

GREATER BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.

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“Investing in the Kingdom of God, by Sowing Seeds for the Savior” – Matthew 13:24

WHAT THE CHURCH IS AND HOW IT GROWS

Scripture: Acts 2:32-47

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Verse 47 of this chapter reads, *“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”* His words tell us **something vital about the Church**, that it is not a building made of bricks and mortar, but is the **company of believing people, of those who have been born again (John 3:3,5) and baptized into the body of Christ, which is the Church (1 Corinthians 12:13).**

Every day the Lord has been adding to His Church those whom He is saving.

1. The Risen Lord is actively engaged in building His Church

We must remember that the **Lord**, who “added to their number daily,” was and is on the throne in heaven. He is there now, so what is He doing? **One thing is that He is adding to the Church those who are being saved.** The Church, therefore, is a **divine institution because He does the adding.** No human can “add” to a Church; it is purely the Lord’s prerogative, and each day this is what Jesus is doing.

In **Matthew 16:13-18** we have the record of the great truth that was unveiled at Caesarea Philippi, and the words to notice are at the end of verse 18. Once we realize that the Lord is the Builder of His Church, two results follow:

- a. We shall be **delivered from discouragement and from a sense of defeatism and despair.**
- b. We shall be **delivered from pride and self-congratulation.**

2. The progress and growth of the Church are helped or hindered by the witness and testimony of its members

Only the Lord can do the work of building His Church; only He can add to the Church so that it expands and becomes stronger each day, and **He does this through the yielded lives and testimony of His people.** Notice the word “**and**” that comes in the center of verse 47.

Look at verses 41-46 to see the following characteristics of these church members:

1. they were soundly converted (verse 41)
2. they were openly committed (verse 41)
3. they were truly obedient (verse 42)
4. they were gloriously united (verse 44)
5. they were obviously consistent (verses 46-47)

How do we measure up to this word picture of the ideal church member?

3. Those who have been added to the Church are "being saved"

It was not only true that new people were being converted daily, **but those who were converted were "being saved."** They were - **justified**, but they were **not yet sanctified** (in a practical sense), or **glorified**. **Salvation is a process.**

When we **believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ we are **saved from the penalty of sin - justification**, to do with the past.

We are "being saved" **from the power of sin each day - sanctification, to do with the present.**

We shall be **saved from the presence of sin at the Lord's second coming**. This is glorification, to do with the **future**.

If we are Christians we are "being saved;" we belong to the Lord and we are **absolutely secure in His keeping** (John 10:28-29), but the work of grace is, or should be, still going on within us. Notice what this tells us:

1. There are **many babies in the Church**.
2. **Sanctification and spiritual growth are a process**.
3. There are **no perfect Church members**: all are "being saved". Every Christian should be growing - pressing on to maturity (2 Peter 3:18).
4. There is **nothing static about a growing Church**. New people should be coming in all the time, and there must be no room for cliques. Every baby must be welcomed into the family circle.
5. **All who are being saved should be in the fellowship of the Church**. In the New Testament, there was no such thing as an **unattached Christian**.

Remember, those who are "being saved" will ultimately be fully saved - look up Romans 8:29-30 and Philippians 1:6.