



1.3 The Early Church: Acts II – Paul & the Gentiles

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Last week we examined the portrayal of Peter in Acts, and his mission of preaching the Gospel to the Jews, starting in Jerusalem, and then extending out further afield. This week we turn to Paul, the dominant figure in early Christianity, who takes the message of the Gospel “global” by preaching to the Gentiles throughout the (eastern) Greco-Roman world. The heroic portrayal of Paul in Acts, like that of Peter, mirrors that of Jesus in Luke; but events and details of Paul’s ministry also mirror those of Peter in the first half of Acts. Paul’s story is structured around three Missionary Journeys throughout the Eastern Mediterranean world, full of adventures and perils. And, like with Peter, Luke crafts the message of Paul into memorable speeches delivered to different audiences on different occasions, as befits the style of historical narratives in the Ancient World. These stirring Speeches are full of the oratorical and polemical devices that are so distinctive of a Greek education in the Art of Rhetoric, synthesized with a profound knowledge of Judaism and a distinctive vision of the Gospel of Christianity.

Assignment #3 for Class on Saturday 26th January 2019

Reading

Please read through the second part of The Acts of the Apostles that focuses on the Ministry of Paul (and his companions) to the Gentiles (Acts 13-28). I suggest re-reading the introduction to Acts in your Oxford Annotated NRSV Bible beforehand; and then reading through the assigned chapters of the book in one sitting. Acts is written as a propulsive, page-turning narrative full of adventures and excitement. If you can, try to read the chapters through a second time, this time using the annotations and notes in your Bible as an aid to understanding and interpretation.

Thinking & Responding

For this week’s Response Paper, I want you to focus on analyzing **one** of Paul’s many Speeches scattered throughout Acts – please choose one (1) from these five Speeches:

1. Paul’s Speech at Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13)
2. Paul’s Speech in the middle of the Areopagus (Acts 17)
3. Paul’s Speech to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20)
4. Paul’s Speech to the Jerusalem Jews (Acts 22)
5. Paul’s Speech before King Agrippa (Acts 26)

Questions to think about: *Why is Paul giving this Speech? Who is his Audience? How is his Speech Constructed? What is his Message? What Understanding of the Gospel and Christianity emerges in his Speech? What Arguments and Appeals does he make? Is he Effective?* Please write your Response in approximately 400-500 words (12-point font, double-spaced, one-inch margin, with your name at the top of the paper). Type up and print your Reflections, and be ready to share and discuss your Insights. I will collect them in to review and grade at the end of the class.