

ECCLESIOLOGY
THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH
 Lesson 5

The Nature of the Church

I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- A. The head of the church is Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23).
- B. The church is Christ's body (Eph. 1:23).
- C. There is only one body (Eph. 4:4; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- D. Christians make up the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 5:30).
- E. Christians now become the indwelling place of God (Eph. 2:21-22; Col. 1:27; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- F. All those in Christ form one body (Eph. 2:15 cf. 4:4-5). There is neither Jew nor Gentile (Gal. 6:15), but a new creation. POINT: There is no social or racial distinction in Christ.

II. SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

A. The Church is Supernatural

1. The church is supernatural because it existed as a concept from eternity (Eph. 1:4; 3:8-11). The church is not an after-thought with God. It was planned long before this world was made. The church exists in time (Eph. 3:10). God has definite plans for the church in this world and has laid down the strategy in the Scriptures. The church is destined for eternity (Eph. 5:27).
2. God's purpose in time is that He should take out of the nations a supernatural people for His name (Acts 15:14), who are the habitation of God (Eph. 2:22), chosen to show forth the praises of God as pilgrims and strangers (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:9-11) and who are the instruments through whom the entire universe can see the manifold wisdom of God (Eph. 3:9-11).
3. The Christian is in a world to which he does not belong (John 15:19; 17:6, 14, 16; 1 John 3:1); a world system that lies in the dominion of the evil one (1 John 5:19; 2 Cor. 4:4).
4. CONCLUSION: The church is a supernatural and spiritual entity that is in the world but not a part of it. It is left in this world to show forth God's praises (1 Pet. 2:9-10) and to glorify God in all that it does. Thus the church is not a political entity, but a spiritual group of called-out people to glorify God.
5. NOTE: People of all denominations who have trusted Christ are members of the true church—Lutherans, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Brethren, Methodists, etc. However, membership or affiliation in a local church does not make one a member of the universal church. Those who

are members of the supernatural invisible universal church must have experienced the supernatural new birth that comes from God.

B. The Church is Supernational

1. God is calling out a spiritual people from all nations of the earth (Acts 15:14). God is no respecter of nation or race.
2. The church transcends all political or national organizations. The church is a spiritual nation (1 Pet. 2:9-10), formed of all those who have, are, or will believe in Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior, from all the nations of the earth. NOTE: There is no educational, social, political or racial barrier in the true church.
3. This body of called-out people, the church, all give allegiance to the same King, Jesus Christ; all observe the same laws, the Bible; and all sing the same national anthem, "Saved, saved by the blood of the Lamb!"
4. The task of the church is to witness to this evil world, build one another in the things of Christ, and to patiently wait for the return of our Lord for His church.

III. CHURCH IS A SPIRITUAL TEMPLE

- A. God dwells in the universal temple (Eph. 2:21-22).
- B. God dwells in the local temple (1 Cor. 3:16-17).
- C. God dwells in the individual temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20).