

Be a Berean – Session 1

Introduction

Jesus said in John 14:25-26 (NASB) ²⁵ “These things I have spoken to you while abiding with you. ²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”

We see from this verse that the Father would and did send the Holy Spirit to comfort, to help, to bring to remembrance, and to TEACH us all things.

In the Aug. 3rd devotion in “**The Almighty God**” by AW Tozer, he says

“We desperately need a divine visitation – for our situation will never be cured by sermons! It will never be cured until the Church of Christ has suddenly been confronted with what one man called the mysterium tremendum – the fearful mystery that is God, the fearful majesty that is God. This is what the Holy Spirit does. He brings the wonderful mystery that is God to us and presents Him to the human spirit...”

We will never know more about God than the Spirit teaches us. We will never know any more about Jesus than the Spirit teaches us, because there is only the Spirit to do the teaching. He is our Teacher, and if He does not teach us, we never can know. He is our Illuminator, and if He does not turn on the light, we can never see. He is the Healer of our deaf ears, and if He does not touch our ears, we can never hear.”

Father God, may you send the Holy Spirit to free us from our ignorance and our self-centeredness we pray. We bow before You now and ask that You would send Your Spirit to heal our deaf ears. That He will teach us to be the Bereans of our day, in our community, and of our church. We ask all these things in the mighty name of Jesus, according to Your will. Amen

Who are the Bereans

Acts 17:10-12 (NASB)

¹⁰ The brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

¹¹ Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

¹² Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men.

The Background Story

- ❖ **Acts 17:10** The brethren [*g0080 adelphos – brother*] were the new Christians in Thessalonica, brothers because of their relationship in Christ.

- Thessalonica, situated about 100 miles (160 km) from Philippi, was the capital of the province of Macedonia and had a population of more than 200, 000, including a colony of Jews (and a synagogue). Paul taught in the synagogue for 3 weeks regarding Christ Jesus. Scripture says in **Acts 17:4** *And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.*
- Jason was a believer who had taken Paul and Silas into his house and he was to guarantee a peaceful, quiet community because of his guests. However, in **Acts 17:5** *⁵ But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people.*
- ❖ **Berea** [*g0960 beroia – well watered*] Berea was a place in Macedonia, which is now called Verria. It was located 50 miles from Thessalonica in another district of Macedonia, near the town of Pella, at the foot of Mt. Bermius. This is where the brethren from Thessalonica took Paul & Silas.
- ❖ **Acts 17:10** *These* indicates the people in Berea – who were called Bereans. When Paul and Silas arrived, they went to the synagogue and began teaching the Jews there. We need to see that Paul and Silas went to teach the Jewish people of Berea – who knew the Old Testament very well.
 - They *received* [*g1209 dechomai – accept, receive*] the word with great *eagerness* [*g4288 prothymia – forwardness, readiness, willingness of mind*].
 - *Examining* [*g0350 anakrinō - investigate, interrogate, determine, judge, search*]
 - The *Scriptures* [*g1124 graphe - a drawing, painting then a writing*]. Referring to the Old Testament Scriptures, the law, prophets, prophetic writings, in reference to the whole of scriptures as known at that time daily.
 - What were the Bereans doing with the teaching of Paul – they were ‘fact-checking’ it with what they knew was truth from the scriptures. They were testing the new revelations to see if a case could be made that Jesus was indeed the Christ spoken about by the prophets. They were eager and ready to see what God would show them

What does this study have to do with ‘Bereans’ and us?

- ❖ They are our example from which we will proceed with this study as well as all the Bible studies of this congregation:
 - We will receive the word gladly and with eagerness
 - We will examine the scriptures, hopefully daily, to see what is the truth of God
 - We will compare verses and context and situations to see what is so
 - We will only take God’s word for truth
 - We will help one another to learn and to teach our children and others
 - We will be led by the Holy Spirit in so doing
 - We will never look at the Bible again as we had in the past, but will love God’s word, cherish it in our hearts, and share with others.

What does the word Bible mean?

- ❖ Bible: The sacred Book or collection of books recognized and used by the Christian church as the uniquely inspired record of God’s revelation of Himself and of His will to mankind. Thereby providing guidelines for belief and behavior.
 - The English word Bible is derived from the Greek word *biblion* [G1046](#), a diminutive form of *byblos* (also *biblos* [G1047](#)), which refers to the bark of the PAPYRUS plant, used widely for writing material. Thus, the term meant first “a strip of papyrus,” then “document, scroll, book.”
 - The plural *biblia* (“books”) was naturally used of the collection of holy writings, but it was sometimes mistaken for the feminine singular, which has an identical form, hence “books” became “The Book” to indicate the Word of God exclusively.
 - Bible as a term has been casually used and not necessarily in a good way, because of this we have all kinds of volumes calling themselves ‘bible’ having nothing to do with the Scriptures.
 - In the New Testament writings, the Old Testament is usually referred to as “the Scriptures” [\[g1124 graphē - a document, holy Writ or its contents or a statement in it\]](#)
 - **Matthew 21:42** Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in [the Scriptures](#), ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’?”
 - **Matthew 22:29** But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding [the Scriptures](#) nor the power of God.
 - **Luke 24:32** They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining [the Scriptures](#) to us?”
 - **John 5:39** You search [the Scriptures](#) because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me
 - **Acts 18:24** Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty [in the Scriptures](#).
 - Or the word “Scripture”
 - **Acts 8:32** Now the passage of [Scripture](#) which he was reading was this: “HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.
 - **Galatians 3:22** But the [Scripture](#) has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
 - **2 Timothy 3:16** All [Scripture](#) is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness
 - And the words “holy Scriptures”
 - **Romans 1:2** which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the [holy](#) [\[g0040 hagios – sacred, pure, \(most\) holy\]](#) [Scriptures](#)

