

ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN: LESSONS IN PATTERN AUTHORITY

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *“Bible Authority” isn’t a new subject, and certainly not to this audience!*

1. We all know that we need positive scriptural authority for all that we do in the spiritual realm.

a) **Colossians 3:17 (KJV)**

b) **We also know that Bible authority is established by:**

(1) Direct Statement or Command

(2) Approved Example

(a) Secondly by inescapable conclusions drawn either from statements or examples.

B. *Recent discussions have caused me to realize, however, that “pattern authority” and how to apply it may not be understood by some.*

1. This lesson will attempt to address that vacuity.

II. DO ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN:

A. *Following “the” pattern is a scriptural principle and requirement.*

1. The Ark built by Noah:

a) **Genesis 6:14-16 (KJV)**

b) **Genesis 6:22 (KJV)**

c) **Genesis 7:5 (KJV)**

2. The Tabernacle:

a) **Exodus 25:9 (KJV)**

b) Exodus 25:40 (KJV)

c) Numbers 8:4 (KJV)

d) Hebrews 8:5 (KJV)

3. The Temple:

a) 1 Chronicles 28:11-12 (KJV)

b) 1 Chronicles 28:18-19

B. Understanding “Pattern Authority”?

1. Not all components of every Bible subject are found in a single passage of scripture. (Thus Paul’s instruction to “divide aright the word of truth – 2 Timothy 2:15). This being true, we have to assemble all the information from all the passages. This is, or becomes, the “pattern” for that subject.

2. Examples:

a) The Plan of Salvation.

(1) We do not learn all we need to know, even about initial obedience and forgiveness of sins, in John 3:16!

(a) Hear – Romans 10:17, etc.

(b) Believe – John 3:16; Mark 16:15-16, etc.

(c) Repent – Acts 17:30; Luke 13:3, etc.

(d) Confess – Matthew 10:32; Romans 10-9-10

(e) Baptism – Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 22:16, etc.

(i) In Water – Acts 8:36ff; Acts 10:47

(f) Faithful Continuance – Revelation 2:10, etc.

b) The Lord’s Supper.

(1) We do not learn all we need to know and apply about the Lord’s supper from a single passage!

(a) Institution – Matthew 26:26-30

(b) **Elements** – “bread & cup (fruit of the vine) – Matthew 26:26-28 cf. Luke 22:18) -- of the Passover feast – **unleavened bread** – cf. Exodus 34:25, Leviticus 23:5, Joshua 5:10, etc.

(c) **Purpose** – “remembrance of me” & “show the Lord’s death till He come” – 1 Corinthians 11:24-26

(d) **How** – **together** – Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:33

(e) **When** – **First Day of the Week** – Acts 20:7

(f) **Frequency** – **inescapable conclusion** – every first day of the week – Acts 20:7

(g) **Misuse** – 1 Corinthians 11:17, 20-22, 27

III. **APPLYING PATTERN AUTHORITY TO OTHER ISSUES:**

A. Nature of questions.

1. These questions are not “new” but “old”, they are not “deep” but “rudimentary.” While we may need to revisit these questions periodically for the benefit of those who are new to the faith and are babes in Christ, they should not need to be re-established for those who consider themselves “mature”. They should know.

a) Cf. Hebrews 5:12 (KJV)

2. Questions are usually good. We invite them. But when questions are asked and answered repeatedly, they can, and do, begin to gender strife.

a) Philippians 2:3 (KJV)

b) 2 Timothy 2:14-15 (KJV)

c) Titus 3:10 (KJV)

(1) Point: If you genuinely don’t know the answers, then ask those who do... do not raise the question to those who are ‘babes’ as if you are simply inquiring, then leave the untaught or unlearned with doubts. (that is what “subverting of the hearers” means)

B. Pattern Authority and the Assembly:

1. A command not to forsake the assemblies.

a) Hebrews 10:25 (KJV)

2. Examples of assemblies:

a) “Assembled with the church” –

(1) Acts 11:26 (KJV)

b) The Corinthian church “assembled”

(1) 1 Corinthians 11:18 (KJV)

(2) 1 Corinthians 11:20 (KJV)

c) The church at Troas assembled for the Lord’s supper.

(1) Acts 20:7 (KJV)

d) Cf. Acts 2:42; Acts 2:46-47; Acts 12:5; 1 Corinthians 14:23, 26, 34-35, etc.

(1) **Established? – The necessity to assemble!**

(2) **Established? – The NEED for a place to assemble.**

3. Where the church assembled.

a) The Temple.

(1) Acts 2:46 (KJV)

b) In Homes.

(1) Acts 5:42 (KJV)

(2) Romans 16:3-5 (KJV)

(3) Colossians 4:15 (KJV)

(4) Philemon 1:1-2 (KJV)

c) On the banks of a river.

(1) Acts 16:13-14 (KJV)

d) At a school.

(1) Acts 19:9-10 (KJV)

(a) Note from verse 8 that they had been meeting in the synagogue – “separated

the disciples”

e) In an unknown third story room.

