

Message Twelve

The Divine Trinity, the Spirit of Jesus, and the Kingdom of God

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

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:

- A. 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—2:32-36:
 - 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.
 - 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.
- B. 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:
 - 1. *The Holy Spirit* is a general title of the Spirit of God in the New Testament—Acts 9:17, 31.
 - 2. As a vessel containing the Triune God, Paul was fully constituted of the Holy Spirit and of the Spirit of Jesus—Eph. 3:14-17; Luke 1:35; Acts 2:32-36; Phil. 1:19.
 - 3. 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.
- C. God obtained the church “through His own blood”—Acts 20:28:
 - 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.

II. *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:

- A. 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—1:3.
- B. The Spirit of Jesus is not only the Spirit of God with divinity in Him so that we may live the divine life but also the Spirit of the man Jesus with humanity in Him so that we may live a proper human life and endure its sufferings—Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 1:5:
 - 1. In his suffering Paul needed the Spirit of Jesus because in the Spirit of Jesus there is the suffering element and the suffering strength to withstand persecution—Col. 1:24; Acts 9:15-16; 16:7.
 - 2. In our preaching of the gospel today, we also need the Spirit of Jesus to face the opposition and persecution.
- C. The Spirit of Jesus involves more than the Holy Spirit—vv. 6-7:
 - 1. The Holy Spirit involves only the incarnation and birth of the Lord Jesus—Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18, 20.
 - 2. The Spirit of Jesus involves His humanity, human living, all-inclusive death, life-imparting resurrection, and ascension—Acts 1:1-3, 8; 2:23, 32, 36.
- D. Just as the Spirit of Christ is the reality of Christ, so the Spirit of Jesus is the reality of Jesus—Rom. 8:9; Acts 16:7:
 - 1. If we do not have the Spirit of Jesus, Jesus will not be real to us.
 - 2. Jesus is real to us because we have the Spirit of Jesus as the reality, the realization, of Jesus—v. 7.

III. 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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:
 - 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

- 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:
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.
 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.
 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.
 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- G. Paul's proclaiming the kingdom of God in Acts 28:31 was the propagation of the resurrected Christ:
1. This is proved by the words *teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ*, which things go together with the kingdom of God—v. 23.
 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.