

An open Bible lies on a dark wooden surface. A pair of glasses with thin frames rests on the left page, which is the Gospel According to Luke. A red ribbon bookmark is placed in the center of the open book. A silver pen lies on the bottom edge of the Bible. The background is dark and out of focus.

Preaching Right Side Up Truth to an Upside-Down World

Our John 17:14-18 Job Description!

John 17:14-18

14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

15 I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

18 As you sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

The goal of this message is to cite seven examples from Acts where the Church strove to fulfill John 17:18 by preaching Right-Side-Up Biblical Truth --- and was accused by the world of “Turning the World Upside-Down” (or equivalent in different words).

Seven Examples in Acts When Enemies Viewed Church Preaching “Right-Side-Up” Biblical Truth as “Turning the World Upside Down” (or Equivalent)

	Passage in Acts
1	Acts 17:6–7
2	Acts 5:28
3	Acts 14:2, 5
4	Acts 16:20–21
5	Acts 19:26–27
6	Acts 21:28
7	Acts 24:5

Example in Acts When Enemies Viewed Church Preaching “Right-Side-Up” Biblical Truth as “Turning the World Upside Down” (or Equivalent)

	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
1	Acts 17:6-7	“Turned the world upside down”	➤ Thessalonica: Jewish leaders became envious of Church’s new converts and felt their synagogue and community power-base threatened. ➤ Contrary to Roman decrees, Church taught that Christ is another King superior to Caesar.

The Acts 17:6 Accusation

A typical reaction by the world to the early Church, as it began to fulfill the commission contained in Christ's John 17:18 prayer **"As you sent Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world."** can be summarized by the famous accusation hurled at the Church in Acts 17:6 --- when enemies described them as **"These who have turned the world upside down!"** What was meant (in the original Greek) by this accusation?

Acts 17:1-6 (Paul and Silas in Thessalonica)

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **2** And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” **4** And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. **5** But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. **6** And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, **“These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,**



30 - Acts 17:1-10 | Acts of the Apostles

United Church of God

Lecture 30

Acts 17: 1-10



presented by **Darris McNeely**

Cincinnati East, Ohio
March 1st, 2023



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0:00



48:43

**The [Acts 17:6 accusation] probably took place in the below
Thessalonica “agora” (open-air plaza city hall seat of judgment).**



Wikipedia,

This Phrase “turned the world upside down” is very important!

Number 1: This speaks to the power of the Gospel to turn the world upside down. Did it turn the whole world upside down in the first century? No. As we know from end-time prophecy (such as in book of Revelation), **the ultimate fulfillment of this will not happen until Christ returns** --- when He will truly turn the world upside-down [actually, right-side-up]. The kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever with the saints. That's what the message of the Kingdom of God entails.

Number 2: This phrase tells us that when Paul powerfully preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God it figuratively shook people up. He preached to them from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. And by what the mob said in their accusation, we find that the Church powerfully preached a message that figuratively turned people's worlds upside down. It was like when those who heard Peter's Pentecost sermon were "pricked in their heart" or "cut to the heart" per Acts 2:37 -- and had their lives personally turned upside-down (or more accurately "turned right-side-up").

From: Troy Phelps
To: Lud Kiramidjian
Subject: Acts 17:6

The verb behind "turned the world upside down" in Acts 17:6 is ἀναστατόω (anastatoō), and it is actually quite rare in the New Testament.

The specific form in Acts 17:6 is: ἀναστατώσαντες (*anastatōsantes*) meaning “having upset,” “having thrown into turmoil,” “having caused disturbance.” The accusation is that Paul and his companions are causing widespread social and political upheaval.

In Acts 21:38, The Roman commander asks Paul: "Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" (NKJV). Here again ὁ ἀναστατώσας is used to describe an actual revolutionary agitator who was believed to have incited an uprising.

This usage is important because it shows the word often carried a political or insurrectionary flavor.

In Galatians 5:12 Paul writes regarding Judaziers, "I could wish that those who trouble you (οἱ ἀναστατοῦντες ὑμᾶς) would even cut themselves off!" These were people who were disturbing/upsetting them through false doctrine (so it shows it can have meanings that are not political).

After looking at this, it's important to understand that the Greek seems to mean "to disturb, throw into confusion, upset the established order, etc..."

[It is] appropriate to talk about how we as Christians should live in a way that shines in this dark world, [.....] not as aggressive revolutionaries, but instead as examples of transformed lives leading to transformed works that bring about glory to God. In doing so, we do shine as examples of lives turned right side up...the right way...[preaching] righteousness.

