

The Church Jesus Built: The Nature of the Church (Universal)

(Colossians 1:13-23)

Introduction: Understanding the nature of “The Church Jesus Built” begins with the word church itself. From the Greek word ekklesia, it means “an assembly” which is used most frequently in the New Testament in two senses: (1) The church universal - that company of souls redeemed by the blood of Christ and (2) The church local - Christians in a geographical area that work and worship together as a congregation of God’s people. Our understanding of the nature of the church can also be enhanced by contrasting the church universal with the church local and noting how the New Testament carefully delineates between the two.

I. The Church “Universal”

A) Composed of _____ Christians

1. This is the church to which Jesus referred in Matthew 16:18.
2. It is made up of all the saved, both living and dead (cf. Heb. 12:22-24).

B) There is only “_____” church

1. Universal church is called the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23).
2. There is only one body (Ephesians 4:4); therefore, only one church!

C) Began on the Day of Pentecost after the ascension of Christ

1. Following the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ (Acts 2).
2. As Peter later referred to this day, it was the beginning (cf. Acts 11:15).

D) One can enter _____ by being “_____” by the _____

1. One cannot join the church by their own volition.
2. Rather, they are added by the Lord Himself when saved (Acts 2:41, 47).

E) The _____ keeps the books of _____

1. There is no agency on earth that keeps the registry of true members.
2. Only the Lord knows those truly His (Hebrews 12:23; 2 Timothy 2:19).

F) Consists of _____ the saved

1. The Lord is presenting to Himself a church holy & without blemish
(Ephesians 5:25-27).
2. Those in the church who are sinning and refuse to repent are cut off, cast out, spewed out (cf. John 15:2,6; Romans 11:19-22; Revelation 3:16).

G) Must be in _____ church to be saved

1. For the Lord is the Savior of the body (which is His church) (Eph. 5:23).
2. Since the Lord adds one to His church when they are saved, one cannot be saved and not be in the church universal!

H) Has _____ “_____” organization

1. The church universal has organization (cf. Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5).
2. There is no earthly headquarters for the church.

I) Cannot be _____

1. For there is no earthly organization to divide!
2. If division appears to exist...
3. Those who would seek to divide the church through doctrine, conduct, etc., are simply cut off by the Lord Himself!
4. There is and always will be, “one body” (Ephesians 4:4)

J) Death doesn’t affect _____

1. The church universal is made up of the saved, both living and dead
(Hebrews 12:22-23).
2. When one dies, they are still with Christ! (Phil. 1:21-23; 1 Thess. 5:10)

Conclusion: We have seen there are at least ten things true of the church universal. Our next study shall examine what is true of the church local. In light of what we have seen thus far, we do well to ask ourselves: Have we been added by the Lord to His church universal? - (cf. Acts 2:36-41,47)

My Notes: