

Introduction to Divine Patterning

by Bill and Karen Bishop

Our failure to recognize and learn from God's patterning is largely due to our western frame of mind. To understand God's ways, we need to adjust our way of thinking. We need to face the fact that our thought process is not the same as those who wrote the books of our Bibles. The authors of our Biblical text were not Americans; they were of Middle Eastern heritage, primarily from the Hebrew lineage. Their ways of speaking, writing, and reasoning were quite different than ours. That presents a problem for us when we try to interpret their writings. We are viewing what was written from the Hebraic mindset through western mindset glasses.

Hebrew is a complex language with multiple meanings for many words. The content of a simple sentence can actually imply a complexity of ideas. Much is lost in translation when we go from any language to another. This is especially true when translating Hebrew to English. It is difficult to put the complexity of Hebrew thought into simple English terms. It is much like trying to transfer college level thoughts into first grade words. Our English translations simply cannot cover all of the breadth of understanding to be gained from the Hebrew words in the original manuscripts. To complicate things further, the meanings of our English words themselves have evolved over the years since our English Bibles were first composed.

The cultural Hebraic style of writing is also an important consideration. For instance, patterning and order provide the framework for the Almighty to relate to Man. Our God is not a God of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). In contrast to confusion, God employs patterning and order.

The word "pattern" is used 16 times in the Word.

Exodus 25:40

(40) And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount.

Likewise, the word "order" is used some 100 times, and is in direct contrast to disorder.

Exodus 39:37

(37) The pure candlestick, with the lamps thereof, even with the lamps to

be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light,

Pattern and order mark the ways of God. His patterning, however, is alien to our way of thinking. Our way of looking at time in the western culture is to stretch it out in linear fashion. We use what is called a time line, which goes from the left (to designate the past) to the right (to designate the future). On this line, events are marked, and the line is often spliced to show how one segment ends so another can begin.

God's time line is not linear. It is spiraling in nature. Its segments are not divided away from and in opposition to one another, but flow together seamlessly. If we can picture a slinky or a flexible coil that is sitting upright and stretched to extend into the air, we have a pretty good frame of reference. If we would focus on a single circular segment in the midst of the coil, we would notice that it overlays other circular segments beneath it (to designate the past), and that it has other circular segments overlying it (to designate the future). Each of these circular segments looks just like the ones over and under it. The pattern rises up continually, unbroken. It is never spliced. It is contiguous. Because there are never any disruptions to this patterning, it provides consistent continuity between God and man.

Using the feasts of Leviticus 23, God provides a shadow typology of Y'shua's (Jesus') birth, life, crucifixion, and return to rule and reign. He calls them His feasts – not the feasts of the Jews. (That is something to consider, is it not?) If each circular segment on the spiral represents a year, then these feasts work their way around the circular formation each year, and the new year's feasts overlies those of the previous year in systematic perfection. That though, is only one example of God's perfect spiraling timeline. There are spirals within one another, even as seen in Ezekiel's wheels. The weeks spiral as well, with the new week perfectly overlying the one that came before it. On it goes, marking time in total synchronicity, and God's perfect spiral doesn't miss a beat.

One of man's favorite places to splice his linear timeline is at the cross of Y'shua. He uses the cross to sever the timeline, virtually isolating everything after the crucifixion from that which came before it.

In God's patterning this could never happen. The cross was an event in time, but all that came before is still inextricably joined to that moment in time, as well as to all that follows it. The pattern never so much as pauses, but moves continually forward. The circular spiraling layers that precede the cross continue to have bearing on all that follows the cross.

You see, the technique of God's spiraling pattern in relating time to us is not the only application of this principle. He uses the same type of relativity in His theological application. God's doctrinal Truth is revealed to us using this same technique, as the Word itself is based upon the same cyclical patterning. Just as God's spiraling time line is not meant to be severed, neither is His theological design to be severed. ALL VALID theological concepts emerge in systematic precision from the layers of principles that precede them.

In our western cultural setting, we are often taught just the opposite. Just as we are used to severing off segments of our western linear time line in a disjointed manner, the same mode of operation is used in our western theological philosophy. From our cultural standpoint, God's ways can start, stop, and abruptly change. This allows for a devastating incongruency of thought, resulting in distortions being presented to God's people behind many pulpits today. It has splintered theological ideology and resulted in divisions of the body - the formation of hundreds if not thousands of denominations in our current age. This has brought about considerable confusion, falsehood, and even strife within the ranks of Christendom.

Western thinking has conditioned us to be very finite in our conclusions, bringing distinct limitations to our understanding. When there are differences in thought, the prevailing sentiment is that one has to be right, and the other wrong. If one can prove the other to be wrong, then that brings victory by default. We embrace an "either/or" mentality. If I'm right, then you must be wrong, or if you're wrong, then I must be right. Actually, there is a "both/and" version that is much more accurate. Hebraically, there can be more than one valid answer for most theological questions. Because the Hebrew patterning contains layering, the Truth that is established on one layer can yield to further revelation of that Truth on another.

You see, in Hebrew thinking, there is expansion of thought built into God's eloquent patterning. There is always a foundational concept, and upon that concept is built a multiplex of understanding. There can be more than one way of viewing things, all of which are correct. However, there IS one manner of theological interpretation that is errant. When a theological construct is established without building it on an underlying Scriptural foundation, it will inevitably be wrong, and result in a dangerously errant message.

When a home is constructed, the foundation is put in place first. Then the walls are built upon the foundation. The ceiling is put upon the walls, then the roof over the ceiling. The ceiling isn't hung in the air without an

underlying structure. So it is with God's patterning. No valid doctrine can be formed without God's underlying structure, for anything formed without this structure ceases to be His Truth. This building of theological concepts is covered in the next article: "*The Progressive Nature of Divine Truth*".