

International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

April 2025

GENERAL SUBJECT: ONE ACCORD AND CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE BOOK OF ACTS (Lord's Day—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight The Divine Trinity and the Kingdom of God

RK Hymns: 608, 946

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:3; 2:32-36; 8:12; 14:22; 16:6-7; 20:28; 28:23, 31

- Acts 1:3 To whom also He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many irrefutable proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses.
- Acts 2:33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.
- Acts 2:34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand
- Acts 2:35 Until I set Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet."
- Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.
- Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- 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 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

- I. Even as the Divine Trinity is the framework of the entire New Testament, so the Divine Trinity is the structure of the book of Acts; chapter after chapter of Acts unveils the operation of the Divine Trinity for the carrying out of God's New Testament economy—e.g., 1:1-2, 4-5, 8, 11, 21; 2:4, 17-18, 21-24, 27, 31-33, 36, 38; 13:2, 4, 7, 9-10, 12, 16, 23, 30, 33-39, 49-50, 52; 28:15, 23, 25, 31:**

- Acts 1:1 The former account I have made, O Theophilus, concerning all the things that Jesus began both to do and to teach,
- Acts 1:2 Until the day on which He was taken up, after He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He chose;

Acts 1:4 And as He met together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, He said, You heard from Me;

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

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 1:11 Who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you beheld Him going into heaven.

Acts 1:21 It is necessary therefore that of the men who accompanied us all the time in which the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us,

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 2:17 "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."

Acts 2:22 Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man shown by God to you to be approved by works of power and wonders and signs, which God did through Him in your midst, even as you yourselves know-

Acts 2:23 This man, delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God, you, through the hand of lawless men, nailed to a cross and killed;

Acts 2:24 Whom God has raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, since it was not possible for Him to be held by it.

Acts 2:27 Because You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor will you permit Your Holy One to see corruption.

Acts 2:31 He, seeing this beforehand, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was He abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption.

Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses.

Acts 2:33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.

Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

Acts 2:38 And Peter said to them, Repent and each one of you be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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 13:4 They then, having been sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed away to Cyprus.

Acts 13:7 Who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man; the latter called Barnabas and Saul to him and sought to hear the word of God.

Acts 13:9 But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

Acts 13:10 And said, O you who are full of all deceit and all unscrupulousness, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?

Acts 13:12 Then the proconsul, seeing what had happened, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Acts 13:16 And Paul, rising up and motioning with his hand, said, Men of Israel and those who fear God, listen.

Acts 13:23 From this man's seed, God, according to promise, brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

Acts 13:30 But God raised Him from the dead.

Acts 13:33 That God has fully fulfilled this promise to us their children in raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, "You are My Son; today I have begotten You."

Acts 13:34 And as to His having raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to corruption, He spoke in this way, "I will give you the holy things of David, the faithful things."

Acts 13:35 Therefore He also says in another place, "You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption."

- Acts 13:36 Now David, having served his own generation by the counsel of God, did indeed fall asleep and was buried with his fathers and saw corruption;
- Acts 13:37 But He whom God has raised did not see corruption.
- Acts 13:38 Therefore let it be known to you, men, brothers, that through this One forgiveness of sins is announced to you;
- Acts 13:39 And from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, in this One everyone who believes is justified.
- Acts 13:49 And the word of the Lord was carried through the whole region.
- Acts 13:50 But the Jews incited the women of high standing who worshipped God, and the chief men of the city, and raised up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and cast them out from their borders.
- Acts 13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.
- 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.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:25 And when they disagreed with one another, they departed, Paul saying one word to them, Well has the Holy Spirit spoken through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers,
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- A. We must be governed by the revelation that God is uniquely one—Psa. 86:10; Isa. 45:5; 1 Cor. 8:4:
- Psa 86:10 For You are great, and You do wondrous deeds; / You alone are God.
- Isa 45:5 I am Jehovah and there is no one else; / Besides Me there is no God; / I girded you, although you do not know Me;
- 1 Cor 8:4 Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is no God but one.
1. The unique God is triune, three-one—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit— Matt. 28:19.
 Matt 28:19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
 2. *The Triune God* refers mainly to God Himself; *the Divine Trinity* refers mainly to God's being triune, which is the primary attribute of the Godhead—v. 19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5.
 Matt 28:19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
 Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
 Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood
- B. The Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Spirit—was fully involved with the Son's ascension and the pouring out of the Spirit—Acts 2:32-36:
- Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses.
- Acts 2:33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.
- Acts 2:34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand
- Acts 2:35 Until I set Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet."
- Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

