

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

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three

**Being Witnesses of the Resurrected, Ascended,
and All-inclusive Christ**

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8; 2:32-36; 3:14-15; 4:33; 5:30-32; 7:56; 20:28; 26:16; 16:31

I. In the book of Acts the apostles and the disciples were witnesses of Christ—1:8; 4:33:

- A. According to the revelation in the book of Acts, everyone who is raised up and sent out by the Lord is a witness of the Lord—1:8; 26:16.
- B. In the New Testament the meaning of *witness* is primarily to bear a living testimony of Jesus Christ in His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—1:22; 2:32; 5:32; 10:39-40; 17:3, 18; 23:11; 24:14-15.
- C. Testifying requires experiences of seeing and enjoyment concerning the Lord or spiritual things; it is different from merely teaching—2:42.
- D. The Lord appointed Paul as a minister and a witness—26:16:
 - 1. A minister is for the ministry; a witness, for a testimony.
 - 2. The ministry is related mainly to the work, to what a minister does; a testimony is related to the person, to what a person is.
 - 3. Paul was a witness of the things in which he had seen the Lord and of the things in which the Lord would appear to him—v. 16.
- E. In His ascension the Lord carries out His ministry in the heavens through witnesses, who testify of Him in His resurrection life and with His ascension power and authority—1:8; 2:32-36; 40; 4:33.

II. The Christ revealed in Acts is in resurrection—1:3; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33:

- A. Through death Christ entered into another realm, the realm of resurrection:
 - 1. Because Christ is the living One with an indestructible life, death is not able to hold Him—Heb. 7:16; Acts 2:24.
 - 2. He delivered Himself to death, but death had no way to retain Him; rather, death was defeated by Him, and He rose up from it.
- B. We need to know Christ in the power, sphere, and element of His resurrection—Phil. 3:10-11.
- C. Christ's resurrection was the focus of the apostles' testimony—Acts 1:22; 2:32; 3:13, 15, 26; 4:33; 10:39-40; 13:33; 17:3, 18:
 - 1. God glorified His Servant Jesus through His resurrection and in His ascension—Luke 24:26; Acts 3:13, 15, 26; 4:10, 33; 5:30-31.
 - 2. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus points back to His incarnation, humanity, human living, and God-ordained death and points forward to His ascension, ministry and administration in heaven, and coming back—2:23; 1:9-11.

III. The Christ revealed in Acts is in ascension—vv. 9-11; 2:32; 5:31:

- A. Whereas resurrection is a matter of life, Christ's ascension is a matter of position, and position is a matter of authority.
- B. The Lord's ascension was His initiation into His living and ministry in the heavens; this initiation brought Him into a new realm, that is, into the heavens where He now has His living and is ministering there.
- C. The Lord's ascension brought Him into a new stage—the stage of a resurrected man living in the heavens as the center of God's administration—Rev. 5:6:
 - 1. This resurrected One is now sitting in the heavens to execute God's administration—Heb. 12:2.
 - 2. The resurrected Christ ascended to the heavens to be exalted by God and to be given the kingship, the lordship, and the headship over all things—Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:22.
 - 3. The ascended Christ has also obtained the throne, the glory, and all the authority in the universe—Rev. 5:6; Heb. 1:3; 2:9; Matt. 28:18.
- D. The ascended Christ is the Lord of all to possess all—Acts 2:36:
 - 1. The lordship of Christ is one of the most important aspects of what He has obtained in His ascension—10:36.
 - 2. Since the lordship of Christ was fully established in His ascension, we—the members of His Body—need to realize this heavenly fact—Eph. 1:20-21.
- E. The ascended Christ is God's Anointed to carry out God's commission to work out the spreading of the gospel and the building up of the church—Acts 1:8.

