

“Jesus Christ: The Head of the Church”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - pastorpat@waukeshabile.org
October 7, 2007

“He is also head of the body, the church” (Col. 1:18a).

What does it mean to be the “head” of the church? Jesus Christ as the head of the church is sighted in several passages within the New Testament.

“But I want you to understand that **Christ is the head of every man**, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3).

“For even as **the body is one and yet has many members**, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, **so also is Christ**” (1 Cor. 12:12).

⁹ “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, **the summing up of all things in Christ**, things in the heavens and things on the earth” (Eph. 1:9, 10).

²⁰ “which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²² And **He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church**, ²³ **which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all**” (Eph. 1:20-23).

“but speaking the truth in love, **we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ**” (Eph. 4:15).

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as **Christ also is the head of the church**, He Himself being the Savior of the body” (Eph. 5:23).

¹⁸ “Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and **not holding fast to the head**, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God” (Col. 2:18, 19).

Several observations can be made from these passages. First, there is only one head over the body and it is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 5:23). Second, the importance of the head in relation to all the other parts is stressed (Eph. 1:9, 10). Third, the head has a ruling authority over everything else (Eph. 1:20-23). Fourth, body stability is found in relation to the head (Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:18-19). We can say these are the “facts of headship as depicted in the Scripture,” but ultimately we must ask “what does this mean?”

Continued on the other side...

The head is an object of affection. It is through the head we come to relational intimacy. The head is what we cherish and love. It is the object of our energy. It is where we spend our time. Priorities are set and established in relation to the head. In the absence of the head, nothing else has life. The head brings sustenance to the body. From the head the body lives and breathes and has its being. Although the body can become sick and at times appear dysfunctional, its very life breath is found in its relation to the head. It is the head that reigns supreme over the body.

Jesus Christ is the head of the church. He is the object of our affection. He is the one through whom we have relational intimacy with the Tri-unity of God. He is to be cherished and loved. He is the object of energy expended. All of life in all of its complexities are set, established, and understood in relation to Him. In the absence of Jesus Christ nothing else matters.

Although His body, the church, can appear sickly and dysfunctional through petty and party divisions, its very life and health are completely dependent on and inseparably linked to Him.

It is a constant prayer that God would open the eyes of His people to see the beauty of His body, the church, as it exists in relation to the head, Jesus Christ. May the prayer of His people find their completion in the fuller revelation of Jesus Christ at His imminent appearance.