

# WEEK 4 — OUTLINE

## Propagating the Resurrected Christ under the Heavenly Ministry of the Ascended Christ

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32-36; 3:15; 5:30-32; 8:4, 12; 13:1-4

### « DAY 1 »

#### I. The book of Acts reveals a resurrected and ascended Christ who is in the heavens (1:3, 9-11, 22; 2:32-36):

A. The Lord's living and ministry in the heavens are the content of the book of Acts.

B. The Lord's ascension was His initiation into His living and ministry in the heavens (5:31):

1. This initiation brought Him into a new realm, that is, into the heavens where He now has His living and His ministry.

2. The book of Acts reveals that the resurrected and ascended Christ is now living in the heavens and ministering there.

C. Christ's ascension was God's exaltation of Him (2:33-36; 5:31):

1. The Lord was made Lord, the Lord of all, to possess all, and He was made Christ, God's Anointed, to carry out God's commission (2:36; 10:36; Heb. 1:9):

a. As God, the Lord was the Lord all the time (Luke 1:43), but as man, He was made the Lord in His ascension after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection.

b. As God's sent and anointed One, He was Christ from the time that He was born (2:11; Matt. 1:16; 16:16; John 1:41), but as such a One, He was also officially made the Christ of God in His ascension.

2. God exalted Christ "to His right hand as Leader and Savior" (Acts 5:31):

a. The ascended Christ is the Leader, the Originator, the Author, and the Inaugurator (3:15; Heb. 2:10; 12:2):

(1) His being the Leader is a matter related to His authority (Matt. 28:18).

(2) He rules sovereignly over the earth with His authority so that the environment may be fit for God's chosen people to receive His salvation (Acts 17:26-27; John 17:2).

### « DAY 2 »

b. The One God has exalted to His right hand is also the Savior (Acts 5:31):

(1) Jesus' incarnation made Him a man, His human living qualified Him to be man's Savior, His crucifixion accomplished full redemption for man, His resurrection vindicated His redemptive work, and His exaltation

inaugurated Him to be the ruling Leader so that He might be the Savior.

(2) We were saved by the Christ on the throne, by the One in glory (3:13; Luke 24:26; Heb. 2:9; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11):

(a) When we were saved, we were seated with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6).

(b) Christ saved us from the throne and to the throne; this is the ascended Christ as our Savior.

## II. In order to cooperate with the heavenly ministry of the ascended Christ for the propagation of the resurrected Christ, we need to know the intrinsic significance of the book of Acts:

A. The book of Acts is a record of a group of people who are resurrected and ascended with Christ, having Christ within them as their life and Christ upon them as their power and authority; they live by the Triune God within them as their life, and they act by the Triune God upon them as their strength, power, and authority (John 20:22; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

### « DAY 3 »

B. Acts is a record of a group of people who act and work in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body (v. 14; 13:1-4):

1. Acts reveals the move and activity of the Body, not of individual actions unrelated to the Body (8:1-17).

2. Acts contains a beautiful picture of the one accord in the activities and work of the believers who move in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body (2:44-47; 4:24, 32; 13:1-4; 16:1-5).

C. The book of Acts shows us the divine stream, the unique flow; there is only one stream, one current, of the flow (Gen. 2:8-12; Rev. 22:1-2; Acts 2:33).

D. In Acts there is a group of people who know the meaning of resurrection and ascension, who live by Christ as their life, who act by Christ as their power and authority, and who realize that they are the Body and act in the Body and for the Body in the one divine stream; this is the intrinsic significance of the book of Acts (John 20:22; Acts 1:8-11, 14; 2:1-4, 24, 32-33; 4:33).

### « DAY 4 »

## III. To carry out His heavenly ministry for the propagating of Himself so that the kingdom of God might be established for the building up of the churches as His fullness, the ascended Christ uses not a group of preachers trained by man's teaching to do a preaching work but a body of His witnesses, who bear a living testimony of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ (1:8):

A. In His ascension the Lord carries out His ministry in the heavens through these

witnesses, in His resurrection life and with His ascension power and authority, as recorded in Acts, to spread Himself as the development of the kingdom of God from Jerusalem unto the uttermost part of the earth (1:8):

1. Testifying requires experiences of seeing and enjoyment concerning the Lord or spiritual things; it is different from merely teaching (2:40).

