

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

About Bible Patterns

By Joe Price

God expected His chosen people Israel to follow His revealed pattern when they built the tabernacle. He gave Moses elaborate, detailed instructions for its construction (Ex. 25-27). An overriding reason for Israel to follow God’s pattern for the tabernacle was that God would there dwell well among them (Ex. 25:8).

“8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it...40 And see that thou make them after the pattern, which hath been showed thee in the mount” (Ex. 25:8, 9, 40).

God wanted the tabernacle, which was a *“copy and shadow of the heavenly things”* (Heb. 8:5) to be built according to His revealed pattern. How much more then, must God be interested in seeing *“the heavenly things”* (the church, Hebrews 8: 2, 5; 3:6; 10:21) conform to the pattern He provided for it. God dwells with us in His church. *“Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit”* (Eph. 2:19-22).

More and more, people who should have been taught the importance of Bible patterns do not have the faintest idea what a Bible pattern is or how it should be used. As a result, division, confusion, and human doctrines are infiltrating the church and destroying souls. Basically, God’s pattern on any subject is everything He revealed about that subject. Read the above passages about the tabernacle. Notice that God *“showed”* the pattern He wanted them to follow. God’s revelation, then, is His pattern (Psa. 119:160; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3).

To properly use a pattern, one must identify the pattern. God revealed His pattern for our conduct in three ways—direct commands, approved examples, and necessary implications. These simple tools enable us to ascertain, and then obey, God’s patterns for such things as the plan of salvation, the worship, work, and organization of the church, and morality. God-revealed patterns are the proper tools we must use and hold fast to establish and apply Bible authority with a *“thus saith the Lord”* (2 Tim. 1:13). — *Knollwood church of Christ Articles*, February 1999. ■

Is There a Divine Pattern For The Church?

By Keith Sharp

We must surely realize our need for such a pattern. No reputable contractor would attempt to construct a building without a blueprint. Even the most talented seamstress realizes the need for a pattern. This is because the tasks they undertake are difficult. Of how much more infinite difficulty is the task of the church, which is *“the pillar and ground of the truth”* (1 Tim. 3:15)?

Indeed, concerning man’s entire relationship to God, Jeremiah could cry in all truth, *“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jer. 10:23). You need divine guidance. And we can know assuredly there is such a pattern. Paul commanded young Timothy: *“Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Tim.

1:13). The word **“form”** means *“an example, pattern...the pattern to be placed before one to be held fast and copied, model...”* (Thayer). This is a plain declaration that there is a pattern. This form, according to the inspired writer, consists of **“words, which thou hast heard of me.”** These are apostolic words. But, the apostles’ words are God’s words, received by revelation from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:9-13). These words were written down by the apostles and constitute the New Testament, which we can read and understand (Eph. 3:1-6). The term **“sound”** is defined thus: *“to be well, to be in good health, true and incorrupt doctrine”* (Thayer). These are words that are conducive to spiritual health. Being the words of God, they are true (Jn. 17:17). But we dare not corrupt them.

If one were to add a pinch of arsenic to wholesome wheat flour, death would result. If one adds a pinch of opinion to the wholesome apostolic words, damnation will result (Gal. 1:6-9). Thus, the divine blueprint for the church consists of the sum total of everything the New Testament says about the church, nothing more or less. Equipped with this pattern, we **“may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work”** (2 Tim. 3:17, ASV).

The aged apostle enjoined an obligation to this pattern. He commanded Timothy to **“hold fast”** the form. The words **“hold fast”** mean to “keep,” “retain” or “be consistent with.” Under the Old Covenant, if one brought into service to God that which was unauthorized, punishment was swift and severe (e.g. Lev. 10:1-2). Under the New Testament we must **“do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”** (by His authority, Col. 3:17), lest we be without God (2 Jn. 9-11) and thus lose our hope of life eternal (Rev. 22:18-19). Indeed, there is a divine pattern for the church, the New Testament. Will you not lay aside human opinion and by faith be conformed to the divine pattern? – *Collegue church of Christ Bulletin*, January 14, 2018. ■

The Pattern for Conversion

By Heath Rogers

The book of Acts is sometimes called the Book of Conversions in that it records the conversions of different people as the gospel began to spread throughout the world. The conversion of the Corinthians described with the following statement: **“And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized”** (Acts 18:8).

Notice the pattern set forth in this verse. First, they heard the gospel. Then they believed what they heard. Finally, they were baptized.

This pattern is consistent with all the accounts of conversion found in the book of Acts. For instance, the people of Samaria heard Philip as he preached Christ, they believed the message he preached, and they were baptized (Acts 8:5-12). In Philippi, Lydia heard Paul preach, heeded the things she heard (which means she believed them, took them seriously, and acted upon them), and was baptized (Acts 16:14-15).

Let me ask, does this pattern describe your conversion? Did you hear the gospel, believe it, and then get baptized for the remission of your sins? Or were you baptized as an infant, and then taught the gospel when you were older? Infant baptism is practiced by many sincere people, but does not follow the pattern set forth in the New Testament. Hearing and believing must precede baptism, not come after it. To **“hear”** is to listen to and consider; to comprehend or understand what is being taught. Infants cannot do this. They cannot believe. Thus, they are not scriptural candidates for baptism.

Have you followed the pattern for obtaining your soul’s salvation that is set forth in the New Testament? Have you heard the gospel? Do you believe the gospel? Have you been baptized, immersed in water, for the remission of your sins? If not, please allow us to help you do so today! – *Knollwood church of Christ Articles*, February 2019. ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com - Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com - Phone: 209-365-9250