

ONE ACCORD
AND CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
(Lord's Day—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

**Continuing to Live in the Divine History within Human History
in the Continuation of the Book of Acts
for the Spreading and Building Up of the Church
as the Corporate Manifestation of Christ**

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8, 13-14; 2:16-18, 21; 5:20, 41-42; 6:4;
13:32-34; 16:6-7; 17:16; 19:21; 28:31

- 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:**
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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— Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:1-4, 16-21; 1 Tim. 3:15-16.
- II. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine 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:
 - 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.
 - 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).

- 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.
- C. We carry out the divine history within the 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.

III. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine 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.
- 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.

IV. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine 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.
- 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.
- C. In order to live in the divine history within the 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.

V. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine 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:

- 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.
- 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.

VI. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine 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:

- A. We need to enjoy the processed and consummated Triune God as the life-dispensing and outpoured Spirit day by day—vv. 11-13, 19; Acts 2:46-47; 5:42; 16:5; 20:31; 28:30-31.
- 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.

VII. The book of Acts reveals a group of people who live in the divine history by continuing to enjoy, live, and proclaim the resurrected Christ as the firstborn Son of God and as the holy things of David, the faithful things, which are all the aspects of what Christ is as mercies to us—13:32-34:

- A. Christ as the seed of David was begotten through His resurrection to be the firstborn Son of God and the life-giving Spirit as God's sure mercies shown to David—vv. 33-35; Isa. 55:3-4.
- B. In Acts 13:34 Paul interprets God's sure mercies in Isaiah 55:3 as “the holy things of David, the faithful things,” and in Acts 13:33 and 35 he indicates that these things are the resurrected Christ Himself as the firstborn Son of God and as the Holy One.
- C. This is also confirmed by Isaiah 55:4, which reveals that the sure mercies are Christ Himself as the Witness, Leader, and Commander to the peoples.
- D. The resurrected Christ as the firstborn Son of God and the life-giving Spirit is a great gift given by God to His chosen people, and this gift is entitled “the holy things of David, the faithful things”—Acts 13:33-34.
- E. The resurrected Christ is the mercies and blessings, the holy and faithful things, whom God gives to us as a great gift; this gift is the resurrected Christ Himself as the reality of the eternal covenant with all His unsearchable riches to be our all-inclusive grace—Isa. 42:6b; 55:3; 1 Cor. 1:9; Acts 13:43.

VIII. If we would be in the continuation of the book of Acts, we need to continue to live in the divine history by having an upper-room consecration—1:13-14:

- A. At the seashore Peter gave up his job to follow the Lord Jesus, but in the upper room he gave up much more—Matt. 4:18-20; Acts 1:13-14:
 - 1. He stood with the heavenly vision to give up the religion of his forefathers.
 - 2. He gave up his country, his relationship with his neighbors and friends, and his relatives, and he was willing to risk his life.
- B. The kind of consecration that we need today is an upper-room consecration, a consecration in which we pay the price to have our whole being “married” to the heavenly vision—26:19; 1:8; 20:24.
- C. If we pay the price for the heavenly vision, we will “burn the bridges” behind us and will have no way to go backward.
- D. Whether we have seen the heavenly vision or not depends on whether we are willing to pay the price to buy the anointing Spirit as the eyesalve—Rev. 3:18.
- E. To take the way of the Lord's recovery is not cheap; this way is expensive and requires a costly consecration.
- F. We are not here for a movement but for the Lord's recovery, and the recovery can be carried out only by the specific and extraordinary consecration in the upper room.
- G. The one hundred twenty in the upper room all became a burnt offering; they were burning for the Lord in spirit, and they burned others with the divine fire of the divine life—Luke 12:49-50; Acts 2:3-4; Rom. 12:11.

- H. When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, great crowds followed Him, but they did not afford Him anything for His move; His move was with those in the upper room, with those whose eyes had been opened and whose hearts had been touched— Acts 17:6b.
- I. It is a small number who will turn the world upside down and change the age; if we would be in the upper room, we need to pray in a specific way and say, “Lord, I am willing to be in the upper room for the recovery of Your testimony.”

