

Acts 17.1-15

Turning the World Right-Side-Up

What TURNS your World UP-SIDE Down?

On the Playground of My Elementary School in CA – 3rd Grade Teacher
Came Rushing with TEARS in her Eyes “President Kennedy is DEAD!”

CLINGING to my Bed – Rocking Across Room – Early AM LA Earthquake 1971

Michael Jackson DEAD! STOCK Market SINKS! at Least Elvis is STILL ALIVE!

v. 6 These that have *turned the world upside down* are come hither also... KJV

NIV = caused trouble all over the world / Revolutionary Impact of Gospel

Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction
1 Thessalonians 1.5

1. Strategic Ministry

a. Key Cities > Mission in NT is Story of CITIES – 1400 ref to Cities Bible

Story BEGINS – Most IMPORTANT City in Bible – Jerusalem

Lord Jesus – Dies for Sins, Rises from Death, Sends Spirit, Births Church

MOTHER Church of Missionary Movement > ANTIOCH – Cosmopolitan City

CLIMAX of Book of Acts: Paul in Rome > Capital of World > Church THERE

v. 1 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.



From PHILIPPI – Paul’s TEAM Traveled Westwards on EGNATIAN Way
 ROMAN HIGHWAYS – the AUTOBAHNS of the ANCIENT WORLD
 53 km to AMPHIPOLIS / 43 km to APOLLONIA / 56 km to Thessalonica
 Walking? Horses? Stop overs? > LUKE does NOT Mention DETAILS

Paul’s LETTER to Church in Rome > He’d NEVER BEEN THERE YET
 ...from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, (*above Macedonia, along Adriatic Sea*) I have *fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ*. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation...now that there is *no more place for me to work in these regions...*
 Romans 15.19-24

COVERED Eastern Medit. > NOW Coming to CAPITAL > and BEYOND!

FULLY Proclaimed > Every PERSON?? Every TOWN?? No!

ESTABLISHED Church Key Cities > BASES to Reach into their REGIONS

The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere.
 1 Thessalonians 1.8

21st C. – More than 50% of WORLD lives in CITIES – China 56 over 1 Million
 MASSIVE Growth of CITIES > GO to Reach them with God’s Love

b. Synagogue First v. 2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue...

...the gospel...the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: *first for the Jew*, then for the Gentile.
 Romans 1.16

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.
 Romans 10.1

Usually Most RESPONSIVE in Synagogue: GENTILES, God-Fearers, BACK Row
 GOOD NEWS of Missioners > Come to JESUS DIRECTLY > NOT thru MOSES

Caused TROUBLE > Jealous JEWS at Paul's SUCCESS with GENTILES

Key > FIND Places where PEOPLE are RESPONSIVE and READY to HEAR

c. Socio-Political Impact

Thessalonica – Population about 20,000 – Named for ½ Sister of Alexander Great

History reveals CITIZENS of Thessalonica made Emperor PERSONAL Deity

I swear...that I will support Caesar Augustus, his children and descendants throughout my life in word, deed and thought...that in whatsoever concerns them I will spare neither body nor soul nor life nor children...that whenever I see or hear of anything being said, planned or done against them I will report it...and whomsoever they regard as enemies I will attack and pursue with arms and the sword by land and by sea...
Oath administered in Paphlagonia

GOSPEL of Jesus Christ CONFRONTS Status Quo of IDOLATRY of MAN

...you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 1 Thessalonians 1.9

GOSPEL DEMANDS New Allegiance – Turning from IDOLS to LIVING GOD

vs. 7,8 They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

By THIS TIME the JEWS recently Expelled from Rome for SEDITION

Paul forced to FLEE all 3 Macedonian Cities > Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea

PERHAPS Reason Paul RARELY USES Titles King/Kingdom in LETTERS

Such a message – that the Lord alone is God and Savior, and that Jesus is Lord and Judge of all – could be seen as dangerous, insulting to Caesar's dignity, and disruptive of the 'Pax Romana.'
Dennis Johnson

Authorities Threatened > Citizen's HIGHEST ALLEGIANCE NOT given THEM

PAUL becomes FOCAL POINT of ATTENTION and AFFLICTION

d. Suffering > Paul was BRAVE and DETERMINED > UNSTOPPABLE

Just BEATEN & IMPRISONED in PHILIPPI > PRESSING ON for Jesus Christ

vs. 1,2 they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue... on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them

