:7 to "fast for those who persecute you" and "you will not have an enemy." In morning intercessory prayers suggested in The Orthodox Study Bible (Thomas Nelson Publishers) appears "Save, O Lord, and have mercy upon those who envy and affront me, and do me mischief, and do not let them perish through me, a sinner." The point of the Didache here seems to be that it is imperative to love, pray, and fast not only for personal reasons, but to demonstrate to others what kind of person a Christian is.

1:9 Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts.

Compare 1 Peter 2:11, "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

1:10 If any man give you a blow on your right cheek, turn the other to him also, and you will be flawless;

1:11 If a man compel you to go one mile with him, go two with him;

1:12 If a man take away your cloak, give him also your coat;

1:13 If a man takes away from you that which is your own, do not ask it back, for you are unable to do that.

1:14 Give to every man that asks of you and do not ask it back;

Compare verses 1:10-14 to Matthew 5:39-42; Luke 6:29,30

1:15 For the Father desires that gifts be given to all from His own bounties.

1:16 Blessed is he that gives according to the commandment;

1:17 For he is guiltless.

1:18 Woe to him that receives;

1:19 For, if a man in need receives, he is guiltless;

1:20 But he that has no need shall give satisfaction why and wherefore he received;

1:21 And being put in confinement he shall be examined concerning the deeds that he has done, and he shall not come out from there until he has given back the last penny.

The meaning of this verse is unclear, but seems not to refer to church order but some civil custom.

1:22 Yea, as touching this also it is said;

1:23 Let your alms sweat in your hands, until you will have learned to whom to give.

Chapter 2

The teaching of the two ways, continued

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

2:2 You shall do no murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not corrupt boys, you shall not commit fornication, you shall not steal, you shall not deal in magic, you shall do no sorcery, you shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born, you shall not covet your neighbor's goods, you shall not perjure yourself, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not speak evil, you shall not cherish a grudge, you shall not be double-minded nor double-tongued;

Both the Old and New Testaments contain injunctions against such behavior, but two things here are new -- "you shall not corrupt boys" and "you shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill them when born." Note how the modern controversy over whether abortion is "murder" is side-stepped here; it simply deserved a special category of acts not to be done by Christians. Apparently this was necessary because pedophilia, abortion, and infanticide were such common practices in those days, just as in modern times.

2:3 For the double tongue is a snare of death.

2:4 Your word shall not be false or empty, but fulfilled by action.

Compare with: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matthew 12:36,37) The RSV translates the idle word as "careless word." Perhaps the Didache here offers a good definition of "idle" words: a mere word that is not fulfilled by action.

2:5 You shall not be avaricious nor a plunderer nor a hypocrite nor ill-tempered nor proud. 2:6 You shall not entertain an evil design against your neighbor.

2:7 You shall not hate any man, but some you shall reprove, and for others you shall pray, and others you shall love more than your life.

Chapter 3

Reasons for abstaining from anger, lusts, pagan magic, lying, vanity, complaining, evil thinking.

3:1 My child, flee from every evil and everything that resembles it.

3:2 Do not be angry, for anger leads to murder, nor be jealous nor contentious nor wrathful;

3:3 For of all these things murders are engendered.

3:4 My child, be not lustful, for lust leads to fornication, neither foul-speaking neither with uplifted eyes;

3:5 For of all these things adulteries are engendered.

3:6 My child, do not be a dealer in omens, since it leads to idolatry, nor be an enchanter nor an astrologer nor a magician, neither be willing to look at them;

3:7 For from all these things idolatry is engendered.

3:8 My child, do not be a liar, since lying leads to theft, neither be avaricious nor glory

in vanities.

3:9 For from all these things thefts are engendered.

3:10 My child, do not be a murmurer, since it leads to blasphemy, neither be self-willed nor a thinker of evil thoughts;

3:11 For from all these things blasphemies are engendered.

3:12 But be meek, since the meek shall inherit the earth.

See Matthew 5:5 and Psalm 37:11.

3:13 Be long-suffering and pitiful and guileless and quiet and kindly and always fearing the words which you have heard.

3:14 You shall not exalt yourself, neither shall you admit boldness into your soul.

3:15 Your soul shall not accompany the lofty, but you shall walk with the righteous and humble.

3:16 You shall receive as good the accidents that befall you, knowing that nothing is done without God.

