

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 19TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

UPSIDE DOWN (ACTS 17:1-9) "AS USUAL"

Paul and his missionary team continued their journey through cities and towns in the area.

- As they entered Thessalonica, Luke refers to their set pattern of finding the faithful Jewish population and sharing the truth of the Messiah with them.
- This time, Luke shares that they reasoned with the Jews for at least three weeks.

"EXPLAINING AND PROVING"

Luke says that Paul took the time to explain and prove that Jesus was the Messiah by helping them understand the Old Testament prophecy about the Messiah.

- It became clear that the only one who fulfills God's divine plan is Jesus.
- Jesus' birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection connected God's revealed plan for a Savior and the salvation of His people.

SOME WERE PERSUADED AND JOINED

As God used Paul and others to share the gospel, some Jews were persuaded to believe the truth, while a large number of God-fearing Greeks became Believers.

- Luke reveals that even some of the most influential people in the city ("leading women") joined the ranks of Christ followers.
- **A person's current position will not limit the power of the gospel to change their life.**

JEALOUS AND WICKED

Just like in past cities, the religious leaders stood up against Paul and made accusations against his presence and message.

- This time, Luke labels it as jealousy—maybe because people were not just listening to the gospel, they were responding with their lives.
- So, they incited the crowd and even aligned with the local "low-life" in an effort to get the troublemakers into the public court.

"JASON AND SOME OF THE BROTHERS"

After searching the area, the leaders decided to press some of the new Believers for information.

- Jason and a few others became targets for the rioters and were taken into custody.
- They weren't being detained for sharing the gospel; they were guilty of listening and allowing the gospel to be heard.

"TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN"

Paul was being accused of turning the world upside down by acting contrary to Roman laws and calling someone other than Caesar their king.

- **Following Christ means new priorities and plans for disciples. Those changes will transform homes, schools, businesses, and entire communities.**

UPSETTING THE CROWD AND OFFICIALS

Jason and his friends weren't guilty of a severe crime but were held accountable for their association with the real troublemakers, and it cost them money and possibly a promise to get Paul out of the city.

- **It was time for Paul to leave, but once again, he left behind new Believers who would grow the church in their community, one person at a time.**

THEOLOGY & PHILOSOPHY (ACTS 17:10-21)

"MORE NOBLE CHARACTER"

After leaving Thessalonica by cover of darkness, they arrived in Berea and found the synagogue and a different culture of acceptance.

- Their nobility was reflected in their willingness to listen and actually compare what was being said with the Scriptures.
- **We're not gullible when we listen to teaching well enough to verify what is said.**

"CONSEQUENTLY, MANY OF THEM BELIEVED"

Their eagerness was a result of hearing something that applied to their own lives.

- But they were wise to cross-examine what sounded almost too good to be true.
- **Contrary to cultural belief, Christians don't check their brains at the door. We study God's Word to better understand His plan for our lives and eternity.**

THE JEWS FROM THESSALONICA

Hearing that Paul was still teaching the truth, some of the Thessalonian Jews made the 45-mile trek to continue their opposition to his message by stirring up a crowd.

- **We are wise to search Scripture and verify what we are taught. We should also be wise enough to realize that opposition will always be ready to challenge what we believe.**

WAITING IN ATHENS

Once again, Paul was ushered out of town and continued his mission. But this time, it appears that he arrived in Athens alone.

- His lack of sidekicks didn't keep him from pursuing his pattern.
- As he walked toward the synagogue, his heart was broken as he saw that the city was full of idols.
- **Do we see the idols of our culture?**

REASONING IN THE COMMUNITY

After recognizing the unique challenges facing this community, Paul took every opportunity to carefully share the gospel.

- He even entered into debate with the Epicureans, (who pursued materialism and pleasure as atheists) and the Stoics (who pursued discipline and self-control as pantheists, believing that the world/universe is god).
- His dialogue was solid and drew even more attention to his message.

"SOME SAID..."

The philosophers decided Paul was either an ignorant show-off or offering a new god to add to their growing list of gods.

- Their response to his message was to learn more about this "new thing."
- They didn't agree with Paul, but they would listen for the sake of learning something new. His message also gave them an opportunity to share their philosophy with him.

IGNORANCE & TRUTH (ACTS 17:22-34)

THE MIDDLE OF THE AREOPAGUS

Paul was invited to present his doctrine at the hub of religious and educational oversight.

- It seems the room was filled with philosophers and citizens who were eager to learn something new they could add to their great "knowledge."
- It wasn't what they were expecting.

"YOUR WORSHIP"

Paul began by noting their religiosity.

- They had many gods to worship and even one that was labeled "unknown."
- He clarified that the god they really didn't know was the God of creation.
- If they had ever questioned their existence, Paul just set the record straight: God created everything, including them.

NOT LIMITED OR NEEDY

He challenged every building and temple in Greece by saying God doesn't reside in manmade structures.

- God doesn't have needs that can be met by any person because He is the one who gives life to all things.
- God created every person and even the place and time in which they would live.

WHY GOD CREATED EVERYTHING

In words that challenged their beliefs and understanding, Paul shared that God the Creator has designed a way for people to connect with Him.

- God isn't in an idol or far away in the universe; He is close to His creation.
- **Do we realize that God is close?**

OVERLOOKING IGNORANCE

Paul doesn't mince words and shares with his audience that God is ready to forgive their abuse of Scripture and creation.

- Ignorance is overcome with truth and proof. Proof is offered in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- **Ignorance is a condition, not an excuse. What do we do once we know the truth?**

RIDICULE, QUESTIONS, AND BELIEF

Some refused to believe in the resurrection because it didn't fit their narrative.

- Others chose to "keep the peace" and rejected the truth with passive ears.
- A few believed and joined Paul in his mission to share the gospel throughout the land.

OPPORTUNITY

- Christ followers share the gospel.
- **Some teach it from a pulpit.**
- **When we share the gospel, it isn't because it's all we have to say; it's because God has created an opportunity for us to share with a individual, small group, or crowd.**

ⁿ LOCATION

- Any place is appropriate to share.
- **Not every place is safe or practical.**
- **We are not called to just share the gospel; we are called to *effectively* share the gospel. When we demand the stage, we weaken the message. When we are invited, we are given an opportunity to effectively share with a listener. Are we answering the invites or waiting for a better stage?**

RESULTS

- We want people to be saved.
- **We rejoice when we see it—especially if we were some part of the process.**
- **Rejoicing is good, but it isn't the goal. If we measure our results, we can easily start keeping score. How is OUR obedience compared to OUR results? Salvation is in Christ, not our results! Sharing the truth and studying His Word is how we obey. When He gives the increase, we rejoice, and He gets the glory. What's next?**