3 Sabbaths in Synagogue > KICKED Out > Perhaps MONTHS @ Jason's Home?

Received FINANCIAL SUPPORT from Philippi – to Work in Thessalonica
...when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Philippians 4.15,16

Also Paul WORKED HARD to Care for his OWN NEEDS – Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. 1 Thessalonians 2.9

God does NOT NEED Months OR Years to Change a CITY

Have SHORT STAY in BEIJING? – Get Busy for GOD & See what HE CAN DO!

vs. 5,6,9 They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials... Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

MISSED Paul > SEIZED JASON New Church Leader > Mtgs in HIS Home

TRADE OFF DEAL for Jason > If PAUL LEAVES CITY > Jason RELEASED

PAINFUL – Paul NEVER ALLOWED to RETURN to THESSALONICA

Brothers, when we were torn away from you for a short time (in person, not in thought), out of our intense longing we made every effort to see you. For we wanted to come to you - certainly I, Paul, did, again and again - but Satan stopped us.

1 Thessalonians 2.17-19

v. 13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

Being ATTACKED Unjustly for GOSPEL does not have to Make us ANGRY
We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. 1 Thessalonians 2.8

Love flowed. Sacrifice abounded. Paul the tough apostle was both ‘wet nurse’ to the babes in Christ who needed tender care and ‘father’ to those who were a little older and needed discipline. Michael Green

2. Scriptural Message

LOTS OF TROUBLE! > Why Not Stay Home & Play MAHJONG?!

BELIEVED Creator & Judge of Universe – ACCOMPLISHED SALVATION

MESSAGE of ULTIMATE Truth – SAVING Power – LIFE Everlasting

Without that MESSAGE > World Remains GRIPPED in Sin, Misery, Death

a. Conversation from Scripture > Message of God is in a BOOK

v. 2 Paul...reasoned with them from the Scriptures

Faith can be based on nothing but the Word of the Lord, we must take our stand on its evidence alone in all controversies. John Calvin

Gk. REASONED > Same root word for DIALOGUE > INTERACTION

NEW Teaching > QUESTIONS, IMPLICATIONS, UNDERSTANDING

Although there is an important place for ‘dialogue’ with men of other faiths... there is also need for ‘encounter’ and even ‘confrontation,’ in which we seek both to disclose the inadequacies and falsities of non-Christian religion and to demonstrate the adequacy, truth, absoluteness and finality of the Lord Jesus Christ. John Stott

SURELY Paul TRIED to PRACTICE what he PREACHED... The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth 2 Timothy 2.24-26

STRONG, FIRM Convictions > No Excuse for RUDENESS, Know-it-ALL

MANY Times LOVE is Shown by LISTENING > Not just Waiting to TALK!

Sometimes LISTENING is thru READING and WATCHING World's Ideas

b. Christ the Savior MODEL of JESUS > DISCIPLES on Road to EMMAUS

v. 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead.
 "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ"

EXPLAINING lit. "OPENING" > Emmaus Road Disciples had this Opening
 Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in
 all the Scriptures concerning himself. Luke 24.27

JESUS of NAZARETH in HISTORY = CHRIST Promised in SCRIPTURE

For what I received I passed on to you as of *first importance*: that Christ died for
 our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the
 third day according to the Scriptures 1 Corinthians 15.3-4

I once asked someone how many numbers one has to get right in the lottery to win
 the big prize. He told me that six numbers must be given correctly...How much
 money do you suppose someone would get if they won the big prize ten times –
 untold riches? No, the winner would likely get nothing but a long sentence in the
 penitentiary because the only way anybody could get six correct numbers ten
 different times is if he is crooked. The odds are just too astronomical. In the same
 way, no one can predict in advance with exact precision what will happen to our
 world in the future or in the life of a human being. Yet it is an indisputable fact that
 over a thousand specific prophecies from antiquity regarding the Messiah were
 fulfilled – specifically, particularly, and perfectly – in the person of Jesus. If
 skeptics would take time to look at those prophecies, their mouths would be shut
 forever about any doubt of the divine origin of the Scriptures and of Jesus. R.C. Sproul

Scripture cites MORE than REALITY of the CROSS >> Gives REASON

He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the
 punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the
 LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53.5-6

SICK Need a DOCTOR // SINNERS Need a SAVIOR > JESUS ALONE!

PREACHING 52 Sundays for 30 Years > Soon EXHAUST Subject of JESUS!