IV. The Christ revealed in Acts is the all-inclusive Christ—3:14-15, 25-26; 5:30-32; 7:56; 10:36, 39-43; 16:31; 17:30-31; 20:28:

- A. Christ is the Author of life—3:14-15:
 - 1. As indicated by the Greek word rendered "Author," Christ is the origin or Originator of life; He is the Author, the Chief Leader, of life—v. 15.
 - 2. In Acts 3 we see the imparting of life into others, which is to propagate Christ; for such a propagation, we need the Lord as the Author of life, the source of life.
 - 3. As the Author of life, Christ is the holy and righteous One—v. 14.
- B. Christ is God's Servant—vv. 25-26:
 - 1. God glorified His Servant Jesus through His resurrection and ascension—v. 13.
 - 2. As the seed of Abraham and the Servant of God, Christ is the One in whom all the families of the earth—all the races, colors, and nationalities—will be blessed—vv. 25-26.
 - 3. God sent back the ascended Christ as a blessing by pouring out the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; hence, the Spirit whom God poured out was the Christ whom God raised and exalted to the heavens—2:33; 3:13-15, 25-26.
- C. Christ is the Leader and Savior—5:30-32:
 - 1. God exalted the man Jesus as the highest Leader, the Prince, the Ruler of the kings to rule over the world, and the Savior to save God's chosen people—Rev. 1:5; 19:16; Acts 5:31.
 - 2. *Leader* is related to His authority, and *Savior* is related to His salvation; He

rules sovereignly over the earth with His authority that the environment might be fit for God's chosen people to receive His salvation—cf. 17:26-27.

D. Christ is the Son of Man—7:56:

1. Acts 7:56 reveals that Christ is the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God to be the comfort, encouragement, and strength to the one martyred for Him.
2. Stephen saw the ascended Christ as the Son of Man; this indicates that the Christ who is in the heavens still has His humanity; He still possesses His human nature.

E. Christ is God—20:28:

1. Christ as our God is the Purchaser of the church, having obtained the church with His own blood—v. 28.
2. God secured, purchased, and redeemed the church with “His own blood” (v. 28), “the blood of Jesus His Son”—1 John 1:7.
3. Christ died on the cross as the God-man, and the blood that He shed there for our redemption was not only the blood of the man Jesus but also the blood of the God-man.
4. The blood through which God obtained the church is God's own blood.

F. Christ is the Lord of all—Acts 10:36:

1. *All* in Acts 10:36 refers to all peoples—1 Tim. 2:4.
2. The ascended Christ is the Lord of all the different races and peoples on earth; with Him, there is no respect of persons—Rev. 5:9.

G. Christ is the Judge—Acts 10:39-43:

1. Christ has been designated by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead—v. 42.
2. Christ is a man to judge the world, designated by God in righteousness and proved by God's raising Him from the dead—17:30-31.

H. Christ is the Lord Jesus, the object of the believers' faith—16:31:

1. To believe in the gospel is mainly to believe in Jesus Christ—v. 31.
2. To believe in the Lord Jesus is to stand on the person of Christ and all that He has accomplished, both of which constitute the belief, the faith, of God's New Testament economy—1 Tim. 1:4.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

CHRIST AS THE ONE IN ASCENSION

After the resurrected Lord finished the forty-day training, He had the peace to leave the disciples. Thus, He brought them all to the Mount of Olives where He was carried up into heaven (Acts 1:11-12). His ascension brought Him into a new stage—the stage of a resurrected man living in the heavens to execute the things God determined on this earth. This resurrected One is now sitting in the heavens to execute God's administration (2:36; Heb. 12:2).

After the resurrected Christ breathed the life-giving Spirit into the disciples as life, life supply, and everything related to their inner man, they all became God-men, men who had been mingled with God. They were filled with the divine life essentially, but they were not yet qualified to carry out God's economy. Therefore, the resurrected Christ had to ascend to the heavens to be exalted by God and to be given the kingship, the lordship, and the headship

over all things. He also obtained the throne, the glory, and all the authority in the universe. While the one hundred twenty were praying on the earth for ten days, God was making the exalted Christ to be the King, the Lord, and the Head of all things. God was giving the authority, the throne, and glory to His exalted One—Christ as the One in ascension.

