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Christ The Head Of The Church

Introduction

February 11th 2013 was a day that will go down in history as the day when after 600 years a pope resigned as Head of the Catholic Church. In reviewing the history of the popes I observed several things:

- a) Pope Benedict was not the first to step down. There were three others before him who also stepped down.
 - i) Pope Benedict IX resigned in 1045 A.D
 - ii) Pope Celestine V resigned in 1294 A.D.
 - iii) Pope Gregory XII resigned in 1406 A.D.
- b) There is and has been rumored for at least 8 centuries that there was a woman “Pope”! Her name was Pope Joan. She was disguised as a man but was discovered to be a woman when mounting a horse and she went into travail.
- c) In the 1300’s there were two popes reigning, one in France and the other in Italy.

What a sad history this is, popes who resign, an apparent pope by fraud, and popes in conflict, yet when they held that position were known as the holy father. Tragically, despite having the scriptures, they never saw the reality that there is only one Holy man, there is only one Head of the church, and He is Jesus Christ our Lord. The church of God has a Head who will never resign, with whom there is no fraud, and who acknowledged God alone as “Holy Father” (Jn. 17:11). This Head has no human counterpart or single human representative, he has no predecessor and no successor. He is not only sinless but essentially holy, never will have a competitor, and whose Headship shall never end due to His decease.

The Varied Headships of Christ

The word “head” is spoken of in three distinct ways concerning our Lord:

1) His physical head

- a) This is spoken of in three ways:
 - i) In rejection (Matt. 8:20; 27:29; 30, 37; Jn. 19:2)
 - ii) In honour (Matt. 26:7)
 - iii) In death (Jn. 20:7, 12)
 - iv) In glorification (Rev. 1:14; 14:14; 19:12)
- b) Considering this, another way His head is spoken of is in:
 - i) His poverty: “The Son of man hath not where to lay his head” (Matt. 8:20)
 - ii) His honored head: being “in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of precious ointment, (of spikenard very precious) and poured [it] on his head, as he sat at meat” (Matt. 26:7, 12)
 - iii) His shaming when He was crowned with a crown of thorns (Matt 27:29)
 - iiii) His affliction and derision: “And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing [their] knees worshipped him” (Mk. 15:19; Jn: 19:2)
 - iv) His superscription when they wrote: “And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS” (Matt. 27:37)
 - v) The purity of His head in judicial activity: “His head and [his] hairs [were] white like wool, as white as snow” (Rev. 1:14)
 - vi) His head in glorification crowned with many crowns (Rev. 19:12; Heb. 2:9)

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2) **His head in type**

- a) Head of the bull in burnt and sin offering (Lev. 1:4; 4:4)
- b) His head of gold (Song of Sol. 5:11) the glory of His head and headship
 - i) Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom was pictured as a head of gold (Dan. 2:32, 38)
 - ii) Christ is typified as the Head of gold in His sterling character, whereas Nebuchadnezzar is seen as such as sovereign autocrat.

3) **His position as Head** and that is spoke of in six ways, for He is:

- a) The Head of the corner (Matt. 21:42), possibly incorporated in that is all other administrative titles because of Calvary. He is the Governor (Psa. 22:28). Observe how the title “Stone” is connected to His Headship. It is not our purpose here but it is a blessing to consider the Lord as “the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20); “the chief corner stone” (1 Pet. 2:6); “a precious corner stone” (Isa. 28:16). In contrast to His belittlement and rejection by man, this is God’s honoring Him.
- b) “The head of every man” (1 Cor. 11:3)
- c) “The head over all things” (Eph. 1:22)
- d) “The head of the church” (Eph. 5:23)
- e) “The head of the body” (Col. 1:18)
- f) “The Head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10)

Due to space our consideration will be on Christ, “Head over all things”. (Eph. 1:22)

Christ The Head Over All Things

In Ephesians 1:3-23, in this passage two truths are being presented:

- a) The greatness of the blessings of God to the church. (Eph. 1:3-15; 18, 23)
- b) The glory of the position God has given to the Lord. (Eph. 1:20-23)

At times we sing: “Every mark of dark dishonor heaped upon Thy thorn crowned brow, told in answering glory now”. In the world that had no time for Him and gave to Him a cross and an accusation; that took happily from him the blessings of restored health and life; and hated Him without a cause, God now crowns Him with glory and honour and makes Him to be head over all things.

