

IS THERE A PATTERN FOR AUTHORITY?

Mel Futrell

In this short article we will begin by briefly defining the two principle terms in our title: “pattern” and “authority”. Following this we will answer the title question and offer adequate Biblical evidence for that answer.

Simply put, a pattern is an “example, model, standard” [*A Concise Greek—English Dictionary of the New Testament*, UBS, p.185]. And the New Testament clearly represents itself as the pattern, model, and standard to be followed by all who would please our God (Romans 6:17; 2 Timothy 1:13). Note that the King James Version uses the word “form” as a translation of *tupos* in these verses. And in this writer’s judgment, any and all who would explicitly or implicitly deny this pattern principle have gone “beyond the things which are written” (1 Corinthians 4:6—ASV).

Now, concerning the word authority, W. E. Vine says, “From the meaning of leave or permission, or liberty of doing as one pleases, it passed to that of the ability or strength with which one is endued, then to that

of the power of authority, the right to exercise power...or the power of rule or government, the power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others...more specifically of apostolic authority...” [*Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 89].

So, is there a pattern for authority? Absolutely! And that pattern of authority is revealed in the authoritative volume, the Bible. Let’s approach our theme by beginning at the source of authority—God Himself.

First, God the Father has authority that is inherent to His being the eternal creator that He is (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 90:2). Jesus made this abundantly clear in an exchange with His apostles as recorded in Acts 1:6-7. There the apostles asked, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus’ response was, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father, hath put in his own power.” The word translated “power” in the King James Version is the Greek term *exousia* which is better rendered as authority. God indeed has His own

authority (Jude 25). Wayne Jackson has correctly noted, “God’s authority is his sovereign right to do anything consistent with his nature and will” [*Bible Words and Theological Terms Made Easy*, 2002, p.16].

Second, Jesus by His own admission was given all authority. This truth is conveyed in the plainest of language in Matthew 28:18 which reads, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Again, “power” is from *exousia*. Naturally one might ask, “From whom did Jesus receive this authority?” And the answer is provided in John 13:3 with these straightforward words, “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God...” We also believe it important to add that according to the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:24, at the second coming Jesus will return this authority to God the Father. There is a pattern for authority.

Continued on page 40

IS THERE A PATTERN?

Editorial

Ronnie Hayes

The term pattern is defined as “a blow, to strike, an impression, the mark of a blow, the impress of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image, a form or mould” (Vines, 33). The Greek term is also translated as, “example, fashion, figure, form manner, pattern, or print” (Vines, 33). It is used in the sense of a blueprint. Some would define it as a suggestion, not an exact pattern to be followed. This concept is wrong and has no merit. It is easy to understand why some would want it to be a suggestion. If it is, then it can be followed if you desire to do so. If on the other hand, it is a blueprint that is to be strictly followed, many will find themselves condemned. Let us look at some of the characteristics of this pattern.

The word of God as a pattern exposes the problems around us. Paul tells Timothy, “Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:13). Paul says to hold fast the form or pattern of sound words. Sound words are those that are healthy, good, and wholesome. We are not to teach just anything. We are to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 2:4). This word of God “is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance” (Acts 20:32). Therein lies the problem. Some want to do what they want to do, regardless of what God says. Bill Jackson wrote in his lecture in the 1986 MSOP Lectureship book, “The warning is certainly appropriate for our day: So many unsound words, teaching, doctrines, and expressions are being uttered today, with a blatant copying

of sectarian words, phrases, and doctrines, and by such is borne the liberalism that has plagued the church of the past several years” (182,183). Burton Coffman in his commentary on 2 Timothy wrote, “The disaster which has befallen modern Christianity is precisely that of departing from the pattern” (255). We would be wise to learn to follow the pattern that God has left for us, instead of rebelling against the will of God.

The word of God as a pattern establishes the proper limits in all things. Peter tells us that the word of God, gives us all things “...that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). When we get to the question of “How are we to worship?” Has man been left to his own to determine what to do? NO!!! Paul told the church at Corinth, “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). What does that mean to us? It means it is through God’s directives we walk (cf. Romans 10:17). It means God tells us what he wants and what he requires in worship. Nothing else will be pleasing to God. The matter of “instrumental music” or simply “singing” is one that shows God’s pattern has established what he wants. The Bible says **SING**. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Ephesians 5:19). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to

“The word of God as a pattern excludes the perverse ways that man wants to do.”

the Lord” (Colossians 3:16). Why would anyone do anything else? Where would anyone get the authority to play or play and sing? I often hear the argument that God didn’t just legislate a bunch of rules. They will say “The Bible is more love letters than law.” Have you ever noticed that these are constantly moving away from law? You know why, don’t you? Because if you can get away from law, then you can get away from requirements. Many don’t want to be bound to live a life that is pure (cf. Philippians 4:7,8). Many don’t want to be bound to worship every first day of the week (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Acts 20:7). Many would rather be like Nadab and Abihu and improvise what they do in worship (cf. Leviticus 10:1,2). You also need to realize that Nadab and Abihu were condemned and punished for what they did! This is why it is so important to have a pattern. If we follow the pattern, we will not make the same mistakes.