Pouring Out the Holy Spirit

As the One in ascension, Christ poured out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33) upon all flesh (v. 17a) to baptize all His believers into one Body (1:5; 1 Cor. 12:13). In Acts 2:33 Peter declared, “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.” The exalted Christ’s receiving of the promise of the Holy Spirit was actually the receiving of the Holy Spirit Himself. Christ was conceived of the Spirit essentially for His being in humanity, and He was anointed with the Spirit economically for His ministry among men. After His resurrection and ascension, He still needed to receive the Spirit economically again so that He might pour out this Spirit upon His Body to carry out on earth His heavenly ministry for the accomplishment of God’s New Testament economy. The same Spirit who was breathed into the believers essentially as life in Christ’s resurrection was poured out upon them economically by Christ in His ascension. In and after His ascension Christ received the all-inclusive Spirit from the Father economically and poured Him out upon the believers for their ministry and work.

Christ poured out the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, that is, all fallen human beings, without distinction of sex, age, or status, in order to baptize all His believers into one Body (v. 17a; 1:5). It was through the Spirit that Christ as the Head of the Body baptized all His believers into His Body (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:5; 11:15-16; 1 Cor. 12:13). The New Testament reveals that Christ is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Concerning the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus said in Acts 1:5, “John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” This was accomplished in two steps, in two instances. First, on the day of Pentecost, Christ, the Head of the Body, having received the Spirit economically once again in ascension, baptized the Jewish believers into the Spirit. That was the first step, the first instance, of Christ baptizing the Body into the Spirit. Then in the house of Cornelius, Christ, the Head, baptized all the Gentile believers into the Spirit (10:44-47; 11:15-17). That was the second step, the second instance. By these two steps, these two instances, Christ the Head of the Body, baptized His entire Body into the Spirit once for all.

Because Christ has baptized all His believers into His Body by means of the Spirit, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:13, “In one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body.” The Spirit is the sphere and element of our spiritual baptism, and in such a Spirit we were all baptized into one organic entity, the Body of Christ. Therefore, we should all, regardless of our races, nationalities, and social ranks, be this one Body. Christ is the life and constituent of this Body, and the Spirit is the reality of Christ. In this one Spirit we were all baptized by Christ into this one living Body to express Christ.

In this way the baptism in the Holy Spirit was accomplished once for all. Now what we need is not to be baptized in the Holy Spirit again but simply to experience the baptism already accomplished in the Holy Spirit. Even as we need not be crucified again because of the finished work of Christ on the cross, so also we need not be baptized in the Holy Spirit again. Christ the Head has already baptized the whole Body in the Holy Spirit. We need only experience what the Head has already done to the Body.

If we would experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit, we must first realize that the

Lord has ascended, establishing His lordship and His headship (Acts 2:36). Because Christ was established as the Lord and Head, He poured down the Holy Spirit upon His Body (v. 33). Second, we must have a right relationship with the Body. Thus, we may tell the Lord as the Head that we know His Body, that we are regenerated members of His Body and are rightly related to it, and that on this standing we claim the baptism in the Holy Spirit already accomplished upon His Body. Then we will indeed experience the wonderful baptism in the Holy Spirit. If we do not understand the ascension of Christ or do not have a right standing with the Body, no matter how much we pray and tarry, it will be difficult to have the experience. Therefore, if we would experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we must realize that Christ today is ascended and is the Lord and Head of all to the church, and we must stand in a right position in respect to the Body.

Made Lord and Christ

As the One in ascension, He was made Lord—the Lord of all to possess all (10:36)—and Christ—God’s Anointed to carry out God’s commission (Heb. 1:9). In fact, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit is a proof that God has exalted the Lord Jesus and has made Him both Lord and Christ.

Lord, as the Lord of All to Possess All

Acts 2:36 says, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.” As God, the Lord was the Lord all the time (Luke 1:43; John 11:21; 20:28). But as man, He was made the Lord in His ascension after He brought His humanity into God in His resurrection. God has always been the Lord, but now a man is on the throne as the Lord. After Jesus was crucified and buried, God resurrected Him and set Him at His right hand, making this Jesus, a Nazarene, the Lord of all the universe. For God to be the Lord, there is no need of any kind of inauguration. But for a small man from a lowly town in a despised country to be made the Lord requires a real inauguration. Now this man from Nazareth was inaugurated to be the Lord of all. By the ascension Peter realized that the very man Jesus, whom he had been following for three and a half years, was inaugurated to be Lord of all. Now the Lord of the universe, the Lord of heaven and of earth, is a real man whose name is Jesus. This is why we declare, “Jesus is Lord,” and why we call, “O Lord Jesus.”

