

**PROPAGATING THE RESURRECTED,
ASCENDED, AND ALL-INCLUSIVE CHRIST
AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

(Thursday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

**The Continuation of the Book of Acts—
Living in the Divine History within Human History**

EM Hymns: 904, 910

Scripture Reading: Acts 28:31; John 5:17; Acts 1:14; 6:7; 11:23-24; 19:20; 26:18

- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- John 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father is working until now, and I also am working.
- 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.
- Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.
- Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;
- Acts 11:24 For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a considerable number was added to the Lord.
- Acts 19:20 Thus, the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.
- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

I. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history within human history as the acting God; they have become God in life, in nature, in expression, and in function (but not in the Godhead) for the spreading and building up of the church as the corporate manifestation of Christ—1:8, 14; 2:14a; 4:10-20, 31-32; 5:20, 38-39; 13:1-4; 26:16-19; 28:31:

- 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.
- 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.
- Acts 2:14a But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them: ...
- Acts 4:10 Let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified and whom God has raised from the dead, in this name this man stands before you in good health.
- Acts 4:11 This is the stone which was considered as nothing by you, the builders, which has become the head of the corner.
- Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no other, for neither is there another name under heaven given among men in which we must be saved.
- Acts 4:13 And as they beheld the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were uneducated men and laymen, they marveled and they recognized them, that they had been with Jesus.
- Acts 4:14 And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say against it.
- Acts 4:15 But they ordered them to go away outside the Sanhedrin and conferred with one another,
- Acts 4:16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? For that indeed a notable sign has occurred through them is manifest to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.
- Acts 4:17 But in order that this would not be spread further among the people, let us threaten them that they no longer speak based upon this name to anyone.

- Acts 4:18 And when they called them, they charged them not to utter anything at all nor teach based upon the name of Jesus.
- Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge;
- Acts 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.
- Acts 4:31 And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.
- Acts 4:32 And the heart and soul of the multitude of those who had believed was one; and not even one said that any of his possessions was his own, but all things were common to them.
- Acts 5:20 Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.
- Acts 5:38 And now I say to you, withdraw from these men and leave them alone; for should this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown;
- Acts 5:39 But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them, lest you be found to be even fighters against God.
- Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- Acts 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.
- Acts 13:3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
- Acts 13:4 They then, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed away to Cyprus.
- Acts 26:16 But 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;
- Acts 26:17 Delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles, to whom I send you,
- Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.
- Acts 26:19 Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- A. In Peter's first proclamation of the gospel in the book of Acts, he quoted from the book of Joel, which reveals the intrinsic, divine history within the outward, human history—Acts 2:17-21; Joel 1:1-4; 2:28-32.
- Acts 2:17 "And it shall be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream things in dreams;
- Acts 2:18 And indeed upon My slaves, both men and women, I will pour out of My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.
- Acts 2:19 And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
- Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord comes.
- Acts 2:21 And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
- Joel 1:1 The word of Jehovah which came to Joel the son of Pethuel.
- Joel 1:2 Hear this, you elders, / And give heed, all you inhabitants of the land. / Has this ever happened in your days, / Or even in the days of your fathers?
- Joel 1:3 Tell your children about it, / And let your children tell their children, / And let their children tell the next generation.
- Joel 1:4 What the cutting locust has left, the swarming locust has eaten; / And what the swarming locust has left, the licking locust has eaten; / And what the licking locust has left, the consuming locust has eaten.
- Joel 2:28 And afterward I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, / And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; / Your old men shall dream dreams; / Your young men shall see visions.
- Joel 2:29 Indeed even upon the male and female slaves / In those days I will pour out My Spirit.
- Joel 2:30 And I will show wonders in the heavens and on earth: / Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

