

The Book of Acts Gentiles Join the Movement

Interpreting the Text:

1. The story of Paul's experience on the Road to Damascus is one of the classic Christian stories and has influenced the way people think about conversion and Christian faith from the first century till today. You might compare this story to Paul's own account of his experience with the risen Christ in Galatians 1 & 2. What themes do we see in Luke that shift or elaborate on Paul's claims?
2. The story of Peter and Cornelius is the longest single episode in the Book of Acts. How do visions function, in this story in Luke, and elsewhere in Acts, to represent messages from God?
3. The vision of the different kinds of food on a sheet that Peter sees is not primarily about whether to keep cultural food laws (kosher laws). How do we understand the vision and the story around it when it comes to the question of fellowship between Jews and Gentiles in the early church?
4. What are some of the significant details about God calling Saul through Ananias (Acts 9:10-22)? How does it compare to other stories of God calling individuals in the Bible?

Applying the Text:

1. Saul[Paul]'s story of call and conversion demonstrates God's powerful ability to transform our hearts. How does Paul's story inspire you to be open to the ways God might be working through you?
2. Professors Bartlett and Attridge suggest that the events of Acts 9-12 support a sense that God is completely in control, from the conversion of Paul to the death of King Herod. Are there events in your life that help you see God at work? How do you understand the way God acts in your life?