

The Church: DEFINED

Study Questions

Chapter 1

Most days are some combination of new and old. We pick up the project where we left off the day before. We microwave last night's leftovers, or follow up on yesterday's conversation. Just as likely, though, we might launch a new effort, cook a fresh meal, or start a conversation with someone we just met. Our days are like this, but on a greater scale, so is all of life.

The combination of new and old is especially true of God's mission, and there's no better example than the book of Acts (a.k.a., *The Acts of the Apostles*). Our time in this book may remind us of God's work displayed in Exodus (from our recent series). You can bet, though, we'll also notice some groundbreaking features of the early church.

Over these weeks, we would do well to observe how ideas that appear new may be more established than we realize; conversely, practices that look familiar may have unprecedented features. It matters because, like the early church, we live in an age where we await Jesus' return. So, what are we supposed to do in the meantime? Who are we as His people? How are our answers to these questions the same as every generation of God's people, and how are they, in a way, "new" since the book of Acts?

NOTE: *In spite of this long-winded introduction(!), we plan to be as brief as possible with our upcoming guides in this series.*

MAIN TEXT: Acts 1:1-14

CONNECT & OBSERVE

1. What did you find most significant from Sunday's sermon?
2. Read the passage in Acts. Does anything stand out as new (relative to this point in God's unfolding mission)? If so, what do you see?
3. Does something appear old or familiar—a continuation of an already established pattern of God's mission? If so, what do you notice?

LEARN

4. Read the following Old Testament passages: Isaiah 44:3-5; Ezekiel 11:19-20; and Ezekiel 36:25-27. How do these verses relate to this week's passage out of Acts?
5. What expectation(s) does the apostles' question of verse 6 reveal? How would you classify Jesus' response in verses 7-8? Is it *comforting*? *Unsettling*? Some of *both*?
6. Beginning with verse 12, what is the apostles' and "the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers [and sisters]" response to Jesus' ascension? We can only speculate, but what kind of prayers can you imagine they were praying?

APPLY

7. What can we learn from Jesus' response to the apostles in verses 7-8, as well as from the words of the "two men...in white robes" in verse 11? Specifically, what do these verses tell us about what *is* and *is not* part of our mission as Jesus' followers?
8. The apostles in this chapter were literal eyewitnesses (v. 8) to Jesus' life, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. We are not eyewitnesses in the same sense, but we are still called to be witnesses. What do you think this means for us today?
8. One of Calvary's [shaping values](#) is *Prayer in Faith*. Both as a church and as individual disciples (i.e., followers/pupils) we want to be a community of people that consistently prays for God to do what only He can do. Where do you see this modeled in Acts 1?
9. Chapter 1 emphasizes the priority of the Holy Spirit for God's mission. Take time together to "Pray in Faith" that we would grow as a community of believers who rely on God's Spirit to accomplish His work in and through us.