- Joel 2:31 The sun shall be turned into darkness, / And the moon into blood, / Before the great and terrible / Day of Jehovah comes.
- Joel 2:32 And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah shall be saved; / For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem will be an escape, / As Jehovah has said, / Even for the remnant / Whom Jehovah calls.
- B. The divine history within the human history is Christ's "goings forth...from the days of eternity" (Micah 5:2) across the bridge of time into eternity future (Psa. 90:2) so that He might be dispensed into His chosen ones as the Desire of all the nations (Hag. 2:7) for His corporate manifestation and His full glorification.
- Micah 5:2 (But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, / So little to be among the thousands of Judah, / From you there will come forth to Me / He who is to be Ruler in Israel; / And His goings forth are from ancient times, / From the days of eternity.)
- Psa 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, / And before You gave birth to the earth and the world, / Indeed from eternity to eternity, You are God.
- Hag 2:7 And I will shake all the nations, and the Desire of all the nations will come; and I will fill this house with glory, says Jehovah of hosts.
- C. Joel speaks concerning the outpouring of the processed, consummated, compound Spirit, who was poured out on the day of Pentecost; this Spirit is the consummated Triune God and the realization of Christ for the manifestation of Christ—2:28-29; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.
- Joel 2:28 And afterward I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, / And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; / Your old men shall dream dreams; / Your young men shall see visions.
- Joel 2:29 Indeed even upon the male and female slaves / In those days I will pour out My Spirit.
- Acts 2:1 And as the day of Pentecost was being fulfilled, they were all together in the same place.
- Acts 2:2 And suddenly there was a sound out of heaven, as of a rushing violent wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- Acts 2:3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which were distributed; and it sat on each one of them;
- Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, even as the Spirit gave to them to speak forth.
- Acts 2:16 But this is what is spoken through the prophet Joel:
- Acts 2:17 "And it shall be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream things in dreams;
- Acts 2:18 And indeed upon My slaves, both men and women, I will pour out of My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.
- Acts 2:19 And I will show wonders in heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
- Acts 2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord comes.
- Acts 2:21 And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- 1 Tim 3:16 And confessedly, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was manifested in the flesh, / Justified in the Spirit, / Seen by angels, / Preached among the nations, / Believed on in the world, / Taken up in glory.

II. The Acts of the Apostles is a book without an ending because this book is still being continued as the divine history within human history—28:31:

- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- A. The Lord said, "My Father is working until now, and I also am working" (John 5:17); this shows that since the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, God has been working until now, and the Lord is also working.

- B. The book of Acts is a record of the work of God; after Acts 28 many of God's vessels are still carrying on with His work; His work is continuing and has not stopped.
Acts 28 be omitted.
- C. His work will go on until the kingdom and even until the new heaven and new earth; God is always advancing; He never stops; if we know this and believe in this, we will praise the Lord; even as the New Jerusalem, His slaves will serve Him as priests—Rev. 22:3; cf. Acts 13:36a.
Rev 22:3 And there will no longer be a curse. And the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His slaves will serve Him;
Acts 13:36a Now David, having served his own generation by the counsel of God, ...
- D. The work of the Holy Spirit in preaching Christ for His propagation, multiplication, and spread through the believers of Christ was not yet completed and needed to be continued for a long period of time.
- E. Such an evangelistic work for Christ's increase, propagation, multiplication, and spread is according to God's New Testament economy for the producing of many sons for God (Rom. 8:29) that they might be the members of Christ to constitute His Body (12:5) for the carrying out of God's eternal plan and the fulfillment of His eternal will; this is revealed in detail in the twenty-one Epistles and the book of Revelation, which follow the book of Acts.
Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- F. Since God is after a corporate, shining vessel, a vessel of testimony, His children must be brought to the awareness of the Body of Christ and learn to live the Body life; otherwise, they are useless in His hand and can never fulfill His goal—Rom. 12:1-5; 1 Cor. 12:12; Rev. 1:10-12.
Rom 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think so as to be sober-minded, as God has apportioned to each a measure of faith.
Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
Rev 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,
Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.
Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,
- G. Even the testimony of the overcomers is maintained on behalf of the whole church; they do the work, and the whole church receives the benefit—12:5-9; 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:3, 5, 12, 20-21.
Rev 12:5 And she brought forth a son, a man-child, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne.
Rev 12:6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place there prepared by God so that they might nourish her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.
Rev 12:7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels went to war with the dragon. And the dragon warred and his angels.