Christ in His ascension was inaugurated as Lord of all, not only of all men but also of all things (Acts 10:36). As the Lord, Christ now possesses the whole universe, God’s chosen people, and all positive things, matters, and persons. Christ is the Lord not only of God’s chosen people but also of the angels and of all those who will be in the millennium and in the new heaven and the new earth. Therefore, He is the Lord of the heavens, the earth, and everything and everyone He has redeemed. In ascension He is the Lord of all to possess all.

The lordship of Christ is one of the most important aspects of what He has obtained in His ascension. Since the lordship of Christ was fully established in His ascension, we—the members of His Body identified with Christ the Head—only need to realize this heavenly fact (Eph. 1:20-23). Once we realize that Christ has obtained the lordship, we, the church as His Body, have to apply it. We may exercise His lordship through our prayer for believers and sinners who are in a poor condition (Matt. 18:18-19; 28:18-19). In our prayer for them, we should take the ground of His ascension, proclaim His lordship, and tell Him that His lordship must be exercised over them. In this kind of bold and extraordinary prayer, we claim what the Lord has obtained in His ascension—His lordship. Instead of begging the Lord to do something for us, we need to learn to pray by claiming what the Lord has obtained in His ascension.

Christ, as God's Anointed to Carry Out God's Commission

Christ in His ascension has not only been made the Lord of all but also the Christ of God to work out the spreading of the gospel and the building up of the church that God's chosen people may be saved and perfected for the constitution of the New Jerusalem to be God's eternal habitation and manifestation according to God's New Testament economy for God's eternal satisfaction. As God's sent and anointed One, He was Christ in eternity and from the time that He was born (Dan. 9:26; John 1:41; Luke 2:11; Matt. 1:16). He was called Christ from His birth, was anointed at His baptism (3:13-17), and was called the Christ by Peter: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:16). This was for Him to accomplish the first part of God's economy for the accomplishment of God's redemption and the release of the divine life by His earthly ministry. But in His ascension He was officially inaugurated into the position of God's Christ, God's appointed One, to carry out the second part of God's economy for the producing and the building up of the church by His heavenly ministry.

Although He was anointed in His divinity in eternity and was anointed at His baptism, He was not officially inaugurated as the Christ until His ascension. When Jesus ascended on high, God made the appointment official. Christ has been not only chosen, appointed, and anointed by God but also inaugurated by God into His office. In this way God declared to the whole universe that this is the very One whom He appointed to accomplish His eternal plan, which is to build up His temple, the New Jerusalem. Therefore, as the One in ascension, Christ was made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36) that He might possess all and that He might carry out God's commission through His heavenly ministry to accomplish God's plan (10:36; Heb. 1:9). (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2975-2980)

CHRIST AS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE

The Lord Jesus is the Author of life. As such, He is the origin or Originator of life, the holy and righteous One; He was killed by the Jewish leaders, raised from the dead by God, and witnessed by the disciples.

The Origin or Originator of Life

In Acts 3:14-15 Peter said to the Jewish people, "But you denied the holy and righteous One and asked that a man who was a murderer be granted to you; and the Author of life you killed, whom God has raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses." The Greek word rendered "Author" is *archegos*, meaning "author," "origin," "originator," "chief leader," "captain." In 3:15 it denotes Christ as the origin or Originator of life, hence the Author of life, in contrast to the murderer. According to this verse Peter indicates that Christ is the source, the origin, and the Initiator of life; He is the Author, the Chief Leader, in life. Here we see the imparting of life into others, which is to propagate Christ. For such a propagation, we need the Lord as the Author of life, as the source of life.

The Holy and Righteous One

Christ as the Author of life is also the holy and righteous One. According to 3:14 the Lord is the holy One. In this verse *holy* indicates that Jesus, the Nazarene, the One despised by the Jewish leaders, was absolutely for God and separated unto Him. Furthermore, He was absolutely one with God. According to the denotation of the word *holy* in the Bible, it signifies one who is absolutely unto God, who is absolutely for God, and who is absolutely one with God. In all of human history only the Lord Jesus is such a One. Throughout His entire life the Lord Jesus was absolutely separated unto God, for God, and one with God.

