

## The Berean Legacy

The *Bereans* were residents of the city of Berea in Macedonia. Paul and Silas preached to them during Paul's second missionary journey around 49AD, twelve years after the Cornelius' House accounts of Acts 10 and 11. The account of Paul and Silas in this very special location is recorded in [Acts 17:10-15](#).

*"<sup>10</sup> As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. Upon arrival, they made their way to the Jewish synagogue. <sup>11</sup> Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, because they received the message with goodwill, searching the Scriptures each day to see whether these things were true. <sup>12</sup> Therefore many of them believed, as well as quite a few prominent Greek women and men. <sup>13</sup> But when the Jewish people of Thessalonica learned that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea, they came there too, agitating and inciting the people. <sup>14</sup> Then the brothers immediately sent Paul away to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. <sup>15</sup> Those escorting Paul brought him as far as Athens. After receiving an order for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left" **Read** (AD 49, Acts 17:10-15).*

These *Bereans* exhibited several positive characteristics that marked their response to the Acts message. First and foremost, Scripture states that the *Bereans* were "*more noble-minded*" because of their willing reception of the Word of God. Unlike the unbelieving Thessalonian Jews, the *Bereans* were eager to hear the teaching of Paul and Silas.



Second, the *Bereans* examined what they heard by comparing it to the Hebrew Scriptures. The fact that they honestly listened and conducted further personal research led many of their brethren to faith in *Messiah Yeshua*. This expansion of the Believing Community was not limited to those within the synagogue, but also extended to many Greek men and women in Berea.

Third, the *Bereans* guarded Paul's safety. When Paul's enemies arrived from nearby Thessalonica, the Berean believers protected Paul by getting him out of the region. They did not turn him over to his enemies or disassociate from him as the Jews from Thessalonica might have expected.

Fourth, the *Bereans* continued to grow in their faith. After Paul's departure, Silas and Timothy remained in Berea. Why? The Bible does not explicitly say, but one reason was probably to give the Berean Community a chance to obtain further instruction in the faith.

Later in the book of Acts, we are given further insight into the faithfulness of at least one Berean man. When Paul decides to return for additional ministry in Macedonia despite the tremendous persecution he had recently faced, one of the men who chose to accompany him was from Berea: *"<sup>3</sup> where he spent three months. When a plot was formed against him by the Jewish leaders as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return via Macedonia. <sup>4</sup> Sopater of Berea, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; as well as Aristarchus and Secundus of Thessalonica; Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia"* (Acts 20:3-4). Sopater, likely a Gentile Believer, continued assisting Paul and Timothy in ministry long after Paul's first visit to Berea.

In summary, the *Bereans* have long been seen as a positive example of how a person or community should respond to biblical teaching. We are called to eagerly learn from God's Word and, no matter whom the teacher is, to investigate new teaching in comparison with the Bible. The practice of the ancient *Bereans* is a model for all who desire to grow spiritually today. The *Bereans* were followers and sanctified by the truth in the Word: *"Thy Word (Adonai's Word) is Truth (John 17:17).*