2. Paul was appointed as a minister and a witness (26:16):

a. A minister is for the ministry; a witness, for the testimony.

b. The ministry is related mainly to the work, to what a minister does; a testimony is related to the person, to what a witness is.

B. The Lord's resurrection was the focus of the apostles' testimony (1:22; 2:32; 3:13, 15, 26; 10:39-40; 13:33; 17:3, 18):

## « DAY 5 »

1. God glorified His Servant Jesus through His resurrection and in His ascension (Luke 24:46; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11; Acts 3:13, 15, 26; 4:10, 33; 5:30-31).

2. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus points back to His incarnation, humanity, human living on the earth, and God-ordained death; and His resurrection points forward to His ascension, ministry and administration in heaven, and coming back (2:23; 1:9-11).

3. The Lord is both God and resurrection, possessing the indestructible life (John 1:1; 11:25; Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24):

a. Since He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him.

b. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; rather, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it (Rev. 1:18).

4. The apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Christ, not only in word but also by their life and action, especially bearing witness of His resurrection; bearing witness of Christ's resurrection is the crucial point, the focus, in carrying out God's New Testament economy (Acts 2:32; 4:33; 10:39-40; 17:3).

## « DAY 6 »

**IV. Our cooperation with the ascended Christ for the propagation of the resurrected Christ is a move in life for the spread of the gospel (8:26-29; 9:10-11; 10:1-3, 9-22):**

A. This move in life corresponds to the Lord's heavenly ministry in His ascension.

B. In Acts 8, 9, and 10 the Lord moved His disciples outwardly for the preaching of the gospel; He was ministering in the heavens to move some of His disciples:

1. In response to the Lord's heavenly ministry, Philip left Jerusalem for Gaza (8:26); this was the corresponding on Philip's side to move in life for the

preaching of the gospel.

2. In Acts 9 there was a marvelous triangle of Christ ministering in the heavens, with Ananias and Saul corresponding to it on earth.

3. In Acts 10 Peter cooperated with the Lord to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

C. This is the proper gospel preaching as a move in life under the heavenly ministry of Christ (5:42; 8:4, 12; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32):

1. Christ as the Head exercised His headship to move His disciples here and there, and they were on the alert, responding to His ministry from the heavens (11:1-18).

2. The preaching of the gospel in the Lord's recovery should be like this: a prevailing move in life, corresponding to Christ's heavenly ministry under His headship (1:8; 2:32-36; 5:30-32; 13:1-4; Eph. 1:22-23).

## « WEEK 4 — DAY 1 »

### Morning Nourishment

Acts 5:30-31 The God of our fathers has raised Jesus, whom you slew by hanging Him on a tree. This One God has exalted to His right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

The Lord's ascension was not the end of His activity. Rather, the Man-Savior's ascension was another initiation....Christ's ascension was His inauguration, His initiation, into His heavenly ministry. The Lord's conception was His first initiation, and His ascension was another initiation. His conception was the initiation of His life and ministry on earth; His ascension was the initiation of His living and ministry in the heavens. Hence, Christ's ascension was not the termination of His activity; instead, it was His initiation into further activity—His ministry in the heavens.

The first book written by Luke, his Gospel, describes the Lord's first initiation and His life and ministry on earth. Now there is the need of the second book, the book of Acts, to tell us into what kind of living and ministry the Lord has been initiated through His ascension. Therefore, Luke had the burden to write a second book to unveil the living and ministry of the ascended Christ. In Acts we see how the Lord lives and ministers in His ascension. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 2-3)

### Today's Reading

We would emphasize the fact that, according to the Gospel of Luke, the Lord lived on earth. That life and ministry were initiated by His conception and concluded by His resurrection. Then after His resurrection the Lord Jesus ascended to the heavens. This ascension was not a termination but another initiation. This initiation brought Him into a new realm, that is, into the heavens, where He now has another living with another ministry. This living and ministry are carried out not by the Jesus who was merely conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of a virgin and born in Bethlehem; it is carried out by the ascended Christ. The resurrected and ascended Christ is now living in the heavens and ministering there. The Lord's living and ministry in the heavens are the content of the book of Acts.

Christ's ascension was God's exaltation of Him. In exalting Christ, God made Him both Lord and Christ. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit is a proof that God has exalted the Lord Jesus and has made Him both Lord and Christ.