APOSTLES saw it DIFFERENTLY > ETERNITY TOO SHORT to Learn All

...the full riches of complete understanding...the mystery of God... *Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...* For in Christ *all the fullness of the Deity* lives in bodily form
Colossians 2.2-3,9

SPIRITUAL MATURITY: NOT Go BEYOND X, but MORE DEEPLY Into X

Thoughts – Attitudes – Values – Desires – Reactions – Words – Behavior

MORE & More Like HIM who DIED and ROSE AGAIN on OUR BEHALF

Preach CHRIST & SCRIPTURE > NEVER RUN DRY > He's Inexhaustible!

c. Contradiction of Slander – Messengers of God were BADLY MISQUOTED!

v. 5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them *certain lewd fellows of the baser sort*, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar...
King James Version

BAD CHARACTERS – NIV / NASB 'wicked men' A.T. Robertson 'BUMS!'

Descended on JASON'S Home like FLIES on MEAT

The very suggestion of treason against the Emperors often proved fatal to the accused.
Sir William Ramsey

vs. 6,7 "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."

SIN Turned God's World UPSIDE-DOWN > SAVIOR will TURN IT RIGHT

Long Ago – King AHAB of ISRAEL > Prophet ELIJAH 'troubler of Israel'

"I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah replied. "But you and your father's family have. You have abandoned the LORD's commands" 1 Kings 18.18

WORLD >> BLAMING JESUS for Disturbances CAUSED by SATAN

Let us faithfully pay to princes what is properly due to them and be ready to offer them all civil obedience; but if they are not content with their own station and try to snatch from us the fear and worship of God, there is no reason why any of us should not say that we rate God's power and majesty more highly. John Calvin

TRY to TEACH Word CLEARLY > Will be MISUNDERSTANDINGS,
OBJECTIONS, ATTACKS >>> Need to CLEAR Reasons for Our BELIEF

PAUL attempted to CONTRADICT Slander w/ TRUTH of GOSPEL

v. 3 ...explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise...

PROVING = lit. PLACE BESIDE > i.e. COMPARING 2 Viewpoints

WHY do we BELIEVE THIS? And WHY do we NOT BELIEVE THAT?

SLANDER Against the GOSPEL in OUR MODERN WORLD >>>>

BIBLE is CORRUPT

CHRISTIANS are BRAINWASHED

JESUS had a WIFE and KIDS

JESUS did NOT DIE on the CROSS

JESUS is NOT the ONLY Way of SALVATION

d. Conviction from the Spirit - PAUL'S WORDS > POWERFUL WORDS

NOTICE What PAUL does NOT Do...

1) He did Not Coerce People - to believe by FORCE

Sometimes we THINK that it will be more CLEAR if we make it LOUDER!

Simply stated, (the standard) is this: Any persuasive effort which restricts another's freedom to choose for or against Christ is wrong. Em Griffin

Cannot BULLY Someone into the KINGDOM of God > GOD SAVES!

NOT our JOB to CONVINCe World of God's Truth, Our Job to Make it CLEAR
God's Word is TRUE Even if the WHOLE WORLD – LAUGHS at YOU!

2) He did Not Entertain People

TODAY Everything Moves by Entertainment – Choose Our Soda Pop & Presidents
Whatever ENTERTAINS Us the MOST WILL ENTRANCE us to FOLLOW!

Churches TODAY must DRAW People by POLISHED PERFORMANCES

When we speak of a ministry today what we usually mean is a business wrapped
around an individual...and what those businesses often largely consist of is
entertainment. James Boice

APOSTLES did NOT have MINISTRY > In MODERN Church Use of WORD
TODAY – TELEVISION Ministries – SPORTS Ministries – MUSIC Ministries
APOSTLES > FOCUSED on MESSAGE > Saving MINISTRY of Lord Jesus
POWER of HOLY SPIRIT > APOSTLE of Jesus > GOD Spoke THRU him
Paul PRAYED as he PREACHED > Relied on SPIRIT and the SCRIPTURES

We also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which
you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the
word of God, which is at work in you who believe. 1 Thessalonians 2.13

3. Saved through the Message

Paul DRIVEN Out 3 Macedonian Cities > Each STILL BUZZING from WORDS

v. 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

MANY – Probably INDIFFERENT *'what was that all about??'*

SOME – JEALOUS, Implication of Message, ROBED their Position & Prestige

FEW – EMBRACED Paul's Message > SUBMITTED to Savior & Sovereign

a. Celebration / JOY NOT Jealousy > SET FREE in JESUS

v. 11 Now the Bereans were of more *noble* character than the Thessalonians, they received the message with *great eagerness*

NOBLE – OPEN MINDED > TEACHABLE > CRITICAL THINKING

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8.31,32

Christian Comes to God and His Word // Hungry Child seeking Mother's Milk

Do YOU have that JOY in GOD'S WORD?? Hearing THIS SERMON??

