

Acts 17:1-15

Turning the World Upside Down

? If you could do one thing to change the world (in any way), what would you do?

Acts 17:1-15 (NIV)

When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah,” he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

5 But other 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 believers 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 believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

? In verse 2, it says that Paul’s custom was to go to the synagogue. Why do you think he would always start there whenever he went to a new city?

? It says that Paul had to reason and explain and prove why he believed what he believed. What are some of the big questions people wrestle with in our culture that we might have to reason or explain to other people?

? In verse two, it says that Paul reasons with the Jews using Scripture. Why do you think Paul chose Scripture as his way of reasoning with the Jews?

? Paul contextualized his reasoning to meet the Jews in their own culture and even in their own synagogue. How would you describe the culture of some of the people who you interact with on a regular basis who don't know the gospel? What are some of their main concerns in life?

? How might you explain your beliefs in a way that resonates with the people of the culture you just described? How is Jesus the ultimate answer to their concerns?

? The Jews accuse Paul and his companions of saying that there is another king besides Caesar. Why was this such a big deal to the city officials?

? In our culture, we don't have a political king like Caesar. What are some of the other people, things, or ideas that we give king-like authority in our life?

? What practical difference does it make in our life if we say that Jesus is our king instead of anyone or anything else?

? Why does Jesus deserve to be the ultimate king in our life over everyone and everything else?

? In verse 11, we are told the Bereans are noble because when they heard the word Messiah they searched the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was true. In what ways can we search the Scriptures to learn about Jesus's Kingship in our own lives?

? The ESV translates verse 6 to say "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also." The Gospel was turning the world upside down! How do we see the Gospel doing this in our own lives or in the lives of others when they first hear the good news?

? How does the gospel impact or “turn upside down” the ordinary, everyday aspects of your life, like the way you work at your job or the way you treat your friends?

For Discussion and Accountability

? What are other “kings” in your life? Who do you follow instead of Jesus?

? How can the members of your small group help you dethrone these false kings in your life and replace them with Jesus?