
“Come, Let Us Reason About the Bible”
What Is the Church of the New Testament?
Bible Study Series

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”—(Matthew 16:18)

LESSON FOUR — The Church — Who Is Its Head?

Estimated Reading Time: 9–11 minutes

As you continue your study on the Church of the New Testament, you are now asked a vital question: **“Who is its Head?”** In other words, *Who is in charge of the church that Jesus established?* Who is the “head honcho”? Knowing the answer to this question is essential, because if you follow the wrong leader, you could be part of something God never intended and Christ never built.

Explore what the Bible says—both Old and New Testaments—about who is over the church, and why no one else has ever been given that role.

1. The Prophetic Foundation — The Head Foretold

Long before Jesus came into the world, the prophets of the Old Testament pointed to a coming King, a ruler from God who would reign forever—not over an earthly nation, but over a spiritual kingdom.

Isaiah 9:6-7

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it...”

Isaiah reveals that this Child to come—clearly a prophecy of Christ—would rule. The government, or authority, would rest on His shoulders. No mention is made of shared leadership. He alone would establish and maintain this kingdom.

Daniel 7:13-14

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven!... Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.”

This "Son of Man" is a prophetic reference to Jesus. Notice: He is given **dominion** (authority), **glory**, and **a kingdom**. That's the church. And it's His, and He alone receives this from the Ancient of Days—God the Father.

2. Jesus Declares His Authority

Now let's listen to Jesus Himself. He wasn't unclear about who the church belongs to—or who runs it.

Matthew 16:16–18

*“Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’
Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.
And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.’”*

Jesus says **“My church.”** Not Peter's. Not a pope's. Not yours or mine. It belongs to Him—and the one who owns the church is the one who built and rules it.

Matthew 28:18

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”

That pretty much settles it. **All authority**—not some, not most—has been given to Jesus. No other individual has ever been given this role. Any man or woman claiming to rule over Christ's church stands in direct contradiction to Scripture.

3. The New Testament Writers Confirm the Headship of Christ

Ephesians 1:22-23

“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

According to the Apostle Paul, God put **everything** under Christ and made Him **head over all things** to the church. The church is His body—He is its only Head. Just as a physical body can't have two heads without being disfigured, Christ's body—the church—cannot have two heads.

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.”

Jesus is **the head**, not **a head**. He has the **preeminence**—the first place. That means no one else is equal to Him in the church.

4. No Other Has Been Appointed as Head

Nowhere in Scripture do we read of Peter, Paul, James, or anyone else being given the role of head of the church. In fact, they repeatedly point back to Christ as the one in authority.

1 Corinthians 3:11

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Jesus is the **foundation** and the **head**. No one else has been given that role—not an apostle, not a council, and certainly not a pope.

5. Warnings of Men Who Would Seek Preeminence

Sadly, even in the first century, some individuals tried to take control of the church.

3 John 9

“I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.”

Diotrephes was trying to place himself above others, refusing even to receive the apostles. John condemns him for seeking what belongs only to Christ—**preeminence**.

6. The “Mystery of Lawlessness” and the Rise of False Leaders

Paul warned of a coming apostasy—a departure from the true faith.

2 Thessalonians 2:3-4, 7

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed... who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped... For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work...”

The “man of sin” and the “mystery of lawlessness” refer to the rise of religious leaders who would usurp Christ’s authority. They would exalt themselves in the church, even claiming divine titles. This is not new—it began in the early centuries and continues today in man-made religion.

7. Antichrists and False Teachers

The Bible also warns us of “antichrists”—not necessarily one person, but anyone who opposes Christ or seeks His place.

1 John 2:18-19

“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come... They went out from us, but they were not of us...”

Anyone who places themselves in the role of Christ—especially as head of the church—is an antichrist in the biblical sense: someone standing against the authority of Jesus.

8. Conclusion: Christ Alone Is Head

The church of the New Testament has only one Head—**Jesus Christ**. He was foretold by the prophets, confirmed by His own words, and declared by the apostles. No pope, archbishop, bishop, president, or council can replace Him.

Anyone who claims otherwise is part of the apostasy that Paul and John warned about. Let us listen to the voice of Christ and no other.

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” (John 10:27)

Follow the true Shepherd, the rightful Head—**Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God**.

Questions to Confirm Understanding

Estimated Time to Answer the Questions: 3 - 5 minutes; With Scripture Lookup: 30 minutes

Read and answer the following set of questions about this lesson, and circle your answer: “True | False” or “Yes | No”. Look up the scriptures provided to confirm your answers. Then compare your answers with the Answer Key provided after these questions.

1. Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18)
True | False
2. The church of the New Testament belongs to Peter.
True | False
3. Jesus said, “I will build My church.” (Matthew 16:18)
True | False
4. According to Isaiah 9:6–7, the one who would come would have the government upon His shoulder.
True | False
5. Jesus is one of several heads of the church according to the Bible.
True | False
6. Daniel prophesied that One like the Son of Man would be given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. (Daniel 7:13–14)
True | False

