

The Noble Bereans



Scripture Reference:

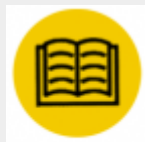
[Acts 17:1-15](#)

Suggested Emphasis:

Study the Scripture to know the truth.

Memory Verse:

“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15



Background
Study



Story
Introduction



Telling
the Story



Review
Questions



Songs



Learning
Activities



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Resources

Story Overview:

Paul continues his 2nd Missionary Journey by visiting the cities of Thessalonica and Berea. In Thessalonica a number of people began to follow Jesus but others were jealous. They started a riot that resulted in Paul's exit. In Berea the people received the message of Jesus with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul

said was true. Paul noted they were of noble character. Many became Christians. Things were going well until some people from Thessalonica heard about it and came to Berea to stir up trouble again. For his own safety Christians in Berea escorted Paul to Athens and arranged for Timothy and Silas to join him there later.

Background Study:

[Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts](#)



Maps available from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/>

This lesson is a continuation of Paul's [2nd Missionary Journey](#). He and Silas had set off from Antioch and travelled across Asia Minor re-visiting the churches that Paul and Barnabas had established during their [1st Missionary Journey](#). In Lystra young Timothy joined them on the journey. After many attempts to take the Gospel message north Paul received a [vision of a man in Macedonia](#) begging him to come and help them. Going on to the Macedonian city of Philippi Paul and his group taught and converted Lydia, a Jailer and their households.

To understand what later happens with the noble people of Berea we must first explore the events that happen in Paul's next stop, Thessalonica.

Thessalonica:

Paul heads south to the port city of Thessalonica which is now the modern-day city of [Thessaloniki, Greece](#). Paul would have travelled along the [Via Egnacia](#) from Philippi to Thessalonica. The [Via Egnacia](#) was a 1,120 kilometre (696 mile) Roman road system that connected a string of Roman colonies from the Adriatic Sea to the Bosphorus. Like other major Roman roads, it was about six metres (19.6 ft) wide, paved with large polygonal stone slabs or covered with a hard layer of sand (*information about the Via Egnacia has been taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Egnatia*). All of this makes for travel relatively easy and quick.

Paul had last come from [preaching in Philippi](#) where there was no Jewish synagogue but Thessalonica had a synagogue and Jewish community. Just as he had done many times before Paul begins his mission work in the city by first visiting the synagogue. Paul's education and background allowed him to speak in Jewish gatherings (see his speech in Jerusalem [Acts 22:3](#)).

Some of the Jewish leaders were unhappy to see members of their synagogue and even people from the community following these men and turning to this new group. They were angry and convinced people of bad character to form a mob and start a riot.

A man named Jason was accused of housing Paul. Jason was dragged in front of the city officials. His accusers falsely accuse him with the high Roman offense of treason. To them there was only one king and that was Caesar. It was treason for Paul to teach that Jesus was actually the king over all.

The bond finally charged was sort of like a guarantee by Jason that there would be no more trouble.

As time goes by a church grows and becomes established in Thessalonica. Paul will later write letters to them and the letters, [1 Thessalonians](#) and [2 Thessalonians](#), form part of the New Testament.

Berea:

Berea is now known as Veria, Greece and it is 73 kilometres (just over 45 miles) west-southwest of Thessaloniki.



Again, Paul and Silas begin their missionary work in this city by first visiting the local synagogue. The only Scriptures Paul and Silas would have used would have been those of the Old Testament. The documents that would make up the New Testament had not yet been written. But Paul knew that Jesus had been prophesied about throughout the Old Testament. In fact, the Jews were awaiting a Messiah. God was fulfilling his promises through the Jewish nation so speaking to Jews was the right place to begin.

The writer of Acts points out that the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians. They were called noble because

- They received the message with great eagerness.

- They examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

The Jews that had caused so much trouble in Thessalonica heard about Paul's success in Berea. They travelled over to Berea for the express purpose of stirring up trouble. This action just confirms Paul's statement about their lack of noble character.

