

## The “churches of Christ” are those that submit to His lordship

Paul conveyed greetings to the Christians in Rome when he wrote: “All the churches of Christ greet you” (**Rom. 16:16**). This statement meant that, at the time Paul wrote, there existed somewhere some other churches, or local congregations, that could properly be called the “churches of Christ.” What were these churches? And is it possible for a congregation today to be what they were?

In the most general sense, of course, the “church” is simply the people of Jesus Christ. The church belongs to Christ. He said, “I will build my church” (**Mt. 16:18**), and Paul said the church is that “which he obtained with his own blood” (**Ac. 20:28**). “All authority” (**Mt. 28:18**) has been given to Jesus Christ, and He is “head over all things to the church” (**Eph. 1:22,23**). The “church” envisioned in these passages is, of course, the universal body of Christ, consisting of all those individuals everywhere who have obeyed the gospel and who live faithfully before the Lord. Membership in this church is a result of being baptized into Christ. “In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith,” Paul wrote to the Christians in Galatia. “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (**Gal. 3:26,27**).

But what about a “local church,” a congregation or assembly of Christians in a specific locality? When a group of individuals, each of whom has been added to the Lord’s body in the universal sense, have the common purpose of working and worshiping together, what will make them one of the “churches of Christ”?

The answer is simple: *the “churches of Christ” are those that submit to His lordship*. A congregation cannot be “of Christ” without obeying Him any more than an individual can be a disciple without following His teaching. For that reason, it is urgent that congregations both hear and obey Christ’s word: “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (**Rev. 3:22**). This week, let’s study the Lord’s authority over His churches — and the dire consequences if we disregard His will. Any congregation can say that it is “of Christ.” But let’s make sure that being “of Christ” (both individually and collectively) is more than a matter of mere words.

### Monday: Ephesians 1:22,23

**Key Idea:** Christ is the head over all things to the church, which is His body.

**Questions for Family Growth:** Who gave Christ the authority that He has over the church? Is there anything about the church that Christ does not have authority over? How is the church “the fullness of him who fills all in all”?

**Wisdom for the Day:** **Proverbs 29:20**.

## Tuesday: Ephesians 5:23,24

**Key Idea:** It is Christ's will for the church is to be subject to Him.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What does it mean that Christ is “head of the church”? What does it mean for someone to “submit” to someone else? How does the church show that it submits (or is subject to) Christ?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 29:21](#).

## Wednesday: Romans 16:16

**Key Idea:** Local churches exist that can rightfully be called the “churches of Christ.”

**Questions for Family Growth:** What did Paul say about the “churches of Christ”? When applied to a congregation, what does the expression “of Christ” mean? Is the term “churches of Christ” the name of a denomination? If not, what is it?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 29:22](#).

## Thursday: Revelation 2:5

**Key Idea:** Churches that do not heed the word of Christ are eventually disowned by Him.

**Questions for Family Growth:** What, according to [v.4](#), was the problem in Ephesus? What did Christ command the church there to do? What does it mean that Christ would “remove your lampstand from its place”?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 29:23](#).

## Friday: Ephesians 1:1

**Key Idea:** To belong to Christ, a church must be comprised of those who are “faithful in Christ Jesus.”

**Questions for Family Growth:** What are “saints”? Is everyone a saint who claims to be one? What does it mean to be “faithful in Christ Jesus”? Concerning faithfulness, what admonition is given in [Rev. 2:10](#)?

**Wisdom for the Day:** [Proverbs 29:24](#).

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