



The Idolatry of Human Headship

During the days of the early Church apostles, the understanding of the rightful place of the Lord Jesus as the Head of His Church was clear and secure. The apostles never usurped His role, nor did they teach a concept of Church leadership that established men as the Head of the Church. Men and women were not given titles of Headship to confuse the Church regarding its true Lord and King. While leaders existed they never took ownership of Jesus' Church, but left that place to Him alone. But after their death this would all change...

Titles such as Regional Bishop, Pope, Cardinal, Arch Bishop, Pastor, and in modern times Senior Pastor, have all become manifestations of a usurpation of Jesus' Headship over His Church. Men have loved the place of pre-eminence in the body of Christ, and have taken unto themselves the place reserved for Jesus alone. In so doing they have brought bondage, stress, burnout, and misery to themselves, and have drawn the body of Christ away from a direct approach to Jesus that He purchased for them by His blood at the cross. I'm not suggesting this is done intentionally by modern leadership. I'm convinced most, who are involved in this form of leadership, do so because of having inherited it from previous generations, rather than because of an intent to dishonor Jesus' headship, and will only see its error by direct revelation.

While Jesus raised up leaders in His Church, they always understood He was the Head. Sadly this understanding slipped away from the Church.

Let's examine this principle and apply appropriate repentance where needed.

1 Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to know that **the head of every man is Christ**,...

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

Ephesians 4:15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into **Him who is the head—Christ—**16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also **Christ is head of the church**; and He is the Savior of the body.

Colossians 1: 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 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.

Colossians 2:10 and you are complete in Him, who is **the head of all principality and power**.

Colossians 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not **holding fast to the Head**, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.

Revelation 14:14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having **on His head a golden crown**, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

Revelation 19:11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and **on His head were many crowns**. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called **The Word of God**. 14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And **He Himself will rule them** with a rod of iron. He Himself

treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

Keeping all of these scriptures in mind, and especially Revelation 19, let's take a look into the Old Testament and see the desire of God, the best approach for the Church, and the tendency of misdirected man to make void the Lordship of Christ.

Samuel, from childhood forward, understood the rightful place of the Lord Jesus as the Head of His Church and the King over His Kingdom.

1 Samuel 8:1 Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beersheba. 3 But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice. 4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. **Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.**" 6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the Lord. 7 And the Lord said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for **they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.**" 8 "According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which **they have forsaken Me and served other gods**—so they are doing to you also. 9 "Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and **show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.**"

In this passage we note several important elements:

1. **Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.** The desire for Headship in Jesus' Church, vested in anyone other than Jesus alone, is always a move towards conformity with the world and away from God's best. It is the predecessor of the modern CEO model of Senior Pastor.
2. **They have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.** Any form of Headship in the Church, other than the Lord Jesus Himself, is perceived by God as a rejection of His Headship, and a denial of His right as King over His people, even when done unwittingly.
3. **They have forsaken Me and served other gods.** Any move towards human Headship is ALWAYS a move towards Idolatry, whether that idolatry is the worship of man, the will of man, the need of man for significance, etc..
4. **Show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them.** Any Headship other than Jesus' is an invitation to reveal man's worst possible behavior, because to devalue Jesus' Headship is to choose something far inferior and destructive. This does not mean all modern Senior Pastor headship brings out the worst in those leaders, but because it is a misunderstanding of divine leadership design, it has in it the seeds of full failure.

Let's follow this theme of usurped Headship and the resultant Idolatry.

Ezekiel 20:29 "Then I said to them, '**What is this high place to which you go?**' So its name is called Bamah (**Strong's #01116 - means a High Place - interestingly it is also translated "funeral mound" in some places, and is most generally referred to as a place of idolatry**) to this day.'" 30 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Are you **defiling yourselves** in the manner of your fathers, and **committing harlotry** according to their abominations? 31 "For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves **with all your idols**, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live," says the Lord God, "I will not be inquired of by you. 32 "**What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.'**" 33 "As I live," says the Lord God, "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, **I will rule over you.**" 34 "I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 "And **I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face.**" 36 "**Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you,**" says the Lord God. 37 "I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant; 38 "**I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.**"

There are several critical understandings we gain from this passage:

