

“CHURCHES OF CHRIST”

(Rom. 16:16)

Paul said in Rom. 16:16: “**16 All the churches of Christ salute you.**” There are some things stated in this verse worthy of our consideration. Notice, in this verse it is stated “**all the churches of Christ.**” I cannot think of any group of people who would not want to salute the brethren at Rome, **other than the churches of Christ!** There was what was called, “**Churches in Judea,**” Gal. 1:22; There were those who were called, “**churches of Galatia,**” Gal. 1:2. According to Acts 9:31 this refers to churches in Judea, Galilee and Samaria. Then consider the congregations the apostle Paul established on his first and second preaching journey and one can realize why he made the statement: “**All the churches of Christ salute you,**” Rom. 16:16.

Is it possible that Paul was thinking of “**All**” - the different congregations that were in existence were sending their greetings to the brethren at Rome? **I believe he was.** Each congregation was independent and separate from all other congregations and thus, Paul is stating their interest in the Roman brethren. The term in Rom. 16:16 is plural, “**Churches of Christ,**” but the singular of that expression would be “**church of Christ.**” When Paul used the word “**All**” I believe he meant just that. The different congregations of the day were referred to as a “**church of Christ,**” and all of the congregations in existence were referred to as “**churches of Christ.**”

There are different figures used in the Bible to designate the Church: 1) **Body**, I Cor. 12:13; 2) **Kingdom**, Col. 1:13; 3) **Flock**, Acts 20:28; Jno. 10:16; 4) **Bride**, Rev. 21:2. Even though it is stated concerning these figures, it is still acknowledged that “**All**” – each congregation was known as a “**church of Christ.**” If I referred to all of the many congregations I would call them “**Churches of Christ,**” as Paul did.

There have been some confusion established by the liberal element – Christian Church – leaving us; because “**they were not of us,**” I Jno. 2:19. Since their leaving they have referred to themselves as “Christian Church,” “Campbellites,” “Disciples of Christ,” and “Churches of Christ.” Their use of the expression “Church of Christ” has caused some confusion among us. Many times one will see a sign in front of a building; yet, when they enter the building, only find instruments of music, and the Missionary Society being practiced. Many have been the times I have told such people, **they need to change their sign out front.**

Our use of Rom. 16:16 and the holding to the name “Church of Christ” is for **identity purposes.** When then, there are others that undertake the same name, there is confusion that results. The “**Churches of Christ,**” in the New Testament, had **no instruments of music** in their worship services and **did not use societies** for the purpose of doing mission work or benevolent work.

When, then, we are traveling we should be mindful of some who have fallen from the faith, putting in front of their building, “**Church of Christ!**” We are to be **knowledgeable enough** to ask questions and determine if they are a true “**Church of Christ,**” or an **apostate congregation.** I have told those of the Christian Church, there are some of their congregations that need to change their name. They are no longer a **Church of Christ!**

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