
BEREAN DIGEST

STUDY. PRACTICE. TEACH.

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The Berean Mindset



The Text

The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to **Berea**, and when they arrived they went into the **Jewish synagogue**. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they **received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily** to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore **believed**, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men (Acts 17:10–12).

The Context

After spending some time in Antioch “teaching and preaching the word of the Lord” (Acts 15:35), Paul and Barnabas decided to “return and visit the brothers in every city where [they had] proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are” (15:36) [this would be their second missionary journey (the first journey chapters 13 and 14 of Acts)].

However, because of the argument between Paul and

Barnabas concerning John Mark (the cousin of Barnabas – see Colossians 4:10) because he (Mark) had “withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work” (Acts 15:38)–Paul and Barnabas separated.

Therefore, “Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed ...through Syria and Cilicia (modern-day Turkey), strengthening the churches” (15:39–41).

Paul then came to Derbe and Lystra. In Lystra Paul picked up a young man named Timothy (16:1–5). They eventually found themselves in Troas, where Paul received a vision of a man of Macedonia (modern-day Greece) (16:6–10). So, they [including Luke cf. Acts 16:11 use of the first person plural pronoun “we”] left Troas and made their way “to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony” (16:12). While there they baptized Lydia and her household and a jailer and his household (16:16–40).

Departing there “they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 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.” 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 (17:1–4).

Because of the jealous Jews, they had to eventually escape by night to Berea (17:10). When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue since they would be familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures and its teaching about the Messiah (17:11).

Background of Berea

The city of Berea was in the Roman province of Macedonia north of Greece. The word Berea means “well-watered or place of many waters.” It was about 45–50 miles from Thessalonica (Salonika). Paul visited this city during his second missionary journey after he was driven away from Thessalonica by jealous Jews. This city is now called Verria.

Breakdown of the Text

Now these Jews (the Jewish Bereans)

Were more noble (The phrase originally meant “of a noble family or high born”—but in the context given—it has reference to their mental eagerness in receiving the word of God with open hearts—that is—they were fair-minded)

Than Those in Thessalonica (Paul had just left there because of the uproar which was caused by their preaching of the gospel—it was stated that “they had turned the world upside down”)

They received the word (The gospel message that Jesus is the Christ—Savior of the world and that He was the Messiah prophesied about in the OT)

With all eagerness (With great zeal and eagerness of mind they listened to the word of God)

Examining the Scriptures (They examined the OT scriptures in order to compare what Paul was stating - with what the Scriptures clearly stated. If they agreed, then they knew that Paul was indeed telling the truth.)

Daily (They investigated the word of God on a day to day basis—cf. Psalm 1:2,3. They did not just study the scriptures on the Sabbath—but every day)

To see if these things were so (They examined thoroughly the things that Paul was speaking concerning Jesus being the Messiah prophesied about in the OT. How wonderful it would be if all people would just take the time to examine the word of God and just see if the things they hear are true.)

Study

1. Paul was forced on several occasions to leave a city? (And in some occasions even beat). How would you respond if that happened to you?
2. Why was it wise for Paul to start his ministry in the Jewish Synagogue?
3. What does it mean to “reason” with someone? (cf. 17:2)
4. What did Paul “explain” and “prove” to them (17:3)? What is the difference?
5. What does it mean to be “persuaded” (17:4)? What are other ways to cause a person to change their mind? What is the best way?
6. Greek women of high standing believed the message. Why is that significant (17:12).

Practice

1. The Bereans received the word spoken by Paul and Silas with “all eagerness.” Does that describe the way you receive the word? Why or why not?
2. When you listen to a teacher or preacher—which of the following best describes you:
 - a. I believe all that is said without question.
 - b. I never really believe much that is said.
 - c. I refer to the Bible to make sure what I have heard is true and biblical based.
3. Should Christians always have an “open mind?” Why or why not? Give an example.

Teach

1. Tell someone about the arrest, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.
2. Show someone OT passages which point to Jesus—that is—OT passages that are referring to Jesus.