

Cephas, and 'I of Christ.' Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:12-13). Those Christians were claiming to belong to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. Paul's point is that Christians belong to Christ and to Christ only.

If we belong to Christ, our spiritual allegiance is to him only, not to people or religious organizations. Sadly, today, some claim to be Christians, but they bind themselves to the teachings of uninspired men. For example, Lutherans follow religiously the teachings of Martin Luther. Catholics follow the instructions of the Pope. Some today claim to belong to Christ, but give allegiance to man-made sects or denominations. Some say, "I am a Christian, but I'm also a Baptist" or "I am a Christian, but I'm also a Pentecostal."

This is not what God planned for his people. Read the New Testament and you'll see that Christians under the direction of Jesus' apostles did not belong to denominations. They were simply Christians and they simply belonged to Christ. We can do the same today by the reading the Bible for ourselves and just doing what it says. I belong to Christ. Won't you belong to him, too?

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## What Does It Mean to Belong to Christ?

Can you believe this guy? He was imprisoned, beaten, and threatened for following Jesus, and yet he said he wanted to know Jesus better and serve him more. That's right, and this "guy" was the apostle Paul. He gave himself completely to Jesus Christ. He belonged to Jesus and wanted others to do the same. But what does it mean to belong to Jesus Christ?

### Belonging to Christ means being related to Christ

Paul described his relationship with Christ this way: "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but *Christ lives in me*; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Galatians 2:20). Paul de-

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scribes a wonderful relationship – one that every person may have with Jesus Christ.

We are able to have a relationship with Christ because he loved us first and gave himself to die for us. In this great act, Jesus made it possible for our sins to be forgiven. Any and everybody can come to Christ by believing in and being baptized into him. A man asked Paul before Paul was a Christian, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name” (*Acts 22:16*).

### **Belonging to Christ means following Christ**

There are several ways the Bible describes this relationship between Christ and his people (Christians). Jesus Christ is the ...

- king of his people, who make up his kingdom (*Matthew 16:18-19, 28; 1 Peter 2:9-10*).
- husband of his people, who are his bride (*Ephesians 5:21-33*).
- shepherd of his people, who are his sheep (*John 10:14*).

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- head of his people, who form his body (*Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4*).

All these wonderful relationships share a central idea. Each one implies that Christians follow the instructions and authority of Christ. Citizens of the kingdom are under the rule of the king. A wife is subject to her husband. Sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. The body takes instruction from the head. Belonging to Christ means following him – listening to and obeying his words.

### **Belonging to Christ means following only Christ**

Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” (*John 14:15*). Because we love Jesus who died for us, we obey him. But this means loving and obeying only him and no other. Think about it. When a citizen of a kingdom obeys another king, it is treason. When a wife goes after another man, she is unfaithful. When the physical body does not take instruction from the brain, this is a serious medical problem.

The apostle Paul wrote to people who had given allegiance to others: “Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, ‘I am of Paul,’ and ‘I of Apollos,’ and ‘I of

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