As God, the Lord was the Lord all the time (Luke 1:43; John 11:21; 20:28). But as man, He was made the Lord in His ascension after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection. And as God's sent and anointed One, He was Christ from the time He was born (Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:16; John 1:41; Matt. 16:16). But as such a One, He was also officially made the very Christ of God in His ascension. The Lord was made Lord, as the Lord of all (Acts 10:36), to possess all; and He was made Christ, as God's Anointed (Heb. 1:9), to carry out God's commission. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 3, 79-81)

Acts 5:30 tells us that Christ was slain by the Jews on a tree. Acts 5:31 goes on to say that God has exalted the crucified Jesus "to His right hand as Leader and Savior." The Greek word rendered "Leader" is archegos, meaning "author," "origin," "originator," "chief leader," "captain." This word is used only four times in the New Testament and always in reference to Christ (3:15; Heb. 2:10; 12:2). It has been translated a number of different ways in various versions because there is no precise English equivalent to the Greek. The thought is that this One is the origin and Originator, the Author, the Leader, and the Inaugurator. He is above all, and He is spontaneously the Ruler with authority. God has exalted Jesus, the One rejected and killed by the Jewish leaders, as the highest Leader. His being the Leader is a matter related to His authority. He rules sovereignly over the earth with His authority so that the environment may be fit for God's chosen people to receive His salvation (Acts 17:26-27; John 17:2). (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2987-2988)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msgs. 1-2; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 31

## « WEEK 4 — DAY 2 »

### Morning Nourishment

John 20:22 And when He had said this, He breathed into them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:49 And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you; but as for you, stay in the city until you put on power from on high.

The One God has exalted to His right hand is not only the Leader but also the Savior. Leader is related to His authority, and Savior to His salvation. Jesus' incarnation made Him a man, His human living on earth qualified Him to be man's Savior, His crucifixion accomplished full redemption for man, His resurrection vindicated His redemptive work, and His exaltation inaugurated Him to be the ruling Leader so that He might be the Savior.

According to Peter's word in Acts 5:31, the Lord is the Savior "to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." To give repentance and forgiveness of sins to God's chosen people requires Christ to be exalted as a ruling Leader and Savior. His sovereign ruling causes and leads God's chosen people to repent, and His salvation based upon His redemption affords them forgiveness of sins. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, pp. 2988-2989)

### Today's Reading

Although the title Savior is applied to Christ in His earthly ministry (John 4:42), He was not officially the Savior until His ascension. We were saved officially by the Christ on the throne, by the One in glory. When we were saved, we were seated with Him in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6). Christ has saved us from the throne and to the throne. This is the ascended Christ as our Savior. (The Conclusion of the New Testament, p. 2989)

The book of Acts is a record of a group of people who are resurrected and ascended with Christ, having Christ within them as their life and Christ upon them as their power and authority. They live not by themselves but by Christ as life. They forget about their own life and deny themselves. Moreover, they walk, act, and work not by their own strength, their own way, or their own method but by Christ as their power, their way, and their method. This Christ who is now their method, way, and power is the very Holy Spirit who came down upon them. In other words, they live by the Triune God within them as their life, and they act by the Triune God upon them as their strength, their way, and their method. This is the contents of the book of Acts.

In principle, Acts is a record only of that group of people who are resurrected and ascended with Christ, having Christ within them as their life and Christ upon them as their power. Moreover, they live not by themselves but by this Christ within, and they act not according to knowledge, doctrine, teaching, rules, regulations, forms, and traditions but according to the living Christ upon them....If we take this point of view and go back to read Acts again, we will gain the proper insight into it.

The book of Acts is the record of a group of people who are regenerated by the Triune God and inaugurated with authority by the Triune God. These people have the Triune God within them as their life and upon them as their authority and power. They act in this way and live by the life within. This is the basic thought of the book of Acts....The believers mentioned in Acts moved and worked with authority and power, not as many do today.