1. The Son ascended, the Father exalted Him, and the Spirit was poured out— Luke 24:51; Phil. 2:9; Acts 1:9-11; 2:32-36.
 - Luke 24:51 And while He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.
 - Phil 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,
 - Acts 1:9 And when He had said these things, while they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him away from their sight.
 - Acts 1:10 And while they were looking intently into heaven as He went, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them,
 - Acts 1:11 Who also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you beheld Him going into heaven.
 - Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses.
 - Acts 2:33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.
 - Acts 2:34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand
 - Acts 2:35 Until I set Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet."
 - Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.
 2. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit were all wrapped up with the outpouring of the Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God—v. 33; John 7:37-39; Phil. 1:19.
 - Acts 2:33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.
 - John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.
 - John 7:38 He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.
 - John 7:39 But this He said concerning the Spirit, whom those who believed into Him were about to receive; for the Spirit was not yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.
 - 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,
- C. In Acts 16:6-7 *the Holy Spirit* and *the Spirit of Jesus* are used interchangeably, revealing that the Spirit of Jesus is the Holy Spirit:
- 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.
1. *The Holy Spirit* is a general title of the Spirit of God in the New Testament— Acts 9:17, 31.
 - Acts 9:17 And Ananias went away and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him, he said, Saul, brother, the Lord has sent Me-Jesus, who appeared to you on the road on which you were coming-so that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 9:31 So then the church throughout the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it was multiplied.
 2. *The Spirit of Jesus* is a particular expression concerning the Spirit of God and refers to the Spirit of the incarnated Savior who, as Jesus in His humanity, passed through human living and death on the cross—16:7:
 - 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.

- a. This indicates that in the Spirit of Jesus there is not only the divine element of God but also the human element of Jesus and the elements of His human living and His suffering of death as well—Phil. 2:7-8.
 - Phil 2:7 But emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of men;
 - Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and that the death of a cross.
- b. In his ministry the apostle Paul needed such an all-inclusive Spirit.
3. As a vessel containing the Triune God, Paul was fully constituted of the Holy Spirit, who was involved with the Lord's incarnation and birth, and of the Spirit of Jesus, who was involved with the Lord's humanity, human living, all-inclusive death, life-imparting resurrection, and ascension—Eph. 3:14-17; Luke 1:35; Acts 2:32-36; Phil. 1:19.
 - Eph 3:14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,
 - Eph 3:15 Of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named,
 - Eph 3:16 That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man,
 - Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 - Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also the holy thing which is born will be called the Son of God.
 - Acts 2:32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we all are witnesses.
 - Acts 2:33 Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you both see and hear.
 - Acts 2:34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand
 - Acts 2:35 Until I set Your enemies as a footstool for Your feet."
 - Acts 2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.
 - 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,
4. The kind of work that we do for the Lord depends on the kind of Spirit by whom we are guided, directed, instructed, and constituted; when the all-inclusive Spirit becomes our constitution, our work will be the expression of this Spirit—Acts 16:6-7; Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19.
 - 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.
 - Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Yet if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not of Him.
 - 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,
- D. God obtained the church "through His own blood"—Acts 20:28:
 - Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
1. God purchased the church by paying the price of "His own blood."
2. Through incarnation our God, the Creator, the eternal One, became mingled with man—John 1:1, 14:
 - John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.
- a. As a result, He was no longer only God—He became a God-man, who had

blood and was able to die for us—1 John 1:7.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from every sin.

