

The Head of the Church



“Unless you live in Christ, you are dead to God.”
ROWLAND HILL

REFLECTION and **PREPARATION**

A.W. Tozer once said, “To accept Christ is to know the meaning of the words, ‘as He is, so are we in this world.’ We accept His friends as our friends, His enemies as our enemies, His ways as our ways, His rejection as our rejection, His cross as our cross, His life as our life, and His future as our future.”

Have you truly accepted Christ?

LESSON AIM:

- To gain an understanding of the nature of Christ’s headship (Lordship) in the church and to discover what it means for us individually and corporately.

DISCUSSION: Is the following statement true or false? (circle one)

- You can have life in Christ yet live defeated in unbelief and sin. T F

THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST

We have learned in this study that Christ's headship is...

- God's order of *authority* over us.
- God's gift of *supremacy* to us.
- God's desire for *maturity* in us.
- God's picture of *security* for us.

5. Christ's headship is God's power of life in us.

Colossians 1:18— He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

There are three titles that demand consideration and interpretation before we make application.

1. He is the _____.

The term "**head**" (*kephale*) is also found in Col.2:10 and 2:19 and it speaks of Christ as the One to whom the body owes its life and from whom it derives its sustenance. What this means is that Christ alone directs and controls the body. He has never and will never appoint someone to perform this organic function.

2. He is the _____.

The word "**beginning**" (*arche*) is found in Revelation 3:14, 21:6, and 22:13. This title speaks of His life-giving initiative. He is not only the source of the church's life, the church owes its continued existence to Him.

3. He is the _____.

Thomas Bentley, the New Testament commentator makes this observation:

"To Him, as the Son of God, resurrection was not only foreordained, but it was also His presumptive right. His inherent sinlessness demanded it. For all others, resurrection was a matter of divine mercy; for Christ it was His due."¹⁰

"**First-born from the dead**" means *He is the first to rise to die no more*. He is called the firstborn from the dead because He is the Head of a new order, a new creation—the church.

¹⁰ Thomas Bentley, *Ritchie New Testament Commentaries, What the Bible Teaches*, p.315

Read these verses and think about what is promised to us because of Christ's resurrection.

- **Romans 8:11**—But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.
- **1 Corinthians 15:20**—But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.
- **1 Thessalonians 4:14**—For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.

His resurrection is a pledge that the redeemed shall also be raised.

Why have we spent so much time on this? The objective that Paul has in mind is found in verse 18 in the purpose clause... "*SO THAT...*"

- He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

What is the reason that God ordained Jesus to be the Head, the beginning and the firstborn from the dead?

What this means is that since there is no sphere where Christ is not supreme, there should be no place in our lives (thoughts, attitudes, desires, actions) where He is not supreme.

Is there any area of your life where His Headship is challenged?

- Any relationship?
- Any activity?
- Any ambition?

Would you join in praising God with David who said;

1 Chronicles 29:11-12—Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all. ¹² Both riches and honor *come* from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.



HART-TO-HEART

Jody Hart, *Editor and Director Mountaintop Resources*

Get in on It!

David Platt said that “we are prone to disconnect God’s blessings in our lives from God’s purpose for our lives.” Let us not leave this study on the headship of Christ simply marveling in how blessed we are to have Him as our Head. We are, in fact, blessed! He rules over us in love, He is supreme in all the earth and we share in that supremacy, He is actively maturing us into His likeness, and we have eternal security in Him! Amen, and amen. All these blessings of headship are not to end at us. Rather, they are all to point back to Him. So that all the earth may declare His praise. So that when all of time has ended, He will be shown to be supreme over all.

Everything on this earth is leading to one place, to one final point in history, to one grand finale, if you will. Christ will be shown, for every eye to see, as the supreme Lord of all!

As we consider all we have learned about His headship and how that impacts our own lives, let us remember those around us and how this headship affects them as well. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are part of this same blessing...rejoice with and encourage them! Unbelievers all around us face a day when His headship will be clearly seen...but we want them to see Him now! Let us prayerfully consider how we can be a part of making His salvation know among all the nations (*Ps.67:7*). As David Platt said, “If you know where all history is headed, get in on it!”

ANSWER KEY:

DISCUSSION

- **False**—Christians will go through times of unbelief and defeat, but this will not be how they live.

5. Christ's headship is God's power of life in us.

1. He is the head.
2. He is the beginning.
3. He is the first-born from the dead.

What is the reason that God ordained Jesus to be the Head, the beginning and the firstborn from the dead?

So that He Himself will come to have first place in everything!

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.