

Christ — The Supreme Head Of The Church

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Eph. 1:

Eph. 1:22-23, *“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”*

Col. 1:18, *“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”*

There is no truth more prominent in the New Testament than the fact that Jesus Christ is the Supreme Head of His body, the church.

There are various figures of speech used in the New Testament to picture to us the church, and Christ is supreme in each one of them.

The church is a kingdom

Matt. 16:16-19, *“And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

Under this metaphor we see the governmental feature of the church.

Christ purchased the church with His own blood. Acts 20:28, *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”*

Those to whom He loosed from sin by His blood, He has made these to be His kingdom.

Rev. 1:5-6, *“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”*

Inasmuch as Christ purchased the church with His own blood, and those whom He loosed from the sins He has made to be a kingdom; therefore, it inevitably follows that the church and the kingdom are the same.

In Peter's sermon on Pentecost he declared that God raised up Christ to sit on David's throne. Acts 2:29-30, "*Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.*"

So it follows that Christ is sitting on David's throne now, or else He has not been raised from the dead.

What follows if Christ has not been raised from the dead? Our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins. 1 Cor. 15:17, "*And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*"

At Christ's second coming He will cease to be king, for He will then relinquish the kingdom to God. 1 Cor. 15:24-26, "*Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*"

The church is a body

- 1 Cor. 12:27, "*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*"
- Eph. 5:30, "*For we are all members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*"

In this metaphor we see the fellowship feature of the church and the great New Testament principle of unity.

Just as there is harmony in the physical body, so there should be unity in the body of Christ, which is His church. Rom. 12:4-5, "*For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*"

But why is there concord in the physical body? Because every member of the body is subject to the head and only one head.

If all who profess to be members of Christ's body would recognize Christ as the supreme Head, there would be no such things as denominations, factions, and divisions.

Christ was not made the head of the church until after He was raised from the dead. Before His death He acknowledged that He could do nothing of Himself. John 5:19, “...*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.*”

But after His resurrection he said, Matt. 28:18, “... *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*”

But Christ was raised from the dead to die no more. Rom. 6:9, “*Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.*”

Therefore, Christ will never die again and relinquish His place as Head over His church to any mortal.

Jesus shall continue to be “*the head over all things to the church*” (Eph. 1:22), until He shall at His second coming “*deliver up the kingdom to God.*” (1 Cor. 15:24).

Therefore, we do not have to look to any mortal on earth as the head of the church, and any institution of which some man or woman is the head just cannot be Christ’s church.

The church is a temple

1 Cor. 3:16-17, “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*”

Here we see expressed the worship feature of the church.

Christ is the High Priest “over the house of God.”

- Heb. 4:14, “*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*”
- Heb. 10:21, “*And having an high priest over the house of God.*”

Being our High Priest, it is through Him that we approach God.

- John 14:6, “*Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”
- Heb. 10:20, “*By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.*”

Since it is through Him that we come unto the Father, there is no part of our worship that is acceptable unto God unless it be done according by the authority of Christ. Col. 3:17, “*And whatsoever ye*

do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

For this reason churches of Christ everywhere are exceedingly cautious to exclude from the worship everything for which we cannot find a “*thus saith the Lord*” in the New Testament.

Therefore, it should behoove us not to worship God as did Noah under the patriarchal dispensation, or as the Israelites did under the Jewish dispensation, but the divine pattern for our worship today is that of the apostolic church of the first century of the Christian dispensation.

When a congregation in those days assembled for worship on the Lord’s Day, it engaged in five distinct acts of worship, which were:

The observing of the Lord’s Supper: Acts 20:7, “*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow...*”

Preaching: Acts 20:7 (see above).

Contributing of money: 1 Cor. 16:2, “*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*”

Praying: 1 Thess. 5:17-18, “*Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*”

And singing praises to God, which was rendered without the aid of mechanical instruments of music: Eph. 5:19, “*Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*”

Anything less or more than this is not according to the apostolic order.

The church is the army of the Lord

This metaphor expresses the fighting feature of the church.

Jesus Christ is our Commander-in-chief. Heb. 2:10, “*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*”

All Christians are soldiers in the Lord’s army.

- 1 Tim. 1:18, “*This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare,*”

- 1 Tim. 6:12, “*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*”
- Eph. 6:10-17, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*”

Paul said to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:3-4, “*Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*”

There is no place in God’s service for a moral coward. The Lord told Gideon to send home all in his army who were “*fearful and afraid*” (Judges 7:3). Even though it took more than two thirds of his army, God had rather have the smaller number of brave souls, than the larger number intermixed with a cowardly element.

