

Acts 17:1-15

Turning the World Right-side Up

Scripture: Acts 17:1-15

Memory Verse: Acts 17:11 *“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”*

Lesson Focus: Continuing on Paul’s second missionary adventure we see the gospel disrupting the sinful “status quo” of the world and restoring lives from being upside-down to being right-side up. Our hope is that the kids will also desire to be **rightly** under the loving authority of King Jesus.

Activities and Crafts: Memory Verse Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Find the Treasure Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Spoon Craft

Starter Activity: Three Cup Challenge

Consider introducing the lesson by asking kids to see if they can solve the “Three Cup Challenge” (we will provide you with the cups). * To set up the cups, place **two right-side up** and **one upside-down** in the middle all in a row. The challenge is to turn all cups right-side up in no more than five moves, but turning over **exactly two** cups at each move. (It is actually a trick as solving it is logically impossible)

Invite a few kids up to try and solve it. Then have some fun and amaze the kids by “solving it” yourself, *but with a subtle twist*. When you reset the cups for yourself, you will **instead** have **two upside-down** and **one right-side up** in the middle. Try your best to reset it so that they don’t notice the switch. “Solve it” after three tries and amaze them! Consider inviting a few kids back up afterwards to try it again but have the impossible setup again. I recommend practicing it beforehand. See a video demonstration [here](#).

Afterwards transition into the lesson by mentioning how, in the book of Acts, we have seen God turn the world upside-down with the good news of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection. Last week we saw the city of Philippi get turned upside-down as Paul and Silas were thrown into prison for speaking the truth. Yet, we saw the jailer and his whole household get saved, their lives being made “rightside up”. *

As we continue to follow Paul on his missionary adventure today, God will continue to shake things up, and Paul’s party will even be branded as those who are “*turning the world upside-down*”. (**Acts 17:6b**) The truth, however, is that the world **already is** turned upside-down because of sin! And God desires to turn people’s lives “rightside-up” with the good news of the gospel. Let’s see what happens next!

Bible Study:

Acts 17:1: Paul and Silas (with Timothy) go west from Philippi and arrive at Thessalonica, another city that is in modern day Greece. Later on, Paul will write two letters to the believers in this city which become two books of the Bible (*1 and 2 Thessalonians*)! * **Teachers:** Consider pointing out where they are on the map in your rooms. *

Acts 17:2: As we have seen before, Paul begins by engaging with the Jewish communities in the cities and “reasons” with them from the Scriptures.

Q: What does it mean to “reason” with someone? A: Make your case or persuade someone to agree with your point of view. I bet most of you “reason” with your parents whenever you want something from them. * (**Teachers:** Consider bringing in treats for the kids and ask them to “reason” with you over why you should give them the treats!) *

Acts 17:3: Paul is making his case by pointing out how Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection fulfilled so many prophecies from the Scriptures proving that He was indeed the Messiah, or Rescuer, that they all had been waiting for! * Therefore, the only thing left for them to do is to believe and trust in Him!

Acts 17:4: And look what happened!

Q: What was the result? A: Many were persuaded and became followers of Jesus! But as we have seen many times in this book, as the gospel grows, so does the opposition!

Acts 17:5: WHOA! Notice how ferocious the opposition is this time! They formed a mob, plunged the city into chaos, and even stormed the house of one of the new believers (Jason) where Paul and Silas must have been staying.

Acts 17:6a: And when they didn’t find Paul and Silas they disgracefully dragged Jason and others out to answer to the city rulers!

Acts 17:6b: Q: How did they describe these Christians? Those who are *turning the world upside-down*. But wait a minute...who are the one’s stirring up trouble and bursting into other people’s homes? Not the Christians! You see, **the world already is upside-down!**

“Upside-down” is exactly how the Bible describes the world. If you go back to the beginning, you will read that God created all things GOOD. But Adam and Eve sinned and turned what God made GOOD upside-down, plunging the world into sin and evil. And to this day, we still live in the same broken, upside-down world. But God is still in the business of taking our lives and making us “rightside-up” in this upside-down world!

Acts 17:7: Notice the primary complaint against Jason and these other believers.

Q: What were they being accused of? A: Calling Jesus their King! If He is your King that means He is in charge! This upside-down world tells us that WE are in charge! *

Acts 17:8-9: While they let Jason and these believers go, it appears that they had to pay a fine of some sort to avoid further punishment. How upside-down this all is!