The word of God as a pattern excludes the perverse ways that man wants to do. Even though the word of God gives us all that we need, man will seek ways to circumvent God’s way for his own. Paul warned the church at Galatia, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6,7). Yes, there are many who pervert the gospel of Christ today. When it comes to marriage, money, and morals, many seek to do what they want. The question is, “Are we going to follow the pattern or seek our own way?”

Ronnie

IS THERE A PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH?

Ashley Kizer

God had promised Abram that He would make of him “a great nation,” and this is the multitude that we see coming out of Egyptian captivity in the book of Exodus (Genesis 12:2). However, this nation was not only to be “great,” but it was also to be “peculiar” and “holy” (Exodus 19:5, 6). Three months after the Hebrews had left Egypt, they were camping in the “wilderness of Sinai” (v. 1). Moses left the camp and climbed the mountain to hear a message from God, Who told Him His desire for the people: “...ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people...And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (vv. 5, 6).

The words “peculiar” and “holy” denote that this nation would be special and sacred (*Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*). So how would this peculiarity be made manifest to the other nations of the world? The answer can be deduced from the conditions stated by God at the beginning of verse five: “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant...” God gave them a law to obey that would serve as an instruction manual for their physical and spiritual welfare. He extended a wonderful promise: “And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless they bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee” (Exodus 23:25). Incidentally, the law would give them freedom from the diseases that had plagued other nations such as the Egyptians (cf. 15:26).

The Israelites were noticeably different because of the Law that they observed. Wicked Haman the Agagite said of the Jews, “...their laws *are* diverse from all people; neither keep they the king’s laws...” (Esther 3:8). When the presidents and princes of the Median kingdom “sought to find occasion against

Daniel,” they had difficulty finding fault with him in regard to his secular duties (Daniel 6:4). However, they came to this conclusion when they took into account his religious practices: “We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God” (v. 5). Daniel and Esther were extremely different from their pagan contemporaries because of the Law to which they remained obedient. The nation as a whole was blessed inasmuch as they submitted themselves to the commandments that had been given to them by God.

Using an obvious allusion to the nation of Israel, the Apostle Peter wrote by inspiration to Christians, “But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...” (1 Peter 2:9). How is it that the church will be “holy” and “peculiar?” Peter contrasts this “chosen generation” with those in verse eight who “stumble at the word, being disobedient...” So, in this case, it is the “law of Christ” which sets us apart (Galatians 6:2). Peter had written to Christians earlier in his first epistle, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (1 Peter 1:25). The book of Acts contains the events of when the church was established on Earth (cf. Acts 2:38). Luke included a commentary on the occasion, stating, “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls” (v. 41). He also wrote, “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (v. 47).

This event gave rise to a “kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44). It is a spiritual kingdom, “not of this world,” which recognizes Jesus as its

King (John 18:36-37). Of this divine institution our Lord prophesied when He told Peter, “...I will build my church...And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven...” (Matthew 16:18). Now God calls everyone by His gospel to come “out of darkness into his marvelous light...” (2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9). If we obey the gospel call, then we can become a part of the church, which is literally translated “a calling out,” or *ekklesia* in the Greek (*Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*).

Just as the United States of America has one national Constitution and the nation of Israel had one Law, the church is called out with one gospel message. The first Christians “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship...” (Acts 2:42). We have been described as “the body of Christ, and members in particular” (1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:18). Can you imagine the head of a person having two bodies?

There is a pattern for the church that Jesus built, and it exists in the pages of New Testament Scripture. A suggestion that there may actually be two different churches which coexist in the same universe as “holy” and “peculiar” defies not only Scripture, but common logic as well. Paul wrote, “...let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me...” (Philippians 3:16-17). The New American Standard Bible states further, “...observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us” (v. 17). We can trust that if we are following in “his steps” and walking “in the light” we are living according to that pattern (1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 1:7).