Rev 12:8 And they did not prevail, neither was their place found any longer in heaven.
 Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast down, the ancient serpent, he who is called the Devil and Satan, he who deceives the whole inhabited earth; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him.
 Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
 Rev 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.
 Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except he who receives it.
 Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;
 Rev 2:27 And he will shepherd them with an iron rod, as vessels of pottery are broken in pieces, as I also have received from My Father;
 Rev 2:28 And to him I will give the morning star.
 Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how you have received and heard, and keep it and repent. If therefore you will not watch, I will come as a thief, and you shall by no means know at what hour I will come upon you.
 Rev 3:5 He who overcomes will be clothed thus, in white garments, and I shall by no means erase his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
 Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.
 Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.
 Rev 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

H. The overcomers are not for themselves; they stand on the ground of the church, and they are there to bring the whole church to perfection; even the victories of the overcomers are corporate victories—cf. Phil. 1:19.

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

III. The word of God is still growing and being multiplied as the continuation of the book of Acts—6:7; 12:24; 19:20:

- Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.
 Acts 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.
 Acts 19:20 Thus, the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.
- A. *Grew* in Acts 6:7 refers to the growth in life, indicating that the word of God is a matter of life that grows as a seed sown into man’s heart for the increase of Christ, the growth of God, within us—Mark 4:14; Col. 2:19.
 Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.
 Mark 4:14 The sower sows the word.
 Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- B. *Multiplied* in Acts 12:24 refers to the increase of Christ in numbers; actually, the multiplication of the disciples depends on the growth of the word.
 Acts 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.
- C. New disciples are “added to the Lord” to become the parts of Christ, the members of Christ—5:14; 11:24; Rom. 15:16.
 Acts 5:14 And believers were all the more being added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

Acts 11:24 For he was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a considerable number was added to the Lord.

Rom 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.

- D. We need to encourage the new believers “to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart”; this is to be persistently faithful to the Lord, cleave to Him, and live in close fellowship with Him—Acts 11:23.

Acts 11:23 Who, when he arrived and saw the grace of God, rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain with the Lord with purpose of heart;

IV. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history within human history by calling on the name of the Lord, suffering on behalf of the name of the Lord, and speaking in the name of the Lord, the name of Jesus:

- A. Joel’s prophecy and its fulfillment concerning God’s New Testament jubilee have two aspects: on God’s side, He poured out His Spirit in the ascension of the resurrected Christ; on our side, we call on the name of the ascended Lord, who has accomplished all, attained unto all, and obtained all—Acts 2:16-18, 21; Joel 2:28-29, 32a:

Acts 2:16 But this is what is spoken through the prophet Joel:

Acts 2:17 "And it shall be in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream things in dreams;

Acts 2:18 And indeed upon My slaves, both men and women, I will pour out of My Spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:21 And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Joel 2:28 And afterward I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh, / And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; / Your old men shall dream dreams; / Your young men shall see visions.

Joel 2:29 Indeed even upon the male and female slaves / In those days I will pour out My Spirit.

Joel 2:32a And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah shall be saved; ...

1. Our divine history in the midst of human history is a history of calling on the name of the Lord to enjoy the riches of Christ for the building up of the Body of Christ as the fullness of Christ—Rom. 10:12-13; Eph. 3:8, 19; 1:22-23.

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;

Rom 10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Eph 3:19 And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

2. By calling on the name of the Lord, we keep ourselves in God’s golden, divine history—a history that begins with Enosh (Gen. 4:26), continues through the Old and New Testaments (Job 12:4; Gen. 12:8; 26:25; Deut. 4:7; Judg. 15:18; 1 Sam. 12:18; Psa. 116:4, 13, 17; 80:18; 88:9; 1 Kings 18:24; Isa. 12:4; Lam. 3:55, 57; Psa. 99:6; Isa. 55:6; Jonah 1:6; 2 Kings 5:11; Isa. 41:25; Acts 2:21; 7:59; 9:14, 21; 22:16; Rom. 10:12-13; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22), and concludes with the last prayer in the Bible (Rev. 22:20).

Gen 4:26 And to Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of Jehovah.

Job 12:4 I have become a laughingstock to my friends, / I, who have called out to God

and He answers me. / The righteous man, the perfect man, is a laughingstock.

Gen 12:8 And he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to Jehovah and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Gen 26:25 And he built an altar there and called upon the name of Jehovah and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Deut 4:7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as Jehovah our God is whenever we call upon Him?

