



The Book of Acts Defense of the Gospel

Interpreting the Text:

1. What are some of the ways in which this final journey of Paul to Rome reminds us of Jesus' final trip to Jerusalem in the Gospel of Luke? How does this help us understand the themes of the Book of Acts?
2. Professors Bartlett and Attridge suggest that Luke in his gospel and in Acts uses geography with a kind of preaching purpose. In Luke the story begins in Jerusalem and returns to Jerusalem. In Acts the story begins in Jerusalem and spreads to Rome. How does geography work in these chapters and what theological uses might these geographical references have?
3. In Chapter 22 Paul makes one more speech in his own defense, and really in defense of the whole Christian movement. In doing so he tells the story of his conversion on the road to Damascus, in his own words, a story that Luke tells in the third person in Acts 9. What are the themes of the defense here, and how does the story of Paul's conversion or call fit into that defense?

Applying the Text:

1. Paul's attempt for complete unity among all people often leads to the offense of particular groups. This same issue continues in the Christian church. How can we learn from Paul about welcoming all people to the message of Christ while being sensitive to and respectful of our neighbors?
2. This portion of Acts, in particular, paints the Jewish leadership in a negative light. How should we engage with this text today without perpetuating harmful, antisemitic messages?