

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY- Acts Chapter 17

Verse 10-15- The believers in Thessalonica sent Paul and Silas away to avoid further harm to those who followed them. They went away under cover of night to avoid the wrath of the mob that seemed determined to find and punish Paul for his influence over their world. They traveled to Berea, 45-50 miles away (2 to 3 days journey walking). As was their normal routine, they went to the Jewish synagogue first. Notice that Luke did not describe the Bereans by their professions or what they did for a living, as he did in previous chapters. He also does not mention about how many Jews there were versus Gentiles (their ethnic heritage). Luke's focus on the Bereans is a comparison of how people receive the message of Christ. He gives a brief but very meaningful description of these people based on their character. He describes the Bereans as being "of more noble character" than the Thessalonians. Then, he tells us why he says this. He says that they received the word with "readiness of mind" and they "searched the scriptures daily" to see "whether those things were so."

Of more noble character- having or showing fine personal qualities or higher moral principles.

Readiness of mind- having an eager, open and willing attitude to receive and test new truth without pride or defensiveness.

Luke makes a point of saying this is the reason it was so easy for many of them, Jew and Greek, to understand and accept this new teaching. (James 1:19-25, ESV 1113), (Luke 8:5-8, ESV 958), (Luke 8:11-15, ESV 958). So, Paul and his companions had a very successful time in Berea, however, as usual word traveled back to those stubborn unbelievers who now seemed to be making it their mission to stop Paul and his followers. They had followed Paul all over. They had stirred up the crowds in Psidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Thessalonica. And here they came to Berea to stir up trouble again. And again, the believers convinced Paul to leave immediately. They took him to Athens while Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea, likely to strengthen the new believers and establish the church before joining Paul. Though Silas and Timothy are not mentioned often, their importance should not be overlooked. Throughout the mission Paul brought the message, and they followed up with the new believers. In his letters to the churches later, Paul referred to them as "co-workers," and often uses the term "we," indicating that they were a necessary and valuable part of the missionary team. (1 Thessalonians 1:1-2, ESV 1089), (2 Corinthians 1:19, esv 1066), (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, ESV 618), (Ephesians 4:11-13, ESV 1081)