

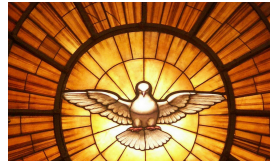
First Jesus, Now Us...

God's plan moves from the work of Christ to the works of the Church. Where do we come in?



FROM JERUSALEM TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH...

Jesus calls his disciples to branch out...leave the nest.



RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

The early disciples received the Holy Spirit...How about us today?



AS WE WORSHIP AND SERVE

What is the witness of today's Church? How do people see us?

NEXT STEPS...



In the First Book... Acts 1

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning ² until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³ After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days

A Center of Service and Prayer, Christ's Church is made up of people who pray and serve.

and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This,” he said, “is what you have heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The Ascension of Jesus

(Mk 16:19–20; Lk 24:50–53)

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” ⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

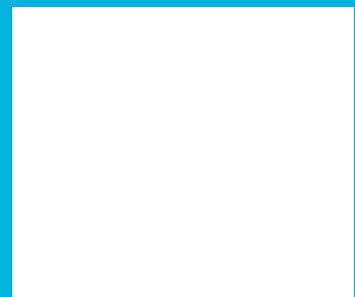
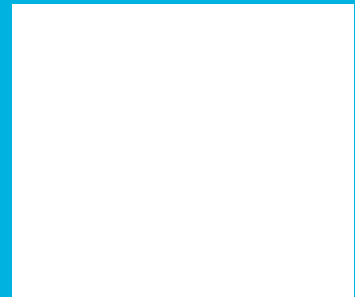
[*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#). (1989). (Ac 1:1–11). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Breaking it Apart...

Let's take the text apart a bit and look at what Luke is telling the early Church:

- 1) Luke's book of Acts is the second of two volumes, the first being the Gospel of Luke.
- 2) Jesus appears to the disciples for 40 days after the resurrection, offering proofs of his resurrection and speaking to them of the kingdom of God. Is there any purpose to the 40 days? What is your understanding of the kingdom of God? Why do you think Jesus talked to the disciples on this subject?
- 3) What do you think is the promise Jesus refers to in verse 4?

Images of Worship, Service, and Witness?



Fill in the blanks above with your image of the Church's witness to the world through the ministries of Worship, Service, and Evangelism. How are they good? In what ways can they be bad?

4) How would you explain the 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' to someone? Why do you think Jesus uses the metaphor of baptism? Imagine what baptism would have been like. Is it more than a metaphor?

5) In verses 6&7, Jesus answers a question raised by his disciples: When is the kingdom of Israel going to be restored? What is your understanding of this question and its implications?

Jesus replies that it's God's timeline and God's business. What does Jesus' response mean?

What are some of the concepts or beliefs that the Church has held onto that you believe may get in the way of reaching people with the Good News? What are some of the things that hold the Church back from its mission?

6) Following his light rebuke of the disciples' questions, Jesus tells them that they will be his witnesses after they receive the Holy Spirit. What do you believe is the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus' disciples?

7) Jesus tells the disciples that they will be witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, then to the ends of the earth. What challenge do you see in this statement of his? As part of, "the ends of the earth," how are we to respond to Christ's claim?

8) Once Jesus ascends, the angels tell the disciples, "he will come back the same way he left." What is your belief about Jesus' coming again that is written of here, in many other places in Scripture, and even in our communion liturgy?