

## Intro:

I wasn't satisfied with our message on this subject last week – I think that what I said was biblical, but I really wanted to get across more ideas on the subject of *The Head of Our Church*. So... this message is *The Head of Our Church (2)*.

When we use the term “head”, one of the primary meanings is one of authority and leadership:

Noun: Dictionary.com (out of 38 noun meanings)

4. the position or place of leadership, greatest authority, or honor.
5. a person to whom others are subordinate, as the director of an institution or the manager of a department; leader or chief.

Adjective: Dictionary.com (out of 5 adjective meanings)

1. first in rank or position; chief; leading; principal: a head official.

Verb: Dictionary.com (out of 16 verb meanings)

1. to go at the head of or in front of; lead; precede: to head a list.

...

3. to be the head or chief of (sometimes fol. by *up*): to head a school; to head up a department.<sup>1</sup>

Now, I go through all that to emphasize the idea of authority and leadership contained in the word ‘head’.

It seems to me that it is vital that we understand what it means for Jesus Christ to be the head of the church.

It is even more vital to understand what it means for Jesus Christ to be the head of *our* church.

Read Mt 16.13-18

**Proposition:** The headship of Jesus Christ over His church means our church and your life must be ordered in conformity to His will.

## I. The authority of Jesus Christ over the church (Mt 16.18)

A. A comment on ‘this rock’

1. Peter just made the essential confession of Christian faith: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God” [Everything else about

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<sup>1</sup> head. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1)*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/head> (accessed: September 20, 2008).

Christian doctrine depends on this statement.]

2. Jesus declares two things concerning this statement
  - a. Peter's understanding and faith in it is dependent on the revelation of God
  - b. The Lord will use this statement as the founding doctrine of his church

B. The notion of 'my church'

1. The Greek word (ἐκκλησία → ecclesiology, ecclesiastical)
  - a. An assembly of people 'called out' for a particular purpose (Greek political word, 'citizen assembly', see Ac 19.39)
  - b. The term is intended to speak of a new body, distinct from Israel, made up of the followers of Jesus
2. The church is yet future when Jesus made the statement
  - a. It's establishment is dependent on coming events
  - b. It's establishment rests on the efficacy of the work that
    - 1) Purchases the church with His own blood (Ac 20.28)
    - 2) Declares himself to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead (Rm 1.4)
3. The church belongs to Jesus Christ
  - a. He founded it
  - b. He created it
  - c. He owns it
  - d. He is in authority over it

C. The endurance of his church: the gates of hell shall not prevail

## II. The emphasis of the New Testament is on the local church

- A. The whole body of New Testament references almost universally speaks of local congregations as 'the church'
- B. A few references refer to something else
  1. A political assembly (Ac 19.32, 39-40)
  2. Some references seem to refer to all Christians in all times

- a. Eph 1.22
- b. Col 1.18

C. Nevertheless, the whole emphasis (over 100 references) of the NT is on local congregations as “the church”

One writer puts it this way: “Every true early Christian congregation was just as good a representation of the whole body as the primitive congregation at Jerusalem. The fact that individual congregations gradually formed larger organisations leaves an impression of development from the individual to the corporate. But we must not be dominated by this impression. What counts is that the congregation took itself to be representative of the whole Church.”<sup>2</sup>

From this notion, we want to address especially the way in which the Lord Jesus is Head of the Church by his current work of oversight over every local church...

### **III. An important current activity of Jesus Christ is oversight of every local church (Rev 2-3)**

A. He evaluates every local church.

- 1. Rev 2.2
- 2. Rev 2.9
- 3. Rev 2.13
- 4. Rev 2.19
- 5. Rev 3.1
- 6. Rev 3.8
- 7. Rev 3.15

B. He rebukes error in local churches

- 1. Rev 2.4
- 2. Rev 2.14
- 3. Rev 2.20

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<sup>2</sup> K. L. Schmidt, “ἐκκλησία” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976). 3:535.

C. He calls churches to repentance and warns of consequences

1. Rev 2.5
2. Rev 2.16
3. Rev 3.2-3
4. Rev 3.18

D. He exhorts churches to faithfulness

1. Rev 2.10
2. Rev 3.11

And, as always, there are messages to faithful individuals in every church, promising rich rewards if they overcome and remain steadfast to the end.

Our focus, however, is on the churches, not the individuals.

What do we want you to see?

- The Lord Jesus as head of the church has direct authority over every church, including this one.

## Conclusion:

What does the Lord see when he sees our church?

Does he see a people thoroughly committed to the mission of the church?

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**Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”<sup>19</sup>  
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

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If the Lord Jesus Christ were to speak to you about your part in the church, and demand that you change, what would you do?

- Are you prepared to have him change your cherished belief system?
- Are you prepared to have him challenge your comfortable lifestyle?
- Are you prepared to have him remove your errors?

That is what it means for the Lord Jesus to be Head of the Church.

Is he the head of our church? May our submitted hearts make it so.