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE VISION OF CONSECRATION

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:12-14; Rev. 3:18

In the foregoing chapters we have covered the vision of Christ, the vision of the church, the vision of the Body, the vision of the self, and the vision of the world. In this chapter we need to consider the vision of consecration. As we will see, this vision is of a particular kind of consecration.

BOUND BY THE FLESH, THE SELF, AND THE WORLD

We have pointed out that fallen people are bound by a cord composed of three strands: the flesh, the self, and the world. The flesh is the human body corrupted by the sinful nature of Satan. Sin is nothing less than the sinful nature of Satan injected into the human body, which had been created by God for His purpose. In Romans 6 and 7 sin is personified and likened to a living person who dwells in us, works in us, and reigns in us. As we have the flesh in the body, so we have the self in the soul. The self is the soul plus the satanic mind, the satanic thought.

The human body has become the flesh, and the human soul has become the self, but what has happened to the human spirit? There seems to be nothing wrong with the human spirit, for, in contrast to the body and the soul, there is nothing evil or sinful in it. No, there is nothing sinful in the human spirit, but nevertheless the human spirit has been deadened. The spirit has been deadened by the sin in the body and by the self in the soul. The more sinful we are, the more our spirit is deadened. Likewise, the more self-seeking we are, the more our spirit is deadened.

Human beings are bound not only by the flesh and the self but also by the world. Satan has systematized all the things on earth which are necessary for human existence. These things include food, marriage, clothing, housing, and transportation. The Lord provides everything necessary for our existence so that we may live to fulfill His purpose. However, Satan has come in to systematize these things into a system which in the Greek New Testament is the word *kosmos* and in English is *world*. Originally, all these things were on earth for human existence, and there was nothing wrong with them, but Satan came in to change the earthly things into worldly things. Satan transmuted the human body into the flesh and changed the human soul into the self. In the same principle, Satan has changed the earthly things— the things that were originally on earth for man’s existence—into worldly things. These things have become elements of Satan’s system, the world, in which all people are imprisoned. Man has been systematized by Satan and has no freedom to fulfill God’s purpose.

How evil and how subtle Satan is! Satan has corrupted the human body with sin, causing the body to become the flesh. Satan has polluted the human soul with the satanic mind, causing the soul to become the self. Satan has systematized all the earthly things that are necessary for human existence, organizing them into one system, the world.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WORLD

The world may be likened to a large university. A university is a system with many colleges, schools, and departments. In a university there may be a school of medicine, a school of law, a school of business, and a school of liberal arts. Such schools are the systematizing elements of the university. All the students in the university are systematized according to their major, and they study in one of

the many schools.

The entire world today is a big “university”—the university of the world. In this university there are different “schools”: the school of food, the school of marriage, and the schools of clothing, housing, and transportation. Whereas most students in a university study in just one school, the worldly people, who have been systematized in the university of the world, may study in a number of different schools, taking many “units” at a time but never graduating. They are so busy and so occupied that they have no time for God. They will not say that they are too busy to eat, but they will tell you that they have no time to come to a meeting, to read the Bible, or to pray. They have time for anything in the university of the world, but they have no time for anything related to God.

In the great university of the world, there is also a school of religion. There are even a school of Christianity and a school of Judaism. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, the Jewish people were systematized by Satan in the school of Judaism.

TURNING FROM JUDAISM TO THE HEAVENLY VISION

The apostles and disciples in the early days were taught and trained by the Lord Jesus to realize something new, something absolutely different from Judaism. They came to know Christ, and they saw the vision of Christ. They knew that Christ had been crucified and resurrected, that He had ascended on high, that He had been enthroned and had been made the Lord and Christ, and that He would come back to the earth. They also had the vision of the church and realized that God would gather together His chosen ones and build them up as local churches. They had been in Judaism, but they were turned from Judaism to the heavenly vision.

THE CONSECRATION IN THE UPPER ROOM

Acts 1 speaks of the upper room in Jerusalem. In this upper room a group of about a hundred and twenty prayed for ten days in one accord. They not only prayed, but they also consecrated themselves to the Lord, offering themselves to Him in a very real and practical way.

