

Behold The Pattern

Introduction. Hebrews 8:5, as part of the great study of the book of Hebrews, teaches that there is a pattern for the work of the people of God. In years past this would have been considered an "article of faith" among Christians. But in recent years men have arisen who have ridiculed the contention that there is a pattern for work and worship in the church. They claim that there is no pattern found in the New Testament for the church. We are going to see that there is indeed a pattern and that God expects us to follow it.

I. *The Old Testament Pattern*

- A. The Old Testament explicitly teaches the concept of a pattern.
 1. Exodus 25:9, 40 -- both passages in Exodus use the same Hebrew word for pattern. It literally means a "structure; model; resemblance."
 2. Numbers 8:4 -- the word for pattern here literally means "a view (the act of seeing); also an appearance (the thing seen); pattern."
 3. Joshua 22:28 -- the same Hebrew word as in Exodus is used to show the acknowledgment of a pattern among the children of Israel.
- B. Three examples of the pattern concept in the Old Testament.
 1. Noah and the ark (Genesis 6:13-16).
 - a) The ark would be made out of gopher wood.
 - b) It would contain three stories and rooms would be built in it.
 - c) It would be sealed with pitch both within and without.
 - d) There were exact measurements: the ark was 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high.
 - e) There would be a single window with a single door.
 - f) The instructions were precise and constituted a pattern for Noah to use in the building of the ark. He understood the importance of the pattern (Genesis 6:22; 7:5, 9, 16).
 2. The tabernacle (Exodus 25:1-40:38).
 - a) Moses was shown a pattern on Mount Sinai (Exodus 25:8-9, 40).
 - b) The tabernacle and its furnishings would be made of certain materials and fashioned in a specific way.
 - c) The tabernacle and its furnishings were made to concise dimensions.
 - d) The tabernacle and its furnishings would be made of exact colors and contain exact embroidery.
 - e) The instructions were precise and constituted a pattern for Moses to use in the construction of the tabernacle. In Exodus

39-40, it is said eighteen times that Moses did all that the Lord commanded him to do concerning the tabernacle.

3. The walls of Jericho (Joshua 6:1-27).
 - a) Each day the men of war would march around the city wall once for six days. Seven priests would also carry the ark of the covenant.
 - b) On the seventh day, the men and priests would march around the city seven times and then the priests were to blow a long blast from their ram's horns.
 - c) The instructions were precise and constituted a pattern for Joshua to defeat the city of Jericho. Joshua understood the importance of the pattern (Joshua 6:20).

II. **The New Testament Pattern**

- A. Use of the Greek word *typos* in the New Testament.
 1. *Typos* is defined as "a die or stamp; a visible mark left by some object, the mark left in history or nature by the antitype; a model (for imitation) or instance (for warning)."
 2. We gather from this definition that it denotes an exact image to be copied, an exact model to be imitated, an example that would serve as a warning, or a pattern to be copied. It is translated in various ways:
 - a) Example (1 Corinthians 10:6; Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3),
 - b) Figure (Romans 5:14).
 - c) Form (Romans 6:17).
 - d) Fashion (Acts 7:44).
 - e) Print (John 20:29).
 - f) Manner (Acts 23:25).
 - g) Pattern (Titus 2:7; Hebrews 8:5).
- B. Use of the Greek word *hupogrammos* in the New Testament.
 1. *Hupogrammos* is defined as "a writing, including all the letters of the alphabet, given to beginners as an aid in learning to draw them; an example set before one; a model or pattern to be copied in writing or drawing."
 2. We gather from this definition that it denotes striving to imitate a model put before one, such as letters posted by the teacher to help the student learn to draw letters. Its sole use in the New Testament is in 1 Peter 2:21, where it is translated as "example".
- C. The concept of the pattern in the New Testament.
 1. Christians are bound to pass on the truth received by the apostles from Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

- a) In Matthew 28:18-20, the apostles were commanded to teach what Jesus had taught them and those disciples in turn would do the same.
 - b) In 2 Timothy 2:2, there were truths that Paul had taught to Timothy which Timothy was required to pass on to others.
 - c) Both these passages teach that there are truths that the apostles had received and these same truths were to be taught to the next generation of disciples.
2. Christians are not to look to the words of men over the words delivered from God.
- a) In Matthew 15:9, it is possible to teach "for doctrines the commandments of men." Since this is described as "vain worship," then we must conclude that God's commandments reign supreme.
 - b) In 1 Corinthians 4:6, the Corinthians should have learned through Paul and Apollos to stay within the confines of God's revelation. Some were swept away by the philosophies of men; what they taught was not God's word.
3. Christians will be judged by the words of Christ.
- a) If the words of Christ are to judge us, then there are specifics that are binding (John 12:48).
 - b) Our love to Christ is conditioned upon the keeping of His commandments (John 14:15). Notice that this means what has been revealed, not silence!
4. Christians are to not either go beyond or change the truth of God's word.
- a) John teaches that we will not have the blessings of God if we do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11). If there is no pattern, there is no doctrine to not abide in.
 - b) Revelation 22:18-19 teaches, specifically about the book of Revelation and in general about all inspired words, that we cannot either add to or take away from the word (cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6). If there is no pattern, then how could we be commanded to not add or take away from the word?

III. ***The Consequences Of Rejecting The Pattern***

- A. It makes it necessary for faithful brethren to cut the ties of fellowship with the erring brother (Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Titus 3:10-11). Fellowship must be severed because falsehood has no place with God.

- B. It cuts us off from the blessings of Almighty God (Galatians 1:6-9). If one does not continue in the gospel that Paul had given to them, they would be cut off from God. Three observations can be made:
1. Paul taught a pattern for their adherence.
 2. Strict adherence was necessary for Christians to receive the blessings of God.
 3. Abandonment of the pattern meant a loss of salvation.
- C. Not continuing in the pattern will cause men to be deceived by false doctrine (Ephesians 4:14-15). Again, several important facts bear noticing:
1. The potential of being deceived by false doctrine necessarily implied that there is a true pattern for religion.
 2. One is deceived when he abandons the pattern God has given.
 3. Continuing in "the truth" guarantees being pleasing to Christ.

Conclusion. We have proved several important principles in this study. There was a pattern for God's people under the Old Law. There is a pattern for God's people today. We are not pleasing to God today if we stray from the pattern given in the New Testament for the church of our Lord.

We will continue our study and see how the pattern has been corrupted in the work of the church among different religious groups and even among our own brethren (1 Timothy 4:16).