Judg 15:18 And he was very thirsty, and he called on Jehovah, saying, You have granted this great victory by the hand of Your servant. And will I now die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

1 Sam 12:18 And Samuel called to Jehovah, and Jehovah sent thunder and rain on that day. And all the people feared Jehovah and Samuel greatly.

Psa 116:4 But I called upon the name of Jehovah. / O Jehovah, I pray, deliver my soul.

Psa 116:13 I will take up the cup of salvation / And call upon the name of Jehovah.

Psa 116:17 To You I will offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving, / And I will call upon the name of Jehovah.

Psa 80:18 Then we will not turn back from You. / Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

Psa 88:9 My eye wastes away at the affliction; / I have called out to You, O Jehovah, every day; / I have spread out my hands to You.

1 Kings 18:24 Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and the God who answers by fire, He will be God. And all the people answered and said, The word seems good.

Isa 12:4 And you will say in that day, / Give thanks to Jehovah; call upon His name! / Make His deeds known among the peoples; / Remind them that His name is exalted.

Lam 3:55 I called upon Your name, O Jehovah, / From the lowest pit.

Lam 3:57 You drew near in the day that I called upon You; / You said, Do not fear.

Psa 99:6 Moses and Aaron among His priests, / And Samuel among those who called on His name

Isa 55:6 Seek Jehovah while He may be found; / Call upon Him while He is near.

Jonah 1:6 So the ship captain approached him and said to him, How can you be fast asleep? Arise, call on your God. Perhaps God will give thought to us, and we will not perish.

2 Kings 5:11 But Naaman became furious and went away and said, I thought, He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of Jehovah his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.

Isa 41:25 I have raised up one from the north and he has come; / From the rising of the sun he will call upon My name. / He will come upon rulers as upon mortar, / As the potter treads the clay.

Acts 2:21 And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Acts 7:59 And they stoned Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!

Acts 9:14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Your name.

Acts 9:21 And all who heard him were amazed and said, Is this not the one who ravaged those who call upon this name in Jerusalem and came here for this, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests?

Acts 22:16 And now, why do you delay? Rise up and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;

Rom 10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who is theirs and ours:

2 Tim 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

Rev 22:20 He who testifies these things says, Yes, I come quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

- B. As we are living in the divine history, we suffer on behalf of the Lord's name within the human history; it is a real honor to be dishonored on behalf of the Name, the very name of the man-dishonored but God-honored Jesus—Acts 4:18-20, 29-31; 5:41-42; 9:13-16; 2 Cor. 6:4; 11:23; Col. 1:24-25.

Acts 4:18 And when they called them, they charged them not to utter anything at all nor teach based upon the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge;

Acts 4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:29 And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings and grant Your slaves to speak Your word with all boldness,

Acts 4:30 While stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may take place through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.

Acts 4:31 And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness.

Acts 5:41 So they went from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored on behalf of the Name.

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.

Acts 9:13 But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many concerning this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem;

Acts 9:14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon Your name.

Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

Acts 9:16 For I will show him how many things he must suffer on behalf of My name.

2 Cor 6:4 But in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

2 Cor 11:23 Ministers of Christ are they? I speak as being beside myself, I more so! In labors more abundantly, in imprisonments more abundantly, in stripes excessively, in deaths often.

Col 1:24 I now rejoice in my sufferings on your behalf and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the church;

Col 1:25 Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship of God, which was given to me for you, to complete the word of God,

- C. We carry out the divine history within human history by speaking “boldly in the name of Jesus”; this name is the expression of the sum total of what the Lord is in His person and work—Acts 9:27; Phil. 2:9-11; 1 Thes. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:5.

Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took hold of him and led him to the apostles, and he related to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.

Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

Phil 2:10 That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

1 Thes 2:2 But having suffered previously and having been outrageously treated, even as you know, in Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much struggle.

2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

V. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history within human history by living, moving, and acting as one Body; they do everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body:

- A. After the Lord Jesus died, resurrected, and ascended, He continued to live, act, walk, and

work on earth in thousands of people because He imparted Himself into them through His death and resurrection—John 12:24.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

- B. The four Gospels give us a picture of the Head, and the book of Acts shows us the Body; the book of Acts is actually the acts of Christ by the Spirit in the church as His Body, His reproduction and duplication—1:14; 2:14a, 42; 9:4-5; 28:13-15.

