

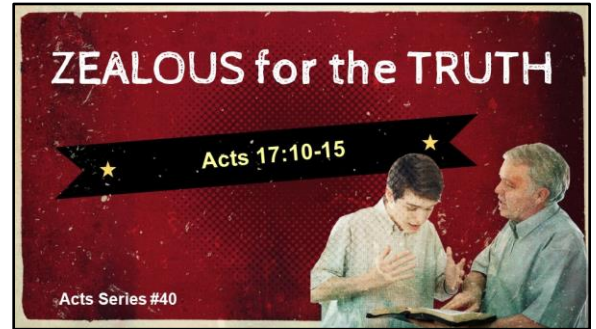
ACTSFACTS

C@G Supplementary Study Notes for ACTS

Message #40

“ZEALOUS FOR THE TRUTH”

(Acts 17:10-15)



In Acts 17, Luke records Paul and his team in three different cities. Not only are the cities different, but the people and their response to Paul’s message is different...and so is the approach that Paul takes in each.

We pick up the story again in verse 10. After a “rent-a-riot” mob had been raised by the jealous Jews in Thessalonica, the local believers were keen to get Paul and Silas out of the city for their safety. Instead of travelling westward along the Egnatian Way, they travelled south-west some 70km to the smaller town of Berea (modern-day Veria).

Berea was a Greek-speaking town of less importance than Thessalonica, yet it still had a large enough Jewish population to have a synagogue. And, as was their custom, Paul and Silas made that their first “port of call” when they arrived.

Luke contrasts the Bereans with the Thessalonians by applauding the way they judge Paul’s words on the basis of Scripture, not on considerations of culture, politics, or even economics (see Acts 16:19). Many of the Jewish communities (not just in Thessalonica) seem to have little concern for “truth”. The Christian message seems to be rejected not because it is untrue, but because it is inconvenient!



Some are jealous of the missionaries’ success, others are afraid that their status in the community will be affected or are fearful of Roman reprisals. But it was different here in Berea.

Is becoming a Christian a matter of faith or understanding? Or both?

Do you believe, then understand...or understand, then believe?

ACTS 17:11

This verse introduces us to the Bereans. It is interesting how Luke describes them.

“Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians....” (17:11a).

What was the reason that Luke described them in this way? (see 17:11b)

Luke used “noble character” to describe the Bereans. Which two words would you most like used about you? Why?

So, not only were the Bereans keen to hear God's Word, they also wanted to check out the veracity of what they heard. Was it really the Word of God?

This is a good policy for us to follow, too.

Too often it is easy to just blindly accept what we hear, or read, without checking Scripture to see if it is true, or consistent with biblical principle.

Many cults and fringe-groups have started out by someone using Scripture wrongly, or to give validation for their own opinions and interpretations. The most dangerous deceptions are said to be the ones that contain some truth. So we must always be discerning....like the Bereans.

If you take the text out of context.....you are just left with a con.

If a person preaches the Truth of God's Word faithfully, then he/she will have no problem standing up to the scrutiny of the Word of God.

Even Jesus used Scripture to prove Himself to others (see Luke 24:25-27).

Luke tells us that the Bereans "...they examined the Scriptures every day..." (17:11).

There is a challenge there for us, isn't there? How often do we study God's Word?

We cannot expect to become discerning hearers (and liver) of the Word if we do not regularly study it. This is an essential part of being a Christian...going to the Scriptures in order to learn more about God and how to live in and through Him.

Perhaps we read so many books "about" the Bible that we neglect reading the Bible itself!

In this post-modern and post-Christian world, where truth is viewed as something subjective and people resist the idea of eternal and transformative truth, we are called to know and study what God's Word says.

To what extent are you like the Bereans?

What Bible Study method do you find most helpful for you?

ACTS 17:12

Because of the Berean's diligence and faithful study of the Scriptures, there was a wonderful result...there was a life-changing impact on many people.

Luke records that many, including Jews, prominent Greek women and many Greek men, became followers of Jesus Christ.

Discuss this statement:

"The Christians who have turned their world upside down have been men and women with a vision in their hearts and a Bible in their hands."

Read: 2 TIMOTHY 3:10-17

What do these verses tell us about the importance of God's Word to our lives as Christians?

Do you spend enough time in Scripture? How can you resolve to become a better student of the Bible?

How can we learn to see our disappointments from God's point of view? Would you have thought all this opposition was good if you were Paul?

How can we allow God to take something bad that has happened and use it for good?

And then, after the Thessalonian mob come down to Berea to have another crack at Paul, the Bereans send him off to Athens, the third city in this amazing chapter.