

BANNERS FOR THE 2016 MEMORIAL DAY CONFERENCE

The Acts of the Apostles is a book without an ending because this book is still being continued for the increase of Christ; the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching Christ for His increase, propagation, multiplication, and spread through the believers of Christ has not yet been completed and has needed to be continued for a long period of time.

The increase and spread of the church is the increase and spread of Christ, who passed through death and entered into resurrection to impart His divine life into those who believe into Him so that they could become His reproduction.

Everything in the church must be in the nature of life, with the content of life, and in the imparting of life; when the branches of the vine receive a sufficient supply of the life-giving Spirit as the life-juice of Christ, they bear fruit as the overflow of the inner life supply.

God's desire is for Christ to increase and grow in the church and for Christ to become the content and element of the church so that the church would arrive "at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

**Outline of the Messages
for the Memorial Day Conference
May 27-30, 2016**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE INCREASE OF CHRIST FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH**

Message One

The Increase of Christ in the Continuation of the Book of Acts

Scripture Reading: Acts 28:31; John 5:17; Acts 1:13-14; 6:7; 11:23-24; 19:20; 26:18

I. The Acts of the Apostles is a book without an ending because this book is still being continued for the increase of Christ—28:31:

- 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 also is working.
- B. The book of Acts is a record of the work of God; after Acts 28 many vessels are still carrying on with His work; His work is continuing and has not stopped.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. 12:1-3; 1 Cor. 12:12; Rev. 1:10-12.
- 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.
- 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.

II. The word of God is still growing and being multiplied for the increase of Christ—Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20:

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

III. The continuation of the book of Acts is the continuation of Christ with the corporate living of the perfected God-men as the reality of the Body of Christ; the apostle Paul, as a pattern to all the believers, the members of the Body of Christ, lived Christ for His magnification as His continuation—Phil. 1:19-21a; Acts 9:4-5, 15; 26:19; 1 Tim. 1:16:

- A. Paul was a disciple of Christ—seeing Christ, hearing Christ, and learning Christ as the reality is in Jesus—Acts 9:1-19, 25-27; 22:14-15; Eph. 4:20-21.
- B. Paul was a chosen vessel of Christ to contain Him, be filled with Him, and overflow with Him for His fullness—Acts 9:15; 2 Cor. 4:7; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:19.
- C. Paul was a man of prayer—Acts 9:11; 13:1-3; 14:23; 16:13, 25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2.
- D. Paul depended on the Body, doing everything in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Acts 9:11, 17-18, 25-27; 1 Cor. 1:1; 12:14-27.
- E. Paul practiced calling on the name of the Lord—Acts 9:14, 21; 22:16; 2 Tim. 2:22; Rom. 10:12-13; Phil. 2:9-11.
- F. Paul lived by the all-inclusive Spirit of Jesus (the Spirit of a man with abundant strength for suffering) for his preaching ministry, a ministry of suffering carried out among human beings and for human beings in the human life for the building up of the Body of Christ—John 7:37-39; Acts 9:16; 16:7, 22-34; Phil. 3:10; Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 6:4; 11:23; Heb. 6:19-20; 13:13.
- G. Paul lived in his mingled spirit (the divine Spirit mingled with his human spirit as one spirit)—Acts 17:16; 19:21; Rom. 8:4, 6, 16; 1 Cor. 6:17.
- H. Paul was filled with the Spirit of joy, essentially for his existence, and with the Spirit of power, economically for his function—Acts 13:9, 52; Eph. 5:18.
- I. Paul exercised himself to always have a good and pure conscience—Acts 23:1; 24:16; 1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9.
- J. Paul lived a life of always rejoicing in the Lord and thanking Him—Acts 16:25; 27:35; Phil. 4:4; Col. 3:16; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.
- K. Paul was allied with God and assisted by God to speak the gospel boldly in the name of Jesus to spread the testimony of Jesus unto the uttermost part of the earth—Acts 9:20, 27; 26:22-29; 28:31; 1:8; 1 Thes. 2:2; cf. Rom. 15:24, 28.
- L. Paul cherished the saints in the humanity of Jesus and nourished them in the divinity of Christ with all the truths of God’s eternal economy, displaying in his living the word of the Lord Jesus that it is better to give than to receive—Acts 20:18-38; 1 Thes. 2:1-12.
- M. Paul’s fourth ministry journey (Acts 27—28) shows in a particular way his life of living Christ, magnifying Christ, doing all things in Christ, and pursuing Christ in order to be found in Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a; 3:8-9, 14; 4:13:
 1. All during the apostle’s long and unfortunate imprisonment-voyage, the Lord kept the apostle in His ascendancy and enabled him to live a life far beyond the realm of anxiety; this life was fully dignified, with the highest standard of human virtues expressing the most excellent divine attributes—vv. 5-9.
 2. This was Jesus living again on the earth in His divinely enriched humanity! This was the wonderful, excellent, and mysterious God-man, who lived in the Gospels,

continuing to live in the Acts through one of His many members! This was a living witness of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and God-exalted Christ!

3. In Paul's living and ministry he expressed the very true God, who in Jesus Christ had gone through the processes of incarnation, human living, crucifixion, and resurrection, and who, as the all-inclusive Spirit, was then living in him and through him—Gal. 1:15-16, 24; 2:20; 3:14; cf. Acts 28:6.
4. On the sea in the storm, the Lord had made the apostle not only the owner of his fellow voyagers (27:24) but also their life-guarantor and comforter (vv. 22, 25); now, on the land in peace, the Lord made him furthermore not only a magical attraction in the eyes of the superstitious people (28:1-6) but also a healer and a joy to them (vv. 7-10).
5. The warm welcome that Paul received from the brothers in Rome and the loving care of those in Puteoli (vv. 13-15) show the beautiful Body life that existed in the early days among the churches and apostles:
 - a. Apparently, the apostle, as a prisoner in bonds, had entered the region of the dark capital of the Satan-usurped empire; actually, as the ambassador of Christ with His authority (Eph. 6:20; Matt. 28:18-19), he had come into another part of the participation in the Body life of Christ's church in the kingdom of God on earth.
 - b. While he was suffering the persecution of religion in the empire of Satan (the satanic chaos in the old creation), he was enjoying the church life in the kingdom of God (the divine economy for the new creation); this was a comfort and an encouragement to him.
- N. The ultimate issue of the church will be the New Jerusalem in eternity future as God's full and eternal expression; this should be the reality and goal of all our gospel preaching today as we follow the pattern of the apostle Paul—"proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered"—Acts 28:31.

IV. Acts 26:18 reveals the work that we must do today for the increase and building up of the Body of Christ; this verse unveils the all-inclusive contents of our divine commission—"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":

- A. This is to carry out the fulfillment of God's jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord, proclaimed by the Lord Jesus in Luke 4:18-21 according to God's New Testament economy.
- B. We need to pray over the contents of our divine commission in Acts 26:18, asking the Lord to make them our experience and reality so that we can bring others into this experience and reality—Eph. 3:8-9.

V. If we would be in the continuation of the book of Acts, we need to continue to live in the divine history in the unique stream of the work of the Lord by having an upper-room consecration—1:13-14; *Hymns*, #907:

- A. 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.
- B. The Lord's move was with those in the upper room, with those whose eyes had been opened and whose hearts had been touched—Luke 12:49-50; Acts 2:3-4; 17:6b; Rom. 12:11.
- C. It is a small number who will turn the world 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."