We must realize the significance of the Lord's resurrection and ascension, including both the breathing of His breath into us on the day of resurrection and the rushing of the violent wind on the day of Pentecost. Now we have the breath within us and the rushing wind upon us. We have the Triune God as our life within and the very same Triune God as our authority without. As such, we are the church. This is the critical transition in the book of Acts. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 1—the Gospels and the Acts," pp. 203-204, 197)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msgs. 3-4; CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 1—the Gospels and the Acts," ch. 6

## « WEEK 4 — DAY 3 »

### Morning Nourishment

Acts 1:14 These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

4:33 And with great power the apostles gave testimony of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

From the very first chapter [of Acts] neither Peter, John, nor those one hundred twenty acted individually. Rather, all the actions of this group of people were the actions of the one Body. The one hundred twenty prayed together with one accord, and they received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, preached the gospel, bore the testimony of Jesus, and always moved and acted as one Body (1:14; 2:1, 4, 14, 46-47). (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 1—the Gospels and the Acts," p. 205)

### Today's Reading

[In Acts] it is difficult to find anyone...who acted individualistically. Although it appears that Philip preached the gospel by himself in chapter 8 when he was in Samaria, it was Peter and John who came to confirm his preaching (vv. 5, 14-17). The Holy Spirit, the power upon the Body, did not come upon those believers through Philip's preaching. It was when Peter and John came and laid hands on the Samaritan believers that the Holy Spirit on the Body was transmitted to them. This proves that even Philip's preaching was not an individual action. His preaching was related to the move of the Body. Therefore, chapter after chapter in Acts records the move and activity of the Body, not of individual believers.

The activities recorded in Acts were not only of the Body but also for the Body, that is, for the building up of the church. No one acted in a way that had nothing to do with the Body. Rather, everyone acted in a way that was for the building up of the Body. The issue and result of what they did was the building up of the church....Many in today's Christianity act in a way that is not of the Body or for the Body. As we have seen, Acts is a record of a group of people who act and work all the time for the Body and through the Body. Therefore, in this book the churches are built up out of the activities of those people. Acts contains a beautiful picture of the one accord in the activities, work, and move of the believers. They always moved in the Body and for the Body.

Beginning from Jerusalem in Acts 2 there was only one flow on this earth, and all the early disciples moved, acted, and worked in the flow. There were not two currents in the flow, but always one. All those who were raised up by the Lord sooner or later were brought into the flow. While the flow proceeded westward, believers such as Aquila, Priscilla, Apollos, and others were raised up by the Lord and brought into this one stream (18:2, 24-28)....The work in the flow is the work of the Lord's present testimony.

Thus far we have seen the principles of the book of Acts. If we apply these principles when we read chapter after chapter, we will be clear about what is in Acts. We will know its real meaning, and we will have the insight into it. The central meaning of the flow in Acts is that there is a group of people who know the meaning of resurrection and ascension. They live not by themselves but by Christ as their life, and they act not according to certain ways or methods but by the living Christ as their strength, power, method, and way. Moreover, they realize that they are the Body, and they always act in the Body and for the Body in the one divine stream. May we all be clear to such an extent that we not only know the resurrection and ascension, but we live in resurrection and act in ascension, not by ourselves but in the Body, for the Body, and in one flow. This is the real meaning of the book of Acts. (CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 1—the Gospels and the Acts," pp. 205-208)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1964, vol. 2, "A General Sketch of the New Testament in the Light of Christ and the Church, Part 1—the Gospels and the Acts," chs. 7-8

## « WEEK 4 — DAY 4 »

### Morning Nourishment

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

26:16 ...I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you.

What the ascended Christ wants to use to carry out His heavenly ministry for the propagating of Himself so that the kingdom of God might be established for the building up of the churches for His expression is not a group of preachers trained by man's teaching to do a preaching work. Rather, the Lord wants to use a body of His witnesses, who bear a living testimony of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and ascended Christ. According to the book of Acts, Satan could instigate the Jewish religionists and utilize the Gentile politicians to bind the apostles and their evangelical ministry, but he could not bind Christ's living witnesses and their living testimony. The more the Jewish religionists and the Gentile politicians bound the apostles and their evangelical ministry, the stronger and brighter these witnesses of Christ and their living testimony became. In His appearing to Paul on the way to Damascus, the Lord clearly told him that He appointed him not only a minister but also a witness....As a living witness of Christ, Paul had testified concerning Him in Jerusalem and would testify of Him in Rome (Acts 23:11). (Life-study of Acts, pp. 594-595)

### Today's Reading

Witnesses are those who bear a living testimony of the resurrected and ascended Christ in life. They differ from preachers who merely preach doctrines in letters. As recorded in Acts, the ascended Christ carries out His ministry in the heavens through these witnesses in His resurrection life and with His ascension power and authority to spread Himself as the development of the kingdom of God unto the remotest part of the earth.

