

Paul's Missionary Journey pt. 6 The Ministry to the Bereans

1. **V. 10. Paul was conveyed away by night** (for reasons of safety) **to Berea**¹; which lay some forty miles SW of Thessalonica. There are two great lessons for us.
 - a. **Observe the interplay between divine providence and faithful service.** Most think Paul's primary plan was to continue along the Egnatian Way to its western terminus at Rome.² This would've resulted in disappointment. **Cf. 18:1-2. Learn: man proposes; God disposes. His ways are not always our ways.**
 - b. **Note that opposition doesn't justify ceasing and desisting.** Upon arrival he immediately enters the Synagogue and recommences his work.
2. **Vv. 11-12. We have a positive description of the Jews residing there.** They were **"more noble."** They are distinguished by:
 - a. **The manner in which they accepted the word.** ***euvgenh, j*** describes the high born but probably denotes an 'open-mindedness'. This mindset is commended because the Scriptures are self-authenticating. **Cf. 1Thess. 2:13. Illstr. Edwards.**
 - b. **The manner in which they tested the word and searched the Scripture.** It was not expressed by a naïve embrace but by an eager (***meta. pa,shj proqumi, aj***) testing and daily examining (***avnakri, nw***). **How much the church could benefit from this Berean spirit?**
 - c. **The manner in which the word bore fruit among them.** Among those included in the group at least one

is known to us, Sospater. **Cf. 20:4.** Perhaps the 'noble life' was turned right side up." Hughes.

3. **Vv. 13. Note the arrival of the opposition.** At this point we are starting to see what appears to have become a policy. A delegation is detached. We observe:
 - a. **That it is specifically aimed at curtailing the spreading of the message.** It should not surprise us that it is always the word that is at issue.
 - i. **From a human perspective. Cf. 1Cor. 1:22-23.**
 - ii. **From a Satanic perspective. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:24; Ro. 1:16-17; Eph. 1:13; 2Cor. 4:1-4.**
 - b. **That it typically seeks to incite the masses against the message.**³ This results in two things: persecution of the messenger and prejudice towards the message.
4. **Vv. 14-15. Again Paul is forced to flee.** He was taken towards the coast and was accompanied as far as Athens.⁴ He leaves Silas and Timothy behind. A Possible reconstruction:
 - a. They rejoined Paul in Athens. **Cf. 1Thess. 3:1.**
 - b. Timothy went back to Thessalonica. **Cf. 1Thess. 3:2.**
 - c. They retraced their path to Macedonia. **Cf. 18:5.**
 - d. Paul then traveled from Athens to Corinth where he was rejoined by Silas and Timothy. **Cf. 18:1.**

These two summaries emphasize a proper attitude towards Scripture. It is to be *honestly handled* and *honestly received*.

¹ Berea is described by Cicero as "an out of the way town." It was 40 miles SW of Thessalonica. It was the first Macedonian city to surrender to the Romans at the end of the 3rd Macedonian war (168 B.C.)

² They were diverted of the Egnatian Way, taking the road that led South.

³ People are always generally controlled by the opinion of the masses while the Christian is always called to turn his back on the opinion of the world. Illstr. Pilgrim's progress.

⁴ The Byzantine text has a variant giving the impression that they pretended to catch a ship to through pursuers of the trail similar to the spies at Jericho.