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.

Acts 2:14a But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and spoke forth to them: ...

Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Acts 9:4 And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?

Acts 9:5 And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.

Acts 28:13 From there we sailed around and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind came on, and the second day we came to Puteoli,

Acts 28:14 Where, having found brothers, we were urged to remain with them seven days. And thus we came to Rome.

Acts 28:15 And from there the brothers, having heard about the things concerning us, came as far as the Market of Appius and Three Inns to meet us; and when Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

VI. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history within human history by rejecting themselves and living by another life—Christ as the divine life; this corporate living of Christ is the reality of the Body of Christ:

- A. The life that is indicated by *this life* in Acts 5:20 is the divine life preached, ministered, and lived by Peter that overcame the Jewish leaders' persecution, threatening, and imprisonment; Peter's life and work made the divine life so real and present in his situation that even the angel saw it and pointed it out.

Acts 5:20 Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.

- B. Paul lived Christ and served God by the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus in his spirit (the divine Spirit mingled with his human spirit as one spirit); he lived within the veil (in his spirit as the practical Holy of Holies) and outside the camp (the human organization of religion)—16:6-7; 17:16; 19:21; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 3:3; Heb. 6:19-20; 13:13.

Acts 16:6 And they passed through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

Acts 16:7 And when they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, yet the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

Acts 17:16 And while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld that the city was full of idols.

Acts 19:21 And when these things were fulfilled, Paul purposed in his spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,

Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,

Heb 6:19 Which we have as an anchor of the soul, both secure and firm and which enters within the veil,

- Heb 6:20 Where the Forerunner, Jesus, has entered for us, having become forever a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedec.
- Heb 13:13 Let us therefore go forth unto Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.
- C. In order to live in the divine history within human history and by the divine life in our human life, we need to be vessels open to the Lord, loving Him, receiving Him, being filled with Him, and letting Him be everything to us and do everything in us, through us, and for us—Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 4:7; Rom. 9:21, 23; cf. 2 Kings 4:1-6.
- Acts 9:15 But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;
- 2 Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.
- Rom 9:21 Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?
- Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
- 2 Kings 4:1 Now a certain woman from among the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared Jehovah. And the creditor has come to take my two children to himself as servants.
- 2 Kings 4:2 And Elisha said to her, What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in your house? And she said, Your servant has nothing at all in the house, except a jar of oil.
- 2 Kings 4:3 And he said, Go and borrow vessels outside, from all your neighbors, empty vessels, and not just a few.
- 2 Kings 4:4 Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and each one you fill set aside.
- 2 Kings 4:5 So she went away from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons; and they brought the vessels to her, and she poured out into them.
- 2 Kings 4:6 And when she had filled the vessels, she said to her son, Bring me another vessel. But he said to her, There is no other vessel. And the oil stopped.

VII. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history within human history by continuing steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word; this is to live in the apostolic ministry in coordination with Christ as our great High Priest in His heavenly ministry—6:4; Heb. 7:25; 8:1-2:

- Acts 6:4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.
- Heb 7:25 Hence also He is able to save to the uttermost those who come forward to God through Him, since He lives always to intercede for them.
- Heb 8:1 Now in the things which are being said the chief point is this: We have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
- Heb 8:2 A Minister of the holy places, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
- A. By prayer we set our mind on the things above and become a reflection of Christ's ministry in the heavens; we depend on prayer to do what man cannot do, to understand what man cannot understand, and to speak what man cannot speak—Acts 9:11; 13:1-4; Col. 3:1-3; 4:2; Eph. 6:18; Dan. 6:10; 9:2-3; 1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Cor. 3:6.
- Acts 9:11 And the Lord said to him, Rise up and go to the lane called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas a man from Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying;
- Acts 13:1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
- Acts 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.
- Acts 13:3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.
- Acts 13:4 They then, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed away to Cyprus.
- Col 3:1 If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.