Chapter 4

Exhortation for Church harmony and personal piety.

4:1 My child, you shall remember night and day him that speaks the word of God to you, and you shall honor him as you do the Lord;

4:2 For wherever the Lord speaks, there is the Lord.

4:3 Moreover you shall seek out day by day the persons of the saintly, that you may find rest in their words.

4:4 You shall not make a schism, but you shall pacify them that contend;

4:5 You shall judge righteously; you shall not make a distinction in a person's status or class to reprove him for transgressions.

4:6 You shall not doubt whether a thing shall be or not be.

4:7 Concerning giving, do not be found holding out your hands to receive, but drawing them in.

4:8 If you have ought passing through your hands, you shall give a ransom for your sins.

4:9 You shall not hesitate to give, neither shall you murmur when giving;

4:10 For you shall know who is the good paymaster of your reward.

4:11 You shall not turn away from him that is in need, but shall share with your brother in all things and not say that anything is exclusively your own.

4:12 For if you are fellow-partakers in that which is imperishable, how much more so in the things which are perishable? You shall not withhold your hand from your son or daughter, but from their youth you shall teach them the fear of God.

4:13 You shall not command your bondservant or your handmaid who trust in the same God as yourself when you are in a bitter mood, for fear that by chance they might cease to fear the God who is over both of you;

4:14 For He comes, not to call men with respect of persons, but He comes to those whom the Spirit has prepared.

4:15 But you, servants, shall be subject unto your masters, as to a type of God, in shame and fear.

4:16 You shall hate all hypocrisy, and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord.

4:17 You shall never forsake the commandments of the Lord;

4:18 But shall keep those things which you have received, neither adding to them nor taking away from them.

4:19 You shall confess your transgressions in church and not go to prayer with an evil

conscience.

4:20 This is the way of life.

Chapter 5

Characteristics of the way of death.

5:1 But the way of death is this:

5:2 First of all, it is evil and full of a curse: murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magical arts, witchcrafts, plunderings, false witnessings, hypocrisies, doubleness of heart, treachery, pride, malice, stubbornness, covetousness, foul-speaking, jealousy, boldness, exaltation, boastfulness;

5:3 Persecutors of good men, hating truth, loving a lie, not perceiving the reward of righteousness, not adhering to the good nor to righteous judgment, wakeful not for that which is good but for that which is evil;

5:4 From whom gentleness and forbearance stand aloof;

5:5 Loving vain things, pursuing a recompense, not pitying the poor man, not toiling for him that is oppressed with toil, not recognizing Him that made them, murderers of children, corrupters of the creatures of God, turning away from him that is in want, oppressing him that is afflicted, advocates of the wealthy, unjust judges of the poor, altogether sinful.

5:6 May you be delivered, my children, from all these things.

Chapter 6

On doing the best you can; prohibition concerning eating food offered to idols.

6:1 Be careful for fear that any man lead you astray from this way of righteousness, for he teaches you apart from God.

6:2 For if you are able to support the whole yoke of the Lord, you shall be flawless;

6:3 But if you are not able, do that which you are able.

6:4 But concerning eating, bear that which you are able;

6:5 By all means abstain from meat sacrificed to idols;

That is, at least do not eat food consecrated in pagan temples.

6:6 For it is the worship of dead gods.

Chapter 7

On Baptism.

7:1 But concerning Baptism, this is how you shall baptize.

7:2 Having first recited all these things, baptize in living water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

"Having first recited all these things" certainly did not mean to recite the foregoing chapters in the baptismal ceremony, but merely shows that the Didache was not composed at one time, but collected from various sources. However, since Baptism is connected with the Teaching of the Two Ways, it seems that it was catechetical instruction for the preparation of catechumens.

"Living water" means running water. However, following verses allow adaptation to circumstances.

7:3 But if you do not have running water, then baptize in other water;

7:4 And if you are not able in cold, then in warm.

7:5 But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Early Baptism was three-fold immersion or three-fold pouring while reciting the trinitarian formula.

7:6 But before the Baptism, let him that baptizes and him that is baptized fast, and any others also who are able;

7:7 And you shall order him that is baptized to fast a day or two before.

Chapter 8

On fasting and praying.

8:1 And let not your fastings be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and the fifth day of the week;

8:2 But do you keep your fast on the fourth and on the preparation day.

