

**Acts**  
**“Jesus” The Sequel**  
**III.) Chp. 13-28 “Witnesses to the end of the earth”**  
*Chp. 15-18:21 Traditions and the road less traveled (2<sup>nd</sup> trip)*  
**17:1-15**  
**“Right side up in an upside down world”**

**I.) Vs. 1-4 A war of words**

**II.) Vs. 5-9 Smoke and mirrors**

**III.) Vs. 10-15 A search for Messiah**

**I.) Vs. 1-4 A war of words**

Vs.1 Paul now moves into two more towns in Europe as he is living right side up in an upside down world. As we noted last week Luke writes this narrative and leaves himself out of the story as he probably stayed in Philippi to help with the young Church that started their. So **“they”** that are travelling south along the 500-mile Roman road called the Egnatian Way are Paul, Silas and Timothy traveling 33 miles to Amphipolis (*Am-fip-olis, which means a city surrounded*), named because it was 3 miles from the sea and a river surrounded it where they stayed the night. The next day they traveled another 27 miles to Apollonia (*Ap-ol-onia, belonging to Apollo*) and again stayed the night. All that Luke tells us is that they just **“passed through”** these two cities which as far as size and importance were larger than Philippi. The only reason for this is to be found in the statement that in *“Thessalonica there was a synagogue of the Jews?”* Where there were synagogues meant that there was a hunger for spiritual truth.

Paul may have passed by these two cities but it is safe to say that eventually those from Thessalonica came the 37 miles back to *Ap-ol-onia* and those from Philippi went forward the 33 miles forward to *Am-fip-olis*. Paul in his words to the Church in Thessalonica says, *“that they became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who*

believe. For from them the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Their faith toward God has gone out.” Then Paul commends the Philippians because, “you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities.” God started a work in one area and then the Word of God, like “seeds carried by the wind” blew into another city and sprouted as the believers in Thessalonica and Philippi were the seeds.

Vs. 2-3 Now notice the way that God used Paul and the missionary team to turn the world right side up. As we see FIVE specific things that Paul employed to turn Thessalonica and through them every place right side up.

1. Vs. 2a “Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them”: Paul went, as he always did, to a place where there was already an interest in spiritual truth, the synagogue where the Jews met to study the Word of God. Paul sought the one place in all of Thessalonica where the people that gathered there were the most informed in truth. Now where today in would you find such a place? We had better get this right, THE CHURCH! I find it interesting that the place through out church history that is the flash point of revival has always been the Church. If you get a concordance and look up the word “revive” and you will find that the word appears 20 times in the Bible and not one of those times does it speak of anyone except the believer. Further more of those 20 times 9 of them are found in the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm. You could call the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm the revival passage of scripture. Here is how the Psalmist puts it:

- Revive me according to Your word (three times)

- **Revive me in Your way**
- **Revive me in Your righteousness**
- **Revive me according to Your lovingkindness** (twice)
- **Revive me according to Your justice**
- **Revive me according to Your judgments**

What's the key word in each of these nine examples? Why it's the word **ME!**

Paul went to the one place that could be awakened to turn the world right side up, those that were seeking after truth. ***Folk's the Church is what needs to be revived.*** When you say that some person needs to be revived you make the assumption that at one time they were alive and the non-believer has never been alive. So for “*three Sabbaths*” or weeks Paul went into the synagogue to revive them in the truth. Paul tells us in 2 Thessalonians that the rest of the time he “*worked laboring in toil night and day, so that he would not be a burden to any of them*”. Paul's came to wake them up not just by his words but how he lived what he believed.

2. Vs.2b “**reasoned** with **them from the Scriptures.**” **Paul had a discussion with folk's based upon the truth of the Word.** The word “*reasoned*” is where we get our English word **dialogue**. It describes not a formal sermon but rather a discussion during which Paul answered questions from those who were interested in truth. But look carefully on what Paul based his answers back upon? **The scriptures!** Webster's dictionary gives the definition of a **septic** as “*to look about*”, and I think we Christians ought to fit this definition. If you want to turn the world right side up you are going to have to open a dialogue with them. One in which you aren't afraid to examine opposing ideologies. **Let me say this, any belief system that won't allow**

**honest investigation of it's self or seeks to persecute anyone who seeks to investigate other belief systems by it's very action is false!**

3. Vs. 3 “**explaining**”: This is the same word that is used twice in Luke 24.
- First in verse 32 where it says concerning the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that after hearing Jesus, “*beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, **expound** to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself*” said; “*Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He **opened** the Scriptures to us?*”
  - Then as Jesus stood in the midst of the disciples in Luke 24:44-45. Jesus said, “*These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.*” Then Luke comments, “*And He **opened** their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*” Same word as the one in our passage!

Clearly the word means to “**expound**” (*Luke 24:37 gives us the definition*) or to **explain** the word of God. If we want to turn our world right side up there must be a clear teaching of the Word, which has to be explaining the passage.

4. Vs. 3 “**demonstrating**”: The word literally means to **place along side of**. Paul was not **only expounding he was propounding**. Paul did not just explain the passages of scripture to them he offered for their consideration the truth of the word of God by placing scripture next to scripture. **He proved that what he was saying was not mere speculation or mans opinion but was in fact TRUTH!** Paul was turning the world right side up because he knew that what he had to share was in fact TRUTH.