(1) Acts 20:7-9

4. When the church met.

a) On the Lord’s day.

(1) Acts 20:7

(2) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

b) Daily.

(1) Acts 2:46

(a) *What time?*

(i) Evening, night, morning....Acts 20:7-12

(b) *How long? Acts 20:7-12 – a long time!*

5. How did they acquire their meeting place?

a) Did they have donated, borrow, rent, lease, buy, or, build?

(1) I suspect all of the above!

(2) We simply don’t know these details.

(3) This is an expedient!

(a) *We know they met.*

(b) *We know when they met.*

(c) *We know they needed a place to meet.*

(d) *We know (sometimes) where they met.*

(e) *We know (sometimes) how long they met.*

(f) *We don’t know how they acquired the place of meeting.*

- (i) Could have, with authority, done any of the above.
- (ii) Someone might say, "it is an assumption that they spent any monies on acquiring a place to meet."

(a) It is much larger assumption to assume that the early church allowed it's ability to provide a place for assembly to be at the mercy of unbelievers. Such was not the case in Acts 19:9-10!

(b) Why would we assume real estate economy to be different then, than now?

(g) The point is, the church is authorized to provide, by necessity, a place to assemble and carry out its work of teaching. Since the "how" to provide isn't specified either by command or example, it becomes an expedient.

6. Thus, "pattern authority" is established for assembly and a place to assemble.

C. Pattern Authority and the contribution. Some have argued that there isn't a "treasury" authorized in the New Testament, or that there isn't any authority for a collection every week, or that those funds collected on the first day of the week were limited to benevolence. Let us see if these are factual conclusions.

1. What the early church did:

a) Was authorized for, and preformed benevolence.

(1) 1 Corinthians 16:1-3

(2) 1 Timothy 5:16 (KJV)

(a) Sometimes took care of it's own.

(i) Acts 1:44-45

(ii) Incidentally, "all things common" meant that they shared what they had ... defined in verse 45!

(iii) Acts 4:34; 6:1-8.

(b) Sometimes sent its benevolence to other churches.

(i) Acts 11:27-30 – the church in Antioch sent to the brethren in Judea.

(ii) Romans 15:25; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 – churches in Macedonia, Achaia and Galatia sent to the church in Jerusalem to supply their need.

(c) Such benevolence, by example and command, was limited to needy saints. (Remember we are discussing the common treasury, or collection of the church here).

b) The church is authorized to provide for the preaching of the gospel, and to support financially those who do.

- (1) The church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15) – This is THE major work of the church.
- (2) The church at Thessalonica “sounded out the word of the Lord” --1 Thessalonians 1:8
- (3) Paul instructs the church at Corinth that those who preach the gospel are to live of the gospel.

(a) 1 Corinthians 9:4-13

(b) Note: this is not benevolence – 2 Corinthians 11:8 “taking wages of them, to do you service”

- (4) The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch.

(a) Acts 11:22 (KJV)

- (5) The church at Philippi had fellowship with Paul in the gospel.

(a) Philippians 1:3-5 (KJV)

(i) By the way, the evangelist had the prerogative to refuse support from a church.

(a) 2 Corinthians 11:7-9

c) How the church provided for it's financial needs.

- (1) Freewill contributions of individuals contributing to the collectivity (i.e. collection; treasury).

(a) “willing mind” – 2 Corinthians 8:12

(b) As purposed in hearts – 2 Corinthians 9:7

(c) Not of necessity – 2 Corinthians 9:7

- (2) What they gave.

(a) Money. Contributed what they sold – Acts 2:45; 4:34,37; 5:1,4,8.

(b) Those appointed to carry gifts to Jerusalem carried their contributions. – 1 Corinthians 16:3

(3) When they gave it.

(a) Upon the first day of the week – 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

(b) The fact that we do not have a time for giving specified for when the church contributed to the work of evangelism does not (silence authorizes nothing) indicate that another time other than the first day of the week is acceptable. (some were to answer this question well over a year ago).

(i) What we do have is a single command as to when the church was to contribute. The lack of any further information **limits us to that command!**

(4) What about frequency?

(a) Upon the first day of the week (every week)... how do we know?

(i) Other examples of similar situations:

(a) “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy “ – Exodus 20:8 – which one?

(b) “Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread” – Acts 20:7 – which one?

(ii) **We have the frequency for collection specified** – to claim only occasional collections “when there is a need” (subjective?) is an unsustainable assumption.

(5) Note: I do not have the time in one lesson to cover every item in the pattern concerning giving and receiving – for instance, the “how” of distribution is known in both benevolence and evangelism, but the “when” isn’t addressed --- Monday, Tuesday, etc., etc.

(a) The time of collection is known.

(b) The time of distribution isn’t

IV. **Conclusion:**

A. Let those who differ with this pattern learn to follow the Bible pattern.

1. If you think I’ve missed the mark or pattern, then correct it, but when you do, do it with positive Bible authority!