The Holy Spirit caused Paul to use a series of expressions in Ephesians 1:20-23 to describe the glorification of Christ.

- a) “He raised Him from the dead”
- b) “Set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places”
- c) “Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named”
- d) “Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come”
- e) “And hath put all things under His feet”
- f) “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” (Eph. 1:20-23)

The passage presents three stupendous truths:

- a) The ascending glorification of Christ by the power of God
- b) The expansion and the significance of His being seated on the right hand of God
- c) His being given to the Church as its head.

This is more than a positional exaltation. Despite filling all things Christ was not complete, just as Adam without Eve. Adam needed Eve to be complete, she was his fulness for that which ideally lay ahead. It is not that Christ was incomplete in Himself. For instance, to be our High Priest he had to learn the pathway of obedience. He

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would not have been fully fitted without His earthly experiences. Perhaps another way to simplify this wonder is to think of a couple who are always together. Then, due to circumstances, one must go the hospital for an extended stay. The other might say: "I just feel something missing, I am not complete". Christ needed the church to be complete despite His exaltation. This is what Paul's prayer was for (Eph. 1:17-18).

He Is The Head of The Church Eph. 5:23

This is different from Eph. 1:22 where He is given as head over all to the church for His completeness. In Ephesians 5:23 He is the Head of the church, indicating His governmental authority and intentions being manifested by the church (for the church is to be subject to Christ Eph. 5:24). Upon consideration we observe that the context teaches even more. Headship in this context is connected with His being the Saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23), and this is the only verse where these two matters are brought before us:

- a) He is the Head, that is His position
- b) As the Saviour, that is His work, but what aspect of His work?

Saviour of the body, is different from Him as Saviour of the world (Jn. 4:42; 1 Jn. 4:14). As the Saviour of the world it relates to eternal destiny and applies to the individual's acceptance of Him as such. As Saviour of the body He is the preserver of the saints, as in an ideal world when the husband is the head of the wife in her preservation. Adam failed to be the saviour of his wife Eve even though he was with her when tempted (Gen. 3:6). Abraham failed to be the husband of Sarah when he told her to tell a half truth meant to deceive (Gen.12:13; 20:2).

In such a figure there is the emphasized truth of an organic union, the head and the body, not the head and the church. In Ephesians the Body is not the local gathering of saints but the corporate gathering from Pentecost to the rapture. This is NOT a certain denomination, but every saint of this dispensation.

A husband can be the head of the body but he cannot be the saviour of the body for the woman is a separate entity. There may be a "one flesh" (Eph. 5:31), but they are not an organic unity. This is very clear by the literal wording of Eph. 5:23 as the wording "He Himself" in ASV, Webster's, Young's literal, and English Standard version, etc.

Christ alone is the Saviour of the body in that he alone can keep the organic unity which Satan is so opposed to. Just as the "gates of hell cannot prevail against the church" (Matt. 16:18), yet the government of Hell can and does prevail against the local churches (Rev. Chs. 2-3). Despite the outward splits and denominations, the Body will be seen as a single unity, one new man (Eph. 2:15); with all distance (Eph. 2:13) and discord (Eph 2:15) removed, and will present it to Himself a glorious church without "spot or wrinkle" (Eph. 5:27).

Thank God the church of God (Acts 20:28) has as it's head a man who has not been elected behind closed doors by a group of men but by the will and power of God, for the glory of God. His Headship will never be:

- a) Repealed because of lack of abilities
- b) Redundant due to no longer being necessary
- c) Replaced for there can be no successor
- d) Rejected and overcome by a coup
- e) Relinquished due to deficiencies of any sort.

. . . Rowan Jennings