

## CHRIST'S HEADSHIP IN CHURCH AND HISTORY

### CHRIST HEAD OF ALL THINGS

The following Scriptures show Christ's headship:— (i) **By creation**. John 1:13, Col. 1: 15–17, Heb. 12–3, 1 Cor., 8:5–6, and this headship is ontological. In one sense we should say 'The headship of the Word', 'the headship of the eternal Son', but because the Word (John 1: 1–4) the Son (Heb 1:2–3) has become incarnate, the terms 'Jesus', 'Jesus Christ', and 'Christ Jesus', are used even when speaking of his being prior to, and being at, creation. (ii) **By redemption**, i.e. by his victory of the Cross (Gal. 1:4, 2:19–20, 6:14, Col. 2:14–15, II Tim. 1:10, Heb. 2:14–15), by his resurrection (Acts 2:15, Rom. 1:4, I Pet. 1: 13, Rom. 5: 10, Rom. 10:9) for his resurrection makes him Lord over both death and life. He is also Lord by his ascension (John 16: 10, Acts 2:33–36, 5:31 Heb. 1:3, 1:13).

What is immensely important is that Christ has been made, and continues to be 'head over all things' as is set out in Eph. 1:20–13. His Lordship is not only to do with his being prior to his incarnation (cf. John 17:13, 20ff., Phil. 2:5ff., Rom. 8:3, Gal. 4:4), but it is in Christ that God has planned all (Ephes. 1:3–14, 3:1–11, etc.). II Cor. 1:19–22 (cf. Luke 24:25, 44f.) shows us that Christ is the heart, substance and fulfillment of all things.

#### Christ The Head of All Things For The Church

Eph. 1:21 (cf. Col. 2: 10) makes him head over all things, for (i) he created them (Col. 1: 16–17) and (ii) he renews and unifies all things, 'filling them up', 'reconciling', and 'harmonising' them, for it is impossible both creationally and redemptively that they should be outside his control (ii) Ephes. 1:20f. (cf. Heb. 1:3, Heb. 10:12–13) is linked with Psalm 110: 1 f., and also connected with Psalm 2 (cf. Heb. 5:5–6). 'For the church' means that his victory (Jesus is Lord) means (a) that since he rules all things his church is kept in victory and true supremacy, and (b) that it is ministers with him, fighting with him in this last age to defeat and destroy the enemies (I Cor. 15:24–28, cf. Rev. 152) so that they will be one with him 'in the age to come'.

#### Christ Is Head Of The Church.

Statements regarding this fact are: – (i) Eph. 4: 15, (ii) Col. 1: 18, (iii) Eph. 5:23 (cf. Rev. 19:6–9, Rev. chs 21–22) (iv) Eph. 2:19–20, cf. I Pet. 4:6–8), (v) Col. 19, 13, 9–10. Rev. 1:12–20, cf. 2A, 8, 12, 18, 13, 7, 14 show his practical headship, and his strong control over his church, consonant with Rev. 1: 12–13 where the glorified Christ is in the midst of the [sevenfold] church.

What then are the purposes and functions of his Headship of the church? Being ontologically Head, the Vine, the Shepherd, the Bridegroom, the true High Priest, the True Prophet, and the True King of the people of God all indicate that Christ as Head is 'the source and origin' of his people, but also Leader and Ruler of them, and for them. The Body has its identity only in him, receiving the benefits of his multi-faceted Headship, i.e. over the Family, Head of the branches as the Vine, Head of members of the Body, Shepherd of the Flock, thus his people operating prophetically, as the priestly and worshipping community, the royal community, being his Bride. He has given to the Body his own fulness, hence they share with him in the fruits of his victory (Eph. 4:7ff.), and presently fight evil powers with him (I Cor. 15:24–28). In him they participate in God's plan for history. We must closely examine II Cor. 11: 1 ffr. and in fact all the triumphalism (along with the philosophy of non-suffering) of the 'super apostles', and the nominated false apostles, as well as their heresiarchs spoken of in Acts, the Epistles and the Revelation.

## The Life of the Head and the Body

The Head has given to the body:–

- (i) the mandate for proclaiming the Gospel,
- (ii) the gifts of ministry (Eph. 4:7–11),
- (iii) the gifts for ministry,
- (iv) the leadership of the eldership,
- (v) the weapons for warfare,
- (vi) the grace for community life – grace flowing continuously from the Father and the Son, via the Spirit,
- (vii) the power for the internal life of the church, for proclamation of the Gospel to the world, and for fighting the forces of darkness.

If the Body remains true to the Head then Head and Body work as one. If the Body is ‘headless’ (the Flock Shepherdless, The Branches without the Vine, the Priesthood without the Priest, etc.) then there is chaos and an unontological situation, i.e. chaos and tragedy. We should closely examine (a) Ephes. 4:11–16, especially 4: 15, and Col. 2:16ff. especially 2:19. We must also see the references which speak of Christ’s relationship to the church in Rev. chs. 2 and 3. Christ is in the midst of the church, showing his Headship in dynamic ways, rebuking, encouraging, judging, executing judgement, and helping in the conflict.

## The Head, and His Appointed Heads of the Church

In our last study we saw the following

- (i) **The fact of leadership:**– See Acts 14:23, 15:6, 20:17, 28, Ephes. 4:11; 1Thess. 5: 12, 1 Tim 3:lff., 5:17f., Titus. 1:5ff., Heb. 117, 17, 1 Pet. 5:lff. cf. Rev. 4:4 (etc.). Note:– The Elders in the Revelation are spoken of as male.
- (ii) **Terms for leadership:** ‘rulers’ (*hegoumenoi*), Heb. 13:7, 17, 24, cf. Acts 15:22, ‘overseers’ (*episcopoi*), Acts 20:28, Phil. 1A, I Tim. 3:1,2, Titus 1:7 ‘those over you’ (*proistamenous*), I Thess. 5:12 (cf. I Tim 14,5,12), ‘elders’ (*presbuteroi*), Acts 11:30, 14:23, 15:2,4,6,22,23, 16A, 20:17, 21:18, 1 Tim. 5:1, 17,19, Titus L5, James 5:14, 1 Pet. 5: 1, ‘pastors’ or, ‘shepherds’ (*poimenas*), Eph. 4:11, cf. John 10: 1– 16, Heb. 13:20, 1 Pet. 2:25. All these are male.
- (iii) **The task of teaching belongs to elders** (1 Tim. 12, 6:17, Titus 2:9, see Acts 20:17ff.), whilst women can learn ( I Tim. 2:11, cf I Cor. 14:35). Older women can teach younger women (Titus 2:3), with perhaps a husband–wife pair also able to teach (Acts 18:26).

The questions then remains as (a) to the total relationship of each member (person) to Christ as Head, (b) the corporate relationship of the community to Christ as Head, (c) the place of the Eldership as the entity through which Christ speaks and leads (cf. Acts 15:6, 19–20, 22), and (d) the entity by which Christ teaches the true word, and confutes heresy, wrong doctrine and wrong practice (Titus L5–16, Jude 14) etc. We also have to see the place and authority of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, and the relationship to the head through the elders and them, as well as members to members ( Eph. 5:20, 1 Cor. chs. 12 to 14, Acts 2:42ff., 4: 32:33, Phil. 2Aff. Ephes. 4:lff.) and all members working together under their Head.