- b. When the Lord Jesus, the God-man, died on the cross, He died not only as man but also as God.
3. The blood that He shed was not only the blood of the man Jesus but also the blood of the God-man.
4. Therefore, His blood, through which God obtained the church, is “His own blood”—Acts 20:28.
Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

II. The kingdom of God is the main subject of the apostles’ preaching in Acts—1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31:

- Acts 1:3 To whom also He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many irrefutable proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
- Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
- Acts 19:8 And he entered into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them in the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.
- Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
- A. The fact that the resurrected Christ, in His appearing to the apostles through a period of forty days, spoke to them “the things concerning the kingdom of God” indicates that the kingdom would be the main subject of the apostles’ preaching in their coming commission after Pentecost—1:3.
Acts 1:3 To whom also He presented Himself alive after His suffering by many irrefutable proofs, appearing to them through a period of forty days and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.
 - B. According to the New Testament, the kingdom of God is not a visible, material realm; actually, the kingdom of God is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself— Luke 17:20-21.
Luke 17:20 And when He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation;
Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
 - C. The churches and the kingdom of God go together; the churches produced by the propagation of the resurrected Christ are the kingdom of God on earth today— Acts 14:22; 20:25:
Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.
Acts 20:25 And now, behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom, will see my face no more.
1. The resurrected Christ, who is propagating Himself in His ascension, by the Spirit, and through the disciples, is the reality of the kingdom of God; the kingdom of God is

His expansion—1:8; 8:12:

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 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

- a. The churches are the expansion of Christ, who came to sow Himself as the seed of the kingdom of God; this is revealed in the Gospels—Mark 4:3, 26.

Mark 4:3 Listen! Behold, the sower went out to sow.

Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,

- b. In the Gospels Christ was the seed of the kingdom; in the book of Acts we have the propagation of this seed to produce the churches as the kingdom of God—8:1, 12; 13:1-4.

Acts 8:1 And Saul approved of his killing. And there occurred in that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

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.

2. We in the churches are the propagation of Christ and the expansion of Christ, and we are enlarging the kingdom of God—Rev. 1:9, 11.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

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.

- D. The kingdom of God is the spreading of Christ as life into His believers to form a realm in which God rules in His life—2 Pet. 1:3-11:

2 Pet 1:3 Seeing that His divine power has granted to us all things which relate to life and godliness, through the full knowledge of Him who has called us by His own glory and virtue,

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;

2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;

2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.

2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.

- 2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.
1. To enter into this kingdom, people need to repent of their sins and believe in the gospel so that their sins may be forgiven and so that they may be regenerated by God to have the divine life, which matches the divine nature of this kingdom—Mark 1:15; John 3:3, 5.

Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has drawn near. Repent and believe in the gospel.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 2. All the believers in Christ can share the kingdom in the church age for their enjoyment of God in His righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit— Rom. 14:17.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 3. The kingdom of God will become the kingdom of Christ and of God for the overcoming believers to inherit and enjoy in the coming kingdom age so that they may reign with Christ for a thousand years—1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:4, 6.

1 Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor homosexuals

1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not the rapacious will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 6:11 And these things were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Gal 5:19 And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Gal 5:20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects,

Gal 5:21 Envyings, bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolator) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and of those who had not worshipped the beast nor his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.
 4. As the eternal kingdom, the kingdom of God will be an eternal blessing of God's eternal life for all of God's redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14, 17.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.

Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.

Rev 21:4 And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, nor will there be sorrow or crying or pain anymore; for the former things have passed away.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.

Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

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;

Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.

Rev 22:5 And night will be no more; and they have no need of the light of a lamp and of the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shine upon them; and they will reign forever and ever.

Rev 22:14 Blessed are those who wash their robes that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter by the gates into the city.

Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come! And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.

- E. In Acts 14:22 Paul entreated the believers who were continuing in the faith to realize that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God, because the whole world opposes our entering in; to enter into the kingdom of God is to enter into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom.

Acts 14:22 Establishing the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith and saying that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

- F. In Acts 19 we see that Satan is fighting against God's spreading of His kingdom on earth; the prevailing ministry for the propagation of Christ is a fighting, a battle, for God's kingdom—vv. 23-41.

Acts 19 be omitted.

Acts 19:23 And about that time no small disturbance took place concerning the Way.

Acts 19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, afforded no little business to the craftsmen.

Acts 19:25 These he assembled together with the workmen of similar trades as well and said, Men, you know that from this business we have our prosperity.

Acts 19:26 And you observe and hear that not only at Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and perverted a considerable number, saying that the gods being made by hands are no gods at all.

Acts 19:27 And not only is there danger that our trade will come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be counted as nothing and that the magnificence of her whom the whole of Asia and the inhabited earth worships will also be overthrown.