- **2 Timothy 3:15** and that from childhood you have known the sacred [g2413 *hieros – holy, pertaining to God*] writings [g1121 *gramma - book, scripture*] which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- ❖ **The plural term *biblia* serves as a reminder that the Bible is a collection of books, while its use in the singular suggests that behind these many books there lies a wonderful unity.**
- The books of the Old Testament were written over a period of about 1,000 years in the Hebrew language, except for a few passages written in Aramaic. The OT tells of the preparation that was made for Christ's coming.
 - This is what the Bereans were diligently studying, comparing, and listening to the teachings of Paul, Silas, and the other apostles' letters.
 - The New Testament was written over a period of about 60 years in the original language of Greek. It tells of Christ's coming, His life and ministry, and the growth of the early church.
 - The title names "Old Testament" and "New Testament" have been used since the close of the second century A.D. to distinguish the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. But the meaning of 'testament' from the Hebrew & Greek languages is 'settlement', 'treaty', or 'covenant'. In English the word covenant best captures the meaning of the word 'testament'.
 - The old or first covenant is God's covenant agreement with Israel which was sealed at Mount Sinai in the days of Moses (Ex. 19:3-6; 24:3-8)
 - **Exodus 19:5** Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine
 - **Exodus 24:3-4,7** ³Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" ⁴*Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.* ... ⁷Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"
 - The new covenant was announced by Jesus as he spoke to His disciples in the upper room Jerusalem the night before His death.
 - **Luke 22:20** And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.
 - **1 Corinthians 11:25** In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

- The New Testament contains the writings of the apostles, members of God's new covenant people.

References: Zondervan & Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionaries and Strong's Dictionary

What exactly is the Bible that we use today?

1. A collection of 66 separate books, written by 40 different authors, over a period of at around 1500 years
2. The 40 authors were inspired by Almighty God through the Holy Spirit to write each book in the languages of Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.
3. It's two major sections, Old and New Testaments, were separated in their writings by a 400-year period in which God was 'silent' and gave no new revelations to man.
4. It is a book which is thoroughly Jewish – written by Jews, about Jews, initially for Jews in the Jewish land of Israel. We are blessed that it is also for us – believers or pre-believers!
5. Today's readers have available translations, transliterations, paraphrases, and versions and in many languages for many cultures, age groups, scholarship/reading levels, languages; we also have an abundance of bibles which have commentaries written for a variety of people groups – like the Life Application Bible, the Life Principles Bible, Chronological Study Bible, Complete Jewish Bible, the Amplified Bible, and an array of bibles with commentaries from leading pastors – Chuck Smith's Word for Today NKJV Bible, Dr. David Jeremiah's NKJV Study Bible, the Hebrew-Greek Key Word NASB Study Bible to mention only three.
6. No one version in one language could possibly serve the purpose of everyone in the world. The beauty of God's Word is that it can be translated in various ways and into various languages, without obscuring the Bible's own purpose – to show people the truth about God, themselves, relationships, the meaning of life... and to call us to respond appropriately and to give God the glory which He alone deserves.
7. In this study we will primarily use the NASB (New American Standard Bible)

What is the Bible's purpose

1. To tell everyone about God, His people Israel, and His Messiah Yeshua (Jesus).
2. Its constant theme is that human beings need to be saved and that God provides that salvation.

3. It reveals the purpose of life, the meaning of history, and that God will deliver humanity from the misery of sin by His precious and *free* gift of salvation thru His Son Yeshua – Jesus whose name means ‘salvation’
4. The Hebrew word for new covenant is ‘b’rit hadashah’ which speaks of a state of being, meaning new and fresh. The new covenant is new not primarily of when it came, but because of what it is. It’s nature is to be new and fresh and the only way to know the new covenant is to know it newly, freshly, every day of your life.

In Closing

We are to be the Bereans that walk in this newness of life by diligently studying and applying His love, grace, truth, and salvation that is always new – to our lives and our relationships. As we daily consume Scripture we will have a transformed mind – which will align our perspective, our desires, attitudes, words, and choices with the Lord’s will.

But we must remember that we won’t hear His voice unless we make His Word a priority. If we ask, He will teach us to listen and help us understand what He is saying in His Word. Our spirit, like the Bereans, needs to be tuned to the Father with a submissive heart that obeys His commands.

Father God, you have given us some amazing insights into the Bereans and also into our very being. As we gather to go over the study and review the questions please allow the Holy Spirit to be in control at each group. Help the leaders gathered here to guide these precious women as we unpack what You had to say to us tonight. We ask all these things in the mighty name of Jesus, according to Your will. Amen