

**ONE ACCORD
AND CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS**

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message One

**The Continuation of the Book of Acts—
the Corporate Continuation of Christ**

Scripture Reading: John 5:17; Matt. 16:18;
Eph. 4:13-16; 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7-9; Acts 9:4-5, 15; 28:31

I. 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—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 of God’s 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. The word of God is still growing and being multiplied for the increase of Christ—6:7; 12:24; 19:20:
 - 1. *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.
 - 2. *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.
 - 3. New disciples are “added to the Lord” to become the parts of Christ, the members of Christ—5:14; 11:24; Rom. 15:16.
- F. Such an evangelistic work for Christ’s propagation, multiplication, and spread is according to God’s New Testament economy for the producing of many sons for God (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.
- G. 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.

II. The continuation of Christ in the book of Acts is prophesied in the Bible:

- A. Isaiah 42:4 says that Christ will come again when He finishes the establishing of God’s justice in the earth, which means to establish God’s salvation as the issue of God’s righteous judgment on Christ—see footnote 3.

- B. Isaiah 53:10 prophesies about the continuation of Christ in His resurrection—“He will see a seed, He will extend His days, / And the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand”:
1. The seed here, a corporate seed, is the church as the Body of Christ, comprising all the believers produced as the many grains by the death of Christ as the one grain and by His reproductive resurrection (John 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:3); Christ as the Servant of Jehovah is the resurrected Life-giver, the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:6, 17), to produce a seed for the building up of His Body as His continuation for Jehovah’s pleasure and for Christ’s satisfaction.
 2. For Christ to “extend His days” means that today Christ is extending His days by living in His believers (Gal. 2:20; see footnote 1 on Acts 28:9); His believers as His Body are His extension.
 3. The pleasure of God (Eph. 1:5, 9; Phil. 2:13) is to see many sons born of Him to become the members of Christ, who constitute the church as the Body of Christ, the corporate expression of Christ.
- C. Isaiah 53:11 says that Christ “will see the fruit of the travail of His soul, / And He will be satisfied”; the fruit of the travail of Christ’s soul implies all the items produced in and through Christ’s resurrection as His continuation:
1. As the processed One, the last Adam, Christ became the life-giving Spirit as the reality of the pneumatic Christ for His propagation through life-imparting—1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 3:17.
 2. As the preeminent One, the One who has the first place in all things, Christ became the Firstborn from the dead for the germinating of God’s new creation and for Christ to be the Head of the Body—Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5a.
 3. As the God-man, Christ was begotten of God in His humanity (Acts 13:33) to be the firstborn Son of God in both the divine and human natures, to be a model for conforming many sons to His image (Rom. 8:29b).
 4. As the resurrection life (John 11:25), Christ regenerated all His believers (1 Pet. 1:3), making them His brothers and the many sons of God (Heb. 2:10-12; Rom. 8:29b; John 20:17), who are the members of God’s household to be God’s kingdom (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10) and God’s precious inheritance (Eph. 1:11).
 5. As the one grain of wheat, Christ became the many grains (John 12:24), who are His increase (3:30) and the components of His Body, that is, the one bread, the church (1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 1:22-23).
 6. Through His life-releasing death and with His life-imparting resurrection, Christ produced a corporate seed as the issue of the travail of His soul, which seed He saw in His resurrection and was satisfied (Isa. 53:10-11; cf. Gal. 3:29).
 7. As the life of the believers, the resurrected Christ is all the members and in all the members of the new man—Col. 3:10-11.
- D. Micah 5:2 prophesies concerning the incarnation of Christ in Bethlehem, and that “His goings forth are from ancient times, / From the days of eternity”:
1. Christ’s going forth, His appearing, is a continuous matter; at the time of His incarnation He began to come forth; after His incarnation, He continued to go forth through His human living, His death, His resurrection, His ascension, His outpouring of the consummated Spirit (who is the reality of Christ Himself), and His spreading through the preaching of the gospel to the whole inhabited earth; all of these are great steps in Christ’s going forth.

2. His going forth has not ceased but is continuing today; Christ's going forth, His manifestation, will consummate when He comes back with the overcomers as the mighty ones (Joel 3:11) to defeat Antichrist and cast him into the lake of fire (Rev. 19:19-20), when Satan is cast into the abyss (20:2-3), and when Christ sets up His throne to reign as King (Matt. 25:31, 34, 40); at that time His appearing will be complete.
- E. These Old Testament prophecies culminate in the greatest prophecy in the Bible concerning the continuation of Christ; in Matthew 16:18 the Lord Jesus said, "I will build My church"; even today this prophecy still remains unfulfilled:
 1. The prophecy on the building up of the church started by the Lord in Matthew 16 is continued by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:13-16, a prophecy concerning the building up of the church in a specific way that remains unfulfilled today.
 2. This prophecy may also be seen as the preparation of Christ's bride, which is still unfulfilled today (Rev. 19:7-9; Eph. 5:25-27); the fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy concerning the building up of the church and the preparation of His bride will bring Him back; now is the time for the Lord to fulfill His prophecy.

III. 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; 26:18-19; 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, praying unceasingly, and thanking Him in everything—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—Acts 28:5-9.
 - 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!
- IV. 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"—28:31.**