In the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee in Luke 18, the Pharisee reminds God "I fast twice a week." Both Jews and Christians fasted twice a week, but on different days. The day of (Jewish) preparation (for the Sabbath) was the sixth day; thus Christians of the early church fasted on Wednesdays and Friday, in contrast with the Jews. The "hypocrites" of verse 1 may be a rebuke to Christians who continued to observe Jewish customs.

8:3 Neither pray you as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in His Gospel, thus pray you:

The following prototypical "Lord's Prayer" is found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. The verse "Thine is the kingdom, etc.," is omitted from some ancient manuscripts of Matthew and does not appear in the canonical Luke, but clearly was an early custom.

8:4 Our Father, Who are in heaven, hallowed be Your name;

8:5 Your kingdom come;

8:6 Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth;

8:7 Give us this day our daily bread;

8:8 And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors;

8:9 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one;

The "evil one" is the correct translation for the references in Matthew and Luke also.

8:10 For Yours is the power and the glory for ever and ever.

8:11 Pray this three times in the day.

That is, roughly "morning, noon, and evening," based on the Old Testament custom found in Psalm 55:17 and Daniel 6:10. Compare with: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1); "...Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour" (Acts 10:9). This indicates the Apostles observed regular hours of prayer, such as the Jews had observed for centuries. The practice of praying at the first (6 a.m.), third (9 a.m.), sixth (noon), and ninth (3 p.m.) hours was carried over into the Church from the start. It continues today in Orthodox monasteries.

Chapter 9

Instruction regarding the Eucharist.

9:1 But as touching the Eucharistic thanksgiving give you thanks thus.

9:2 First, as regards the cup:

9:3 We give You thanks, O our Father, for the holy vine of Your son David, which You made known to us through Your Son Jesus;

9:4 Yours is the glory for ever and ever.

9:5 Then as regards the broken bread:

9:6 We give You thanks, O our Father, for the life and knowledge which You did make known to us through Your Son Jesus;

9:7 The glory is Yours for ever and ever.

9:8 As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and being gathered together became one, so may Your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Your kingdom;

"Mountains" apparently was a common figure of speech meaning "nations." See The Shepherd of Hermas: Similitudes (Similitude 9:162).

9:9 For Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever and ever.

9:10 But let no one eat or drink of this Eucharistic thanksgiving, except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord;

9:11 For concerning this also the Lord has said:

9:12 Give not that which is holy to the dogs.

Compare: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6); "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." (Matthew 15:25-28; also Mark 7:27,28)

Chapter 10

Concluding instructions about the Eucharist.

10:1 And after you are satisfied thus give you thanks:

10:2 We give You thanks, Holy Father, for Your holy name, which You have made to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which You have made known unto us through Your Son Jesus;

10:3 Yours is the glory for ever and ever.

10:4 You, Almighty Master, did create all things for Your name's sake, and did give food and drink unto men for enjoyment, that they might render thanks to You;

10:5 But did bestow upon us spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Your Son.

10:6 Before all things we give You thanks that You are powerful;

10:7 Yours is the glory for ever and ever.

10:8 Remember, Lord, Your Church to deliver it from all evil and to perfect it in Your love;

10:9 And gather it together from the four winds -- even the Church which has been sanctified -- into Your kingdom which You have prepared for it;

10:10 For Yours is the power and the glory for ever and ever.

10:11 May grace come and may this world pass away.

10:12 Hosanna to the God of David.

10:13 If any man is holy, let him come;

10:14 If any man is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen.

"Maranatha" is an emphatic assertion used by the apostle Paul, in Aramaic or Syriac, meaning either "Our Lord has come" or "Our Lord will come." See 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." ("Anathema" originally literally meant anything "put up" in a temple of a pagan god, set apart or separated, consecrated, devoted, etc., and is used in the sense of a person or thing accursed or damned, and is a formal curse, as in excommunicating a person.)

10:15 But permit the prophets to offer thanksgiving as much as they desire.

The hitherto unmentioned prophets here receive a concessional footnote with reference to their freedom in prayer practices, which links (awkwardly) two separate blocks of material which have been brought together later in the developing Diche tradition.

In Biblical idiom in both the Old and New Testaments, "prophet" is used of one who (professedly) announces the will or celebrates the works of God, whether these relate to things past, present, or future, and is applied to patriarchs, orators, singers, songstresses,

priests, and preachers. In the Didache, it refers to inspired or inspiring preachers who were "forth-tellers" rather than "foretellers."

