

**Colossians 1:13-23**

Sec 6 - “There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof.”

A. Contrary to popular opinion & claims of the Roman Catholic Church, Peter was not the first pope or head of the church having authority over the other apostles.

1. In other words, there is not an unbroken line of papal authority from Peter to the modern day.
2. In one of my history classes in seminary, I wrote about Pope Gregory VII or Hildebrand.
  - a. His papacy lasted from 1073 – 1085.
  - b. Prior to his rise to power, there was not one established pope or *papa* (Latin).
  - c. According to Britannica, “The term *pope* was originally applied to all the bishops in the West and also used to describe the patriarch of Alexandria, who still retains the title. In 1073, however, Pope Gregory VII restricted its use to the bishop of Rome”<sup>1</sup>
  - d. The other major change was that Pope Gregory succeeded in enforcing that almost all clergy had to be celibate. I remember that leaders of the German church wrote back in opposition to this change; they cited at least 2 of these passages:
    - 1) **1 Tim 3:2 “An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of 1 wife”**
    - 2) **Titus 1:5 elders were likewise to be “the husband of one wife”**
  - e. Modern Germans are voicing their protest again. German Cardinal Reinhard Marx has called the Catholic Church practice of celibacy for priests "precarious," and has said "sexuality is part of being human." <sup>2</sup>

B. **Col 1:13-23** is one of the strongest texts to uphold that Christ is the only head of the church.

1. His glorious work of salvation is summarized in **vv13-14**. Look there.
2. This text is also one of the most powerful for establishing the deity of Christ. → **vv15-17...**
3. The Lord Jesus is labeled as the absolute head of the church in **v18**. **“He is also head of the body, the church; & He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”**
  - a. Christ’s supremacy as head of the church is intermingled with His glorious divinity & cosmic authority.
  - b. Using the illustration of bookends, **vv 19-20** rest on the back end. → **vv 19-20**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/papacy>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/german-cardinal-says-priests-should-be-allowed-to-marry/a-60639526>

C. Turn to **Eph 1:18-23**

D. Just as the Roman church was wrong in establishing a pope as head of the church, it was also likewise wrong for King Henry VIII to establish himself as supreme head of the church of England.

E. The Holy Spirit gave these 2 glorious passages to Paul which fit with what Jesus said in His giving of the Great Commission in **Mat 28**: **“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (18-20).**

F. The abuse of church power & authority is likewise an insult to the glorious doctrine that Christ is the only head of the church.

G. Church government through Presbyterianism vs rule by hierarchy fits much better with Christ as the only head of the church. Consider the case of the United Methodist church having one bishop as head over every church in all of Louisiana.