

THE EXALTED CHRIST...HEAD OF HIS CHURCH

The Master's Plan For His Church

Colossians 1:15-23

Ephesians can be labeled the epistle portraying the “*Church of Christ*”...**Colossians** shows Jesus as “*Christ of the Church*.” **Ephesians** focuses on the *Body* (the church), **Colossians** focuses on the *Head* (Christ). Paul’s purpose is to show that Christ is *Preeminent...first and foremost in everything*...and the Christian’s life should *reflect* that priority. Because believers are *rooted* in Him, *alive* in Him, *hidden* in Him, *complete* in Him, it is utterly inconsistent for us to *live life without Him*. Clothed in His *love*, with His *peace* ruling in our hearts, we are *equipped* to make Christ first in every area of life. This is a picture of what it is to be “*in Christ*” and for Christ to be “*in us*.”

“...We are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head...”

~Ephesians 4:15

“He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.”

~Ephesians 1:22

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

~Ephesians 5:23

Although we are to do everything we can in the church by *witnessing*, *serving*, and *ministering*, it is the *power* of Christ that *makes everything work*. We give *supreme effort*, but if anything happens, it is because of Christ. It is a great comfort to know that *even when we fail*, He *succeeds*. Christ is our *Head*...and without Him *we can do nothing* (**John 15:5**).

I. HE IS THE SAVIOR:

Three things in this text point to the *saving work* of Christ on behalf of His church.

• His NAME.

In **Matthew 1:21**, we read, “*...You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*”

Jesus means “*Jehovah saves*.” It’s the Greek form of the OT name *Joshua*. It is the name of One who *saves*.

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

~Acts 4:12

“Jesus said to him (Thomas), ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.’”

~John 14:6

Jesus’ name speaks of His *saving work*!

• His BLOOD.

God *required* that there had to be *bloodshed* to deal with *sin* (**Genesis 3:21**). Every Jewish person knew that the ratification of the **Old Covenant** in **Leviticus 17:11** was by *blood*. The *New Covenant*...the *covenant of grace*...was also by blood.

Whereas the *priests* of **Israel** had to repeatedly make *sacrifices* in the holy place, Christ made *one sacrifice*, and *purchased eternal redemption* for us.

“When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He

entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”

~Hebrews 9:11-12

“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”

~Matthew 26:28

“...This cup is the new covenant in My blood...”

~I Corinthians 11:25

“...All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

~Hebrews 9:22

- **His RESURRECTION.**

When we think of Christ’s *resurrection*, we tend to only see it *as a means* to our own *resurrection*. But there is much more to it. The *resurrection* of Jesus Christ is the *single greatest affirmation* of the Father’s approval of Jesus’ *saving work*. When the Father *raised* Jesus from the dead, He was *affirming* that Jesus had *accomplished* what He had gone to the cross to do.

II. HE IS THE SHEPHERD:

Jesus is called **shepherd** *three times* in the New Testament...

“I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

~John 10:11

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

~I Peter 5:4

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord.”

~Hebrews 13:20

- **He PROTECTS us...**Many times the Bible refers to *ungodly people* as *sheep without a shepherd*...but believers are sheep *with* a Shepherd.
- **He EQUIPS us...**He tells us to put on the *armor of God* (**Ephesians 6:10-18**). Our Lord not only *protects* us but also *intercedes* for us and *equips* us. Just as a shepherd would *protect* his sheep by *fighting off* a *predator*, the Lord Jesus Christ *fights off* the *adversary* who constantly comes before the throne of God to *accuse* Christians.
- **He NUTURES us...**As our *Shepherd*, He *nurtures* us, *cherishes* us, and *equips* us to do His will.

III. HE IS THE SOVEREIGN:

Jesus Christ is *Lord*...the *Sovereign* of His church. And He *manifests* His *sovereignty* in the church in *two key ways*.

- **He RULES His Church.**

As Lord of His church, He is its *ruler*. If anyone asks who is in *authority* of JBC, we tell them *“Jesus Christ!”* The NT teaches that Christ *rules* His church through a *plurality* of godly men, or *elders*. (**Ephesians 1:22**; **Ephesians 4:15**; and **Ephesians 5:23**) (**Colossians 1:18**).

- **He TEACHES His Church.**

The Lord’s will is *revealed* through His *Word*, through *prayer*, and through *human instruments* and *providential circumstances*...but He is the *Teacher*. He *teaches* us through the Word and His Spirit.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

~John 14:26

As a pastor, I’m not to give you ***my own opinion*** of things. I’m not to talk about ***social issues*** that aren’t related to the Word of God. I’m to ***open*** the Word of God to you so that ***you may know*** the ***mind of Christ*** and the ***heart*** of the Savior. Christ is the ***Teacher***...I’m only a ***server***. I didn’t ***cook the meal***...I’m only supposed to ***deliver it*** to you!

IV. HE IS THE SANCTIFIER:

“For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

~Philippians 2:13

He is the One who ***sets us apart*** from ***sin***, ***purifies*** us, and ***leads*** us to give Him ***glory*** forever. We belong to Him...He is the ***builder***, ***owner***, ***chief cornerstone***, and ***foundation*** of the church. The church is His.

“Christ...loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word.”

~Ephesians 5:25-26

Christ wants His church ***pure*** so that ultimately...

“He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.”

~Ephesians 5:27