



[Acts 17:10-13](#)

(10) As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. (11) Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (12) Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men. (13) When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

New International Version

Berea lies within the ancient region of Macedonia. Scripture confirms that a Jewish community - large enough to have built a synagogue - lived within the city, even though it was within a Gentile nation. On his second "missionary" journey, following the council in Jerusalem, the apostle Paul came to Berea to preach, after proclaiming [the gospel](#) in places like Philippi and Thessalonica.

What is it, though, that made the Bereans so special? Commentator Matthew Henry writes, regarding the Bereans:

They had a freer thought, and lay more open to conviction, were willing to hear reason, and admit the force of it, and to subscribe to that which appeared to them to be [truth](#), though it was contrary to their former sentiments. This was more noble.

They had a better temper, were not so sour, and morose, and ill conditioned towards all that were not of their mind. As they were ready to come into a unity with those that by the power of truth they were brought to concur with, so they continued in charity with those that they saw cause to differ from. This was more noble. They neither prejudged the cause, nor were moved with envy at the managers of it, as the Jews at Thessalonica were, but very

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generously gave both it and them a fair hearing, without passion or [partiality](#).
(*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 2141)

We first see that they were more fair-minded (*noble*, KJV) than the Jews of Thessalonica. What does it mean to be fair-minded or noble? The Greek word used in Acts is *eugenesteroi*, which comes from *eugenes*, from which we derive the personal name "Eugene." Originally, it meant "wellborn" and implied nobility. Later, it described those of a generous spirit, who are open-minded toward truth, not prejudiced, hostile, or suspicious of others, but give others a fair hearing. The Bereans are considered as noble because they listened to the preaching of the gospel with open hearts as they pursued [God](#) and His whole truth.

We also see that they received the Word with "readiness" or eagerness. The Greek word, *prothumos*, suggests that they looked into the Scriptures with enthusiasm, eagerness, and zeal. The Greek paints a word-picture of a ravenously hungry man who devours the food set before him or an extremely thirsty man who is finally given something to drink. The Bereans were full of enthusiasm, readiness, and zeal for God's Word.

The Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if what they were being taught was correct. We need to remember that the only Scripture available to them was the Old Testament. The things that Paul and Silas taught them were regarding [Jesus Christ](#) and the New Covenant, mentioned in the Old Testament. Most of these people were of Jewish heritage and knew of the Old Testament promises of a Messiah.

How exactly did they search the Scriptures and prove this "new" information? *Searched* comes from the Greek word *anakrino*, which translates as "properly, to scrutinize, i.e. (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine." The King James Version translates the word variously as "ask, question, discern, examine, judge, search."

This does not mean that the Bereans constantly questioned the Scriptures to prove or disprove what they were learning. However, they had access to the Old Testament, the Bible of their time. They could examine the words Paul and Silas spoke and determine if they were indeed in line with the Old Testament teaching. They could also observe the manner that these men conducted their lives. How these men taught the Word of God and the proofs they gave were quite relevant to the Bereans.

Does this mean that they had to disprove or reprove things such as the [Sabbath](#) or the Holy Days, which they knew to be of God? Absolutely not! But it clearly indicates that they were not going to let old thoughts, ideas, or ways easily fall by the wayside, nor

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Acts 17:10-13 (<http://www.theberean.org>) would they close the door on any truth that might come to them through revelation or by teaching. It also made them aware of the need to establish and re-establish the truth of God among them on an on-going fashion.

As a small Jewish community among the Gentiles, they probably needed the added security of what they were learning and living to be a bulwark against the corrupt world around them. They kept close to God's Word, scrutinizing it for every bit of help it could give them to remain true to God's way amidst a pagan culture. Each of us should readily relate to this as we strive to survive the corruption of [this world](#) and Satan's ploys.

In addition, the Bereans studied God's Word on a daily basis. Why is this important? When we see instances of [contact with God](#) in the Bible, it often has a daily application. Why does God require the Israelites to collect manna each day (except on the Sabbath, for which they prepared by collecting a double portion on Friday), except to remind them of His constant providence? Why does Christ leave us the example of the "model [prayer](#)," in which we are to thank God for our physical and spiritual food each day? This daily spiritual exercise had to help the Bereans to feed on, dwell on, delight in, and think upon what was true, lovely, praiseworthy, and excellent rather than the negativity that their world often embraced. Their lives and minds were continually on the things and ways of God.

— Staff

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