- Col 3:2 Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth.
 Col 3:3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
 Col 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
 Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
 Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.
 Dan 9:2 In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by means of the Scriptures the number of the years, which came as the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet, for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, that is, seventy years.
 Dan 9:3 So I set my face toward the Lord God to seek Him in prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.
 1 Cor 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.
 2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
- B. By the ministry of the word, we impart Christ into others as the heavenly life and power so that they may be sustained with the riches of Christ to live Christ as their heavenly life on earth—Rom. 15:16; cf. Isa. 50:4-5.
- Rom 15:16 That I might be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, a laboring priest of the gospel of God, in order that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, having been sanctified in the Holy Spirit.
- Isa 50:4 The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one.
- Isa 50:5 The Lord Jehovah has opened my ear; / And I was not rebellious, / Nor did I turn back.

VIII. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history within human history seen in Psalm 68, which shows that Christ is the center of God's move on the earth and the reality of God's activities through the church—vv. 1, 24:

- Psa 68 be omitted.
 Psa 68:1 Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered; / And let those who hate Him flee before Him.
 Psa 68:24 They have seen Your goings, O God, / The goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary:
- A. We need to enjoy the processed and consummated Triune God as the life-dispensing and outpoured Spirit day by day—vv. 11-13; Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 16:5; 20:31; 28:30-31.
- Psa 68:11 The Lord gives the command; / The women who bear the glad tidings are a great host.
 Psa 68:12 The kings of the armies flee. / They flee! / And she who abides at home / Divides the spoil.
 Psa 68:13 Though you lie among the sheepfolds, / There are dove wings covered with silver, / And its pinions, with greenish yellow gold.
 Acts 2:46 And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house, they partook of their food with exultation and simplicity of heart,
 Acts 2:47 Praising God and having grace with all the people. And the Lord added together day by day those who were being saved.
 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.
 Acts 16:5 And so the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.
 Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.
 Acts 28:30 And he remained two whole years in his own rented dwelling and welcomed all those who came to him,
 Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

- B. We need to dwell in Christ as the “shore” of the evangelists for the transportation and spreading in the preaching of the gospel; on the day of Pentecost at least one hundred twenty gospel “ships,” all of whom were Galileans, set out from the shore to spread the gospel—Psa. 68:27; Gen. 49:13; Acts 2:7; 13:31.

Psa 68:27 There are little Benjamin, who rules them, / And the princes of Judah in their company, / The princes of Zebulun, the princes of Naphtali.

Gen 49:13 Zebulun will dwell at the shore of the sea, / And he will be a shore for ships, / And his flank will be toward Sidon.

Acts 2:7 And they were amazed and marveled, saying, Behold, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

Acts 13:31 And for many days He appeared to those who had come up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now His witnesses to the people.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE CONTINUATION OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

There are sixty-six books in the Bible. When we come to the end of many of these books, we can say that the book is finished. There are fifty chapters in Genesis, and when we come to the end, we sense that we have come to the end. The Gospel of Matthew has twenty-eight chapters. When we come to chapter twenty-eight, we feel that we have come to the end. When we come to Romans 16, we also feel that this is the end. When we read Revelation 22, we also feel that this is the end.

But there is one book in the Bible which does not have an end. All the other sixty-five books have an end. But one book does not have an end. This book is the Acts of the Apostles. Why does Acts 28 end the way it does? When you read Acts 28, you feel as if the book has not yet concluded. This book does not have an ending. The Acts of the Apostles is a book without an ending because this book is still being continued. Perhaps the acts of the first-century apostles have ended, but the book of Acts as a whole has not yet ended. Until now we still have the Acts of the Apostles with us. This book has not yet ended.

The Lord said, “My Father is working until now, and I also am working” (John 5:17). This shows that since the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, God has been working until now, and the Lord is also working. What is the book of Acts? The book of Acts is not a record of the work of Paul or a record of the work of Peter or John. The book of Acts is a record of the work of God. Who can say that God has done no work after Acts 28? Who can say that God’s work stopped after Acts 28?

