

Turning the World Upside Down

*And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying,
These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.*

– Acts 17:6 –

As children, it is likely that many of us were enthralled with snow globes. I recall a specific one that was part of my mom's annual cache of Christmas decorations. I can still see it in my mind's eye, a tiny snow globe, not more than three inches in diameter, the miniature home of a Lilliputian snowman with branch-like arms, coal-like buttons and face, and a bright red scarf. Every year when that snow globe found its seasonal home on our marble top table, I would pick it up and shake it so that the snowstorm would begin within. I would watch in wonder as the "snow" would swirl for multiplied minutes until it all found its way back down to the "ground" of the snowman's minute world. I would then shake it yet again, over and over, to create the fascinating and mesmerizing beauty that its manufacturer obviously intended to be enjoyed by all who would handle it.

A snow globe is comprised of all the necessary components to become a dynamic and beautiful decoration, but it must be acted upon by an outside force. Without the initiative of an interested observer, the globe will lay lifelessly in state, displaying but a paltry fraction of its intended value.

The hearts of unredeemed men like the ones Paul and Silas encountered at Thessalonica are like snow globes. Within man's soul resides a vast amount of potential for beauty, awe, wonder, and purpose, but it lies deeply buried and lifelessly dormant due to sin, unwittingly and reluctantly awaiting an external party to affect its dark winter. The gospel that Paul and Silas brought to that Macedonian town was the same gospel the Holy Ghost was using throughout the Roman Empire to radically convert men to the Lord Jesus Christ. The world was being massively disrupted by an interested Party Whose desire is to watch men live their lives as they were intended to be lived, building a magnificent crescendo toward an eternal home and unencumbered fellowship with their Creator.

Men's hearts today do not differ from those of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, Philippi, Berea, Athens, Jerusalem, or Rome. They are as lifeless and hopeless as ever due to sin and the curse, and just as reluctant to change. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the great disrupter of that actively inactive hopelessness. We, like Paul and Silas, are ambassadors of that same gospel that turned the Roman world upside down. As ambassadors, we must embrace the fact that, due to its antithetical nature to a fallen world and its estranged humanity, this gospel that we carry with us, if not disruptive to men, is no gospel at all. Those that we encounter on life's journey should and must feel a certain amount of disruption when in our presence. We can be certain that some, as at Thessalonica, will believe not. But we can also rest assured that others, tired of the stagnancy and pointlessness of life under the sun will welcome the disruption, ushering in the gospel's miraculous power of redemption and conversion, birthing vibrant and dynamic life that will begin to meet out their new Master's unique purpose for them. After all, is that not what has happened to each of us?

Let us go forth today with the confidence that we, too, carry with us the power to turn someone's world upside down. And may the Lord help us to do just that.