Chapter 11

Marks of true and false apostles, prophets, teachers, etc.

11:1 Whoever therefore shall come and teach you all these things that have been said before, receive him;

11:2 But if the teacher himself be perverted and teach a different doctrine to the destruction thereof, hear him not;

11:3 But if to the increase of righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him as the Lord.

11:4 But concerning the apostles and prophets, do according to the ordinance of the Gospel.

11:5 Let every apostle, when he comes to you, be received as the Lord;

11:6 But he shall not abide more than a single day, or if there be need, a little more.

11:7 But if he abide three days, he is a false prophet.

11:8 And when he departs, let the apostle receive nothing except bread, until he finds shelter;

11:9 But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet.

11:10 And you shall not put to a test nor discern any prophet speaking in the Spirit;

11:11 For every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven.

This is a startling interpretation of the mysterious unforgiveable sin, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, mentioned in Matthew 12:31 and Mark 3:29. However one interprets this sin, it is obvious that the only unforgiveable sin is one that prevents a person from coming to the Lord for forgiveness. Thus it is clear that people who worry about having committed this sin have not done so.

11:12 Yet not every one that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he have the ways of the Lord.

11:13 From his ways therefore the false prophet and the prophet shall be recognized.

11:14 And no prophet when he orders a table in the Spirit shall eat of it;

11:15 Otherwise he is a false prophet.

The meaning of ordering or requesting a table "in the Spirit" is unclear.

11:16 And every prophet teaching the truth, if he does not what he teaches, is a false prophet.

11:17 And every prophet approved and found true, if he does anything as an outward mystery typical of the Church, and yet does not teach you to do all that he himself does, shall not be judged before you;

"Outward mystery typical of the Church" refers to the sacraments, here especially the Eucharist. Writing about the Eucharist (Homilies on 1 Corinthians), St. John Chrysostom explained the Christian use of "mystery" as follows: "It is called a mystery, because what we believe is not the same as what we see, but we see one thing and believe another.... When I hear the Body of Christ mentioned, I understand what is said in one sense, the unbeliever in another."

11:18 He has his judgment in the presence of God;

11:19 For in old times the prophets did the same.

The point of 11:17-19 seems to be that the validity of the sacraments resides in them, not in the man who performs them liturgically.

11:20 And whoever shall say in the Spirit, Give me silver or anything else, you shall not listen to him;

11:21 But if he tell you to give on behalf of others that are in need, let no man judge him.

Anyone aware of the practices of today's ministers must realize how far we have departed from the Teachings of the Apostles described in the Didache.

Chapter 12

More on itinerant ministers and visiting laymen.

12:1 But let every one who comes in the name of the Lord be received;

12:2 And then when you have tested him you shall know him, for you shall have understanding on the right hand and on the left.

12:3 If the visitor is a traveler, assist him, so far as you are able;

12:4 But he shall not stay with you more than two or three days, if it be necessary.

12:5 But if being a craftsman, he wishes to settle up with you, let him work for and eat his bread.

12:6 But if he has no craft, according to your wisdom provide how he shall live as a Christian among you, but not in idleness.

12:7 If he will not do this, he is trafficking upon Christ.

Or, "he is a Christ-peddler."

12:8 Beware of such men.

Chapter 13

Ministers and the needy are to be supported by the first-fruits.

13:1 But every true prophet desiring to settle among you is worthy of his food.

13:2 In like manner a true teacher is also worthy, like the workman, of his food.

13:3 Every first-fruit then of the produce of the wine-vat and of the threshing-floor, of your oxen and of your sheep, you shall take and give as the first-fruit to the prophets;

13:4 For they are your chief-priests.

Christian clergy are symbolically identified with the original Jewish high-priests, and thus are also to be supported by first-fruits.

13:5 But if you do not have a prophet, give them to the poor.

13:6 If you make bread, take the first-fruit and give according to the commandment.

13:7 In like manner, when you make a jar of wine or of oil, take the first-fruit and give to the prophets;

13:8 Yea, and of money and raiment and every possession take the first-fruit, as shall seem good to you, and give according to the commandment.

Chapter 14

Admonitions for celebrating the Eucharist on the Lord's day.