4207 Veterans Memorial Dr.
Adamsville, AL 35005

IS THERE A PATTERN FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH?

Sam Willcut

On the specific Day of Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the apostle Peter proclaimed to the gathered Jews in Jerusalem the message of redemption (Acts 2:38). Those who gladly heard and obeyed his inspired sermon “were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41), and from that day forward, “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47). How sad that over the years since, humanity has digressed in the organization of that divine institution. Men have established popes, presiding bishops, ecclesiastical synods, councils and conventions to formulate and legislate what they believe is the church of our Lord. Yet, nothing could be further from the truth. Is there a pattern for the organization of the church? Has Christ left us to use human wisdom to govern the church any way we see fit?

In the first place, the Lord has authoritatively organized his church to consist of elders. We see this pattern throughout the New Testament. After the first missionary journey by Paul to Asia Minor, he went down to the church in Jerusalem, which was more mature by this time, and found “apostles and elders” (Acts 15:4-6)—*presbuteros*, which refers to one who is older or senior. What role do these elders have? In Acts 20:28, Paul gathered the elders of Ephesus before him (Acts 20:17) and stated, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Thus, we are able to link together elders as being “overseers”—*episkopos*, which the New Testament also translates as

“bishops” (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7) who have responsibility over the local congregation. Who were these men? They were qualified men appointed for the office (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Keep in mind that Paul instructed congregations to appoint those already qualified—those who have already demonstrated the type of character and ability to handle the tremendous task within the church. It is tragic for congregations to disregard these qualities and place men in such an important position simply because they have potential! Such practice is not according to the authorization of the word of God in this manner of church organization. Therefore, these elders are men with responsibility and authority, to which members are to honor, respect and submit (Hebrews 13:7, 17). In other words, they are shepherds working under the authority of “the chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:1-4).

Second, the Lord has authoritatively organized his church to consist of deacons. We see the predecessors for such an office in Acts 6:1-8, wherein the apostles selected qualified men to serve in such a way under their oversight to relieve them from the needed benevolent work. Thus, we should not be surprised that later, we find a special office of servant (*diakonos*—“deacon”) to consist of qualified men to serve under the oversight of the elders (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Philippians 1:1 presents this straightforward and superb arrangement: “Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.” Thus, with this pattern of organization for the church of our Lord in the respective roles of responsibility, elders will lead, guide,

oversee, rule and direct the congregation (cf. Acts 11:27-30; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17) and deacons will serve in a special capacity as the elders see fit for the efficiency and expediency of the local work in the kingdom (Acts 6:1-8).

We can definitely see a pattern for the organization of the church.

In conclusion, we can definitely see a pattern for the organization of the church. Whether we read the historical account from Luke or consult the epistles of Paul or Peter, the Lord has organized his church with a pattern of elders and deacons. Incidentally, because we always find these roles listed in the plural tense (cf. Philippians 1:1), our respect for the silence of the scriptures persuades us to comply with the organization of the local congregation with a plurality of elders and deacons. In this way, we understand that a single individual ruling who is tempted with self-preeminence (cf. 3 John 1:9-10) is as foreign to this pattern of organization as anything else to Christianity is. The beauty of this divine arrangement is that we are able to see from the word of God that this pattern is sufficient to meet the needs of the congregation. Whether the church deals with issues of local benevolence (Acts 6:1-7), foreign benevolence (Acts 11:27-30), evangelism (Acts 8:4), doctrinal questions (Acts 15), or matters of edification (Ephesians 4:15-16), this pattern of church organization is sufficient to meet these needs while complying with the desire and direction of our head, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23).

PO Box 127
Mumfords, TN 38058

IS THERE A PATTERN: FOR WORSHIP? ROLE OF MEN AND WOMEN

James E. Rogers

God has given a pattern to follow in our service to Him. This pattern reveals responsibilities of men and women. This study will address God's pattern for men and women in New Testament worship.

Some argue there is no pattern given by God for worship. One wrote that "God has spelled out no formula for the worship of Himself" (Blakely 14). Given O. Blakely argued that "in no case did they [the apostles] give directives for corporate worship" (37). This would mean that one is left to his own imagination as to how he may worship God. For the folly of this approach to worship one need only read the account of the actions of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat in 1 Kings 12 and Jehovah's rebuke in 1 Kings 13. Joel's strong rebuke of Israel (Joel 2:12-14) gives one an indication as to whether Jehovah will accept just anything in worship. If there is no regulation of worship by God, what was Paul doing by inspiration in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34?

