

## The Nobleness of the Bereans.

Acts 17:10-15.

Sunday, May 15, 2011.

### I. Departure from Thessalonica.

- A. The civil authorities of Thessalonica had taken security of Jason and certain other brothers, and with that they let them go. In handling the matter this way they acted with a lot more prudence than had been the case with their Philippian counterparts. It is not inconceivable that they had contact with the Philippian authorities, and had an opportunity to think about how to handle this kind of situation should it occur in Thessalonica.
  - 1. The meaning of “taking security” is that Jason and certain other Christian brothers had to post a bond to insure the civil order in Thessalonica.
  - 2. Jason seems to have been the brother at whose house the apostles stayed, and the church in Thessalonica may have met in his house as well, as was the case with Lydia in the city of Philippi. At this early hour in the history of the Christian Church most churches met in homes.
  - 3. As the Jewish opposition was such that the brothers could not guarantee the civil order in the city of Thessalonica as long as Paul and Silas were on the scene, they thought it best to send Paul and Silas on their way, and they did so without delay, the very same night.
- B. The apostles move on to Berea, a city located some 50 miles South West of Thessalonica; where there also was a sizable Jewish population with a synagogue. It would have been a two day journey on foot.

### II. A refreshing change.

- A. Coming to Berea, the apostles follow the pattern of ministry they had grown accustomed to; they visit the local synagogue on the Sabbath day and preach Jesus as the Christ from the Old Testament.
- B. A refreshing change awaits them among these Jewish folks. Our text says that they “were more fair-minded” than those in Thessalonica (and in other cities where they had preached.) The old King James has “more noble;” the word noble meaning excellence in character or outstanding character. This is probably the better translation.
  - 1. The nobility, or excellence of character, of the Bereans was that they received the word with all Readiness; they judged the words of these preachers worthy of serious consideration.
  - 2. This nobility furthermore consisted in the fact that they did not receive the word of these preachers without reservation and a certain tentativeness. They wanted to weigh and compare these new teachings against the testimony of the Old Testament Scriptures, and take some time to reflect on this, to determine whether these things were in fact so.
  - 3. Finally their nobility shows in the fact that they did so without delay. They did not wait till the next Sabbath day or the next council meeting, but they searched the Scriptures daily.
- C. In summary, the nobility of the Bereans did lie in the fact that they were

possessed by one single minded agenda; more than anything else they really wanted to know the truth. Personal pride and prejudice were made to bow before this overriding desire. They had to know the truth.

### III. The result of the Berean spirit.

- A. “Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks ( Luke’s way of saying many of the Greeks), prominent women as well as men.”
- B. These words fulfill the words of the Lord Jesus in John 7:17: “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God, or whether I speak of my own authority.”
- C. We should not think of the Bereans as being exceptionally clever so as to be able to figure out from the OT Scripture the truthfulness or untruthfulness of Paul’s words. We have in the Berean Jews and proselytes a living example of another gospel truth; the truth that the promises of grace and salvation are given to an asking, seeking and a knocking people, Luke 11:9.  
The Bereans exhibit faith by taking their hearts and minds to the word of God, desiring most of all to know God’s honest truth, and the Holy Spirit of God came alongside them, enlightened their minds in the knowledge of Christ, and enabled them to embrace Christ the way He is offered to us in the gospel.
- D. These Berean Jews teach us three important truths:
  1. That it is important, and that it has been given to all people, (not just the clergy) to read and search the Scriptures, with the Holy Spirit’s help, in order to know the truth.
  2. That they are entitled, and indeed called, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to form a judgment whether the teaching they are receiving in their church is according to the Word of God.
  3. That no faith, other than such as flows from a personal conviction of a heart that has been informed by the Word of God, and taught by the Spirit of God, is either desirable or of any avail.

#### Applications:

1. Do you have the kind of bottom line in your life the Bereans had? No matter what it means, I have to know the truth. For better or for worse, I have to have the truth.
2. Do you have faith that God is the rewarder of those that diligently seek Him, Hebrews 11:6, taking your heart and mind to the Scriptures (daily) with the prayer that the Holy Spirit would teach and guide you into all truth?
3. If you do, you should take courage knowing that not withstanding the confusion, darkness and bewilderment you may experience, the promises of grace and salvation are yours, and that the light of His truth will prevail over the present darkness.

### IV. A return of the conflict.

When the Jews of Thessalonica learn of the turn of events in Berea they undertake the two day journey to Berea to stir up the opposition against the gospel. If love of the truth fueled the apostles’ proclamation of the gospel to the ends of the earth, note here the energy and zeal fueled by a hatred of the truth.