Acts 19:28 And when they heard this, they became full of rage and began to cry out, saying, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!

Acts 19:29 And the city was filled with confusion; and they rushed with one accord into the theater, seizing Gaius and Aristarchus of Macedonia, Paul's traveling companions.

Acts 19:30 And when Paul intended to enter into the populace, the disciples would not allow him.

Acts 19:31 And some of the Asiarchs also, who were his friends, sent to him and entreated him not to venture into the theater himself.

Acts 19:32 So then some were crying out one thing, and some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together.

Acts 19:33 And they drew Alexander out of the crowd, the Jews having pushed him forward; and Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the populace.

Acts 19:34 But when they realized that he was a Jew, one voice arose from all for about two hours, crying out, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!

Acts 19:35 And the town clerk, having quieted the crowd, said, Men of Ephesus, which of you men is there then who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple

- keeper of the great Artemis and of the image fallen from Zeus?
- Acts 19:36 Since these things therefore cannot be disputed, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash;
- Acts 19:37 For you have brought forth these men who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess.
- Acts 19:38 If then Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a matter against anyone, courts are being conducted and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another.
- Acts 19:39 But if you seek after anything further, it shall be settled in the legal assembly.
- Acts 19:40 For indeed we are in danger of being charged with insurrection for today's affair, since there is no reason for it; and with reference to it we will not be able to give an account concerning this disorderly gathering.
- Acts 19:41 And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.
- G. Paul's proclaiming the kingdom of God in 28:31 was the propagation of the resurrected Christ:
- Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.
1. This is proved by the words *teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ*, which things go together with the kingdom of God—vv. 31, 23.

Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

Acts 28:23 And once they had appointed a day for him, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he expounded these matters, solemnly testifying of the kingdom of God and persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning until evening.
 2. To teach concerning Christ is to spread the kingdom of God; therefore, the kingdom of God is actually the propagation of the resurrected Christ—a process that continues to be carried out through the believers today—v. 31.

Acts 28:31 Proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unhindered.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Entering into the Kingdom of God through Many Tribulations

A Kingdom of the Divine Life

In Acts 14:22 we see that Paul and Barnabas told the disciples that “through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.” Many think that the kingdom of God is merely a sphere where God may rule over people as the King. According to this understanding, the kingdom of God is simply a realm where God rules over His people. I do not say that this understanding is wrong, but it is superficial and natural.

The kingdom of God was a main subject of the apostles' preaching in Acts (8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). It is not a material kingdom visible to human sight but a kingdom of the divine life. It is the spreading of Christ as life to His believers to form a realm in which God rules in His life.

Christ as the Seed of Life Sown into the Believers

In the *Life-study of Mark* we have pointed out that the kingdom of God is the Savior Himself (Luke 17:21) as the seed of life sown into His believers, God's chosen people (Mark 4:3, 26), and developing into a realm in which God may rule as His kingdom in His divine life. Its entrance is regeneration (John 3:5), and its development is the believers' growth in the divine life (2 Pet. 1:3-11). It is the church life today, in which the faithful believers live (Rom. 14:17), and it will develop into the coming kingdom as an inheritance reward (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5) to the overcoming saints in the millennium (Rev. 20:4, 6). Eventually, it will consummate in the New Jerusalem as the eternal kingdom of God, an eternal realm of the eternal blessing of God's eternal life for all of God's

redeemed to enjoy in the new heaven and new earth for eternity (21:1-4; 22:1-5, 14).

In Acts 14:22 Paul exhorted the believers who were continuing in the faith to realize that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. Do you think that Paul regarded the kingdom of God as only a realm where God's people are under His ruling and that to enter into this realm we must pass through tribulation? Paul may have had the thought that the kingdom of God is a realm in which God rules over His people, but this certainly was not his main thought concerning the kingdom of God. We need to remember that Paul was exhorting disciples who were somewhat advanced. They were continuing not only in the grace of God but also in the faith. The charge to continue in the faith is both deeper and higher than that to continue in the grace. Therefore, those whom Paul was exhorting in 14:22 were somewhat learned in divine things. In telling them that they must enter the kingdom of God through much tribulation, Paul certainly regarded the kingdom as something more than an objective realm in which God rules as the King.

