



Summary

What does it look like when the ancient scriptures of the Old Testament suddenly come alive and point unmistakably to Jesus as the promised Messiah? In Acts 17, we walk alongside Paul as he enters the synagogue at Thessalonica and does something remarkable: he opens the very scriptures his audience has known their whole lives and shows them what had been hidden in plain sight for centuries. From the suffering servant passage in Isaiah 52 and 53, written 700 years before Christ, to the haunting imagery of Psalm 22, composed 1,000 years before crucifixion even existed as a form of execution, the Old Testament cries out with prophetic precision about who Jesus is and what he came to do. We are reminded that our faith is not blind. It is reasonable, evidence-based, and deeply rooted in fulfilled prophecy. There are over 300 specific Old Testament prophecies that Jesus alone has fulfilled, and that is not a coincidence. It is a divine fingerprint. This message challenges us to see the Bible not as two disconnected books but as one unified story, where the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. Whether we are lifelong believers or still exploring what we believe, the invitation is the same: open the book with fresh eyes and let the evidence speak.





Points

- **Title:** Turning the World Right Side Up: The Reasonableness of Faith and the Promise of His Return
- **Sermon Summary:** Drawing from Acts 17, this sermon follows Paul, Silas, and Timothy as they minister in Thessalonica, demonstrating how Paul reasoned with both Jews and Gentile God-fearers from the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Jesus is the long-promised Messiah. The sermon emphasizes that Christian faith is not blind but is grounded in fulfilled prophecy, typology, and the internal consistency of Scripture from the Old Testament to the New. The second half transitions into a communion meditation, unpacking the dual significance of the Lord's Table as both a memorial of Christ's atoning work and a forward-looking declaration of his imminent return for his bride, framed through the imagery of the Galilean betrothal custom. The sermon closes with a call to salvation and a reminder that the new covenant means God forgives and forgets sin, so believers are invited to remember Christ rather than their failures when approaching the table.

Key Points:

- - Paul's missionary strategy was to target large population centers first, trusting the gospel would spread outward to surrounding villages
- - Paul reasoned with people from the Scriptures, demonstrating that all of Christian faith can be explained and defended from God's Word
- - The Old Testament contains over 300 prophecies that point directly to Jesus, all of which he uniquely fulfilled
- - The primary obstacle Paul had to overcome with Jewish audiences was the concept of a suffering, dying, and rising Messiah, as Jewish tradition focused almost exclusively on Messiah as a conquering king
- - Isaiah 52-53 and Psalm 22 are among the most powerful Old Testament passages Paul would have used to demonstrate that Messiah's suffering and death were prophesied centuries in advance
- - Psalm 16:10 and Daniel's timeline prophecies further confirm the resurrection and the identity of Jesus as Messiah
- - The gospel message will always divide a religious crowd into two groups: those who are incredulous that these truths were never taught to them, and those who are incensed and will protect their religious indoctrination at all costs
- - The accusation that Paul and his companions had "turned the world upside down" reflected how widely and rapidly the gospel had already spread throughout the known world
- - At the communion table, believers are called to remember Christ and his finished work, not their sin, because under the new covenant God forgives and forgets iniquity
- - The Galilean betrothal custom provides a powerful biblical framework for understanding communion as a declaration of Christ's return for his bride, the church
- - Communion is not a religious rite to be practiced mechanically but a symbol of personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- - Paul's warning in 1 Corinthians 11 about taking communion in an unworthy manner is a serious call to examine one's heart and relationship with Christ before approaching the table\



Scripture Reference:

- - Acts 17:1-9 (primary passage)
- - Isaiah 52:13 through Isaiah 53 (the suffering servant prophecy)
- - Psalm 22 (a prophetic portrait of the crucifixion)
- - Psalm 16:10 (prophecy of the resurrection)
- - 2 Timothy 3:16 (the inspiration and profitability of Scripture)
- - Jeremiah 31:34 (the new covenant and the forgiveness of sin)
- - 1 Corinthians 11:23-27 (the institution and proper observance of communion)
- - Luke 22:15-20 (Jesus at the Last Supper and the Galilean betrothal declaration)
- - Matthew 24 (no one knows the day or hour of Christ's return)
- - Psalm 40 and Hebrews (in the volume of the book it is written of me)
- - Exodus 12 (the Passover lamb as typology of Christ's sacrifice)

