

Who is Head of the Church?

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Tesla, a company that makes electric vehicles, robots, solar panels, and AI technology, just made a deal with Elan Musk on a 1 trillion-dollar stock package. If the company meets certain goals and growth targets are met, Elan Musk can become the world's first Trillionaire. A voting process was done to vote for the package or to not for the package. The media had mostly negative opinions posted on their websites because of Elan Musk's politics. Those who invest money through stock into the company want the best person in charge of the big company that can make that company continue to grow bigger and better. Elan Musk started that company and he runs a tight company that makes money and they are always trying new things and improving themselves. Stockholders want a leader who has a good track record of making companies grow in positive ways. After the voting last year, Elan Musk was rewarded that package. For any good organization to run well, a good leader is needed. Plus, when an organization has a good leader, the rest of workers need to follow in their footsteps or it will hurt and slow the good growth of the company. Every organization needs to know who is leading them.

The same goes with the Church. Who is leading the Church. Paul had to address this issue with the Colossian Church. The sad thing about this today is the Church is so fortunate to have such a great leader, yet, half of the time, the Church doesn't listen or obey His commands. So, let's take a look at what Paul tells the Colossian church through the Spirit of God. So, let's turn to Colossians 1: 11 – 23 where we read this from Paul, “¹¹ We also pray that you will be strengthened with all his glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. May you be filled with joy,^[a] ¹² always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, ¹⁴ who purchased our freedom^[b] and forgave our sins.

Christ Is Supreme

¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,^[c]

¹⁶ for through him God created everything

in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see

and the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him.

¹⁷ He existed before anything else,

and he holds all creation together.

¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church,

which is his body.

He is the beginning,

supreme over all who rise from the dead.^[d]

So he is first in everything.

¹⁹ For God in all his fullness

was pleased to live in Christ,

²⁰ and through him God reconciled

everything to himself.

He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth

by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. ²³ But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

(www.biblegateway.com – NLT)

Last week, we talked about how Paul wanted the Colossian Church to understand that Jesus Christ was the supreme leader of this earth. Greek philosophy had found its way into the church and was teaching that the earth was evil and Jesus was only the ruler over the spiritual world, which opened other

cans of worms as well. If Jesus is ruler of only the spiritual world, then you won't be punished for the evil one does on this earth. That's just one example. So, Paul wanted to make sure the Church knew that Jesus had top authority on this earth, but Paul didn't stop there. In verse 18, Paul tells us that "Christ is the head of the church, which is his body". We have to stop for a moment and look at the Greek terms used here by Paul. The Greek term for Church means a group of people gathering – an assembly. The Greek term for body means essential unity as human, animal body (Strong's Concordance). In other words, the church is a group of people that is united together like the human body is united together. Plus, this includes Jesus as the head of the body. We are the body and Jesus is the head and we function like the human body functions – in unity. Jesus should be the brain center of the Church and we follow His lead in all things. Then, Paul goes into great detail about Jesus and how the cross and His blood made peace for us with God and God was pleased that His Son did this – this was part of the plan before the world began. Paul states in verse 22 that Jesus has brought us into the very presence of God. So, we must believe in this Gospel message and believe His truth. Then, Paul tells the church don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News of Jesus. Paul also added in verse 22 that the church is to be holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault. Why? Jesus is the head of the Church and we are the body. Jesus is holy and blameless and we are to be as well. You may ask how can this be done? Jesus tells us in Matthew 22: 37, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: love your neighbor as yourself. All the other commandments and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments. (NLT)" When we allow the Holy Spirit to help us live out these two commandments, everything else falls into place including being holy and blameless before God. So, the Church must cling to these main commandments because they were demonstrated on the cross. So, to put all this together, we obey and follow Jesus because He is the head of the Church and we are the body of the Church and we do this out of love for Him. Then, we can love the people around us. This does not mean we love or tolerate sin because Jesus is

still the head of the Church. He is holy and righteous and if we mix in false teaching about tolerating sin as the Church, we have just cheapened the cross and the blood that was shed there. We are to be holy and blameless because now we are part of the body of Christ as the Church. Paul would be telling the Church the same thing today. However, there is more.

Since, Jesus Christ is the head of the Church, we must understand something that has disappeared from today's theology. I found a statement that was interesting to me in an old commentary on Colossians. The writer states, "We are told that Christ 'learned....obedience by the things which he suffered' at the hands of His creation" (Beacon Bible Commentary). The Hebrews writer adds onto this statement in Hebrews 5: 8-10, "So even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. In this way God qualified him as a perfect Priest, and he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey him. (NLT)" Jesus suffered for the Church. Why do we think we must have it so easy as a Christian? The early Church knew that to be part of the body of Christ meant to be part of His suffering as well. If the head must suffer because of the sin of the world, the body will as well. Jesus tells us in Matthew 16: 24, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. (NLT)" We to must pick up our cross and follow Him. This means we suffer as Jesus did by the hands of His creation because of sin. I sometimes think we believe a Christian should have it better than everyone else. If you really look at these pieces of Scripture, it looks like we'll suffer more as Christians. Since we are to be a holy and blameless people, sin will become more and more revolting to us because we are connected to the head of the Church, Jesus Christ. Yet, at the same time, we will love people more and more as Jesus did while He was dying on the cross. We'll start to better understand what sin does to people and that will cause us to suffer as well. Paul makes this statement in Colossians 1: 24, "I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am completing what remains of Christ's suffering for His body, the church. (NLT)" Paul suffered because he preached and taught Jesus Christ and he was glad about it. It's hard for Christians today to wrap their minds around this

because we think God should take away all our suffering out of love for us. Yes, our Lord can heal and help us during suffering, but if we suffer because of telling others about Jesus, then we should have a different mind set for this as Paul did. Jesus tells us that if we give up our life for Him, we will find true life and that is found at the cross that we are to carry. When we follow Jesus, it isn't just following Him. We are living for Him, suffering for Him, and dying for Him. We do this out of true love for Him. Some may say this sounds to hard to follow Jesus in this way. If Jesus died for us, the Church, wouldn't He also be able to help us to deal with the suffering we must deal with when reaching others for Jesus. Plus, when we learn to be glad for suffering for Christ, like Paul did, this will help us to deal with the regular human suffering we deal with every day. If Jesus is the head and we are the body, we'll enjoy the same nourishment that the head enjoys. Paul enjoyed the love of Jesus and that love helped him to deal with the suffering for Jesus. We shouldn't be afraid to get our hands dirty for Jesus. If it requires us to suffer, we need to ask the Lord to help us to be glad through His Spirit. You see, following Jesus isn't as simple as we would like to make it. However, it is the only way to fully enjoy the relationship we can have with Jesus. This sounds so personal and holy. Don't let the culture around you destroy this holy and righteous relationship you can have with Jesus. Allow the Holy Spirit to help you to love the Lord with everything you have. Paul didn't want the Church to allow the culture of the day to destroy this body and head relationship. The American Church needs to get back to following Jesus only. He is and still is the head of His Church.

NLT Life Application Study Bible. Tyndale House Publishers: Wheaton, 1996

Beacon Bible Commentary Vol.9. Beacon Hill Press: Kansas City, 1965

The Strongest Strong's Concordance. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2001