1. **What is this high place to which you go?** There is One who is to occupy the “high place,” and whenever any other person or god usurps that place it becomes a place of idolatry and ultimately a diminishing of the place of Jesus’ Headship. The great need for the Church in the 21st century is to destroy the high places in her midst - none is in greater need than the usurpation of Jesus’ Headship.
2. **Bamah.** According to Strong’s Concordance, such a high place was often a place of a funeral mound. When men reject His Headship, though they think, in giving themselves the place that rightfully belongs to Jesus, that they will find life; the reality is they find it to be a place of death. There are just some places that Jesus alone can occupy, and anyone who usurps that place is inviting death upon themselves. The reality is that for 1850 years the Church has done this and experienced the death that only false religion can offer up.
3. **Defiling yourselves.** When men usurp His place then it ends up defiling them, even though they have told themselves it will be the place of glory and legacy. (Many in our day, under the strain of this defiling tendency, have fallen to all kinds of immorality, breaches of ethics, and criminal behavior.)
4. **With all your idols.** Men who take the place of Jesus in His Headship of His Church become idols, a focus upon men instead of Jesus. The Church becomes a place that reflects the vision, agenda, and will of man. Men allow themselves to be worshiped and applauded, in the place where Jesus alone should be given such glory.
5. **What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, ‘We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.’** Jesus will not tolerate forever the usurping of His Headship. It doesn’t work. We aren’t called to be like any other institution on earth. Our Headship is from Heaven alone. The direction the modern Church has taken, in imitating the corporate world, with its business models of leadership, vision casting, mission, agendas, and policies is an abomination, and Jesus will ultimately overthrow it.

Jesus tells us, in John 10:5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.

Eventually Jesus breaks through the voice of Strangers, reveals the distraction they bring to the sheep, from a direct relationship with Him and His voice, and leads them to Himself again.

6. **I will rule over you.** Jesus couldn’t be clearer.
7. **I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there I will plead My case with you face to face.** “Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you. Don’t be confused about this. The Church in the 21st century is in a “wilderness of the peoples.” We have chosen to model ourselves off of the worldly corporation model, seen ourselves as a business or political entity, and robbed Jesus of His Headship, and the result is that while we look impressive in our mega Churches, with many Senior Pastors of great pomp and circumstance, we are wandering around in a wilderness of our own making, in comparison to the paradise Jesus’ Headship would have provided. We are serving wood and stone - things that are lifeless and empty by comparison to the fullness of His Lordship and life.
8. **I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.** There is rapidly coming to the Church a purging of the rebels from among the Church, who have transgressed against Jesus’ Headship, and Jesus will remove them from His Church that the Church might once again know He is Lord. In some cases this will come by death, to those in genuine rebellion, in other places this will come as honest and good men open themselves to the revelation of His Headship and voluntarily submit to a death of their own headship of His Church. Men and women, all over the world are voluntarily giving up their titles, their positions, their salaries, their offices, their renown, their reputations, and their honor, and coming back under His Headship. As a result they are beginning to experience the paradise of His blessed leadership in their lives and the life of the Church.

Let’s take a closer look at point #7. What is the Lord saying to Ezekiel about Israel’s failure in the wilderness? When did they fall away from Him being their Lord, King, and Head in the wilderness?

Exodus 19:17 And **Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God**, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

It was both God's and Moses' intention that ALL the people would meet face to face with God, not just Moses. The saddest day in all of Israel's history was when they chose to cling to their carnality and sin, confess that they couldn't give it up, and allowed their sin to create sufficient fear in them as to reject God's offer to come near to Him. Rather than repent and draw near they chose to refrain and draw back. Such a move made way for Moses' human headship to come to a place God didn't desire. He became their mediator and effectively their king, when they could have come before Him themselves.

Exodus 19:20 Then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. 21 And the Lord said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the Lord, and many of them perish. 22 "Also let the priests who come near the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out against them." 23 But Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.'" 24 Then the Lord said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest He break out against them."

It isn't until we get to a fuller description of Deuteronomy 5 that we gain the sense that both the people and God knew their level of consecration to God was so weak that had He allowed them to come near Him He would have had to kill them. The only difference between Moses and the people appears to be the level of consecration. Moses was allowed to do what the people were disallowed. The people clung to their fleshiness and thrust Moses forward to take the place that had been offered to them. As we will see, Exodus 20:19 may well be one of the most tragic verses in all the Scripture. While their choice was wise, given their commitment to sin, how much better it would have been for them to have had a heart like Moses?

Exodus 20:18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "**You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.**" 20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

Deuteronomy 5:25 "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for **you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain.**

Deuteronomy 5:23 "So it was, **when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders.** 24 "**And you said: 'Surely the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he still lives.** 25 '**Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God anymore, then we shall die.** 26 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 '**You go near and hear all that the Lord our God may say, and tell us all that the Lord our God says to you, and we will hear and do it.'** 28 "**Then the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken.** 29 '**Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!**

Would to God that we would be willing to die, at least die to the sin and carnality that separates us from God and creates a vacuum to be filled by men led astray by the traditions of man.