Three and a half years earlier, the Lord Jesus came to Peter by the seashore, and Peter offered himself to Him. Peter left his job and began to follow the Lord (Matt. 4:18-20). We may say that Peter consecrated himself to the Lord. However, Peter’s experience in the upper room was something else. Here Peter had a new kind of consecration, not an ordinary consecration but something specific. At the seashore Peter gave up his job, indicated by his leaving his fishing nets, but in the upper room he gave up much more. We need to itemize the things Peter gave up in order to be in the upper room.

Standing with the Heavenly Vision to Give Up the Religion of His Forefathers

The first thing Peter gave up was Judaism. The heavenly vision was contradictory to the religion of his forefathers. Peter’s attitude was not to stand with his forefathers’ religion but to stand with the heavenly vision. In the first several chapters of Acts, we see that Peter and the other apostles were troubled and persecuted by Judaism, but they continued to take sides with the heavenly vision. The first item of their consecration in the upper room was to give up the traditional religion of their forefathers.

Giving Up His Country

In order to be in the upper room, Peter also gave up his country. Peter was from Galilee, but he left Galilee and came to the upper room in Jerusalem.

Giving Up His Relationships with His Neighbors and Friends

As a native of Galilee, Peter surely had relationships with his neighbors and friends in Galilee. For Peter to be in the upper room required that he give up these relationships. This is not an insignificant matter. Peter gave up these relationships at a real cost.

Giving Up His Relatives

Peter also gave up his relatives. I doubt whether Peter brought his parents with him into the upper

room. There is no hint to this effect. Actually, Peter's parents might have remained in Judaism.

Risking His Life

Finally, Peter was in the upper room at the risk of his life. He was ready to give up his life. At that time Jerusalem was a threatening place to Peter and all the others in the upper room, yet they were willing to risk their lives to be there. In order to be in the upper room, they all gave up Judaism, their country, their neighbors and friends, and their relatives, and they were willing to risk their lives.

THE KIND OF CONSECRATION WE NEED TODAY

We need to see the vision of this upper-room consecration. You may talk much about consecration, but this may be a consecration at the seashore, not a consecration in the upper room. Yes, at the seashore you gave up something to follow the Lord Jesus, but you may not have yet come to the upper room. What kind of consecration do you have—a consecration at the seashore or a consecration in the upper room?

The time in the upper room in Acts 1 was a turning time. It was a time of the turning of an age, a time of the turning of a dispensation. The turn that took place at that time affected heaven and earth. Do you know what the issue of that consecration in the upper room was? That consecration issued in the church. The church came out of the consecration, the dedication, of the one hundred twenty in the upper room.

During those ten days in the upper room, everything was dedicated in a practical way and was dedicated at any cost—at the cost of their forefathers' religion, at the cost of their country, at the cost of their relationships with neighbors and friends, at the cost of their relatives and families, and at the cost of their lives. The only thing they cared for was the heavenly vision. They were "drunken" with this heavenly vision. They were "married" to this heavenly vision; their whole being was held by this heavenly vision; and they were beside themselves with this heavenly vision. This is the kind of consecration we need today.

PAYING THE PRICE FOR THE HEAVENLY VISION

Have you seen the heavenly vision about which we have been speaking? Have you seen the visions of Christ, the church, the Body, the self, and the world? I believe that you have seen something. Will you be able to stand before the Lord at the judgment seat and tell Him that you have not seen any of these visions? Surely you have seen something concerning Christ, the church, the Body, the self, and the world, and thus you are without excuse in this matter.

Some claim that they have not seen the vision. They say this because they are not willing to be in the upper room. In other words, they are not willing to pay the price for the heavenly vision. They know that there is a cost to admitting that they have seen something. They realize that all these visions are costly, but they are not willing to pay the price.