Stories:

- - The account of Paul, Silas, and Timothy arriving in Thessalonica after traveling 100 miles from Philippi and reasoning with Jews and God-fearing Greeks in the synagogue over three consecutive Sabbaths, resulting in many believing and others stirring up a mob against Jason who had hosted them
- - The narrative of the two disciples on the Emmaus Road, to whom the risen Jesus opened the Old Testament Scriptures to show how they pointed to him
- - The account of Jesus meeting with his disciples in the upper room after the resurrection and leading them through a study of the Old Testament to demonstrate its fulfillment in him
- - The Galilean betrothal and wedding custom, in which a son would pay the bride price, share a cup with his betrothed, declare he would not drink again until the day was fulfilled in his father's house, depart to build a bridal chamber, and return only when the father gave the word, used as a framework for understanding the Last Supper and the promise of Christ's return for the church
- - The Passover account from Exodus 12, presented as a typological picture of Christ's sacrifice, with the application of the blood to the doorposts serving as a picture of personal faith in the atoning work of Jesus

Scripture Reference:

- - Acts 16:11-40, the primary passage covering Paul's arrival in Philippi, Lydia's conversion, the exorcism of the slave girl, imprisonment, the earthquake, and the jailer's salvation
- - 1 John 4:4, affirming that the Holy Spirit within believers is greater than the demonic power at work in the world
- - 1 John 4:17-19, on perfect love casting out fear and the truth that believers love God because he first loved them
- - Hebrews 13:15, calling believers to continually offer the sacrifice of praise through Christ
- - Psalm 34:1, David's declaration to bless the Lord at all times regardless of circumstances
- - Habakkuk 3:17-18, the prophet's declaration of joy in God despite total material loss
- - James 1:2-3, on counting trials as joy because the testing of faith produces endurance



- - John 16:8-11, Jesus describing the Holy Spirit's work of convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment

Stories:

- - The vision of the Macedonian man pleading with Paul to come to Europe, which redirected the entire missionary journey westward and whose identity remains unresolved, with the jailer or the demon-possessed girl offered as possible candidates
- - Lydia, a wealthy seller of purple dye from Thyatira, whose heart God opened by the riverside prayer meeting outside Philippi, resulting in her household's baptism and her generous hospitality to Paul's team
- - The demon-possessed slave girl who followed Paul for many days crying out accurate declarations about his ministry, until Paul commanded the spirit to leave her in the name of Jesus Christ, immediately ending her masters' profitable fortune-telling enterprise
- - The arrest, public beating, and imprisonment of Paul and Silas on false charges brought by the slave girl's masters, who were motivated by financial loss rather than genuine legal grievance
- - Paul and Silas praying and singing hymns at midnight in the innermost dungeon while fastened in stocks, with the other prisoners listening, followed by a divine earthquake that opened all the prison doors and loosed every chain
- - The jailer drawing his sword to kill himself upon seeing the open prison doors, being stopped by Paul's shout that all prisoners remained, and then falling trembling before Paul and Silas to ask how to be saved
- - The jailer washing Paul and Silas's wounds, his entire household being baptized that same night, and the household rejoicing together over their newfound faith
- - The historical and mythological background of the Oracle of Delphi, the giant python slain by Apollo, and the high priestess Pythia, used to explain the nature of the demonic spirit that possessed the slave girl
- - The fasces, the bundle of rods carried by Roman lictors, explained as the origin of the word fascism and illustrated by its appearance on the Mercury dime and on the Lincoln Memorial



Scripture

Acts

- Acts 16:40
- Acts 17:1-9
- Acts 20:5

Psalms

- Psalm 16:10
- Psalm 22:1-18
- Psalm 40 (alluded to in reference to "in the volume of the book, it is written of me")

Isaiah

- Isaiah 52:13-15
- Isaiah 53:1-12

Jeremiah

- Jeremiah 31:34

Matthew

- Matthew 24 (alluded to regarding the day and hour no one knows)
- Matthew 24:36

Luke

- Luke 22:15-20

Hebrews

- Hebrews 8 (noted as repeating Jeremiah 31 verbatim)

1 Corinthians

- 1 Corinthians 11:23-27



2 Timothy

- 2 Timothy 3:16

Additional references alluded to without specific citation:

- Exodus 12 (the Passover lamb typology)
- Daniel (prophecies with specific dating)
- Revelation (referred to as "the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ")
- The Emmaus Road account - Luke 24:13-27
- The upper room Bible study - Luke 24:36-45





Quotes

The only place where women are on equal footing with men, you can check this out, the only place where women in the whole world, the only place where women are on equal footing with men are the places where the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has traveled, been accepted, and put into daily belief.

