

# BE LIKE THE BEREANS

Acts 17.1-15

As Paul takes the Gospel further into Europe, he adopts different methods of presenting the good news of Jesus.

This passage shows us how a believing community should understand Scripture.

## **Necessity: God graciously reveals Himself in writing**

God has communicated about Himself in written form. For Jesus and His initial followers, there is a defined deposit of writings called “Scripture”. For them, God had spoken. This is why Jesus says “Scripture cannot be broken” (John 10.35).

- i. The written word allows for the stability of the message over time and across spaces.
- ii. The written word removes ambiguity (v. competing recollections).
- iii. The written word welcomes communal reflection and discussion on shared material.

## **Sufficiency: Scripture tells us all we need for salvation**

The content of Scripture is the Christ, Israel’s anointed King (Acts 17.3; 26.6, 22-23; Luke 24.26-27, 44-45; John 5.39; 2 Timothy 3.14-16). The Jesus of history is the Christ of Scripture.

Scripture is “Christoscopic” = “Christ is the scopus (“aim, goal”) of all the Scriptures” (K. Vanhoozer, *Mere Christian Hermeneutics*, 315 citing Oecolampadius).

When we read God’s Word, we encounter the person of Christ.

“‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved’? And they said ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household’” (Acts 16.30-31).

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10.9; Cf. 10.17; 1 Corinthians 15.1-8).

Jesus is our King (Acts 17.7).

## **Authority: Scripture serves as the rule of faith and life**

The people of Berea are noble because they look to Scripture as the standard for theology and life.

Norma Normans = the norming norm (the rule that rules), Scripture  
Norma Normata = the normed norm (the rule that is ruled), creeds

God has given us His word as a guide for faith and life. We live differently because we are Christians (Cf. Acts 17.6).

**Clarity: Anyone can read and understand Scripture**

Paul reasons from the Scriptures. We see evidence of sustained discussions about the Bible. It is less of a “knock down argument” approach than a deliberation over truth claims.

The Bereans are noble because they are reading and “examining” God’s Word (Acts 17.11). Our faith is one that welcomes investigation, explanation, reasoning, and persuasion.

**Key Point:** May we never forsake the reading of Scripture.

**Small Group Application Questions:**

What made the Jewish opposition “jealous” of Paul and Silas (Acts 17.5)? What reasons did they give for their opposition (Acts 17.6-7)?

Why would the famous commentator William Barclay refer to the charge of Acts 17.6, that “these men have turned the world upside down” as “one of the greatest compliments which has ever been paid to Christianity”?

How is Paul and Silas’ ministry received in Thessalonica and Berea? What can we expect as a faithful church?

What modern day applications do we learn from the Christian’s declaration that Jesus is King as opposed to Caesar (Acts 17.7)? Why is this important?