

**Background:** Our church is built on a set of core values that define us and help us understand who we are and why we worship, share, serve the way we do. We will look at these over the course of the next several weeks.

**Introduction:** How do you define the church (not *our* church, but *the* church)? It is an institution that is poorly understood in our culture – and even in the church.

## I. An Expression of the Trinity

A Basic Definition: A holy community of those who are

1. Called by the Father
  - The people of God
  - Loved and chosen by Him!
  - Bringing glory to God and blessing to the world
2. Redeemed by the Son
  - Clothed with His righteousness
  - Bearing His name
3. United in the fellowship of the Spirit
  - God's seal is upon us (we are His)
  - Our "seal" of the inheritance that awaits (He is ours)

## II. Rooted in Israel

A. A *Chosen* People (Deuteronomy 7:6-8)

1. Tied to the promises to Abraham (fulfilled in Christ Jesus)
2. A Treasured Possession (v6)

B. God in their midst

1. Called together in *Assembly* "Gathered"
  - With the Lord in their midst (Leviticus 26:12)
2. The Tabernacle and the Temple
  - a. Symbol of God's dwelling place (Exodus 19:6)
  - b. Setting for sacrifice for sins
3. A Holy Dwelling Place (with His people)
  - Exodus 33:7-11

### III. Established In Christ

#### A. Something "Old"

##### 1. 1 Peter 2:9-10

- Rich in Old Testament language & imagery
- Deuteronomy 7:6-9; Exodus.19:6; Hosea 1:9 & 2:1,23

##### 2. Jesus is tied to the Old Testament promises (2 Corinthians 1:20)

- All find their fulfillment in Him

NOTE: Many churches in this country do not believe that.

#### B. Something "New" (Ephesians 2:11ff)

##### 1. Destroying the dividing wall

###### a. The perfect sacrifice

- Romans 6:10; 8:2

###### b. Between God and man

###### c. Between Jew and Gentile

##### 2. Jesus gathers His church

###### a. His chosen ones (John 6:37;15:16; Ephesians 1:4)

###### b. Through *profession* of faith (Matthew 16:16-19)

###### 1) Don't separate the testimony from the man

###### 2) But don't separate the man from the disciples (Matthew 18:18)

###### c. With great *Power* (Matthew 16:18; Isaiah 28:16)

##### 3. The New Israel of God (Galatians 6:16)

###### a. The "old" signs give way to the new

- The Covenant sign changes
- Passover finds its fulfillment in the Lord's Supper

###### b. Ephesians 2:19-22

###### 1) We are One in Christ (members of the household of God)

###### 2) Holy, consecrated to God (temple and dwelling place)

###### 3) Universal, worldwide

###### 4) Apostolic (built on the foundation of the apostles)

**Conclusion:** Are we still building walls? Does the hostility persist?