Again, the Christian brothers stepped in to protect these missionaries. Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea but Paul was sent to the coast. This either meant he was going to sail or follow the road along the coast to his next destination. The brothers escorted Paul to Athens and arrangements were made for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

Study of God's Word

The noble people of Berea are a good example for us. With open minds and hearts, they were eager and open to what God had to say to them. But, at the same time, they were willing to study the Scripture to make sure that whatever a preacher was saying measured up to what God had said in His Word. Encourage children to always compare what they hear to what the Scripture says.

Here are some verses about the importance of Scripture. I especially like the first one because it is from a letter that Paul later wrote to Timothy. Paul knew Timothy's mother and grandmother had taught him Scripture since he was a small child.

- [2 Timothy 3:14-17](#)
- [Romans 15:4](#)
- [Psalm 119:9-16](#)



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Way to Introduce the Story:

Make sure every student has a bible (Old and New Testaments) and have a “sword drill” (The name of this game comes from the Bible being referred to as a sword in [Hebrews 4:12](#) and [Ephesians 6:17](#)). The teacher calls out a scripture (make sure you do some of the memory verses!) and the students all search for the verse in their bibles. The first one to find it and read it and begin reading it out loud is the winner of that round. Play a few rounds. Point out the importance of knowing how to search for scriptures in the bible. “In today’s story we are going to read about two cities where Paul preached. Most of the people in one of the cities did not search the scriptures. Paul left there and went to another city where the people studied God’s word. Luke, the writer of Acts, called these people noble.”

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The Story:

Paul’s 2nd Missionary Journey began in Antioch. He and Silas travelled through Asia Minor visiting the churches that Paul had helped establish on his 1st Journey. Then they sailed across the Aegean Sea to teach people in Macedonia. These men travelled wherever God wanted them to go to teach people about Jesus.

One of the places where Paul and Silas preached was in the city of Thessalonica. There were many Jewish people in this city and they would often gather together in their meeting place which was called a “synagogue”. Since Paul was an educated Jewish teacher he went to the synagogue to tell the other Jews about Jesus.

Long ago, in the times of the Old Testament, God chose the Jewish people to be his nation

to follow him and to be the people through whom would bring blessing to the world. He had promised them that one day a Messiah would come from the Jewish nation to be their and the worlds true king and king rescue the Jews and the world from the power of sin and death. The message that Paul had for the Jewish people in the synagogue was that the Messiah had come and that the Messiah was Jesus. He had died on the cross but risen up alive again to reign as worlds true king and so that everyone could be saved from the power of sin and death.

Some of the Jews believed Paul and decided to become followers of King Jesus. There were other people in the city who were not Jews but they believed in God. When they heard about Jesus they became followers, too. Even some of the important women in Thessalonica heard Paul speak and decided to become Christ-followers (Christians).

But not all of the Jews believed what Paul was saying about Jesus. Some did not believe Jesus was the Messiah and did not want anyone else to believe it either. They were jealous that so many people were listening to Paul and Silas.

These were not nice people. They found some bad people in the town and got them to cause trouble and make everyone angry. They thought that Paul was staying in the home of a man named Jason so they rushed to Jason's house. Paul wasn't there but they drug Jason out of his house and took him to the court officials.

Jason was innocent but the men kept accusing him and his friends of causing trouble in the city. Finally, the court officials told Jason that he could go back home as long as he paid money to them and promised to stay out of trouble.

Thessalonica had become a dangerous place to be so that night some of the Christians helped Paul and Silas leave the city. They sent them to the city of Berea.

When he arrived in Berea Paul went straight to their synagogue to tell the Jewish people of Berea the good news that Jesus was the Messiah. But when Paul spoke to them he

found that they were very different from the people in Thessalonica. Luke writes that the Bereans were “more noble”.

A noble person is one who has good personal qualities and is moral in character as evidenced in their having an open mind and heart. The noble Bereans listened carefully to what Paul said and then studied the Scripture to learn more. They read about what God had to say about the Messiah. They knew the Scripture was true and they wanted to make sure that everything Paul said agreed with what God said.