Regarding this matter of cost, or price, let us read the word of the Lord Jesus in Revelation 3:18: "I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see." In this verse the Lord counsels us not to pray nor to ask nor to receive nor to take by faith; He counsels us to *buy*. Here we are concerned only with the third of the three things which the Lord counsels us to buy—eyesalve to anoint our eyes that we may see. Perhaps, in a sense, you have not seen the heavenly vision, but as soon as you are willing to pay the price, to buy the eyesalve, you will see. The crucial matter is the willingness to pay the price. Once you come into the upper room, everything is clear. But if you are not willing to come into the upper room, no matter how many messages you hear, you still will not be able to see.

You need to buy the eyesalve. Do not excuse yourself by saying that you have not seen the vision. Do not say that you are not clear. You may be clear, but you may not be willing to pay the price. If you are not willing to pay the price, you will not dare to say that you have seen the vision. Whether or not you have seen the vision depends on this one matter—whether you are willing to pay

the price. Pay the price to buy the eyesalve, and you will see the vision.

I encourage you to pray, saying, “Lord Jesus, by Your mercy I will buy the eyesalve. By Your mercy I am willing to pay the price to be in the upper room.” If you say this to the Lord, the heavens will be opened, the scales will fall from your eyes, and you will see the heavenly vision.

BURNING THE BRIDGES BEHIND US

If you pay the price for the heavenly vision, you will “burn the bridges” behind you and will have no way to go backward. Christianity will be behind you, and you will have no way to return to it. Even if you wanted to go back, the people would not accept you.

However, suppose that one day an offer is presented to you, an opportunity to have a better position or a better future. The opportunity may be for you, or it may be for your wife or children. Would you consider this offer? For you to consider such an offer would mean that you have not burned all the bridges. It would mean that you have left yourself a way to go back. By the Lord’s mercy I can testify that I burned all my bridges more than thirty years ago. We should not be ashamed of burning our bridges—we should praise the Lord for it.

THE COST OF TAKING THE WAY OF THE LORD’S RECOVERY

To take the way of the Lord’s recovery is not cheap. This way is expensive; it requires a costly consecration. To take this way will be at the cost of the religion of your fathers and of your country, at the cost of your relationships with your neighbors and of your relatives, and at the cost of your own life. Are you ready for such a consecration? Are you ready to come into the upper room to be clear concerning the heavenly vision?

We are here not for a movement but for the Lord’s recovery. How can the recovery be realized? The recovery can be realized, carried out, only by the experience of the consecration in the upper room. This is not an ordinary consecration; it is a special consecration, a specific consecration, an extraordinary consecration. This consecration is a turning point.

What happened to those one hundred and twenty who were in the upper room in Acts 1? They all became a burnt offering. They were burning, and they burned others. We also need to be burned, and then we will burn others.

What are we expecting today? Do we expect a revival or a movement? Do we expect a new kind of Christian activity? What are we doing here? Have we come together to hear something that we cannot hear elsewhere? We may be here for this reason, but this is not enough. We must be here for the Lord’s recovery, which is the issue of an upper-room consecration.

IN THE CROWD OR IN THE UPPER ROOM?

When the Lord Jesus was on earth, great crowds followed Him. Multitudes were saved and healed, and multitudes received the favor of God. Eventually, however, there were only about one hundred and twenty in the upper room. The crowds, the multitudes, did not afford the Lord Jesus anything for His move. The Lord’s move was with those in the upper room, with those whose eyes had been opened and whose hearts had been touched. This small number came into the upper room to be burned, and then they turned the whole world upside down. The principle is the same today. It is a small number who will turn the world upside down and change the age.

Do you intend to be in the crowd or in the upper room? Will you remain one of the multitude, or by the Lord’s mercy will you come into the upper room? I do not know who you are. Only the Lord knows who will be in the upper room.

I would urge you to pray to receive the Lord’s mercy so that you might be in the upper room. If you are not willing to come here, then what you have read in these chapters will have nothing to do with you. Then you will be like those in the crowds, those the Lord did not count on. If you would be in the upper room, you need to pray in a specific way and say, “Lord, I am willing to be in the upper room for the recovery of Your testimony.” (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1965, vol. 3, “The Heavenly Vision,”* pp. 207-214)