**The Nobility of the Bereans**

*Acts 17:11*

**Introduction**

1. Jesus spoke a parable about the word being preached and received – parable of sower (**cf. Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**):
   1. Each soil is said to have received the seed – each heart is said to have received the word. (Wayside, stony places, thorns, good ground.)
   2. The seed is God’s word – this is the constant. (Same word/seed)
   3. **The soil is the hearts of men – implied is a responsibility for tending to one’s own soil/heart. (As a farmer does.)**
   4. **We can be receivers of God’s word in ways which profit nothing, or receivers of God’s word in ways which yield ultimate success.**
   5. **The quality of reception depends upon the soil.**
2. We can learn from the Bereans of **Acts 17:11** about the quality of heart which will receive the word of God as did the “good ground” in the parable of the sower.
   1. ***“Fair-minded”*** – *eugenēs* – "well born" (eu, "well," and genos, "a family, race"). (Vine) (“well born, i.e. (literally) high in rank” – Strong)
      1. **Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26** – about those who are called to the gospel.
      2. **Cf. Luke 19:12** – parable of the Minas – “nobleman” – paired with “Anthropos” (Mankind/human being).
   2. “noble” (ASV, ESV, KJV)
   3. “noble-minded” (NASB), “fair-minded” (NKJV):
      1. A quality of the mind, or character.
      2. **Their character was superior to that of the Thessalonians IN REGARD TO THEIR RECEPTION OF GOD’S WORD.**
3. What was it about the Bereans which caused the HS to describe them as nobler in mind than the Thessalonians?
4. A Contrast of Jews
5. Physical Israel and Spiritual Israel
   1. **Romans 9:3-9** – not all Israel who are Israel.
      1. Jews rejected salvation in Christ because they do not seek the righteousness of faith – salvation by God’s standard – but by the works of the law.
      2. **(v. 6)** – Distinction between the true Israel, and merely ethnic Israel:
         1. **Children of promise contrasted with children of flesh.**
         2. Illustrated with Sarah having Isaac – son of promise. (Ishmael was of fleshly means.)
         3. **(vv. 25-28)** – Further explanation:
            1. **(vv. 25-26)** – Gentiles will be called the people of God.
            2. **(vv. 27-28)** – Only a remnant (a small portion) of the physical Israel would be God’s people.

**Cf. Romans 11:5-10** – a remnant of Israel is saved.

**(v. 7)** – i.e. ethnic Israel who did not accept Jesus as the Christ and obey the gospel.

**(vv. 8-10)** – the reason? They did not like what they heard, so rejected it.

**Result? (v. 9** – their perverted view of the Law, and erring devotion to it was their downfall)

**Cf. Galatians 5:2** – They sought justification by the Law, so ironically, the Christ which the Law spoke of did not profit them.

* 1. **Cf. John 5:31-47** – Jesus rebukes hard hearted Jews for disbelief in Him, the object of the OT Scriptures:
     1. **(v. 31)** – Jesus is not wanting them to simply take His own claims alone.
        1. (**vv. 32-37)** – John bore witness of Jesus (some believed that, but were straying now), and God bears witness (*through miracles before – like the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda*)
        2. **(vv. 38-40)** – Their approach to scripture was erring – did not accept the one that was spoken of in them – the Christ.
           1. Why didn’t they?
           2. They did not like the things Jesus claimed to be, or the things He taught.
           3. **Ultimately, rejected what the Scriptures said, and instead abused it to their liking.**
        3. **(vv. 41-47)** – they care not that God bears witness, but only accept those whom they validate themselves. ***Moses judges them in the OT because they reject the object of the OT – Jesus Christ.***
     2. **The Jews had their own biased view of scripture so that WHEN THE FULFILLMENT CAME IN CHRIST, THEY WERE BLINDED FROM THE TRUTH.**
  2. *The Bereans were different 🡪*