The Old Testament is leading to the New Testament, and the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.

It's a greater statement of faith to say that nothing created everything than the faith that I have that God created everything. And I've got evidence for God. They have no evidence for anything.

Contrary to the opinion of those indoctrinated by their religion, the table set before us does not turn the world upside down. Instead, in fact, it turns your world right side up.

Since God forgives and forgets our sin, we should also remember Jesus instead of our sin.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, what are you doing? You're proclaiming the Lord's death and then that last little phrase there, which speaks of the rapture of the church, until he comes.

This is not a form to be practiced as a religious rite. It is representative, again it's symbolic, of a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and everything that it means to you that he's coming again.

We don't need to think about our sin any longer. We need to think about him and what he's done for us.

The gospel message of Jesus Christ will always divide a religious crowd. There will be in the first case the incredulous, and their incredulity is, I can't believe no religious leader has ever reasoned with me about these things before.

Only Jesus has fulfilled these prophecies. And due to the time and the dating and everything that's expressed in these prophecies, especially from the book of Daniel and other places like that, there's no other person that could fulfill these prophecies.





Discussion Questions

Paul reasoned with people from the Scriptures rather than relying on personal opinion or experience -- in what ways does grounding your faith in Scripture rather than personal feelings change how you engage with those who challenge your beliefs?

The sermon draws a distinction between those who respond to the gospel with incredulity ('Why was I never taught this?') and those who respond with indoctrination-driven anger -- which response do you think is more common in your own community, and what does that reveal about the state of religious openness today?

Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 contain remarkably detailed descriptions of a suffering Messiah written centuries before the crucifixion -- how does the existence of fulfilled prophecy shape the way you think about the reliability and authority of Scripture?

The sermon suggests that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed -- how does this understanding change the way you read and study the Old Testament in your personal devotional life?

Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper to remember him rather than their sin when taking communion -- how does shifting your focus from guilt and personal failure to the person and work of Christ change your experience of the communion table?

The Galilean betrothal custom that Jesus referenced when he said he would not drink of the cup again until the kingdom of God was fulfilled suggests communion is not only a backward-looking memorial but also a forward-looking declaration of his return -- how does this dual perspective affect the sense of urgency or hope you bring to worship?

Paul's declaration that 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness' implies that no area of life is beyond the reach of Scripture's guidance -- are there areas of your own life where you have been reluctant to let Scripture speak, and why?

The sermon points out that the only places in the world where women have historically been treated as equals to men are places where the gospel has taken root and been lived out -- what does this say about the relationship between the gospel and human dignity, and how should that motivate believers in their engagement with culture?

Jason was put on trial before the rulers of a major city essentially on the very day he became a believer, simply because of his association with Paul and Silas -- in what ways does your own faith in Christ expose you to social, relational, or professional consequences, and how do you navigate that tension?

The sermon describes both atheism and religious indoctrination as systems that resist evidence and demand a kind of faith -- how do you personally distinguish between genuine open-minded inquiry into truth and the kind of closed-minded certainty that refuses to engage with challenging ideas?





Small Group Guide

Based on Acts 17:1-9 and Communion

Overview

This week's sermon followed Paul, Silas, and Timothy as they traveled from Philippi to Thessalonica, where Paul reasoned with Jews and God-fearing Greeks from their own Scriptures to demonstrate that Jesus is the promised Messiah. The sermon also explored the meaning of communion, connecting it to remembrance of Christ, the New Covenant, and the promise of his return.

