

## **The Message that turns the World upside down Acts 17:1-9**

As Acts 17 begins, Paul continues to proclaim the gospel in the province of Macedonia. When he first went into Macedonia and preached in Philippi, he was entering new frontiers for the gospel. Though he was beaten and imprisoned there, along with Silas, by God's enabling he was not deterred from continuing to proclaim his message in the capital city of Macedonia, the city of Thessalonica.

Arriving in this city of about 200,000, he went into the synagogue to show those there the scriptural foundations for the gospel. He reasoned with them, explaining and proving from the Scriptures read and discussed in the synagogue, that the Christ must suffer and rise from the dead. He proved to many that it was necessary that the Christ of Scripture suffer and be raised from the dead. Among the texts he likely pointed to would have been Isa. 52:13-53:12, as well as Psalm 2:1-2,7; 16:10; 110:1; 118:22. We can conclude this because these were used in the New Testament to make this point by the apostles who had heard Jesus explain the Old Testament to make this very point. (Luke 24:25-27,44-46)

After showing this, he also explained that the Jesus of history was the Christ of Scripture. These things foretold in their scriptures happened with regard to Jesus. The Christian gospel was not a departure from but a fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures. He made a compelling case that convinced many to join Paul and Silas. This led the Jews (who didn't accept his arguments) to be jealous and to seize them. They attacked Jason's house, expecting to find Paul and Silas there but did not find them there. So they dragged Jason and some of other brothers before the city authorities. They shouted that those who had turned the world upside down had come to their city and that Jason had received them. They also explained how they had turned the world upside down by saying that these Christians all acted against the decrees of Caesar by saying there is another king, Jesus. This was a politically subversive claim. The cultural implications of this gospel claim were that those who called Jesus the king, would not give their unconditional loyalty to human authorities. They would render to Caesar the things that were Caesar's, but not render to Caesar the things that were God's. This could create turmoil in Thessalonica and this might have had consequences for this capital city that was a free city.

There are at least two things to realize from what happened in Thessalonica. First, those who believe the gospel message, not only see Jesus as Savior but also as King. Becoming a Christian is not only asking Jesus to be your savior but also following him as Lord and King. Jesus died and rose not only to our rescuer but also our ruler. Jesus is not a co-Pilate or a consultant, He is King. Also, living under the authority of King Jesus means we don't always obey, support or defend any political leader or party. We have one King. This will manifest itself when we can support a party or a president, but also see and speak about their faults and failures. Gospel-centered believers don't glorify any political authority or party in a way that even approximates the way we should glorify Christ alone.

What does it look like to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ our Savior and King? It means remembering and believing that "one name is higher, one name is stronger, than any grave than any throne, Christ exalted over all." It means living so it is obvious that Jesus is exalted over all because he is our Savior, he conquered the grave for us, and he is our King, far greater in our lives than anyone on any throne. It means living in a way that shows he is exalted far above all.