You must not ever be afraid to take on the difficult topics concerning the Bible. Since it is truth you can investigate it. I have spent the last 29 years of my life with this approach to personal study and the only thing that has remained constant is God's Word. **What makes us right is not that we have some sort of ideology that lines up with our world view but rather that TRUTH has come into our lives and changed our world view!**

- a. All of this discussion, explaining and proving of the Bible centered on the phrase, "*that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead.*" What this tells us is an important point in turning our world right side up. Paul made his focus **not** on how these Jews could live better and more productive lives. His focus was *not philosophy or principals* but rather on a **PERSON!** **The key to turning the world right side up is to talk about, explain and prove that Jesus is who He said He was and did what He said He would do!** No doubt that led to discussing Isa. 53, Ps. 22 and others. Because of the persecution of the nation of Israel and the apparent delay in the Messiah's coming the Jews like their counter parts today just could not grasp that Jesus could be the Messiah.
5. Vs. 3 "*This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ*": The word "*preach*" means to proclaim. Based on this statement we see that **Paul pushed for a decision** as we are told in the next verse where we are told that "*some of them were persuaded*". Folk's if you want to turn your world right side up then you are going to have to press the issue and give them an opportunity to make a choice. Paul did this by identifying Jesus as the

fulfillment of the prophecies he had explained and proved then asked them, “*What are you going to do with Him?*”

Vs. 4 We are told of **the effects of Paul’s five-fold method** of turning the world right side up in that three groups were touched in varying degrees:

- a. “*Some of them were persuaded*”: The “*them*” in this sentence refers to the Jews in synagogue. The religious Jews were the hardest group to reach as it is today that those who are religious are always the hardest ones to reach with truth. Only a few of those folk’s were open to the truth, Jason of verse 5 was not doubt one of them.
- b. “*a great multitude of the devout Greeks*”: The Greeks who were tired of polytheism and in search of truth had come into the synagogue then upon hearing the truth’s about the Messiah Jesus believed. In Acts 20:4 we are told that two of them (*Aristarchus* = Prince and *Secundus* = Second) joined Paul and the missionary team.
- c. “*and not a few of the leading women*”: A lot of the wives of important men of the city got saved as well. These were educated women who had found Plateau and Socrates had nothing to offer the heart and upon hearing about Jesus turned their lives over to Him.

## **II.) Vs. 5-9 Smoke and mirrors**

Vs. 5 With some success also came the enemies attempt to change the outcome. Those who refused to receive the Word of God became jealous of its impact upon the same folks, so they went to the down town area and got together some people who were into doing nothing and paid them to start trouble. The outcome was a city wide riot that ended

up in attacking Jason's house where they thought Paul was at. Friends have you noticed that this is still a tactic of those who refuse to trust in Jesus, "***When you can't defend your position just out shout your opponent***".

Vs. 6-7 **And when that doesn't work revert to lies and false accusations** as they came up with two things to charge them with:

1. Vs. 6 "*These who have turned the world upside down have come here too*": **I could only pray that I would be dragged before the city council and charged with such a crime as this.** It's a great thing when your enemies praise you (*as Paul and his band were charged*) with **changing the social structure of the world as they knew it.**
2. Vs. 7 "*these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king; Jesus*": The word another here means "*of a different kind*". The second charge was that of treason in challenging Caesar's authority. Church history records for us that **over 6 million of our brothers and sister in Christ were killed in the first 250 years for refusing to say, "Caesar is Lord."** Jesus said to Pilate, "*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.*" Folks, **Jesus conquers the world one heart at a time not with armies and weapons but with ambassadors armed with truth and love.**

Vs. 8-9 The public trial happens and all that Jason has to do is put up security saying that Paul won't be coming back to the city which is what Paul probably meant when he said

in 1 Thessalonians 2:18 that, “*he wanted to come to them; time and again; but Satan hindered us.*”

### III.) Vs. 10-15 A search for Messiah

Vs. 10-11 At night the Church sent Paul and Silas to Berea which was about 60 miles southwest of Thessalonica in the foothills of the Olympic Mountains a little hick town off the main road. The difference was to be found in the hearts of those in the synagogue. Luke says that they were more “*fair-minded*” or literally were of a higher character than those in Thessalonica. What made them so? Luke tells us two things that gave them a higher character:

- a. “*they received the word with all readiness*”: The word means to have, “*eagerness, or to rush forward*”. **These Bereans wanted the Word of God they were hungry for truth, they were receptive to at least hearing the Word.** Folk’s one of the greatest sounds to hear in a Church service is the rustling of Bible pages! One of these guys was named Sopater according to Acts 20:4. Now his name means, “*One who defends the Father*”.
- b. “*searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so*”: **Not only were they receptive to the Word they wanted to make sure that what was being taught lined up with the Bible and they did so DAILY!**

Vs. 12-15 The result of this careful examination of the Word was that “*many of them believed*”. The greatest evidence of what we believe is to be found in our willingness to examine the Bible’s claims and then search out what it proclaims. What a consistent enemy as these guys get together and travel the 60 miles to try to cause a problem so the Bereans just send Paul on down to Athens leaving Silas there.