As Paul was on the way to Damascus, Christ revealed certain things to him, and in those things Paul saw Christ. The Lord indicated that He would reveal more things to Paul and in those things the Lord Himself would appear to him. Therefore, what Paul saw was not merely the things themselves but Christ as the One appearing in all these things.

In Acts 20:21 Paul [says], "Solemnly testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance unto God and faith in our Lord Jesus." Once again, the word "testifying" is used. Testifying requires experiences of seeing, participating, and enjoying. It is different from mere teaching. Paul's use of this word here indicates that he himself had experienced repentance unto God and faith in the Lord Jesus. Therefore, he could testify concerning what he had experienced. He did not merely preach and teach; he testified of what he had passed through in his experience of repentance and faith.

When the Lord Jesus appeared to Paul, He commissioned him, appointing him as a minister and a witness. Concerning this, the Lord said to him, "Rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you" (26:16). Here we see that the Lord appointed Paul both a minister and a witness. A minister is for the ministry; a witness is for the testimony. Ministry is mainly related to the work, to what the minister does. Testimony is related to the person, to what the witness is.

The Lord's resurrection is the focus of the apostles' testimony [1:22]. It refers back to His incarnation, humanity, human living on earth, and God-ordained death (2:23), and points forward to His ascension, ministry and administration in heaven, and coming back. Thus the apostles' testimony of Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, is all-inclusive, as depicted in the whole book of Acts. They preached and ministered the all-inclusive Christ as revealed in the entire Scripture. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 595-596, 460, 594, 40)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msgs. 10, 68



## « WEEK 4 — DAY 5 »

### Morning Nourishment

Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

15 And the Author of life you killed, whom God has raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

[In Acts 3] Peter said..., “Men of Israel, why are you marveling at this? Or why are you gazing at us, as though by our own power or godliness we have made him walk? The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him” (vv. 12-13). Some manuscripts add “the God of” before Isaac and Jacob. Why in verse 13 did Peter speak of God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Why did he not speak simply of God? This title refers to the Triune God, Jehovah, the great I AM (Exo. 3:14-15). According to the Lord’s word in Matthew 22, this divine title implies resurrection: “Concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (vv. 31-32). Peter referred to God as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob because this indicates that He is the God of resurrection...God glorified the Lord Jesus through His resurrection and in His ascension (Luke 24:26; Heb. 2:9; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:9-11). (Life-study of Acts, pp. 101-102)

### Today’s Reading

Regarding the Lord as a man, the New Testament tells us that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11). Considering Him as God, it tells us that He Himself rose from the dead (Rom. 14:9). In the same principle, regarding Him as a man, the New Testament tells us that He was killed by men (Mark 9:31). But considering Him as God, it tells us that He laid down His life of Himself (John 10:18). This also proves His dual status—human and divine.

Acts 2:24 says that it was not possible for the Lord to be held by death. The Lord is both God and resurrection (John 1:1; 11:25), possessing the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Because He is such an ever-living One, death is not able to hold Him. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to detain Him; rather, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it.

Acts 2:25 says, “For David says regarding Him, ‘I saw the Lord continually before me, because He is on my right hand, that I may not be shaken.’” The words “I saw” introduce a declaration of Christ in His resurrection.

Acts 2:28 continues, “You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of gladness with Your presence.” Here the ways of life are the ways to get out of death into resurrection. The Greek word for “presence” also means countenance. Christ was resurrected into God’s presence, especially in His ascension (2:34; Heb. 1:3).

In Acts 2:29 through 31 Peter says, “Men, brothers, I can say to you plainly concerning the patriarch David that he both deceased and was buried, and his tomb is among us until this day. Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him to seat One from the fruit of his loins upon his throne, he, seeing this beforehand, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.”

In Acts 2:32 Peter gives a concluding word concerning Christ’s resurrection: “This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses.” The Greek word for “which” here may also be rendered “whom.” The apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Christ, not in word only, but also by their life and action. Especially they bore witness of His resurrection (4:33), which is the crucial focus in carrying out God’s New Testament economy. (Life-study of Acts, pp. 78-79)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 13; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 30

## « WEEK 4 — DAY 6 »

### Morning Nourishment

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ.