And it did! Jesus really was the Messiah. Jesus was the King of the whole world! Because of this many of the Bereans in the synagogue decided to follow Jesus. As Paul and Silas continued to speak with people many other people besides Jews became followers of Jesus too.

Paul and Silas and even their friend, Timothy continued to talk to people about Jesus in Berea. But, meanwhile, the news got back to Thessalonica and the angry Jews from there travelled to Berea to cause trouble. Soon they convinced some people in Berea to be angry with Paul. Paul’s life was in danger.

Now Berea had become a dangerous place for Paul. But the Christians in Berea made sure he was safe. They took Paul to the coast and then they escorted him down to the city of Athens. They promised to send Silas and Timothy to him soon.

Paul remembered the noble Christians in Berea but, as he looked around at all of the idols in Athens, he knew that these people needed to hear about God and Jesus too. There was still much work to do.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found

in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here for the printable illustrations.](#)

Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Or use the video below.

Review Questions:

1. What is a synagogue? The building where Jews met together to learn about God
2. Who was the Christian who was drug out of his house in Thessalonica? Jason
3. Why are the Bereans said to be of “more noble character than the Thessalonians”?
They received the message about Jesus with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul was preaching was true.

Song Suggestions:

- [B-I-B-L-E](#)
- [Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day](#)
- [The Books of the New Testament.](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Trace Paul's Second Journey on a Map
- Make sure every student has a bible (Old and New Testaments) and have a "sword drill" where you call out scriptures and the class races to find them in their bibles. (The name of this game comes from the Bible being referred to as a sword in [Hebrews 4:12](#) and [Ephesians 6:17](#)).
- Be sure and spend extra time on today's [memory verse](#). You can work on it for the next few weeks. This is one the children really need to know.
- Learn how to study the scripture like the Bereans. Older children can be introduced to bible dictionaries, concordances, atlases, and commentaries. You might want to take a trip to the church library to see some study material that is available.
- Help the children to begin their own bible dictionary. Write down the new words they have learned this term and give some Scripture references.
- Object Lesson: Bring a food item or candy bar to class and place in front of the children. Lay your bible beside it. Talk about how simply looking at the candy bar is not enough. It is not until we take it and eat it that we can enjoy it. The Bible is the same. Just carrying it around or looking at it is not enough. It is not until we read it that we can receive the benefits. Read a few Scriptures you have chosen beforehand. After you have discussed this with the children then let them enjoy the candy bar.
- To review, either you or the children can draw a large outline of Paul on a whiteboard or piece of paper (even drawing with a stick in the sand works fine if you are outside). Then, after you have taught the lesson ask the children to think about what they have just learned from the Bible. Have them write descriptive words and/or draw pictures inside and around the outlined illustration of Paul. When you see what the children are writing or drawing you may be surprised or encouraged by what insights they have picked up from the story. This is also a good opportunity to correct or add to anything you might not have covered as well as you could have



when you were teaching.

If you prefer, you can [download and print the illustration of Paul provided here](#) and then have the children write and draw on it for the review.

- Alternatively, if you are teaching a series of lessons about Paul then you might draw an outline of him on a large poster or paper and then add descriptive words about him each time you study a new lesson.
- [Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together as a set.](#)

Crafts:

- Make a relief map of Paul's Journeys featuring the place in today's story. If you are studying about Paul's journeys over a few lessons then you could add more details to the map each time you learn about another stop on the journey. Instructions on how to make a relief map at <http://www.squidoo.com/salt-dough-maps>
- [Make a scroll. Click here for instructions.](#) Write this verse on it: "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15, NIV

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "The Noble Bereans" printables to print \(A4 paper\)](#)

[Click here for "The Noble Bereans" to print \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Wordsearch of Books of New Testament \(christiananswers.net\)](#)
- [Map of Paul's 2nd journey \(deeperstudy.com\)](#)
- [Review: Create a "passport" that covers the life of Paul. Good visual ideas and activities. Could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul found \(kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)
- [Read more about Thessalonica \(bibleplaces.com\)](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/paul-2nd-journey/>

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