Example in Acts When Enemies Viewed Church Preaching “Right-Side-Up” Biblical Truth as “Turning the World Upside Down” (or Equivalent)

	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
2	Acts 5:28	“Filled Jerusalem with your doctrine”	➤ Jerusalem: Church preached true gospel, healed many and grew in numbers and influence. ➤ Religious leaders feared that the Church was diminishing their authority, influence and wealth --- and “accused” the Church of teaching false doctrine --- even though it was actually teaching true and sound doctrine (Isaiah 5:20).

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	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
3	Acts 14:2, 5	Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against Church	➤ Iconium: Great multitudes of Jews and Greeks believed resulting in growth of Church. ➤ To counter Church’s success, unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles so that both violently attacked the Church.

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	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
4	Acts 16:20–21	“Exceedingly trouble our city” teaching customs which are not lawful for Romans	➤ Philippi: Healing of fortune teller slave girl upset her owners who lost revenue. ➤ Roman magistrates feared social disruption.

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	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
5	Acts 19:26–27	“Turned away many people” from practicing magic and from Diana idols and temple worship	➤ Church instigated rejection of the Ephesian obsession with magic (resulting in massive public book burnings). ➤ At Ephesus, the idol makers were upset because the Church was: (1) Destroying their business; (2) Undermining the city’s world-renown religious identity and worship system; and (3) Threatening the prestige of their goddess Diana (Artemis).

The Way

① What Is the Christian Message?

BT



28:21

Today you will hear a message that you've actually never heard before, a message that can change your life as you discover and follow what the earliest Christians called “The Way”.

- The first Christians had a definite message that they shared with others, and it was a message that was so different from the religious beliefs of the society around them that they were accused of turning the world upside down. How did they [have such impact]?**
- We're going to look at a biblical story of how in one ancient city the Christian message caused people to burn books about practicing magic and almost started a riot.**
- If you identify as a Christian, as we look at this fascinating story, you need to seriously ask yourself a question. Does this same message burn in my heart and guide my life? Has God turned my life right side up?**

We're going to go to **Acts 19:18-20. It says, “And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled 50,000 pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.”**

- The Way changed their lives. The pagans who [now] believed enthusiastically burned their books containing incantations to the spirits and magic spells and rituals.**
- What they burned was worth 50,000 pieces of silver --- which was a huge fortune.**

Continuing the story in Acts about Ephesus and the Church's impact on its people. "Ephesus was home to one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and grew wealthy by serving pilgrims from Europe and Asia Minor. An entire industry existed to make silver statues of Diana. So how did Ephesian society respond to the message of the new Christian Way? It was dramatic.

Acts 19:23-25 "And about that time there arose a great commotion about the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen. He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade.

- **The Church's message was significantly impacting the economy.**

Acts 19:26 “Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.”

Acts 19:27 “So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia [Minor] and the world worship.”

Acts 19:28-29 “Now when they heard this, they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord,

Acts 19:34 “..... all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

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	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
6	Acts 21:27-28	 the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, “Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place. Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.	➤ Jerusalem: The Jewish religious leaders never forgot Paul’s abandonment of Judaism and were upset by his preaching that Christ was the Messiah. Besides feeling threatened by Paul, they were jealous of his success --- resorting to trumped-up charges against him, and stoking fears that he was rejecting Jewish national identity.

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	Passage	Enemy Accusation	Why World Became Upset
7	Acts 24:1-9	After arrest, Paul brought before Felix at Caesarea: Act 24:2 And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: Act 24:5 “we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. Acts 24:6 He even tried to profane the temple, Act 24:9 The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so.	➤ Seen as a destabilizing threat to the Jewish people and their identity.

Conclusion

John 17:18 is our (individual and collective) job description.

As Jesus was sent to be the light of the world, so He has sent us to shine the “right side up” biblical light to a spiritually dark and upside-down world. That is the goal of UCG’s Beyond Today media efforts.

As we saw in this our brief glimpse into seven early Church history examples in Acts, our efforts will result in: (1) Additional firstfruits being spiritually turned right side up; and (2) The rest of the world mistakenly viewing us as “turning the world upside down” --- until their minds are eventually turned right side up.

What a blessing to be called during this age to be part of the Work of God that is preaching right-side-up biblical truth to an upside-down world, proclaiming the TRUE GOSPEL, and thus preparing the way for Jesus Christ’s return when He will finally turn this world right side up!