

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.
Jackson, TN 38305
oldhickorycofc.com

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God's Pattern

Patterns are an important part of our lives in many ways. When a contractor builds a house, he follows a pattern known as a "blueprint." When a mechanic repairs your car, he uses a pattern known as an auto repair manual. When a mother sews a dress for her small daughter, she follows a "dress pattern." And when your favorite cake is made, the cook followed a pattern called a "recipe."

In each case there is a standard pattern to be followed to achieve the desired results or the correct end product. The pattern must be followed or the end product will not be faithful to the original pattern and the results could be disastrous. The house not built to pattern may leak or worse, it may collapse; the car not repaired by the manual may run like a "lemon" or not run at all; the dress not made by the pattern may look more like a clown outfit; and the cake not made by the recipe could wind up unfit for the family dog. Many people who have the common sense to recognize the need to faithfully follow patterns in their everyday lives, fail to recognize the most important pattern of all . . . the Bible. God has always provided a pattern for His people to serve as a guide to worship and service acceptable to Him.

In the Old Testament, God led the children of Israel out of the slavery of Egypt down to the foot of Mt. Sinai. There God called Moses up the mountain and gave him a "pattern" of laws and a "pattern" for a place of worship for the Jews. As God gave Moses this divine pattern, He also gave a warning: "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so ye shall make it" (Ex. 25:9). And He repeated this warning: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shown thee in the mount" (Ex. 25:40).

Following God's pattern, the Jews constructed the tabernacle, a tent, and fashioned all the articles for worship to be placed within and without the tabernacle, the brazen altar, the laver, the golden candlestick, and table of shewbread, the altar of incense and the ark

of the covenant. For over 500 years the tabernacle served as the place of worship for the Jews.

Not all the Jews heeded God's warning through Moses to follow His pattern. Two priests determined to disregard God's pattern of worship and follow their own worship. Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron "offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not" (Lev. 10:1). The consequences of violating God's divine order were immediate and dire, "And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord" (Lev. 10:2). God's drastic punishment of these two men was for our benefit to teach us to treat His pattern with respect and obedience.

When David became king of the Jews, he planned to build a permanent place of worship, a temple, in the city of Jerusalem. While David was not allowed by the Lord to actually build the temple, David did make all the plans and preparations for the construction of the temple which he passed on to his son Solomon to complete. As David commissioned Solomon to build the temple, he explained the source of the blueprints, "'All this,' said David, 'the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern'" (1 Chron. 28:19). David urged Solomon to follow God's pattern in the commands of His Law as well as building His temple.

Despite God's warnings, again the Jews failed to faithfully respect and keep God's pattern. Towards the end of his life Solomon drifted away from God and His commandments. Following Solomon under the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, more Jewish kings were unfaithful rather than faithful to the Lord. Because of the apostasy of the Jews, God allowed them to be taken into captivity and the temple to be destroyed.

While in captivity in Babylon, God sent a special vision of the temple to the prophet Ezekiel. In the vision Ezekiel saw a man with a measuring rod measuring God's temple and all the articles in it. Why? What was the meaning of the vision? "Thou son of man, shew the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern" (Ezek. 43:10).

Just as God gave the Jews a pattern through Moses and David, He has given us a pattern of work and worship through Christ and His apostles. The Old Testament, the tabernacle and the temple were only "a copy and a shadow of heavenly things" that are now provided for us by Christ under the New Testament.

The pattern Christians have to follow is complete and sufficient. It is complete as it has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3). It is sufficient as it "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that

the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

As God warned the Jews not to violate or tamper with His pattern, He warns us also:

1. We must obey God's pattern. It is necessary to obey "that form (pattern) of doctrine which was first delivered to you" (Rom. 6:17). To fail to obey His pattern leads to sin and spiritual death (Rom. 6:18-23).

2. We must walk by God's pattern. The inspired apostles, led by the Holy Spirit are an "ensample" or pattern for us to learn from, imitate and walk after (Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:9).

3. We must keep God's pattern. "Hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. . ." Paul instructed (2 Tim. 1: 13).

4. We must make all things by God's pattern. As Moses was warned to follow the pattern of God in all things, so God warns us in the New Testament ". . . for 'See,' sayeth He, 'that thou make all things according to the pattern . . .'" (Heb. 8:5).

Will you heed the warning?

- Wayne Greeson, Guardian of Truth, March 19, 1987

“Quite an Accident”

The atheist says: There is no God. All wonders around us are accidental. No mighty hand made the thousand billion stars. They made themselves. The earth spins itself to keep the oceans from falling off. Infants teach themselves to cry when they are hungry or hurt. Faith is the crutch for the ignorant, the opium of the masses.

Has he examined the evidence? Whose faith is based on fact? Which makes more sense?

How does the sugar thermometer in the pancreas know the proper blood sugar level to keep us from falling into a coma and dying?

How does the heart beat for years without faltering? It rests between beats! It pumps 800 million times in a normal life span, pushing enough blood to fill a string of tankers that would stretch from New York to Boston.

The pattern of a person's fingerprints never changes and no two persons are identical. What was "evolution's" purpose in keeping these?

Kidneys filter poison from the blood, and leave those components that are useful. How does the kidney know one from another?

A brain weighs less than three pounds but directs all thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each cell dials messages to other cells in billions of different combinations. A cubic half inch of brain cells contains a lifetime of memories. Who gave the human tongue flexibility to form words, and a brain to understand them, but denied it to the brute animals? Who showed a womb how to keep splitting a tiny ovum until a baby had the proper number of fingers, eyes, and ears in the right place and then release it into the world when it is strong enough to live?

Certainly, God exists! We are evidence of it. "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4). Let us join David in exclaiming to God, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvelous are thy works; And that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14).

Paul told the Athenians about the "unknown God" (Acts 17:25) in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (17:28). Our secular society is forgetting that it is God who gives all the blessings we enjoy (Jas. 1:17). May we magnify His name, the true God of heaven and earth.

"Know ye that the Lord he is God: It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves" (Psalm 100:3).

- Terry Hightower

A Quote From the Past ...

"Much is said about preaching the truth in love, and so it should be preached. But in love of what? The preacher should so love the truth that he will not sacrifice any of it nor pervert it, and he should so love people that he will not withhold from them even an unpleasant truth. He that does either of these things loves neither the church nor the people. We frequently fool ourselves, thinking we do thus and so to spare the feelings of others when it is our own feelings that prompt us. 'Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves

teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables' (II Timothy 4:2-4)."

- R. L. Whiteside

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- > "Lasting friendship and enduring love takes months and years to grow!"
 - > "A lot of people are like buttons - always popping off at the wrong time!"
 - > "The religion that has no root fails in times of sorrow!"
 - > "The safest side for a man to take in an argument between two neighbors is the outside!"
 - > "Proud people are dominated by the desire to climb, to arrive, to reach the top and be admired!" - John Balyo
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THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Birth of Jesus Christ!*" (Text: John 18:37); Sunday evening: "*Who Has Eternal Life?*" (John 6:51-59).