We learn from God's Word that "whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17). One of the things we do in word and deed is worship; therefore, we must worship according to the authority of the Lord Jesus. The worship rendered to God must be according to "spirit and truth" (John 4:24). From this text one learns that the object of worship is God, the correct attitude of worship is "in spirit," and the standard by which worship is measured is "truth." It is "truth" that determines the role to be played by men and women in worship.

Truth tells us the role of men in worship. Based on the principle of male leadership established at creation (1 Corinthians 11:7-9;

14:34; 1 Timothy 2:8-13), men are to lead in the worship in mixed audiences. Thus, men are to lead the prayers, the singing, in the administering of the Lord's Supper, the Bible study and in the opportunity of giving as prospered upon every first day of the week (Acts 2:42; 20:7; Ephesians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). One observed, "it was . . . Paul's deliberate wish that the men should conduct public worship" (Nicoll 4:107). It is very interesting that the men who lead in the public assembly are to be men who can lift "up holy hands, without wrath and disputing" (1 Timothy 2:8). This tells us not every man is qualified to lead in the worship. It is also worthy of observation that "men" is from "aner" which "is never used of the female sex; it stands (a) in distinction from a woman . . . 1 Tim. 2:12 . . ." (Vine 3:34).

Truth tells us the role of women in public worship. Women are to pray as they are led, sing as they are directed, partake of the Lord's Supper, study the Bible and give as they have been prospered on every first day of the week. "Against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:23). There are some things women cannot do in public worship to God. "The New Testament instruction that limits the sphere of woman's leadership activity is based on a creation principle, not culture. First Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:33b-35, Ephesians 5:21-33, and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 are four New Testament contexts where Paul discussed the distinctive roles of men and women. Paul's reason for feminine subjection is based upon **the creation** (1 Cor. 11:7-9; 14:34b; 1 Tim. 2:13)" (Meadows, 485,486).

Women cannot be head over the man (1 Corinthians 11:3) nor speak in a mixed assembly, in the sense of prophesying, because this would put

them in a position of authority over a man which is forbidden (1 Corinthians 14:34-36). The word for "silence" is "sigao", which means, "to be silent" (Vine 4:30). Women are restricted from leading prayer in the mixed assembly (1 Timothy 2:8). Women cannot present themselves in an ungodly manner (1 Timothy 2:9,10). Women cannot teach nor have dominion over a man (1 Timothy 2:12). "Teach" is from the verb, "didaskoo," which means, "to give instruction" (Vine 4:111). This prohibits a woman from preaching in the mixed assembly. "Nor" translates "sude" which means "not however, i.e. neither, nor, not even" (Biblesoft's), which shows a woman is not to teach nor in any other manner exercise dominion over a man. "Have dominion over" is from "authentēs" which means to have power or authority over one (Vine 1:89,90). "Man is from (aner) which "is never used of the female sex; it stands (a) in distinction from a woman . . . 1 Tim. 2:12 . . ." (Vine 3:34).

May men and women respect God's pattern in worship and offer acceptably to Him!

SOURCES: Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and International Bible Translators, Inc.

Blakely, Fred (1987), *The Banner of Truth* (June). Blakely, Given O. (1988), *Highers-Blakely Debate* (Denton, TX: Valid Publications). Meadows, James, (1992), *STUDIES IN EZRA, NEHEMIAH, AND ESTHER*, Dub McClish, Ed., (Denton, TX: Valid Pub. Inc., 1992). Nicoll, W. Robertson, Ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1974). Vine, W. E., *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, Co., 1966)

PO Box 2895
Cookeville, TN 38502

IS THERE A PATTERN FOR SALVATION?

Dale Hubbert

No subject should stir greater interest in the mind of sinful man than the topic of salvation. No price should be too great to pay nor command too difficult to obey in complying with divine revelation so that hope might replace despair (Titus 3:7).

Is there a pattern for salvation? Are there different patterns so that we might choose the one we like best? Is there no pattern at all leaving us to navigate our own course to a safe spiritual harbor?

The answer to the above questions depends upon our faith and confidence in the written revelation of God's will. Words of inspiration always guide us to the proper conclusion. Feelings, tradition, and opinions may lead us astray (Mark 7:13).

The terms and conditions of salvation have varied somewhat in the different dispensations of time. The pattern for salvation under the old testament was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14) freeing Christ our redeemer to institute the pattern whereby those living on this side of the cross might seek and find spiritual cleansing (Hebrews 9:17).