1. The Jews of Thessalonica
   1. The Thessalonians in **Acts 17** were a microcosm of the dominant character of the closed-minded Jews. **The Bereans were an exception to the rule, thus, exceptional –** ***“more fair-minded.”*** (Exceptional character)
   2. **Thessalonians – Acts 17:1-5** – the truth hurt them, and they were envious (did not give the word much chance by searching and studying, but reverted to violence) – ultimately driving Paul and Silas away.
   3. **Bereans – Acts 17:10-12** – still Jews, but Jews which evidently desired the truth no matter what – WERE READY (unbiased), AND SEARCHED DAILY.
      1. Note – the only difference between these Jewish people was their character.
      2. SAME – ethnicity, religious background, scriptures, GOSPEL PRESENTED, etc.
2. Nobility of Mind
3. What was it about the Berean Jews that led the HS to describing them as “more fair-minded” than the Thessalonian Jews? (**cf. Acts 17:11**)
4. Readiness
   1. **Readiness** – *prothymia*; "eargerness, willingness, readiness" (pro, "forward," thumos, "mind, disposition," akin to prothumos, READY, A, No. 2). (Vine)
      1. “eagerness” (ESV).
      2. “great eagerness” (NASB).
      3. “readiness of the mind” (ASV).
      4. “readiness of mind” (KJV)
      5. **Cf. 2 Corinthians 8:11-12** (“readiness,” “willing mind”), **19** (“ready mind”); **9:2** (“willingness”)
      6. “predisposition, i.e. alacrity: — forwardness of mind, readiness” (Strong)
         1. Regarding an attitude about something BEFORE interaction with that thing.
         2. ***“the word”* – they were willing to accept the truth of God’s word before they heard it.**
         3. **Pre – because this is an attitude had before hearing the truth, it is independent of the specifics of the truth – favorable attitude regardless of the content.**
   2. Essential – humility – **cf. James 1:21:**
      1. **Meekness** – *praÿtēs* – mildness, i.e. (by implication) humility. (Strong)
         1. “It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.” (Vine)
         2. **Being humble enough to acknowledge that God’s truth is not only the best, but the only way to go – it saves your soul.**
      2. WE MUST ACCEPT GOD’S WORD IN OUR HEART IN FULL WILLINGNESS TO OBEY IT BEFORE WE EVEN HEAR WHAT IT HAS TO SAY.
   3. **Essential – Setting aside:**
      1. **Wrath** – **James 1:19-20** – cannot allow God’s word to harden us, but accept if we are wrong.
      2. **Sin – James 1:21** – we cannot hold on to our sin and expect to see God’s word clearly. (Then comes the attempt to justify sin with God’s word.)
      3. **Prejudice:**
         1. **Jews in Antioch – Cf. Acts 13:15, 40-41, 42, 43, 44** – Rejected God’s word when it was taken to the Gentiles.
            1. **(v. 15)** – requested that Paul preached.
            2. **(vv. 40-41)** – warning of Paul about fulfilling negative scripture.
            3. **(v. 42)** – Gentiles requested Paul preach.
            4. **(v. 43)** – Many Jews followed Paul.
            5. **(v. 44)** – Jews see the gospel was taken to the Gentiles and changed their mind about it.
         2. **Perception of the preacher (Paul) – cf. 1 Corinthians 3:6-7; 2 Corinthians 10:10** – focus on the delivery and deliverer instead of the content.
         3. **Prior belief – cf. 1 Corinthians 3:18-20** – Paul is essentially saying, “FORGET ALL YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW, AND BELIEVE GOD’S WORD INSTEAD.”
5. Diligence
   1. With the character of meekness, and the predisposition to accept truth, **the Bereans tested what Paul and Silas offered.**
   2. **2 Timothy 2:15** – diligence with the word of God.
   3. **Nature of God’s revelation:**
      1. **Acts 17:26-27** – created us to diligently seek Him (**cf. Hebrews 11:6** – desires such). IMPLIED IS THAT HE DID NOT SPOON FEED US.
      2. **John 8:31-32** – revealed to be known fully, and understood.
   4. **Bereans – Acts 17:11** – they searched the scriptures to find whether the things spoken by Paul and Silas were so. (**cf. 1 John 4:1-3** – testing the spirits by a standard)
      1. **(v. 12)** – When they heard the truth and tested it finding it to be so, many believed.
      2. **An honest heart seeking truth will put in the work, and accept what God revealed in the scriptures.**

**Conclusion**

1. We need to approach the study of God’s word like the Bereans of **Acts 17:11.**
2. Can it rightly be said of you that you are “fair-minded” in regard to your attitude toward the preaching of God’s word?