There was never an instant when He was not absolutely for God and one with Him. Therefore, He is called the holy One. He alone deserves the title *the holy One*.

In 3:14 Peter called the Lord Jesus not only the holy One but also the righteous One. To be righteous is to be right with God and also with everyone and with everything. Only the Lord Jesus can be called the righteous One, because only He is right with God and with everyone and everything. In ourselves we are not right with God, with others, or even with things. We, therefore, cannot be the righteous One.

As the righteous One, the Lord Jesus is the right One. He was never wrong with God or with anyone or anything. Consider the time when He cleansed the temple: “He found in the temple those selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers sitting there. And having made a whip out of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, as well as the sheep and the oxen, and He poured out the money of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. And to those who were selling the doves He said, Take these things away from here; do not make My Father’s house a house of merchandise” (John 2:14-16). The Lord Jesus certainly was right in doing this. If He had not done it, He would have been behaving like a politician. The Lord saw the sinful situation, and He was indignant. As the righteous One, the Lord cleansed the temple in a righteous way. He was never wrong, for He was always the righteous One. As the righteous One, He is right with God, with man, and with everything in the heavens and on the earth.

Killed by the Jewish Leaders, Raised from the Dead by God, and Witnessed by the Disciples

Peter wanted the people to realize that the One the Jewish leaders killed is the Author of life. Although He was killed, God raised Him from the dead. Regarding the Lord as a man, the New Testament says that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11). But considering Him as God, it tells us that He Himself rose from the dead (14:9). Furthermore, the apostles, the disciples, were witnesses of the resurrected Christ, bearing witness of His resurrection, which is the crucial focus in the carrying out of God’s New Testament economy.

CHRIST AS GOD’S SERVANT

As God’s Servant, Christ was raised up by God to bring the blessing covenanted to Abraham, first to the Jews, the chosen people of God, that they may turn away from their wickedness.

Raised Up by God to Bring the Blessing Covenanted to Abraham

In Acts 3:25-26 Peter said, “You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God covenanted with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ To you first, God, having raised up His Servant, has sent Him to bless you in turning each of you away from your wicked deeds.” Here the “seed” of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed refers to Christ (Gal. 3:16). Christ is the One in whom all the families of the earth, all races, colors, and nationalities, will be blessed. Furthermore, God sent back the ascended Christ first to the Jews by pouring out His Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Hence, the very Spirit whom God poured out is the very Christ whom God raised and exalted to the heavens. When the apostles preached and ministered this Christ, the Spirit was ministered to people.

At the time Peter was speaking the word recorded in Acts 3:26, Christ, God’s Servant, had ascended to the heavens and was still there. Nevertheless, Peter told the people that God had sent Christ to bless them. What does this mean? Actually, God has received Christ

into the heavens. But here Peter said that God has sent this ascended One to the people. In what way did God send the ascended Christ to the Jews? God sent Him by pouring out the Spirit. This implies that the outpoured Spirit is actually the ascended Christ Himself. When the outpoured Spirit came to the people, that was Christ, the ascended One, sent by God to them. From this we see that the poured-out Spirit is identical to the ascended Christ. In God's economy, for the experience of His people, the ascended Christ and the poured-out Spirit are one. In God's economy Christ and the Spirit are one for our enjoyment.

**First to the Jews, the Chosen People of God,
That They May Turn Away from Their Wickedness**

In these verses, Peter indicates that God has sent His Servant first to the Jews to bless them by pouring out His Spirit to them. Now they need to receive this One. He is not far from them. Although He is in the heavens, economically He is among them as the poured-out Spirit to bless them. If they call on the name of the Lord Jesus, they will receive His person—the Holy Spirit. Then they will have God's blessing. This is the way for us to receive the blessing God intends to give us by sending the ascended Christ back to us as the life-giving Spirit. (*The Conclusion of the New Testament*, pp. 2981-2984)