13:2 And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, Set apart for Me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Ever since His ascension the Lord has been ministering in the heavens. For this ministry to be worked out on the earth, however, requires a correspondence to it on our side. Nearly twenty centuries have gone by, but not much has been fulfilled on earth. Thus, as this age draws to a close there is an urgent need for us to correspond to the Lord's ministry. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Heavenly Ministry of Christ," p. 93)

### Today's Reading

During the time of the Acts, the disciples were moving on with the Lord in life [for the spread of the gospel]. This was so in the case of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, Ananias and Saul, and Peter and Cornelius [cf. Acts 8:26-39; 9:10-11; 10:1-3, 9-22]. All three were moves in life that corresponded to the Lord's ministry in the heavens.

[In contrast], what is revealed in Ephesians and Colossians is not a move for the gospel but the growth and function of the Body [cf. Col. 2:18-19; Eph. 4:14-16]. The one is to bring people to the Lord; the other is to build up the Body. For people to be brought to the Lord requires a move in life; for the Body to be built up, the growth and function in life is needed.

The move in life to bring people to the Lord is outward, but the growth in life for the building of the Body is inward. For both the outward and the inward aspects we need to correspond to the Lord's ministry in the heavens.

In Acts 8, 9, and 10 the Lord moved His disciples outwardly for the preaching of the gospel. He was ministering in the heavens to move some of His disciples. Suppose Philip at that time had been away loving the world, Ananias had fallen into sin, and Peter had gone back to Galilee to go fishing. Christ would then have been ministering in the heavens, but there would have been no response on earth. Praise the Lord, these three were ready to respond!

In response to the Lord's heavenly ministry, Philip left Jerusalem for Gaza (8:26). While he was walking along in the desert, he was responding to the heavenly Christ. The Lord had one disciple there in the desert whom He could move. When He said to Philip, "Approach and join this chariot" (v. 29), Philip ran up and heard the eunuch reading Isaiah. Do you see how Philip was corresponding to the heavenly ministry? It was through this that the Ethiopian eunuch was brought to the Lord. This was the corresponding on Philip's side to the move in life for the preaching of the gospel.

The situation in Acts 9 was similar. Ananias must have been praying when a vision came to him from the heavens. The Lord spoke to him via heavenly television and directed him to Saul. Saul was also praying when the heavenly television transmission came to him, and he saw Ananias coming. There was a marvelous triangle of Christ ministering in the heavens, with Ananias and Saul corresponding to it on earth, all aimed at bringing Saul to the Lord.

In Acts 10 a Roman centurion named Cornelius was praying when an angel came and told him to send for Peter. Suppose Peter had been unavailable when the messengers came to him from Cornelius....He went with them, and Cornelius, his family, and probably the soldiers as well, were all brought to the Lord.

This is the proper gospel preaching. It is a move in life under the heavenly ministry of Christ. It is not a movement organized by a mission board. Christ as the Head exercised His headship to move His disciples here and there. They were on the alert, responding to His ministry from the heavens. I hope that the preaching of the gospel in the recovery will be like this: a prevailing move in life, corresponding to the Lord's heavenly ministry under His headship. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Heavenly Ministry of Christ," pp. 93-95)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1980, vol. 2, "The Heavenly Ministry of Christ," ch. 5; The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 74

## « WEEK 4 — HYMN

### Hymns, #910

1

The overflow of life is work,  
The work should be our living!  
What we experience e'er should be  
The message we are giving.  
When living and the work are one,  
The work will be effectual;  
When message and the life are one,  
The word will be successful.

2

The work must be the fruit of life,  
Born thru the Spirit's flowing;  
As branches of the Lord, the vine,  
Fruit bearing, life bestowing.  
'Tis Christ Himself thru us to work,  
Himself as life expressing,  
And all the riches of His life  
To others manifesting.

3

'Tis not a movement borne of man,  
But by His power moving;  
'Tis not the deeds done outwardly,  
But inward action proving.  
'Tis not the work of enterprise,  
But 'tis His life confessing;  
'Tis not to toil for our success,  
But 'tis Himself expressing.

4

Our plans, our aims, our energy  
We must abandon wholly,  
That He may work His plan thru us,  
His aim and object solely.  
Ourselves, with all we are and have,  
To death we must surrender,  
That Christ may live Himself thru us  
With riches and with splendor.