

The Book of Acts

The Church Begins in Jerusalem

Interpreting the Text:

1. Professors Attridge and Bartlett suggest that throughout the book of Acts we have emphasis both on continuity and change. How do you see these two themes developed, especially in the famous story of Pentecost (Acts 2)?
2. What are some of the themes in Peter's speech in the latter part of Acts 2? (This is the first of a number of sermons in this book, and they may reflect Luke's theology as much as they do Peter's or Paul's). What purpose do these kinds of sermons serve? What do they tell us about the early church?
3. Luke is said to have written most "like a historian" out of all of the evangelists. What evidence supports this claim in the first few chapters of Acts?

Applying the Text:

1. How does prayer function for the apostles in these chapters? What might we learn from these stories about the importance of prayer and discernment today?
2. The use of language and translation features strongly in these first chapters, teaching that evangelism requires our ability to communicate with and understand each other. What ways do you embrace the spirit of Pentecost in spreading the Good News? How can we work to communicate effectively with our neighbors?
3. The disciples are beginning to clash with the legal systems of their day as they continue to follow and spread Jesus' teachings. Have you ever felt tension between what Jesus calls us to do and what civic or social practices ask of you?