



## Is God Concerned About Patterns?

by  
Vernon Teagarden

In our everyday affairs we recognize the importance of patterns. For example, a seamstress could not make a dress without a pattern. Without a pattern, or blueprint, a machinist could not machine a suitable part from metal. Similarly, would one build a house without first obtaining a pattern from a qualified architect? Given a little thought, it doesn't take long to realize just how much our lives are influenced by patterns.

In the New Testament, the word "pattern" comes from the Greek word "tupos" which "primarily denoted a blow...hence (a) an impression, the mark of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image (Acts 7:43); (c) a form or mould..." (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, W. E. Vine, (Vol. II) p. 33.) In our own language the word means, "1) A person or thing worthy of imitation. 2) A model, plan, etc. used in making things. 3) A design. 4) A regular way of acting or doing." *Webster's New World Dictionary*.

It has long been the assumption of many in the religious world that there is no

New Testament pattern for anything, and especially the church. Is this true, or does the Bible teach us that God is concerned about patterns? Are patterns a matter of importance to Him? Does he have an interest in or regard for patterns? Let us look into the source of truth, God's word, to find the answer to these questions.

In Genesis 6:13-21, we read about God giving a pattern to Noah for the building of the ark. Noah followed God's pattern and was saved from the destruction of the flood (Gen. 6:11; 7:1-5). Farther along in Bible history we read about God giving Moses a pattern for the building of the tabernacle (Exod. 25:9-39). Was this pattern a matter of importance to God? Yes! Moses was instructed to build only according to the pattern (Exod. 25:40; 26:30). In Numbers 8:4, we see that Moses, who was not one of these fellows willing to divorce himself from the "pattern theology," followed the pattern. The Hebrew writer makes mention of these things in Hebrews 8:1-5. "Now this is the main point of these things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts

---

## The Southeast

Church of Christ meets at:

35 Walnut Court

Mogadore, OH 44260

Phone: 330.628.7432

## SERVICES:

### Sunday

Bible Study: 10:00 am

Worship: 10:50 am  
6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Bible Study: 7:30 pm

---

*and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer. For if He were on the earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.'* (Emphasis added).

Incidentally, the “tabernacle” which the Lord erected and not man, is the church. Christ said that He would “build” His church (Matt. 16:18). This He did; and He built it according to the pattern that was in the mind of God before the world came into existence (Eph. 3:8-11).

God gave a pattern for the carrying of the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 25:14; 37:5). David chose to ignore the divine pattern and Uzzah lost his life (2 Sam. 6:1-7). Later David acknowledged his sin and sought to rectify it (1 Chron. 15:11-15). There are a number of lessons to be learned from this story. For example, there are times when God not only tells us WHAT to do, but HOW to do it. Moreover, there is a time when God not only tells us WHAT to do and HOW to do it, but also WHO is to do it. (cf. 1 Tim. 5:16). Whenever God specifies that excludes everything not specified in the thing commanded!

God has set forth patterns in the New Testament that are to be imitated. “A pattern is the totality of the rules of conduct to be observed in imitation.” (Gene Frost, *Old Issues Do Not Fade Away*, p. 39) In short, all that God has said about anything becomes a pattern for it. The pattern is the model or example for all later imitation. To illustrate, let us take the New Testament and study the subject of baptism. Jesus said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mk. 16:16). Peter told his audience to “repent and be baptized every one of you...” (Acts 2:38). Jesus said that one must be willing to confess Him before

men (Matt. 10:32). Paul said, “For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation” (Rom. 10:10). Before his baptism, the Ethiopian treasurer confessed his belief in Jesus as the Son of God (Acts 8:37). Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that the proper action of baptism is a burial in water (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; Acts 8:35-38; 10:47, 48). And, in addition, baptism’s design is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Putting all of these passages together we find that the pattern of scriptural baptism is a burial in water for the confessing penitent believer, unto the remission of sins. There are numerous examples of this pattern being followed (Acts 2:38-41; 8:12, 13; 8:36 ff.; 10:47, 48; 11:14; 16:14 ff.; 18:8; 22:16; etc.). Any person scripturally baptized must follow the same pattern. However, there are a number of violations of this pattern being practiced today. Baptism for infants, or for the dead, or for other purposes; such as the teaching that baptism is not for the remission of sins, but simply is an outward sign of an inward grace of salvation, are all in violation of the New Testament pattern for scriptural baptism.

Now with these things fresh in our minds, consider the following. All that God has said about the plan of salvation is a pattern for salvation to every person. All that God has said about the New Testament church is a pattern by which the church is identified. All that God has said about becoming a member of the Lord’s church

is a pattern for everyone. All that God has said about how He is to be worshipped is a pattern. All that God has said about the day to observe the Lord’s Supper is a pattern for Christians to follow. All that God has said about the church and the support of preaching the gospel is a pattern to be observed. All that God has said about the church and helping the needy is a pattern for Christians today.

Let us remember the divine warning found in Hebrews 8:5, “*see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern.*” That divine pattern is found in the pages of the New Testament, which is the “Divine Blueprint” for all time. (cf. Gal. 1:8, 9; Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Col. 3:17, etc.). May we learn to respect the will of the Lord in regard to all things, daring not to add to nor take away from His word (Duet. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18, 19; 2 Jn. 9). Yes, God is concerned about patterns!

---

#### A Look At Daniel

*“During the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, learned from reading the word of the LORD, as revealed to Jeremiah the prophet... (Dan. 9:2)*

What was he doing? Studying the word of the Lord! Daniel did some serious Bible study. As a result, God was able to do amazing things in his life. Much of it was because Daniel was willing to seek God's face and take time to listen to His will. This enabled him to keep his focus on the eternal. May we all strive to be like Daniel!

- Jeff Haught