Teachers: Before moving on, consider acting this scene out with the kids. * See the next page of the lesson for some lines and ideas. * Point out how dedicated Jason and these other new believers must have been about following Jesus as they could have easily just denied Jesus as their King to avoid all of this trouble (but they didn't)!

Acts 17:10: Paul and Silas appear to be sent away secretly and they go about 40 miles West to a nearby city named Berea. After experiencing so much turmoil in Thessalonica, you'd think they might be discouraged to continue on their mission. Yet they go straight for the synagogue again to reason with this Berean Jewish community from the Scriptures!

Acts 17:11: Let's take a few minutes to understand this verse as this is also our memory verse for the lesson. These people are praised for being more "fair-minded" or welcoming than those in Thessalonica.

Q: Why? I see two reasons why they were praised so. Let's read this verse again in case you didn't catch it.

A1: They received the word with **readiness**. They were good listeners and teachable! *

A2: They **searched** * the Scriptures for themselves to confirm whether the gospel message was true. This means that they were good students of the Scriptures who were willing to investigate this radical message about Jesus as King and Messiah. (**Teachers:** We will leave a magnifying glass in your room. * Consider using it to point out how these Bereans were good "detectives", searching the Scriptures)

In the same way, we want to encourage you to be good students of the Scriptures. * Get into the habit of "daily" reading your Bibles!

Acts 17:12: And many of these folks discovered that Paul was right. Jesus IS the One the Scriptures pointed to! And their lives became "rightside-up" as they made Jesus their King and Savior! *

Acts 17:13: Gimme a break! The "rabble-rousers" from Thessalonica just can't let it go and stir up more trouble in Berea! Yet, we know who is behind these bad guys: the devil! He will do whatever it takes to keep people "upside-down" in their sin and suffering. *

Acts 17:14-15: The opposition became so fierce that Paul was forced to flee again. This time, however, Paul moves on alone as Silas and Timothy remain. We aren't sure whether this was intentional or if they were separated due to the chaos. Paul goes South about 300 miles to Athens, which was and is still the most prominent city of Greece today!

Key Point: We've seen the gospel shake things up in two different cities today. Many people responded and their lives were made rightside-up forever! Is your life upside-down? Talk to your leader! Maybe you need to make Jesus your King today. *

Do you want to stay right-side up in your Christian life? Be a good student of the Scriptures! Like those Bereans, search the Scriptures daily and let Jesus reorder your life according to His ways! *

Mob Attack in Thessalonica

*Acts 17:5-9: Choose a few kids to be Paul, Silas, and Tim *. Have a leader be Jason and another leader be the angry rabble-rouser. Choose kids to be the mob to drag off Jason! Finally, pick one more kid to be the city ruler and give him/her a script.*

*The act should begin by having Paul, Silas, and Tim secretly lead a Bible study with Jason. The angry rabble-rouser will pound on the “door” demanding entrance. **

Rabble-rouser: Let me in! Where are those evil Christians?

Jason quickly and quietly sends Paul, Silas, and Tim out the back before answering the door.

Jason: Um, calm down buddy. We are not evil. We’re not the one’s barging into people’s houses. We love people and we love Jesus Christ.

Rabble-rouser: Where are Paul, Silas, and Tim? They must be arrested!

Jason: Who, who, and who? I’m afraid you have the wrong house, pal.

Rabble-rouser: Very well! Then we will take YOU! SEIZE HIM!

The mob then drags Jason off to the city ruler. Make it funny!

Rabble-rouser (to City Ruler): Jason is hiding these people who have turned the world upside down. These Christians say that Jesus is King.

City Ruler (to Jason): Is this true?

Jason: Yes, but we have done nothing wrong! We want you also to believe in King Jesus!

Have the rabble-rouser and mob of kids do the SHAME-SHAME gesture rubbing their fingers together.

City Ruler: SILENCE! We will let you go, but do not talk about this Jesus dude anymore.

FIND THE TREASURE



Read Acts 17:6
In what ways does Jesus
turn things “upside-
down”?

PARENT CHALLENGE
Why did sharing the good news of the
gospel create so much conflict?

Read Acts 17:11
What two things were the
Bereans praised for?