7. The apostles taught that Christ is the head of the church. (Ephesians 1:22–23)
True | False
8. The apostle Paul said the church is the body of Christ and that He is its head. (Colossians 1:18)
True | False
9. Jesus said He would build the church on Peter as the foundation. (Matthew 16:16–18)
True | False
10. God placed all things under Jesus’ feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church. (Ephesians 1:22)
True | False
11. The “man of sin” described in 2 Thessalonians 2 refers to someone who would exalt himself above all that is called God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)
True | False
12. The Bible teaches that there would never be any falling away from the truth.
True | False
13. According to the apostle John, many antichrists had already come in the first century. (1 John 2:18–19)
True | False
14. Diotrephes was praised by John for his leadership and desire to have preeminence. (3 John 9)
True | False
15. Christ has the preeminence in all things, including the church. (Colossians 1:18)
True | False
16. Anyone who places themselves in the role of Christ as head of the church is opposing biblical teaching.
True | False
17. Is there any scripture that gives the title of “head of the church” to any man besides Jesus?
Yes | No
18. Did Jesus claim the church as His own possession? (Matthew 16:18)
Yes | No
19. According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, can another foundation be laid other than Jesus Christ?
Yes | No
20. Should Christians today follow only the voice of the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ? (John 10:27)
Yes | No

Answer Key — Lesson Four: "Who Is Its Head?"

Estimated Time to Read the Answers: 5 - 7 minutes; With Reflection and Contemplation: 30 minutes

1. **Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18)**

Answer: True

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.’”

Explanation: Jesus plainly states that He possesses all authority. This affirms His exclusive role as the Head of the church.

2. **The church of the New Testament belongs to Peter.**

Answer: False

Explanation: Jesus said the church is His (Matthew 16:18). Peter was a servant and apostle, but not the owner or head of the church. Nothing in scripture exists that would point to Peter as being Christ’s successor as head of the church.

3. **Jesus said, “I will build My church.” (Matthew 16:18)**

Answer: True

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church...”

Explanation: The possessive “My” makes it clear that Jesus, not Peter or anyone else, is the builder and owner of the church.

4. **According to Isaiah 9:6–7, the one who would come would have the government upon His shoulder.**

Answer: True

“...And the government will be upon His shoulder... Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...”

Explanation: This prophecy foretells Christ’s singular leadership over His spiritual kingdom—the church.

5. **Jesus is one of several heads of the church according to the Bible.**

Answer: False

Explanation: Scripture teaches that Christ is the **only** head of the church (Ephesians 1:22–23, Colossians 1:18). There are no co-heads.

6. **Daniel prophesied that One like the Son of Man would be given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. (Daniel 7:13–14)**

Answer: True

“...Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.”

Explanation: This Old Testament prophecy points directly to Christ receiving a universal and eternal kingdom—the church.

7. **The apostles taught that Christ is the head of the church. (Ephesians 1:22–23)**
Answer: True
“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church...”
Explanation: Paul affirms that God gave Jesus full authority as Head of the church.
8. **The apostle Paul said the church is the body of Christ and that He is its head. (Colossians 1:18)**
Answer: True
“And He is the head of the body, the church... that in all things He may have the preeminence.”
Explanation: Paul again confirms that Christ alone is the head and holds the place of preeminence.
9. **Jesus said He would build the church on Peter as the foundation. (Matthew 16:16–18)**
Answer: False
“Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’”
“...On this rock I will build My church...”
Explanation: The "rock" refers to Peter’s confession—that Jesus is the Christ—not Peter himself.
10. **God placed all things under Jesus’ feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church. (Ephesians 1:22)**
Answer: True
“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church...”
Explanation: The verse explicitly confirms Christ’s supreme authority over the church.
11. **The “man of sin” described in 2nd Thessalonians 2 refers to someone who would exalt himself above all that is called God. (2 Thessalonians 2:3–4)**
Answer: True
“...the man of sin... who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped...”
Explanation: Paul prophesied a coming apostasy where a man would claim authority that belongs only to God—pointing to false leadership.
12. **The Bible teaches that there would never be any falling away from the truth.**
Answer: False
Explanation: The Bible clearly warns of a falling away (apostasy), especially in 2nd Thessalonians 2 and 1st Timothy 4.
13. **According to the apostle John, many antichrists had already come in the first century. (1st John 2:18–19)**
Answer: True
“...even now many antichrists have come... They went out from us, but they were not of us...”

Explanation: John notes that false teachers—those opposing Christ—were already present in the early church.

14. **Diotrephes was praised by John for his leadership and desire to have preeminence. (3rd John 9)**

Answer: False

“...Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.”

Explanation: Diotrephes is condemned for trying to take a role of superiority, in contrast to Christ’s teaching on humility.

15. **Christ has the preeminence in all things, including the church. (Colossians 1:18)**

Answer: True

“...that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

Explanation: Christ holds the top position in every aspect of the church. No other can claim that authority.

16. **Anyone who places themselves in the role of Christ as head of the church is opposing biblical teaching.**

Answer: True

Explanation: Scripture shows only Christ has that role. Anyone claiming that position is contradicting the Word of God (Ephesians 1:22, 1 John 2:18).

17. **Is there any scripture that gives the title of “head of the church” to any man besides Jesus?**

Answer: No

Explanation: No verse in Scripture gives any man the title or authority of Head of the Church. That title belongs to Christ alone.

18. **Did Jesus claim the church as His own possession? (Matthew 16:18)**

Answer: Yes

“I will build My church...”

Explanation: Jesus clearly calls the church “My church,” asserting His ownership and authority.

19. **According to 1 Corinthians 3:11, can another foundation be laid other than Jesus Christ?**

Answer: No

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Explanation: Jesus is the sole foundation for the church. No man can lay another.

20. **Should Christians today follow only the voice of the true Shepherd, Jesus Christ? (John 10:27)**

Answer: Yes

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

Explanation: Jesus describes His followers as sheep who listen only to Him—their Shepherd and Head.