Key Takeaways

- *Paul's method of ministry was to reason from Scripture, not to offer personal opinion or emotional appeals. All of Scripture points to Jesus, and faith in Christ is reasonable and defensible from God's word.*
 - *The Old Testament is filled with prophecy that Jesus fulfilled precisely, including Isaiah 52-53, Psalm 22, and Psalm 16:10. There are over 300 such prophecies, and only Jesus has fulfilled them.*
 - *The gospel message will always divide a religious crowd. Some will respond with incredulity, wondering why they were never taught these things. Others will respond with indignation, defending their religious indoctrination at all costs.*
 - *Communion is not primarily about remembering our sin. Jesus specifically instructed his followers to remember him at the table, not their failures.*
 - *Communion also points forward. Jesus' words in Luke 22:16 echo the language of a Galilean betrothal ceremony, signaling that he is coming again for his bride. Every time believers take communion, they proclaim his death until he comes.*
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Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. *Think about a time when something from Scripture suddenly made sense to you in a new way. What was that experience like, and what brought about that clarity?*

Digging Into the Text



2. *Paul's pattern was to go to large population centers first, trusting the gospel would spread outward from there. What does this tell us about strategic thinking in ministry? How might that principle apply to how we share our faith today?*
3. *Paul reasoned with people from Scripture rather than sharing his personal experience on the Damascus Road. Why do you think he chose that approach with Jewish audiences? What does that say about the role of Scripture in conversations about faith?*
4. *The sermon pointed to Isaiah 52-53, Psalm 22, and Psalm 16:10 as passages Paul likely used to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah. Had you previously connected those Old Testament passages to Jesus? What stands out to you most about those prophecies?*
5. *The sermon described two reactions to the gospel: incredulity and indignation. Which reaction do you think is more common today, and why? Have you personally experienced either reaction when sharing your faith?*
6. *Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. How does that conviction shape the way you approach Bible study personally and as a group?*
7. *The sermon made the point that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. What are some examples from your own Bible reading where you have seen that connection?*

Reflecting on Communion

8. *The sermon emphasized that Jesus instructed us to remember him at the table, not our sin. How does that reframe the way you have typically approached communion? Does it change anything for you?*
9. *Jesus' words in Luke 22:16 connect the Lord's Supper to the promise of his return. How often do you think about the return of Christ when you take communion? How might keeping that in mind change the experience?*
10. *Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 11:27 against taking communion in an unworthy manner. In light of everything discussed in this session, what does it mean to approach the table worthily?*

Practical Applications

This Week, Consider the Following

- *Read Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 and Psalm 22 on your own. As you read, make a list of the specific details that were fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Bring your list to share with the group next week.*



- *If you have a Jewish friend, neighbor, or coworker, pray this week for an opportunity to have a natural conversation about faith. Ask God to give you the right words and an open door.*
 - *Before your next communion service, take a few minutes beforehand to redirect your focus from your failures to Jesus himself, his sacrifice, and his promised return. Write down one thing about Jesus you want to remember when you take the bread and the cup.*
 - *Reflect honestly on whether your faith is based on Scripture or on religious tradition and habit. Ask yourself: if someone asked me why I believe Jesus is the Messiah, could I show them from the word? If not, what is one step you could take this week to build that foundation?*
 - *Memorize 2 Timothy 3:16-17 if you have not already. Consider how those verses apply to the way you approach the Bible in your daily life.*
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Closing Prayer Focus

Close your time together by praying for the following:

- *Those in your lives who are religiously indoctrinated but have not yet placed their faith in Jesus as Messiah and Savior*
 - *Boldness to reason from Scripture with those who have questions about faith*
 - *A deeper appreciation for what Christ accomplished on the cross and a renewed anticipation of his return*
 - *Anyone in the group who may still be wrestling with what it means to be born again*
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For Further Study

- *Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 -- The suffering servant prophecy*
- *Psalms 22 -- A portrait of the crucifixion written a thousand years before it occurred*
- *Psalms 16:10 -- The resurrection foretold*
- *Jeremiah 31:31-34 -- The New Covenant described*
- *Luke 22:14-20 -- The institution of the Lord's Supper*
- *1 Corinthians 11:23-29 -- Paul's instruction on communion*
- *Matthew 24:36 -- No one knows the day or the hour*
- *2 Timothy 3:16-17 -- All Scripture is God-breathed*



Daily Devotional

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Based on Acts 17 and Supporting Scriptures

Day 1: The Word That Reasons With Us

Reading: Acts 17:1-4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Devotional: Paul did not ask the people of Thessalonica to accept blind faith. He opened the Scriptures and reasoned with them. God's Word is not fragile under examination -- it is strengthened by it. Every doctrine, every promise, every warning in Scripture can withstand honest inquiry because it originates from God himself. If you have questions about your faith, bring them to the Word. If doubt has crept in, open the Book. God is a great communicator who says what he means and means what he says. His Word is profitable not just for scholars but for every believing heart willing to receive it.

