

Is Jesus Christ Head In Your Fellowship?

Colossians 1:18 [King James] *“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.”*

Notice it is “*in all things*” that Jesus Christ is to have prominence.

Ephesians 1:17-23 [NIV] *“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fulness of him who fills everything in every way.”*

Jesus Christ has total power over the Church as it’s “*head over everything.*”

This statement that we find in the Scriptures, God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is very clear, there are **no** exceptions to the decisions that are made within any Christian fellowship.

Does Jesus Christ have this authority in your Christian fellowship?

The remarks that I am about to make are observations made during my many years as a minister in a free church.

I acknowledge that I myself have been involved in the situation that I now deplore.

As Ezra in his prayer of intercession included himself among the wrongdoers, so do I. [**Ezra 9:6**]

My burden is that Jesus Christ has today almost **no** authority at all among the groups that call themselves by His name.

By these I do **not** mean the Roman Catholics, liberals or the various quasi-Christian cults.

My burden covers Protestant churches generally and include those who protest the loudest that they are in spiritual descent from Jesus Christ and His apostles, namely, the evangelicals.

The present position of the above listed churches may be likened to a king in a limited, constitutional monarchy.

The king, sometimes depersonalised by the term “*the crown*” is in such a country no more than a traditional rallying point, a pleasant symbol of unity and loyalty much like a flag or national anthem.

The king is lauded, feted and supported, but his real authority is small.

Nominally the king is head over all, but in every crisis someone else makes the decisions.

On formal occasions the king appears in royal attire to deliver a speech that has been put into his mouth by the real rulers of the country.

The whole thing is rooted in antiquity and no-one wants to give it up.

“All hail the Power of Jesus’ name” may be the Church’s national anthem and the cross her official flag, but the week by week services and meeting of the church and the day-to-day conduct of her members it is someone other than Jesus Christ who makes the decisions.

Jesus Christ is allowed to say “*come to me, all who are weary and burdened*” or “*do not let your heart be troubled*” but when this is said, someone else takes over.

Those in actual authority decide the moral standards of the fellowship, as well as all objectives and the methods employed to achieve them.

The authority of Jesus Christ may even be taught as a theory but it is rarely applied in a practical way of living.

The idea that the man Jesus Christ has absolute and final authority over the whole Church and over all its members in every detail of their lives, is simply not now accepted as true by the rank and file of evangelical Christians.

To avoid the hard necessity of either obeying or rejecting the plain instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ, as found in the New Testament of the Christian Bible, we take refuge in a liberal interpretation of them.

Saying that Jesus Christ simply could **not** have meant what He said, so His teachings are accepted only theoretically after they have been weakened by interpretation.

I now offer some concrete proof to support what I have just written.

Let anyone reading this who has had experience on a church board or council try to recall the times or time when the members read from the Scripture to make a point or when any chairman suggested that the brethren should see what instructions the Lord Jesus Christ had for them on a particular question.

The prayer before the meeting is for divine help to carry out their plans. Apparently the idea that Jesus Christ might have some instructions for them never so much entered their heads.

Who can remember when a conference chairman brought his Bible to the table with him for the purpose of using it?

Jesus Christ is desired as their helper, **not** as their Lord.

Human means are devised to achieve ends are assumed to be divine, these are hardened into policy, and thereafter the Lord Jesus Christ doesn’t even get a vote.

In the conduct of public worship where do we find the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ?

We sing to Him, we preach about Him, but He must **not** interfere.

We worship our way, and it must be the right way, because we have always done it this way, as have other fellowships in our group.

What Christian when faced with a moral problem goes straight to the Sermon on the Mount or other New Testament scriptures for an authoritative answer?

Who lets the words of Jesus Christ or His original Holy Spirit inspired apostles as recorded in the New Testament be final on giving birth control, the bringing up of a family, personal habits, tithing, entertainment, buying, selling or other such important matters?

The causes at the back of this decline in the authority of Jesus Christ in His Church are many, I would like to mention two major ones.

One is the power of custom, precedent and tradition with the older religious groups.

Not Jesus Christ is Lord but custom is lord in this situation.

Custom is a constant pressure on all decisions made just like gravity.

The second is the revival of intellectualism among the evangelical churches.

This, if I sense the situation correctly, it is **not** so much a thirst for learning the truth but for a personal reputation being attained.

Because of it good men who ought to know better are being placed in a position of collaborating with the enemy.

Our enemy Satan comes against the Christian Church in the name of philosophy or psychology or anthropology, and urges us to rethink our historical position or to be less rigid, more tolerant, more broadly understanding.

For the true Christian the one supreme test for the present soundness and ultimate worth of everything religious must be the place that our Lord Jesus Christ occupies in it.

Is Jesus Christ Lord or a symbol of our religion?

Is Jesus Christ in charge of this project in our fellowship or is He just one of the crew?

Does Jesus Christ decide things, initiate them, or does He just carry out the plans of others?

All religious acts from the simplest act of an individual Christian to the ponderous and expensive operations of a whole denomination, may be proved by the answer to a simple question.

Is Jesus Christ Lord in this act?

1 Corinthians 3:9-20 [NIV] *“For we are God’s fellow-workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no-one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple. Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a ‘fool’ so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: ‘He catches the wise in their craftiness’; and again, ‘The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.’”*

Whether our works will prove to be wood, hay and stubble or gold and silver and precious stones in the Great Day of Judgement will depend on the right answer to this simple question.

Your response to this hard hitting article may be one of three possible choices.

- 1) Rise up in shocked indignation and accuse me of irresponsible reporting.
- 2) Nod in general agreement with what is written but take comfort in the fact there are exceptions and our fellowship is among the exceptions.
- 3) In meek humility confess that we have grieved the Holy Spirit and dishonoured our Lord Jesus Christ in failing to give Him the place His Father has given Him as Head and Lord of the Church.

Which path you take as an individual or a fellowship is yours to choose, but the outcome **is** in the hands of Jesus Christ Who **is** the Head and **is** the Lord of the true Christian Church.