



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Believing their Scriptures-Jews that Excelled in Nobility

MAY 30-JUNE 1, 2018

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Acts 17:10-15 *“And the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea; and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11) Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so. 12) Many of them therefore believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men. 13) But when the Jews of Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea also, they came there likewise, agitating and stirring up the crowds. 14) And then immediately the brethren sent Paul out to go as far as the sea; and Silas and Timothy remained there. 15) Now those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.”* (NASB)

“THE BEREANS INSTEAD SAID: THIS SOUNDS GOOD. WE'D LIKE TO HEAR MORE ABOUT IT. LET'S LISTEN. THEN, HAVING HEARD THE GOOD NEWS, THEY WENT TO THE SCRIPTURES THEMSELVES TO SEE IF THE THINGS PAUL WAS TEACHING REALLY WERE IN THEM. MOREOVER, THEY DID IT DAILY— NOT JUST ON SUNDAY MORNINGS FOR AN HOUR, BUT DAILY BECAUSE THESE TEACHINGS WERE A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. THEY WANTED TO SPEND ALL THEIR AVAILABLE TIME STUDYING THEM.”
JAMES MONTGOMERY BOICE

On both occasions was Paul actually fleeing for his life? Why was it unusual for the Jews to believe their own Scriptures? What made these Jews so eager to receive the Word and examine the Scriptures? Did the vast majority of those in the synagogue come to Christ? Why the surprise attack by mob

violence again in Berea? Is Paul commissioned again by the Berean church? Why do the brethren bodyguards escort Paul by sea? Is Paul concerned about himself or the churches when he sends for Silas and Timothy to come to him immediately?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 6-8: ACTS 17:16-21 PAUL AND THE GREATEST PHILOSOPHERS
- JUNE 13-15: ACTS 17:22-28 PAUL PROCLAIMS THE UNKNOWN GOD AT PHILOSOPHY'S PINNACLE

Paul had rejoiced in the addition of Timothy to his mission team from the very place of his greatest pain from stoning at Lystra. At Troas, Luke the Physician will be added to his team and by the vision of the man from Macedonia saying, *“Come over to Macedonia and help us,”* (Acts 16:9) the entire team was called *“to preach the gospel to them”* (16:10). After planting a church in Philippi, and intense persecution where Paul and Silas were beaten with rods, they were requested by the generals to leave the city. So Luke is left to pastor the infant church and the team departs for the next capital. At Thessalonica, after only three weeks of ministry, the results of faithfully reasoning, explaining, proving and persuading concerning Jesus Christ from the Scriptures at the synagogue, some of the Jews believed along with *“a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women”* (17:4). It seems that this *“great multitude”* may have been about half of the city. Such spectacular success invited severe persecution from the unbelieving Jews who were probably trying to kill Paul and caused him to leave.

“FOR FROM YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS SOUNDED FORTH, NOT ONLY IN MACEDONIA AND ACHAIA, BUT ALSO IN EVERY PLACE. YOUR FAITH TOWARD GOD HAS GONE OUT, SO THAT WE DO NOT NEED TO SAY ANYTHING.”
1 THESSALONIANS 1:8

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN RD.
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY'S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

Believing their Scriptures-Jews that Excelled in Nobility

I. THE COURAGE OF PAUL'S TEAM ACTS 17:10

The believers, at this influential capital where the East met the West on the Egnatian Way coming through the heart of the city and the farmers took their wares down river to sell them to the seafaring shipmasters in this famous port, were concerned for the safety of especially Paul and Silas. So they kept them hidden until nightfall and immediately sent them away under the cover of darkness to the next closest capital, Berea. It is obvious that Paul did not want to leave these new children in the faith to the mercy of their persecutors—the verb “*went*” literally means to “be absent.” Thus Paul considered himself absent from the previous synagogue to be present in this next one. The threats against his life seem to be his least concern as he immediately enters the next “*synagogue of the Jews*” and gives them the Gospel from the Scriptures, just as he had done in the previous capital.

“THERE STANDS OUT ONCE AGAIN THE COURAGE OF PAUL. HE HAD BEEN IMPRISONED IN PHILIPPI. HE HAD LEFT THESSALONICA IN PERIL OF HIS LIFE AND UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS. AND ONCE AGAIN IN BEREA HE HAD TO FLEE FOR HIS LIFE. MOST MEN WOULD HAVE ABANDONED THE STRUGGLE WHICH SEEMED BOUND TO END IN ARREST AND IN DEATH ... THE IDEA OF TURNING BACK NEVER OCCURRED TO PAUL.” WILLIAM BARCLAY

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE BEREANS ACTS 17:11-12

Luke describes these Jews from Berea as continually “*more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica.*” The word initially meant “noble by birth” but grew to embrace the concept of noble by action. This may be the only time in history where the Jews as a whole in a synagogue live up to their heritage as sons of Abraham and as a group eagerly receive the truth about Jesus Christ their Messiah and examine their Scriptures carefully for themselves whereby they wholeheartedly embrace their Messiah, with none turning against the others to persecute them for

receiving the truth! They believed their Scriptures and continually “*examined*” them to verify if what Paul was teaching them was true. The verb “examined” is from two words, “again” and “judge,” and it pictured an unbiased judge reviewing, studying thoroughly, asking questions, investigating as if he were in the midst of a trial seeking the truth. Notice that this was not just done on the Sabbath at their synagogue, they daily welcomed the Word of God and its truth “*with great eagerness.*” The “therefore” naturally follows: those who eagerly investigate their Old Testament Scriptures will “believe!” The “*many*” Jews who believed in Berea are contrasted with the “*some*” who believed in Thessalonica. The fact that there was no conflict or persecution points to the majority of those in the synagogue believing. Additionally many of the leaders in this capital believed, “*the honorable*” women and men are described literally as “not a few!” Their loyalty to Scripture had attracted the city leaders.

“THEREFORE, LET THIS REMAIN A MOST SURE MAXIM, THAT NO DOCTRINE IS WORTHY TO BE BELIEVED BUT THAT WHICH WE FIND TO BE GROUNDED IN THE SCRIPTURES.”
JOHN CALVIN

III. THE CRUELTY OF UNBELIEVERS ACTS 17:13-15

Not only do the unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica remove Paul from his infant children in Christ as he is compelled by their ungodly conduct to flee to Berea, but then they, in the same way, force him to flee this most noble group of newborn Christians. Paul is fleeing for his life, revealed by the “*brethren*” who “*conducted*” him to his next capital. If he flees by land, there are several straights where he and his bodyguards could be ambushed, so they go by sea. When Paul gets to Athens, his greatest concern are the believers at Thessalonica who are at the mercy of these murderous Jews, so he requires his teammates join him to be sent back to Thessalonica and Philippi.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you courageously presenting the Gospel to those around you and even above you?
- 2) Do you examine the Scriptures daily to grasp its truth so that you receive the truth and are not deceived?
- 3) Are you willing to help other believers in every way possible, caring for their safety and shielding from attacks?