The apostle Paul was a fighter. He was not a man of neutrality. He fought for his convictions. He said in Phil. 1:17, “*... I am set for the defence of the gospel.*”

Paul never gave up; he never used the words, “surrender” or “retreat.” He met the devil on every front. He met traitors, false brethren, and false teachers; yet he said, “*But none of these things move me ...*” (Acts 20:24).

Hence, when Paul came to the end of life’s battle, he could know with assurance the outcome. 2 Tim. 4:6-8, “*For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*”

The church is a vineyard

Matt. 20:1, “*For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.*”

Under this emblem we see expressed the working feature of the church. Matt 20:2-16, “*And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went after their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.*”

In the Lord’s Parable of the Labourers in the very first verse of this account we see three things said here by our Lord:

The householder went out to “... hire labourers into his vineyard ...”

He did not try to scare or force them into his vineyard. Neither will the Lord bring any person into His service by coercion. He is calling for volunteers; He drafts no one into His army.

The householder went out to “... hire labourers into his vineyard ...”

He did not want shirkers or loafers. There is no place in the kingdom of God for a lazy man. We are to be “*zealous of good works*” (Titus 2:14).

The householder went out “... hire labourers into his vineyard ...”

Hence, it makes a difference where the work is done; it must be done in His vineyard.

Jesus said in Matt. 7:21-23, “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”

How necessary, then, it is to be in the Lord’s vineyard.

Conclusion

So, if you want to be a citizen in Christ’s kingdom, a member of His body, a worshiper in His temple, a soldier in His army, and a laborer in His vineyard, you must be in His church, for He has no citizens outside His kingdom, He has no members outside His body, He has no worshippers outside His temple, He has no soldiers outside His army, He has no labourers outside His vineyard.

Will you respond to His precious invitation, and in obedience to His gospel, be added by His grace to His church?

How can a person become a member of His church? One must become a Christian. The following are the steps necessary to make that happen:

- **Faith.** Heb. 11:6, “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*” When I was in high school (I was about 17 years old), a neighbor boy my same age told me he was an atheist. Since I had been baptized, I took the opportunity to talk to him about the scriptures. He told me that he could see that living the life of a Christian was good, but he wasn’t sure if he believed there was a God. But to be on the safe side, maybe he should go to church, and when he dies and stands before God (if there is a God) on the day of Judgment (if there is a Judgment), maybe if God sees that he has gone to church and lived a good life that God would send him to heaven (if there is a heaven), and not to hell (if there is a hell). I told him, “It doesn’t work that way. You have to believe in Him with all your heart or you cannot please Him.”

- **Repentance.** Acts 2:38, *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”* Acts 11:18, *“... Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”* If while you were sleeping, you heard a noise in the other room, and you think to yourself, “There’s a burglar in my house!” So you reach for your cell phone, and as quietly as you can, you call the police, tell them there is a burglar in your house, and you give them your address. Soon, you heard them arrive and capture the thief. He yells, “I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” What is he sorry for? He is sorry that he got caught; not that he stole. In true repentance the thief would be sorry that he ever stole and wants to change his life so that he would never steal again. That is true repentance. It is a change of mind that brings about a change of action. That is what we have to do before we can become a Christian.
- **Confession.** Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* What do we confess? That we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Note that in the above scriptures that faith (believing), repentance, and confession are “**UNTO**” righteousness, life, or salvation. “Unto” means toward something; not that one has already attained.

- **Baptism.** It is baptism where righteousness, life, and salvation are attained. Jesus, himself, was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, *“But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* (Matt. 3:14-17). Jesus was baptized because God said it was the right thing to do. Did you see how pleased God was about Jesus being baptized? Jesus also said *“it becometh **us** to fulfil all righteousness.”* We

are baptized because it fulfills His righteousness, not because it is of our righteousness.

In fact, if we are not baptized, we are still in our sins. “*Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*” (Acts 2:38). Peter, what did you say the reason of baptism is? “*for the remission of sins*”. Why would anyone want to leave out the step that removes our sins?

Jesus commanded that to reach salvation we must be baptized. “*And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Mark 16:15-16).

Ananias told Saul (before he was rename Paul) the very same thing, “*And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16). Baptism is a requirement given by God.

Baptism is called a burial. “*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*” (Rom. 6:4). Our old man is to be dead to us. “*Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” (Rom. 6:3-6). Baptism is God’s blueprint for applying the blood of Christ in our lives by baptism. We are free from our old sins only when we are baptized.

This doesn’t mean “sprinkling. The scripture above says baptism is a burial. We don’t take a dead body to the cemetery and sprinkle a little dirt over it; we bury the body.

If you have not yet become a member of Christ’s church, won’t you consider it today?

