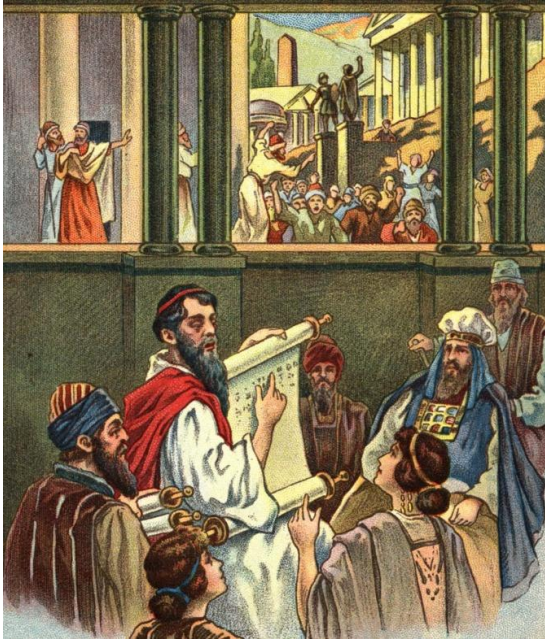


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 8



APOSTLES TURN THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

Scripture Text: Acts 17:1-15

Leaving Philippi by request of the city officials, Paul and Silas left the nucleus of a healthy church behind them. The next stop of Paul and companions was at Thessalonica. Preaching in Thessalonica gained a great multitude of converts. Unbelieving Jews raised an uproar and seized Jason. The brethren sent Paul and Silas to Berea by night, where they continued preaching. The Bereans searched the Scriptures. The Jews from Thessalonica came there also and raised opposition. The brethren sent Paul to Athens.

The Bible is God's means of giving us the Truth. It is the best means of spreading the Gospel. Jesus said, ". . . the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (**John 6:63**).

Nothing can make up for lack of the Bible in our teaching. It has authority, truth, and power.

MEMORY VERSE: *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

—*Romans 1:16*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Psalm 127** The vanity of work without God.
- Tue.—**Matthew 10:26-33** The value of life.
- Wed.—**Matthew 5:38-48** Neighbors and enemies.
- Thu.—**Psalm 119:161-168** Peace in keeping God's Law.
- Fri.—**Matthew 10:34-42** The reward of the righteous.

Devotional Reading: Matthew 10:16-25 Facing persecution.

A Good Workman

Acts 17:1-4 Paul and Silas **came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them.** Paul seemed most skillful at starting his preaching in a synagogue. The presence of one in Thessalonica, no doubt, had some influence on his stop there. This was their meeting place. He seems to have followed the line of Christ's reasoning on the Emmaus road when He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered . . . and to enter into his glory?"—His death and resurrection (**Luke 24:26-27**). Jesus **beginning at Moses and all the prophets . . . expounded . . . in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.** These Old Testament Scriptures of Christ's necessary death for sin and His resurrection Paul used to prove that Jesus is Christ, because He fulfilled the prophecies about Him. **Some** Jews believed, and a **great multitude** of Greeks or Gentiles.

Power to Turn the World Upside Down

Acts 17:5-9 Those Jews not taken hold of by belief were taken hold of by envy. They gathered **lewd fellows of the baser sort** —wicked, lawless, bad, low-down, dishonorable, and worthless. In this they revealed their

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own character. They **set all the city on an uproar** against the Apostles. The mob **assaulted** the house where Paul and Silas stayed. Not finding them, they seized their host, Jason and others and took them before the rulers. They said Paul and Silas had **turned the world upside down**. What a strong testimony to these great men's lives! They accused the saints of treason—setting up Jesus as king, in place of Caesar. Disturbed, the rulers released Jason and the others on bail—**security**.

The Thessalonians made the mistake so many make. They thought the Apostles meant the Kingdom of Jesus is an earthly one. Jesus' reign is spiritual and competes with no kingdom but Satan's, which it will destroy. See **John 18:36; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:10**.

How we see things depends upon our position. Being wrong, the mob saw the change in the world as wrong. The point of importance is that the Gospel will change the world wherever it touches it. The Gospel will not leave people as they are. The Apostles' preaching stirred either dedication or opposition. When Paul preached, he was usually driven out of town, but he left behind a changed people. The town was turned upside down. If we are to turn things around, we must preach and live the unadulterated Gospel of Christ without fear of the opposition of the world. We must dedicate ourselves wholly to God and move as He leads us. No other way will do.

Testing Paul's Message

Acts 17:10-12 The brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas. Paul and Silas do not seem to have been anxious. The church was anxious for them and sent them **by night**—secretly—**unto Berea**. In Berea Paul and Silas **went into the synagogue**. They just could not learn to avoid trouble by keeping still about Jesus. Results were different here than in Thessalonica. These had less prejudice and more honesty. These Bereans **received the word with all readiness of mind**—with an open mind, yet not a mind to believe just everything. They **searched the scriptures daily** to learn the truth or falsity of the Apostles' teaching. **Therefore**—because of their searching—**many . . . believed**. Reading of the Old Testament proved the teaching true and settled them more solidly in the faith than Paul's words alone could have done.

The Bereans wished neither to accept a lie nor to reject the Truth. There was one way to prove the matter. They read the Bible—the Old Testament; the New Testament was not yet written—to see if it said of Christ what Paul said. When they believed, they had the answer. If we base our belief in the Bible, we will not wonder and question. We can know the Truth if we so desire. The radio, books, and pulpits teach so many differing things. Study the Bible and try the teachings by it. Carry your Bible to church and try the sermon. Read it daily and prepare yourself. The majority of church people know little about the teachings of the Bible. A Bible-reading church is a strong church. A Bible-reading saint is unlikely to drift into false worship.

Followed to Berea

Acts 17:13-15 The peaceful condition was not allowed to continue. The unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica heard the news and came to Berea to destroy the Gospel growth there. They **stirred up the people** against Paul and Silas. Yet again, the brethren supplied the caution for Paul. To protect him, they took him to Athens. To throw off the pursuers, they pretended to start to the sea. Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea, but Paul sent word back to them to come to him quickly. There was urgent work of evangelizing to do.

One of the greatest mistakes Christians make is to present their personal opinions. The greatest contribution made by Reformation leaders was the position they took that Christian belief and conduct must be based wholly upon Scripture, and that nothing can be set forth as a directive for Christian conduct unless it be commanded or allowed by the Word of God. As we meet the contentions of skepticism, paganism, and of many sects and "isms", let us forbear to argue; instead, let us go back to the Scripture and measure what men say against what God has said.