

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Finding the Pattern for the New Testament

In building the tabernacle, God told Moses to "make all things according to the pattern which was shown to you on the mountain," (Ex. 25:40). There is no reason to misunderstand that God gave Moses a pattern and He intended for him to follow it in all things. God also gave Moses a pattern for making the ark of the covenant, including how it was to be moved (Ex. 25:10-22). God gave a pattern to Noah for building the ark (Gen. 6:14-22). God expected these men to be obedient to the pattern given them. When these obedient men followed God's instruction did this mean they both had a "legalist" mind set? Rejecting the pattern is to reject the God who gave it. Are there lessons that we should learn from these obedient men? What lessons are there other than we should also follow the patterns that God has given us? Paul said, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction," (Romans 15:4).

God's word gives us a pattern as to "how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth," (1 Tim. 3:15). Jesus promised "I will build My church", (Matt. 16:18), of which, Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote that "God's household [church]", would be "built on the foundation of the apostles," with "Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone," (Eph. 2:20). The first century church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine," (Acts 2:42). Paul told Timothy to "instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines," (1 Tim. 1:3). Paul later wrote "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us [apostles]," (Phil. 3:17). Paul told Timothy, the evangelist, to "Retain the standard [pattern] of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus," (2 Tim. 1:13).

We should accept what Jesus and the apostles gave as the characteristics of the ONE church in the New Testament. This one church according to the pattern given in God's word, meets God's approval, and no other one will be accepted. Jesus said, "Every plant [church] which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted," (Matt. 15:13). The church which Jesus built is the church to which He adds the saved (Acts 2:41, 47). It is the one over which Jesus is head (Eph. 1:22-23) and for which He gave His blood (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28). Not only is Jesus the head of "the body, the church" (Col. 1:18), but He is also the Savior of the body (Eph. 5:23). There is in the pages of the New Testament the pattern for this one New Testament church and God expects us to be obedient to this pattern .

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:

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