

HEAD OF THE BODY

Colossians 1:18 And He is the **head of the body**, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Scholars have identified as many as 700 titles and names for Jesus in the Bible.

Jesus said of Himself that He was the Alpha and the Omega. Those are the first letter and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. We would say that Jesus is A-to-Z. He's the entire alphabet. He is everything God wants to say to you – the entire language of God.

We've been going through our alphabet to identify some of the 700 titles and names. We're going, as it were, from A-to-Z. So far we've looked at these biblical names, from A through G:

1. The Last **A**dam
2. The **B**ridegroom
3. The **C**omforter
4. The **D**oor
5. The **E**xpress Image of God.
6. The **F**irstborn from the dead
7. **G**od.

That brings us to the letter **H**. Some of the 'H' names of Jesus are:

1. The Holy One (Acts 3:14).
2. Heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2).
3. High Priest (Hebrews 3:1).
4. Hope of Israel (Jeremiah 1:7).
5. Our Hope (First Timothy 1:1).
6. Horn of salvation (Luke 1:69).

Tonight, we want to look at Jesus as the **Head of the body, the Church**. He is so called in Colossians 1:18. In Ephesians 1:21-23, you read,

Ephesians 1:21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.
Ephesians 1:22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,
Ephesians 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Principality... power...might... and dominion. As the **Head over all things**, Jesus' authority is far above anything and everything we can imagine. For example:

1. He is above Satan and Satan's world system.
2. He is above holy angels and fallen angels.
3. He is above saved people and unsaved people.

What does that matter? When we understand He is the **Head over all things**, and far above them, then our problems take on a very different character. Whether physical... or psychological... or even spiritual – our problems can only be working together for our good and His glory.

Head suggests authority. But we want to look at something else, something precious. Jesus is the head of the body, the Church. Of course it means He is its authority. But it means something more as well.

When we use the word "Church," we mean Christians. The Church is comprised of all those called-out from the world into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, when Jesus sent (as promised) the Holy Spirit upon the believers gathered in the upper room. It consists of all those saved from that moment until the Lord returns in the Rapture.

There were believers before the Day of Pentecost. The Old Testament was full of them! But they were *not* the Church. The Church is a mystery revealed to us in the New Testament.

The Church will continue on earth until the Rapture. When the Lord returns to Rapture the Church, He will first raise from the dead all those believers who have died from the Day of Pentecost until that point. We will be gathered together in Heaven, before the throne of

God, while our Lord deals with the nation of Israel during the seven-years of the Tribulation on the earth.

We will return with the Lord in His Second Coming... We will rule and reign on the earth with Him for the one-thousand year Kingdom... Then we will inhabit eternity – a new Heaven and a new earth.

Many metaphors are necessary to describe the Church:

1. It is compared to a **building**; but one made up of living stones.
2. It is compared to a **household**, with servants all under the authority of its Master.
3. The Church is compared to a **bride**, readying herself for the appearing of her Bridegroom to take her away to the wedding.

And, as we've read tonight, the Church is compared to a body. From one standpoint, a body is a collection of a number of parts. The marvel of it is that they are all **one** – essential, vital, organic parts of one another.

You understand how your own physical body should operate. Your head directs your movements and activities so that there is a cooperation and a co-ordination between all of the various individual members that comprise your one body.

The same ought to be true of you as the body of Jesus on the earth today. Jesus is the Head, and you are the body.

The Head directs your movements and activities so that there is a cooperation and a co-ordination between all of the various individual members that comprise the one body of Jesus on the earth today.

In order to accomplish His work on the earth in the first century, Jesus was incarnate in a single human body.

In order to accomplish His work on the earth in the following centuries, **Jesus is incarnate in *another* human "body" – the Church – comprised of each believer.**

Jesus considers **you** His body on the earth today. It's not going beyond Scripture at all to say that Jesus is incarnate on the earth today through **you** - His body of believers.

Don't take this too far. Individual Christians are not incarnations of Jesus! That's some kind of weird pantheism.

Nevertheless, it is true that all of us, collectively, **are** His body on earth today.

This is one reason Jesus told His disciples that, after He left for Heaven, they would accomplish greater works than He had.

How can that be – when we are so frail, so faulty, so often false?

Ephesians 1:22 And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church,
Ephesians 1:23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

As Head, Jesus is our fullness; He fills us. It's an odd phrase, but medical writers of the first century considered the head as filling the body with energy and impulses.

All of our gifts and graces; all of our service; all of our growth and activities; must come as a result of what the Head supplies. We must guard against the temptation to counterfeit the work of God by substituting our own programs or energy.

Let's let the Lord be the Head, and learn to be content as His body. It's harder than you think! But more rewarding in the end.

