

Message Twelve

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

Scripture Reading: Acts 27—28

**I. The apostle Paul 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—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

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God's eternal economy, displaying in his living the word of the Lord Jesus that it is better to give than to receive—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

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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.

**II. The continuation of the book of Acts is the corporate continuation of Christ with the corporate living of the perfected God-men as the reality of the Body of Christ—28:31; cf. John 5:17:**

- A. The book of Acts was actually not ended but left open that more may be added; the reason for this must have been that 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.
- B. 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 (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.
- C. Since God is after a corporate vessel, we must be brought into the reality of the Body of Christ and learn to live the Body life by denying our natural life; otherwise, we are useless in His hand and can never fulfill His goal.
- D. In the four Gospels God was incarnated, passed through human living, died, and resurrected, thus completing Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God (Col. 2:9); in the book of Acts this embodiment of God, as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), spreads Christ into His believers, working the processed Triune God into His chosen, redeemed, and transformed people to make them the constituents of the church, through which God may be expressed.
- E. The ultimate issue of the church will be the New Jerusalem in eternity future as God's full and eternal expression, which will also be God's eternal kingdom as the sphere in which He

reigns in His divine life in eternity forever and ever; 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.