14:1 And on the Lord's own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions, that your sacrifice may be pure.

14:2 And let no man who has a dispute with his fellow, join your assembly until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be defiled;

14:3 For this is the same sacrifice spoken of by the Lord;

14:4 In every place and at every time offer Me a pure sacrifice;

14:5 For I am a great king, says the Lord, and My name is wonderful among the nations.

Perhaps a reference to "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts." (Malachi 1:11)

Chapter 15

Appointment of bishops and deacons.

15:1 Appoint for yourselves therefore bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and do not love of money, and who are true and approved;

The isolated, rural Christian communities first depended on itinerant apostles, prophets, and teachers, but now the Didache turns to the establishment of a more settled local ministry.

"Appoint for yourselves..." does not mean the congregation was to ordain its own clergy, for that was done only by properly ordained bishops to maintain "apostolic succession." But the local congregation did put forth for ordination men it approved of, or could accept or reject those proposed by the ordaining bishop. This custom is still reflected in the Orthodox ordination ceremony when the congregation responds in unison "Axios!" or "he is worthy!"

Qualifications for bishops and deacons are in 1 Timothy 2:1-12. "Bishop" (Greek "episkopos") means an overseer, an elder. By late in the first century bishop came to designate a presiding elder.

15:2 For they also perform to you the service of the prophets and teachers.

15:3 Therefore do not scorn them;

15:4 For they are your honorable men, along with the prophets and teachers.

15:5 And reprove one another, not in anger but in peace, as you find in the Gospel;

15:6 And let no one speak to any who have done wrong towards his neighbor, neither let him hear a word from you, until he repent.

This "silent treatment" of misbehaving, unrepentent members shows how serious the Christian community was about maintaining purity.

15:7 But do your prayers and your alms-giving and all your deeds you as you find it in the Gospel of our Lord.

That is, without ostentation and in secret, unlike "the hypocrites." See Matthew 6:1-6.

Chapter 16

Closing apocalyptic warnings.

16:1 Be watchful for your life;

See Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 22:40,46 about "watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

16:2 Let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirded, but you be ready;

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord..." (Luke 12:35,36a)

16:3 For you know not the hour in which our Lord comes.

Compare: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.... Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.... Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." (Matthew 24:36,42,44; 25:13)

16:4 And you shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls;

Compare: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)

16:5 For the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if you be not perfected at the last season.

Compare: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (Matthew 24:13)
Predestinarian teaching of "once saved, always saved" or "the unconditional eternal security of the believer" was not believed by the early Church; in fact, it is repudiated here and elsewhere.

16:6 For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate.

16:7 For as lawlessness increases, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." (1 Timothy 4:1)

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts..." (2 Peter 3:3)

"And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in diverse places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

But they that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house:

Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (Matthew 24:3-22)

16:8 And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God;

16:9 And shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands;

16:10 And he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began.

16:11 Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and perish;

"Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the

temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.... And then the lawless one will be revealed, and the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by his appearing and his coming. The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved." (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4,8-10, Revised Standard Version)

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matthew 24:24)

16:12 But they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself.

Compare with: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth upon a tree." (Galatians 3:13; a reference to Deuteronomy 21:22,23)

16:13 And then shall the signs of the truth appear;

Compare: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven and with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matthew 24:30,31)

16:14 First a sign of an opening in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead;

16:15 Yet not of all, but as it was said:

16:16 The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him.

16:17 Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

Compare with: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51,52)

Summary of practices of the Christian community:

- 1. Careful instructions preceding Baptism.*
- 2. Prebaptismal fasting by the candidates and the one who will baptize them.*
- 3. Baptism in the three-fold name by the best means available.*
- 4. Probably Baptism was followed by a special eucharistic meal with the newly-baptized.*
- 5. According to a variant reading of 10:8, possibly an anointing with oil followed this meal.*
- 6. Regular fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays.*
- 7. Meetings on the "Lord's day" (Sunday), which included a meal of some sort, prayer, and confession.*
- 8. Recitation of the "Lord's Prayer" three times a day.*
- 9. Possibly also a daily community gathering.*
- 10. Regular attention to inner-community discipline and prayer, as well as "good works" such as alms-giving and systematic contributions.*
- 11. Attention of hospitality for the traveling Christian, whether layperson or leader.*

Your comments or feedback on The Seraphim Files are welcome.

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