Luke 9:23 Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross daily**, and follow Me. 24 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.

Galatians 2:20 "**I have been crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

1 Corinthians 15:31 I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

The Church in the wilderness forward has continually chosen to do the same thing - thrust special men and women forward, into the presence of God, and urged them to tell them what God wanted them to do, and thus relieved themselves of their privilege and responsibility to appear before God themselves, hear His Word, and submit to His Headship. As a result of this, leaders in their human weakness have always been tempted to lead the people of God away from the Headship of Christ and take a place of authority upon themselves that has opened these leaders up to self deception and a robbing God of His glory.

We would have thought, under the glory of the New Covenant, that finally gave all believers the privilege of experiencing what Israel gave away to Moses alone, the Church would have chosen to draw near and align themselves directly under His Lordship, and appreciate the proper place of leadership in their midst, but instead they did, after the time of the apostles, just exactly what Israel did here in the wilderness. They thrust leaders forward, under the assumption that God would not speak with them, and they allowed men to take too much authority unto themselves, who in turn and in time led the Church astray.

Listen to the offer of the New Testament:

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 **Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace**, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 6:17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and **which enters the Presence behind the veil**, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

1 John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. 19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. 20 For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. 21 Beloved, **if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God**. 22 And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

Such verses make it clear, that while Israel wisely stayed a distance from the Lord, due to their sinfulness, the Church, because of the finished work of Christ at the cross, is now invited into the very presence of God. Why oh why would we have the joy and privilege of coming directly under His Headship, and be called to never have any other Head over us than Him, then choose to thrust men forward as Israel did with Moses, and grant them titles, positions, offices, and headship, and find them ruling over us with laws, traditions, and doctrines of men? Brethren these things ought not to be so.

Jeremiah answers this sad question:

Jeremiah 5:31 **The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?**

What will we do in the end? Here's what we will do, if we desire to please the Lord, walk in the light of His Word, enter into the freedom of His Spirit, and come to truly know Him:

2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore **"Come out from among them And be separate**, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty."

Revelation 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready**." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the

Lamb!' ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

If the Church is going to be prepared for His coming, and be ready for the marriage supper of the Lamb, then she is going to have to separate herself from human Lordships and Headships, and return to the place of her calling under His direct Headship. Anything else is Idolatry and an abomination to the Lord. You and I didn't pay the price of our shed blood to have His Bride come under our Headship. Jesus alone paid this price, and Jesus alone deserves this level of leadership with His Bride.

We should have learned from Israel's Babylonian and Assyrian captivities, that God hates idolatry, but for 1850 years we have been in a form of captivity. No leader on earth, no Senior Pastor on the planet, can compare to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The idolatry of human cult leadership has prevailed in the Church since the death of the apostles. It took the Church merely 50 years after the death of John the apostle, to move towards the idolatry of male Church headship. Polycarp and Ignatius allowed a very slight deviation, and after them Irenaeus took things to a whole new level of human headship, resulting in captivity to this idolatry for all these years. Now, Jesus is calling a multitude of men and women out of the bondage of captivity to the will of man and the traditions of the elders, back to a place of proper honor and respect for the Headship of Christ. It is an awkward return. All too often it is marked by rebellious attitudes, the pointing of the finger, condemnation, and bitterness, but as Jesus purges these manifestations of sin and hurt from our lives, we come to the proper place of identifying the error that is at the heart of the Church, and walking in the truth with humility, love, and service. As Jesus washes this idolatry from our lives we are learning to love those who are still bound by it, and to become His servants towards helping the Bride make herself ready for her Bridegroom's return. It grieves me to hear of those who have come out of the religious systems of traditional Christianity, referring to those leaders still operating in this system as Pharisees. I truly don't believe, in the majority of cases, that those still functioning in the IC are truly Pharisees. All of us wrestle with Pharisaical tendencies, but this is a far cry from being an actual Pharisee. Better that we form bridges of compassion and revelation, than walls of rebellion and arrogance.

It should be our desire to assist the body of Christ towards its healing, and not form barriers of attitude and rejection, that solidifies their commitment to practices that hold them captive.

May God help us to give up our human idols, our love of human headship, and return to a place of honoring our Head - the Lord Jesus.