Reflection Question: Are there questions about your faith you have been afraid to bring to Scripture? What would it look like to reason through them honestly before God this week?

Practical Application: Identify one question or doubt you carry about your faith. Spend time this week searching the Scriptures for what God actually says about it, rather than relying solely on what others have told you.

Day 2: The Suffering Servant Revealed

Reading: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22:1-18

Devotional: Seven hundred years before the cross, Isaiah described a servant who would be wounded for the transgressions of others, led silently to slaughter, and buried among the wicked. One thousand years before crucifixion existed as a form of execution, David described pierced hands and feet, divided garments, and a cry of abandonment. These were not coincidences. They were God declaring the end from the beginning, hiding the fullness of Messiah in plain sight. Jesus did not merely fulfill prophecy -- he embodied it completely. When you read these passages and see Jesus in every line, your faith is not wishful thinking. It is well-founded confidence in a God who keeps every word.

Reflection Question: How does seeing Jesus revealed throughout the Old Testament strengthen your confidence in the reliability of God's promises for your own life?

Practical Application: Read Isaiah 53 slowly and substitute your own name wherever the text refers to the one for whom Messiah suffered. Let the personal weight of that substitution settle in your heart throughout the day.



Day 3: Turning Your World Right Side Up

Reading: Acts 17:5-9; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:10-12

Devotional: The indoctrinated crowd accused Paul and his companions of turning the world upside down. But the gospel does not disorder the world -- it restores it. The new covenant God established through the blood of Jesus is not a religion of earned favor or accumulated ritual. It is a covenant of relationship, written not on stone but on the heart. God declares in the new covenant that he will forgive iniquity and remember sin no more. This is not a conditional promise. It is a settled declaration from a God who does not change. The world calls the gospel disruptive. God calls it redemption. Your sin is not what defines you before him. Jesus does.

Reflection Question: In what areas of your life are you still carrying the weight of sins that God has already declared forgiven and forgotten?

Practical Application: Write down one sin or failure you have been mentally rehearsing before God. Then write across it the words of Jeremiah 31:34 as a declaration of what God himself has said about it under the new covenant.

Day 4: Remember Him, Not Your Sin

Reading: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Luke 22:14-20

Devotional: Jesus was specific about what the communion table is meant to produce in the believer's heart. He did not say, remember your failures. He did not say, rehearse your unworthiness. He said, remember me. The bread and the cup are not instruments of condemnation for the repentant heart. They are symbols of a finished work and a living Savior. Jesus approached that final Passover with fervent desire because he wanted his people to understand that his blood was establishing something permanent -- a covenant in which God forgives completely and forgets entirely. When you come to his table, come with your eyes on him, not on yourself. That is what he asked for.

Reflection Question: When you approach the Lord's table, where is your focus -- on what Christ has done, or on what you have failed to do?

Practical Application: Before your next time of communion, spend a few minutes reading Psalm 103:8-12 as preparation. Let those verses reorient your heart toward who God is and what he has already accomplished on your behalf before you receive the elements.



Day 5: Until He Comes

Reading: Luke 22:15-18; Matthew 24:36-44; John 14:1-3

Devotional: Jesus told his disciples he would not drink of the cup again until it was fulfilled in his Father's house. To Galilean ears, those words carried the full weight of a betrothal promise. The son goes away, prepares a place, and returns only when the father gives the word. No one knows the day or the hour -- not even the son, only the father. Every time believers gather at the communion table, they are not only looking back at the cross. They are looking forward to his return. The table is both a memorial and an announcement. He is coming again. He has paid the bride price. The chamber is being prepared. The father will give the word. Maranatha.

Reflection Question: How does the certainty of Christ's return change the way you live today, make decisions, and relate to those around you who do not yet know him?

Practical Application: Share with one person this week -- a family member, a coworker, or a neighbor -- that Jesus is coming again and that there is still time to respond to him. You do not need to have all the answers. You only need to point them toward the one who does.

