

## **The Doctrine of the Church**

### **The Head of the Body is Christ**

#### **Introduction**

*I believe that there is one holy Christian Church on earth, that is, the community or number or assembly of all Christians in all the world, the one bride of Christ, and His spiritual body of which He is the only head.* Martin Luther

Later, the WCF would say, *There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ.*

#### **I. The Biblical Doctrine of Christ's Headship**

##### **A. Jesus Christ as Sovereign Head**

1. Jesus Christ alone is the King of the Church, He alone is Head of the body.
2. Eph. 5:23-24
3. Col. 1:18; 2:9-10
4. Eph. 1:18-23
5. Christ as Head of the Church alone rules the Church through His Word and Spirit.

“The Church, as a society, owes its origins to Christ: it derives from Him its government and office-bearers; it receives from Him its laws and constitution; it draws from Him its spiritual influence and grace; it accepts at His hand its ordinances and institutions; it acts in His name, and is guided in its proceedings by His authority... (Bannerman, I. 194).

##### **B. Jesus Christ as Organic Head**

1. Jesus Christ is the Source of Life for His body.  
Just as revealed in the Vine and branch metaphor of John 15, “He equips and nourishes them as the vine sustains the branches.... While every particular [local] church is a manifestation of the universal church, of the people of God, at the place where it manifests itself in action, each church possesses its own fullness and is independent. There are no mother churches – including Jerusalem and Rome – in the sense that the one might be free to lord it over other churches. All churches are equal because they are all – even if one has been planted by another – dependent in the same way, that is, directly and absolutely, on Christ and bound to His Word” (Bavinck)
2. Eph. 4:11-16
3. Col. 2:18-20

He is the Head of the Church in this sense, that the Church is not only indebted to Him for its existence at first, but for its life and well-being ever since... The Church has no store of life apart from Christ being in it; the ordinances of the Church have no deposit of grace apart from Christ present with them; the office-bearers of the Church have no gift of power, or authority, or action, apart from Christ ruling and acting by them” (Bannerman, I, 199).

**Conclusion:**

## **II. Christ’s Headship: Implications**

- A. Christ as the Sole Head of the church, universal and local  
Christ alone is Lord of His Church.
  - 1. Universal –
  
  
  - 2. Local –
  
- B. Christ as the Head of each local congregation, its unique source of life

**Conclusion:**