

# They Upset the World

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When one reads through the book of Acts, he cannot help but be impressed with the enthusiasm, diligence, dedication, and commitment of the first century Christians. Despite a great persecution against them, they went everywhere preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:1-4). As a result of their efforts, we find that they had a troubling affect on the world of that day and time. Notice what Luke records:

*When they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the world have come here also..." (Acts 17:6).*

Some translations render that verse, "they have turned the world upside down..." In other words, these New Testament Christians had a serious impact on the world around them. Their message of a risen Messiah was well-known.



They delivered a message that convicted men of their sin (Acts 2:37-38). The Jewish people were told the Law could no longer save them (Heb. 8:7-13). All in all, the Christians were an offense to the world. This is one of the reasons they were so viciously persecuted. Their convicting message was not always gladly received.

That the followers of Jesus Christ were an offense is not surprising. It was prophesied of the Christ that He would be a stumbling block to many (Isa. 8:13-15). The apostle Peter, quoting from Isaiah, writes of the offense of Jesus:

*6 For this is contained in Scripture: "Behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, And he who believes in Him will not be disappointed."*

7 *This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone,"*

8 *and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed (1 Peter 2:6–8).*

The word "offense" in those verses is the Greek word *skandalon*. It is the word from which we get our English word, "scandal." Jesus was scandalous to many of the Jews. They were offended by Him (cf. Matt. 9:11; 15:12; John 6:66). The idea that the long-awaited Messiah should die on a cross was offensive (cf. (John 12:34; Gal. 3:13). It is therefore natural the the followers of Jesus, in their teaching and conduct, would also be offensive.

Christianity today is still offensive to the vast majority of the people in the world. Those who adhere to the Bible's teaching are considered narrow-minded, insensitive, advocates of hate, and out of touch with reality. After all, in our "enlightened" world of today, who could accept the Bible's teaching regarding the definition of marriage, the roles of men in the home and the church, what is sexually immoral, or the fact that there is only one way to God?

In being an offense, let us never be ashamed of the Gospel (cf. Rom. 1:16). Let us not shrink back from declaring the wonderful truths of God's word (Heb. 10:39). Let us strive to have an impact on the world today, just like our brothers and sisters of the first century.

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