Do WE Come with the EAGERNESS of the BEREANS? Anticipatory JOY?

Community of JOY > Church in Maced. > Crossed Social & Cultural Barriers

v. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

JEWISH Women found in HIGH CLASSES of ROMAN SOCIETY

Even EMPEROR NERO'S wife POPPAEA was JEWISH Sympathizer

v. 12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

Jews and Greeks – the Prominent and the Poor – Men and Women

In a world that is being torn asunder by ethnic strife, the Church which unites people from different social and cultural backgrounds may be the most powerful contemporary demonstration of the glory of the gospel we have to offer the world.

Ajith Fernando

b. Conservative

CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN >> NOT Politics, Hairstyles, Music Tastes

CONSERVE = HOLD ON TO ---- CAREFUL, NOT to LOOSE VALUABLES

Important THINGS we DO NOT WANT Stolen – DOUBLE LOCK them!

What you heard from me, *keep* as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. *Guard* the good deposit that was entrusted to you 2 Timothy 1.13-14

BEREANS > Got NO EMAIL Message about this ODD GUY NAMED PAUL
BORE Marks of FRESH BEATINGS > TIRED > VICIOUSLY ATTACKED
SERVANT of the SAVIOR // OR a SNAKE sent by SATAN??

TEST?? – FUNNY? CLEVER? INTERESTING? HANDSOME? DAPPER?

MANY CHURCHES > these are Their EVIDENCES of MAN of GOD
v. 11 ...examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true
SEARCHED DAILY – Not just SUNDAYS – Words matter of LIFE & DEATH

No MERE EMOTIONAL Response to the GOSPEL > Truly CONVINCED
FOCUS of MINISTRY --- SCRIPTURES > Textbook and Court of Appeal
Thessalonica – Paul ‘reasoned’ ‘explained’ ‘proved’ ‘proclaimed’ ‘persuaded’
Bereans – ‘received’ ‘examined’ ‘great eagerness’

Last Month – Cancer Follow-Up BLOOD Test – 10 Minutes? 45!

2 Nurses wanted to talk about CHRISTIAN Faith – Even Cancer is for Gospel!

Challenged > Have you READ for YOURSELF the Words of JESUS

THEY told me how PEOPLE all over WORLD – Believe and Follow HIM

I Challenged “Maybe that is a REASON to know WHO He is, WHAT Claimed”

First Christians WOULD BE SHOCKED at our Resources TODAY

WHOLE BIBLE – Dozens of TRANSLATIONS into ENGLISH

Big PRINT – Pocket SIZED – MP 3 – VIDEO – DVD – COMPUTERIZED

I want to know one thing: the way to heaven, how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me that book of God.
John Wesley

c. Conviction v. 11 ...they received the message with *great* eagerness and examined the Scriptures *every day* to see if what Paul said was true.

BEREAN – TODAY > Someone who Studies Bible with Impartiality & Care

v. 12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

GOD LOVES ALL > POOR and the PROMINENT

PROMINENT >> Usually have MORE TO LOOSE, FAITH is Greater RISK

JOIN with ACCUSED SEDITIONIST > INSURRECTIONIST

For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews
1 Thessalonians 2.14

Paul & Silas were UNPOPULAR in this UPSIDE DOWN World

They did NOT Turn World TOPSY-TURVY – CONSEQUENCE of SIN

Their WORLD turned UPSIDE-DOWN – Not by DEAD Presidents or Pop Stars

Not even by EARTHQUAKES or ECONOMIC Collapse

Jesus DIED & ROSE to put the WORLD RIGHT with GOD and with ITSELF

LIVING God ENTERED their World – Not to DESTROY but SET FREE

Deserve His PUNISHMENT but we're FREELY Given – FULL PARDON

Savior took their Place – Suffered in their Stead – PAID their Penalty in FULL

We help to SORT Things OUT when we – Like Paul – Make Jesus KNOWN

Acts 17:1-15

17:1 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. 5 But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. 10 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. 13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.
