

Week 9// A New People (Christians)

Acts of the Apostles

Intro//

Following the ascension of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the book of Acts tells the story of the birth, beginnings and growth of the Church. It recounts both the adventures and adversity experienced by the Apostles and first followers of Jesus. They suffer persecution and are scattered, but the gospel spreads throughout the region. Leaders fail and fall out (sometimes publicly), but they figure out what the Spirit is saying, and the Kingdom keeps expanding. Ultimately, Acts is an inspirational, yet realistic account of how Christian community was/is formed so that the world around is transformed.

For the ninth video in full, [please click here](#).

Discussion Questions//

1. Although the 'early church' is often idealised, the Christian community depicted in Acts is beautiful but broken in much the same way as it is today.
 - a. Can you think of an example or occasion where you experienced authentic Christian community/the Church as it was meant to be?
 - b. In what ways (if any) can the story of the early church help us reflect or respond when we're let down by church?
2. In the video, a distinction between what seem like 'one-off' aspects of Church life in Acts (e.g. having 12 Apostles) with more 'universal' markers of Church life (e.g. caring for the poor). *Based on Acts, elsewhere in Scripture or your experience, what would you suggest are the key ingredients of what it means to be Church?*
3. James claims that the Church consistently grows in Acts when people preach the good news of Jesus, even if this preaching takes different formats. *To what extent does this still ring true today? What are some of the creative forms you/your community could share Jesus this Christmas?*
4. The first half of Acts heavily features Peter whilst the second half largely follows Paul, but in both men fade into the background as God's story and that of His Church carries on.
 - a. *What might this reveal about God's nature/character and the role of human leaders in his Kingdom?*
 - b. *Who have been some of the key figures in encouraging your Christian faith? How many of these have faded in and out over time and what impact has this had on your story?*

Reading Plan//

1	Acts 1.1-11	Ascension
2	Acts 2	Pentecost
3	Acts 6.8-8.8	Stephen
4	Acts 8.26-40	Philip
5	Acts 9	Paul
6	Acts 15	Jerusalem Council
7	Acts 27-28	To Rome