The book of Acts reveals to us the true and only pattern of salvation. It gives multiple examples of souls stained with sin being purged and replaced with purity only blood can offer (Romans 5:9). Each of these cases of conversion provides common essentials that are clearly stated or in some instances implied and understood. All of those who were rescued from sin were recipients of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8) and complied with the terms God requires of those who are liberated from sin (Galatians 5:1).

Every case of conversion brings a person who has the ability to reason in contact with the gospel, as it is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). This gospel

identifies Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of the world (Luke 2:11). Many gathered in Jerusalem heard the gospel preached by Peter and the other apostles (Acts 2:14). The people in Samaria heard Phillip preach Christ as the focus of the gospel (Acts 8:5). Jesus instructed Saul to seek Ananias who would reveal the spiritual needs of his life (Acts 22:10). Peter preached to the household of Cornelius the saving gospel that the Jews had received (Acts 10:34-48). Paul and Silas taught a jailer and his household the good news of a risen Lord (Acts 16:31-32). Salvation is for those who can be taught and are willing to listen.

Every case of conversion involves a person who is willing to believe the scriptures that are taught and that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24). A common denominator of those in Jerusalem on Pentecost, those in Samaria, the household of Cornelius, the jailer, and Saul is that they had faith in those things they had been taught. In order to be saved and please God we must be believers (Hebrews 11:6).

Every case of conversion involves a believer who is penitent and ready to make life-altering changes. Jesus said unless we repent we would perish (Luke 13:3). Peter told those in Jerusalem to repent (Acts 2:38). Other cases of conversion may not record the discussion of the command to repent. This does not mean they were exempt from our Lord's command. No person with spiritual reasoning would seek to argue that salvation could be obtained in the absence of repentance on the part of the believer (Acts 17:30).

Every case of conversion involves the confession that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus made it plain during his ministry that we must make that confession before others

(Matthew 10:32). We see the example and pattern as Phillip teaches a eunuch (Acts 8:36-37). Accordingly today we do not stray from that pattern but allow sincere believers to orally express their faith in Jesus as God's son. Though not stated specifically in every example in the book of Acts, it is implied and understood that we must make the good confession (Romans 10:10).

Every case of confession involves the baptism of the willing believer in water for the remission of sins. It is this area of salvation where many balk or leave the scriptures yet this part of salvation can be verified in EVERY case of conversion in the book of Acts. Those on the day of Pentecost were told to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38). When Phillip preached in Samaria believers were baptized (Acts 8:12). Saul was told to be baptized which would wash away his sins (Acts 22:16). The household of Cornelius was baptized (Acts 10:48). The household of a jailer was baptized (Acts 16:33). Our pattern shows that all of these were baptized in order to be forgiven of sins (1 Peter 3:21), not because their sins had already been forgiven.

Every case of conversion required the baptized believers to walk faithfully with the Lord (1 John 1:7). Simon was a Christian but when he sinned he was told to repent and pray (Acts 8:22). We are taught to confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness through prayer (James 5:16).

There is a pattern for salvation that all accountable mankind must follow in order to receive the crown promised to those who are in Christ (1 Peter 5:4). Have you followed that pattern?

4540 Hwy 5
Jasper AL 35503

IS THERE A PATTERN FOR MARRIAGE?

Tom Larkin

When the Jewish leaders questioned Jesus usually their purpose was dishonest and devious. Such is the case in Matthew 19:3 – “The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” They are asking the same basic question that serves as the title of this article, but their reaction to Jesus’ answer reveals that they had already rejected God’s pattern (v. 4-7). Our world is much the same today. Marriage is under attack from every quarter. For years we have faced the attempt by some to redefine marriage and others who seek to destroy it altogether. But the Bible clearly sets forth a pattern for marriage that man must respect.

Thayer defines the word “pattern” as it appears in our New Testament, “in a technical sense, the pattern in conformity to which a thing must be made” (p. 632). Please note the imperative “must.” When we speak of the biblical pattern for a thing, we have no option other than to accept and apply what the Scriptures say. To say that there is a biblical pattern for marriage is to say that it is God who has determined how marriage ought to be.

This is exactly what we find in Jesus’ response to the Pharisees’ question in Matthew 19 – “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (v. 4-6). Our Lord’s answer reveals the fundamental aspects of God’s pattern for marriage.