The book of Acts does not have an ending. After chapter twenty-eight, many of God’s vessels are still carrying on with His work. His work is continuing and has not stopped. Everything was not over after Paul worked in Rome for two years. Paul lived in Rome and was later martyred. None of these things are recorded in the book of Acts. Peter, Paul, and John are three important persons, yet none of their endings were recorded. How can we say that the book of Acts has ended? God’s testimony can never be finished. We could say the same thing even if there was a twenty-ninth chapter, or a thirtieth chapter, or even a hundredth chapter. If one wanted to write more, new things could always be added. This is why Acts stops at chapter twenty-eight. Although the written record no longer continued after chapter twenty-eight, God’s work has been going on. The work in the first century was not the peak. For four thousand years, God has been working. If we say that Acts 28 was the peak, we must be at the bottom of the hill; we must have come down from the peak. This is not true, because the Lord said, “My Father is working until now, and I also am working.” We should not assume that God’s work reached its peak at the time of Paul, and we should not consider that God’s work reached its peak at the time of Martin Luther either. No, the first century was not the end of God’s work, nor was the sixteenth century the end of His work. Even last century was not the end of God’s work. His work will go on until the kingdom and even until the new heaven and the new earth. God is always advancing; He never stops. If we know this and believe in this, we will praise our Lord.

Man always has a misconception that his age is the worst age of the church. At the time of

Martin Luther some thought this way. At the time of John Wesley some thought this way. We consider Martin Luther's time a marvelous age and John Wesley's time a marvelous age also. While we consider their ages marvelous, some who come fifty years after us will say that we were at a marvelous age. We are afraid that man will stop. But God never stops. Every year, He knows what He is doing, and He knows how much He will work. Every year, He does what He wants to do. He is a God who goes on day by day; He is always advancing. Hallelujah! God is a God who keeps on advancing!

Every time God advances, He finds some vessels. In the book of Acts, God found some vessels. At the time of Martin Luther, God found a vessel, and at the time of John Wesley, He also found a vessel. Every time there is a spiritual revival, God finds some vessels. Where is God's vessel today? It is true that the Father is working until now. But who is continuing to work together with Him? Who can say, "I also am working"? This is the crucial question.

Brothers and sisters, if God grants us light and if we see God's truth, we will admit that God is after the same vessel today that He ordained at the beginning. This vessel is the church. In other words, God is not after an individual vessel today but a corporate one. Since God is after a corporate vessel, His children must be brought to the awareness of the Body of Christ and the Body life. Otherwise, they are useless in His hand and can never fulfill His goal.

Revelation 1 tells us that the churches are golden lampstands. God does not simply say that the churches are golden; He says that the churches are golden lampstands. If the churches are just golden, they cannot satisfy God. God says that the churches are golden lampstands because golden lampstands shine and enlighten. God desires the church to be a shining vessel, a vessel of testimony. From the beginning God has ordained that the church be a lampstand. The church, not individuals, is a lampstand before the Lord. It is not enough just to be golden, and it is not enough just to be of God. There must be the shining for God and the testimony for Him before the church can be considered the lampstand.

Hence, the church exists for God's testimony. Anything that is not golden is not the church, and anything that is not a lampstand is not the church. Anything that does not have life within is not the church, and anything that does not have the testimony within is also not the church. The church must realize what God is doing and what He is after in this age; it must realize what God's testimony on the earth today is. Only then can the church be considered the golden lampstand.

Simply put, God's work is always advancing. He is still seeking this vessel. His vessel today is the same vessel He intended to have at the beginning; the church is this vessel, not single individuals.

Some may ask, What does it mean that the overcomers come out of the church? It is true that there needs to be overcomers who come out of the church. But even the testimony of the overcomers is maintained on behalf of the corporate whole; it is not for individuals alone. The overcomers are not men who consider themselves extraordinary, better than others, and who put everyone else aside. The overcomers work on behalf of the whole church. They do the work, while the whole church gains the benefit. The overcomers are not for themselves; they stand on the ground of the church, and they are there to bring the whole church to perfection. They stand on the ground of the church and maintain their stand on behalf of the church. Even the victories of the overcomers are corporate victories.

The vessel God is after is a corporate one. Therefore, we have to learn to live the Body life. In order to live the Body life, we have to deny the natural life and be judged and dealt with by God in a deep way. We must learn obedience, and we must also learn fellowship. In this way, we will have the chance of becoming God's vessel. (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 37, pp. 121-124)