What, then, was Paul's main thought concerning the kingdom of God? If we would know this, we need to realize that according to the New Testament, the kingdom of God is not a visible, material realm. Actually, the kingdom of God is a person, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. When He was questioned by the Pharisees about the kingdom, "He answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21). As the context proves, the kingdom of God is the Savior Himself, who was in the midst of the Pharisees. Wherever the Savior is, there is the kingdom of God. This was the reason He could say that the kingdom was in the midst of the Pharisees. As the Lord's word in Luke 17:20 indicates, this kingdom does not come with observation; that is, it is spiritual, not material and visible.

In the four Gospels the Lord Jesus sowed Himself as the seed of the kingdom into His disciples. The development of this kingdom seed begins in Acts and continues in all the Epistles. This development reaches its consummation—the harvest—in the book of Revelation. According to the Lord's word and Paul's understanding, the kingdom of God is not a material realm. Rather, the kingdom is spiritual, divine, and even personal. The kingdom is Christ as the seed sown into the hearts of His chosen people. Our hearts are the soil into which the kingdom seed is sown and in which this seed develops. As we have pointed out, the seed of the kingdom is sown in the Gospels, it develops in Acts and the Epistles, and it consummates with the harvest in Revelation. This is the proper definition of the kingdom of God.

Entering into the Full Enjoyment of the Resurrected Christ as the Kingdom of God

Now that we have seen that the kingdom of God is Christ as the seed that is sown into us, develops, and consummates in a harvest, we need to ask what it means to enter into the kingdom. To enter into the kingdom of God is to enter into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom. However, we may not understand what it means to enjoy Christ as the kingdom. The whole world opposes the entering of God's people into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom. Judaism, for example, has been usurped and utilized by Satan to frustrate the believers from entering this enjoyment. Throughout the centuries other forms of religion—Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam—have also been used by God's enemy to keep God's people from entering into the full enjoyment of the all-inclusive Christ as the kingdom of God.

Acts 1:3 tells us that through a period of forty days the resurrected Christ appeared to the apostles and spoke to them "the things concerning the kingdom of God." Peter and all the one hundred and twenty had been brought to the Lord, and they had received the essential Spirit for their life, living, and existence. They were truly followers of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, in chapter 1 of Acts they had not yet entered into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom of God, as God's ruling realm. It was still necessary for them to enter into the realm of the full enjoyment of the resurrected Christ as God's kingdom. On the day of Pentecost Peter and all the others surely entered into this realm—the realm of

the full enjoyment of the resurrected and ascended Christ as the sphere in which God rules over His people. As Peter was preaching the gospel in Acts 2, we see with him and the other apostles a picture of the kingdom of God. In Acts 2 the one hundred and twenty were in the full enjoyment of the resurrected and ascended Christ as God's ruling realm. Such a realm is the kingdom of God.

Very soon after the believers entered into the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom of God, the Jewish religion came in to frustrate this enjoyment. If in chapters 3, 4, and 5, Peter, John, and the other believers had shown any weakness, they would have lost the full enjoyment of the resurrected Christ, and as a result, they would have missed the kingdom of God.

In the light of what we have seen concerning the kingdom of God, let us now come back to Acts 14 and ask if the disciples whom Paul was exhorting had entered into the realm of the full enjoyment of Christ as the kingdom of God. No, those believers had not yet entered into that enjoyment; they were still on the way. Therefore, Paul charged them to enter into the realm of the full enjoyment of the resurrected and ascended Christ as the kingdom of God. Here he seemed to be saying, "I have preached to you the resurrected Christ as the holy and faithful things, as the grace of God, as eternal life, and even as the all-inclusive life-giving Spirit. The full enjoyment of grace, eternal life, and the Spirit is a realm, and this realm is God's kingdom. You have not yet entered into this realm—you are on the way. Therefore, I exhort you through many tribulations to enter into the kingdom of God. You should expect opposition and be prepared for it. You will face much tribulation. But through all these tribulations you must endeavor to enter into the realm of the full enjoyment of the resurrected and ascended Christ as the kingdom of God. When you have the enjoyment of such a Christ, you will be under the divine rule. Then you will become the kingdom of God, which is the proper church life." (*Life-study of Acts*, pp. 335-339)