

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God

IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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All in the Christ

As I listen to what is preached in the Christian world today, I seldom hear that the heart of God's plan for the ages is for all things to be headed up in *the* Christ, things in the heavens and on the earth. And, this plan leads to God's ultimate purpose—so that God the Father may be all in all and, I add, all things are new and in love.

Paul was uniquely given revelation of this great fact, which he called a secret (that is now revealed).

In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him) to have an administration [plan] of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ — both that in the heavens and that on the earth.... (Ephesians 1:8b-10 CLV [ESV])

Other translations variously express the phrase *to head up all in the Christ* as *to gather together in one all things* (KJV), *to sum up all things in Christ* (ASV), and *to bring into one the whole in the Christ* (YLT).

In the Greek, at the heart of this expression is the Greek word *anakephalaiomai*, which is comprised of two primary words with the first meaning "up" and the second meaning "to strike on the head." For comparison, the Greek word often used to describe Christ as the head of the body is *kephale*, which has a primary meaning of "seizing" with "the head being the most readily taken hold of." Thus, *to head up* seems to be the closest in meaning to the Greek.

Clearly, the secret revealed through Paul has much to do with the headship of Christ and not simply a gathering together. A gathering together or a summing up of all does not tell us much about the purpose for such a thing. However, heading up all things in *the* Christ tells us volumes, for it reveals that everything in the heavens and on the earth will be brought under the headship of Christ. In other words, King Jesus will be the head or the authority over all things. After all, He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet, and then He will abolish all rule and authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24-25). Heading up all things is to bring all into subjection to His rule and authority and power so that in the consummation of the ages all things in the heavens and on the earth will be brought into subjection to the kingdom of God.

But there is more, for as the head, Christ will progressively lead all creation into the very all of God. Do not underestimate the word *all*, for it is a comprehensive word that leaves out nothing. Absolutely everything in God's creation will ultimately be brought under the headship of Christ and be ruled by the mind of Christ.

The Weymouth Translation adds to our understanding by introducing the concept of the restoration of all things (the whole creation) and all the nations and all creation discovering their true Head.

And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it—the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in Heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him. (Ephesians 1:9b-10 WNT)

This leads to some questions: How will Christ head up all things? Will He do it by fiat, all at once? Will He do it by Himself? No, He will not. He will do it through His body, His complement conformed to His image, and it will be done progressively throughout the oncoming ages until the very consummation of the ages. Consider the following from Paul.

[God] subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement [filling up, completion] of the One completing the all in all. (Ephesians 1:22-23 CLV [added])

[God] rouses [raises] us together [the ecclesia, the body of Christ] and seats us together among the celestials [in the heavenly places], in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons [ages], He should be displaying the transcendent [surpassing] riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:6-7 CLV [added])

To me [Paul], less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations [gentiles], and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons [ages] in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons [ages], which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord.... (Ephesians 3:8-11 CLV [added])

All these verses mean that, in God's wisdom, the body of Christ has been chosen to be a co-worker with Christ in the heading up of *all*, not only on earth but also in the heavens or, as the above translation states, among the celestials. Paul describes the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ, as the complement of Christ. Other translations use the word *fullness* or *completion*, meaning that the body is the full expression of the head. Simply, Christ's body will be the agent through which He will complete the all in all so that God the Father may be all in all.

If you will note, some translations state that all things will be headed up in *the* Christ; that is, the article *the* is used in relation to Christ. We might pass this off as being of little significance; however, I believe it explains how God intends to head up all things. It will be done through the head and the body, which together is *the* Christ. Consider what Paul wrote about *the* Christ.

For, even as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, so also is *the* Christ.... (1 Corinthians 12:12 YLT)

In other words, Paul defines *the* Christ as one body. You cannot have a body without a head if it is to function. Both Christ, as the head, and the ecclesia, as His body, are one body, called *the* Christ.

To be sure you do not miss the import of what you just read, let me paraphrase Paul's revealed secret.

In all of His wisdom, God has made known the secret of His will, which He has purposed in His Son, that in the consummation of the ages, all in the heavens and on the earth will be headed up in both the Son and His body, which together is *the* Christ.

Can you imagine a calling any greater than this? It is tremendous! Those counted worthy to reign with Christ are destined to be *the* Christ, the very complement of the one who has been charged with completing God's plan to bring about the purpose of the ages. He will subject all things in the heavens and on the earth through His complement, His body. For those of *the* Christ, there is work to be done in the oncoming ages. It is not a call into retirement, as so many picture it in our day; rather, it is a call into a glorious vocation with the head of the universe. *The* Christ has been called according to God's purpose.

Our beloved Lord is on a mission for His Father, and He has called and chosen a faithful company of saints to be His complement to complete God's plan, which encompasses not only the earthly but also the celestial realm. His complement will not be restricted to this earth, for *the* Christ will reign in both the celestial and the earthly realms or, if you will, in all creation, both seen and unseen. There is no higher calling, no greater honor than to be the complement of Christ and to be included in the great work He is doing and will continue to do in the oncoming ages until all is headed up in *the* Christ. There is only one true head in all creation, and there will be only one true body, *the* Christ, in which all will be headed up. May the spirit of God give you revelation of this great truth!