It is significant that in answering the question Jesus quoted

from Genesis 2. These are the words that God spoke immediately after creating woman and bringing her to man. The attempt to “redefine” marriage to include homosexual unions fails to recognize this primary piece of God’s pattern – he made them “male and female.” From the beginning, God has intended that marriage be between one man and one woman. If God had desired anything else, here is where he would have made that known. Through legislation the governments of men can affirm that homosexual unions are no different from that between a man and a woman, but that does not make it so. God is the one who designed and gave mankind the institution of marriage and we have no right to change this or any other aspect of God’s pattern.

Notice further that in order for this union of one man and one woman to be established, their must be a leaving of “father and mother.” Those who deny that God has established a pattern for marriage must be aware of the fact that Adam did not have an earthly father or mother to leave. Why would God make such a statement unless he intended for this to be mankind’s pattern for marriage? This feature of God’s pattern should not be taken lightly. If either party in the marriage is unwilling to make this break with parents, disaster is the likely result. Also, it is necessary to point out that parents are responsible to encourage a child’s “leaving” in order to cleave to a spouse. Many marriages have encountered unnecessary difficulties because of a mother or a father who is unwilling to let go of their child.

Another element of God’s pattern for marriage is seen in the word “cleave.” When a man leaves father and mother, he is to cleave to his wife. Thayer defines this word

“to join one’s self to closely, cleave to, stick to” and it is a word that was used when one glued two objects together (p. 547). In his comments on this word Adam Clarke calls this a “beautiful metaphor, which most forcibly intimates that nothing but death can separate them: as a well-glued board will break sooner in the whole wood, than in the glued joint.” Jesus’ statement of verse 6, “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder,” harmonizes perfectly with the meaning and usage of the word “cleave.” God intends for marriage to be permanent.

When a man and a woman leave father and mother to cleave to each other, God creates something new. Jesus said of such a union, “Wherefore they are not more twain, but one flesh” (v. 6). A weaving of two lives into one has taken place. But notice that it is not just the man and the woman. God is involved in this joining of hearts and lives. Consider the statement that follows – “What God hath joined together let not man put asunder.” Marriage is not a social custom, neither is it simply an agreement between two people. God intended for marriage to be like a three-fold cord between himself, the man and the woman. The wise man Solomon said, “a threefold cord is not quickly broken” (Ecclesiastes 4:12). When a couple who plans to marry involves God in their lives as they should, it will enhance the likelihood that they will be together “till death do us part.”

God’s people should appreciate God’s pattern for marriage and do all within their power to uphold it.

76 Antioch Rd.
Somerville, AL 35670

Is There a Pattern for Authority? by Mel Futrell -----Continued from page 33

Third, Jesus is said to have taught as one having authority. This is evident by the closing verses of what we have come to call the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:28-29). There we read, “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine. For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” What He taught them was not His own doctrine “but his that sent me” (John 7:16). He was beyond question “a teacher come from God” (John 3:2). “Appealing to no other authority, Jesus taught in his own right and said that his authority (*exousia*) was from God” [Jack Lewis, *The Living Word Commentary*, Volume 2, p.118].

Fourth, we must have authority from God for all we do in religion. This authority, we believe, resides in the God-breathed volume the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The validity of this claim can be amply demonstrated from a host of New Testament passages like: John 4:24 with John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 5:7

with Romans 10:17; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11; 2 John 9. Because of space limitations we will focus on only one of these, Colossians 3:17, where we read, “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Of great interest to us is the expression “in the name of.” Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901), says of this expression it is “to do a thing...by one’s command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause” [Greek-English Lexicon, p.447]. Most obviously, to do a thing “in the name of the Lord Jesus” is to do it by His authority. In other words, to have His permission which is found in His word (John 12:48).

Fifth, preachers are to speak with authority. In Titus 2:15 Paul writes to Titus a gospel preacher and tells him, “These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.” Clearly then Titus was to speak with all authority—but how would he do

this? Certainly the answer is that he could do this only by speaking the authoritative word. Remember the power is not in me but rather the gospel (Romans 1:16-17). My role is important, however, I am a clay jar designed to pour forth the word of life (2 Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 2:16). Tom Holland was definitely correct when he wrote, “The preacher has no authority by virtue of ordination. The pulpit has no authority within itself. However, God’s word is authoritative. The man who declares God’s word may speak with authority” [*Encouraging Expository Preaching*, p.201].

Rebellion against the authority of God will no doubt continue both in and out of the church of Christ. Frankly, this antiauthority spirit is crippling the church. However, our plea must not change—and that plea is for a return to the pattern for authority.

959 Alford Ave.
Birmingham, AL 35226