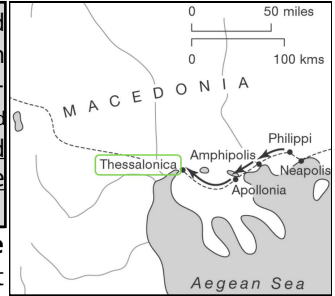




Our emotions & feelings don't ALWAYS deceive us, but sometimes they do. So how can we keep from being fooled? There must be a deeper foundation than our feelings. So what IS that?

Today we rediscover the importance of
KNOWING & SHARING THE SCRIPTURES

Acts 17:1-3 (NET) ¹ After they traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.² Paul went to the Jews in the synagogue, as he customarily did, and on three Sabbath days he addressed [reasoned with = ESV, NAS] **them from the scriptures,** ³ explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and to rise from the dead, saying, "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."



Paul & Silas addressed the people at the **synagogue** for **three Sabbath days**. This took some time and that's okay. We want people to ask their questions, express their concerns, & hear us respond in gentleness.

We're not asking people to take a 'leap of faith', but a 'step of trust'.

...a step of trust in the REAL JESUS, who REALLY lived a sinfulness life,
REALLY died for our sin & REALLY rose from the dead.

Paul did much more than just preach to the people in the synagogue. Paul **reasoned with them from the Scriptures**. The Greek word translated "reasoned" [NET = addressed] is the root for our English word **dialogue**, a two-way exchange of questions and answers. Imagine the people opening vellum and parchment copies of the popular Greek Septuagint¹, as Paul selected & submitted passages for some give and take.

Question: How could Paul persuade this audience simply using the Scriptures?

- 1) Most Jewish people believed in the authority of the Scriptures.** They saw the Scriptures given by God to men through men. In our culture, we don't always start off with that assumption as many people DON'T think the Scriptures were given by God to men through men. We might have to do some ground work as to WHY we believe the Scriptures are trustworthy (10-week series we did called **Sola Scriptura** - find on **FellowshipOfMadison.com**).
- 2) Paul knew & shared the Scriptures that demonstrated WHY he believed WHAT he believed.** Do you know why Jesus had to die? Do you know where the Scriptures teach this? (Paul would have likely read from Isaiah 53 & Psalm 22.)
 - Read the Scriptures in context on a regular basis!
 - Talk with people who know the Scriptures better than you so that you make sure your questions get answered & what you're learning gets celebrated!

BIG TRUTH: The Scriptures are the FOUNDATION for WHY we believe WHAT we believe.
The Scriptures show us WHO God is and WHAT God says.

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 222.

Acts 17:4-9 (NET) ⁴ **Some of them were persuaded** and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large group of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women. ⁵ But the Jews became jealous, and gathering together some worthless men from the rabble in the marketplace, they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. They attacked Jason's house, trying to find Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly.⁶ When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city officials, screaming, "These people who have stirred up trouble throughout the world have come here too, ⁷ and Jason has welcomed them as guests! They are all acting against Caesar's decrees, **saying there is another king named Jesus!**"⁸ They caused confusion among the crowd and the city officials who heard these things. ⁹ After the city officials had received bail from Jason and the others, they released them.

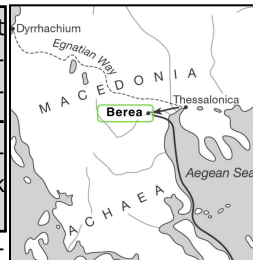
When Paul shared the Gospel, using the Scriptures, some people **were persuaded and joined** the team! Of course, some weren't persuaded and got upset.

They are all acting against Caesar's decrees, saying there is another king named Jesus!

This is the same tactic used by the Jews in Jerusalem against Jesus, successfully leading Pilate to have Jesus crucified. Remember that? (See John 19:12-15) "*We have no king but Caesar!*" (v.15) Claiming another king NOT under the authority of Caesar was treason in the Roman Empire, likely bring troops to crush any rebellion. This scare tactic stirred emotions against Paul and Silas and their friends like Jason.

The city officials **received bail from Jason**, money that would be forfeited if there was any more trouble. Paul & Silas had to go.

Acts 17:10-12 (NET) ¹⁰ The brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea at once, during the night. When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue.¹¹ These Jews were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they eagerly received the message, **examining the scriptures carefully every day to see if these things were so.** ¹² Therefore many of them believed, along with quite a few prominent Greek women and men.



What was the difference between the Bereans and the people in Thessalonica? They were interested in TRUTH, and they were willing to investigate the claims to see if they were true.

Everything they had been taught was NOT true. For example, most Jews had been taught the Messiah would never die (remember Peter rebuking Jesus for saying he was going to be killed - Matt. 16:21-22). Yet Jesus' death is foundational to the Gospel message...SO...they either had to bend their preconceived beliefs to fit the Bible OR bend the Bible to fit their preconceived beliefs. We must do the same. We must be Bereans!

They eagerly received the message, examining the scriptures carefully every day to see if these things were so. And Dr. Luke applauds them for being *eager, but cautious*.

False teachers don't applaud careful examination of the Scriptures, but typically expect you to take their word for it. Opening the Scriptures and reading in context is NOT encouraged, apart from their commentary. You SHOULD question what your parents, pastors, & church teach you. Question what the missionaries who knock at your door teach you. **Examine the Scriptures carefully every day to see if these things are TRUE!**

BIG TRUTH: The Scriptures are the FOUNDATION for WHY we believe WHAT we believe.

The Scriptures show us WHO God is and WHAT God says.

Without the Scriptures (in context) we construct 'build-a-bear Jesus'

And if...**the Scriptures are the FOUNDATION for WHY we believe WHAT we believe** then we compare what we feel & what others say to the teaching of the Scriptures.

Many of them (Bereans) **believed** that the message Paul & Silas shared WAS true. Just imagine the moment when they realized who Jesus REALLY WAS! - the fulfillment of the OT Scriptures, the long promised Messiah who could forgive their sin & fulfill their lives!

* See the video of Micah Wilder & other former Mormons here: <http://www.unveilinggrace.com>

As we have seen over and over again in the story of Acts, some believed, some did not, and some were even hostile to the Gospel message.

Acts 17:13 (NET) ¹³ But when the Jews from Thessalonica heard that Paul had also proclaimed the word of God in Berea, they came there too, inciting and disturbing the crowds.

There is often an enemy behind the enemy. There would be other times that Paul would try to make it back to Thessalonica but NOTICE whom he blamed for not making back.

1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 (NET) ¹⁷ But when we were separated from you, brothers and sisters, for a short time (in presence, not in affection) we became all the more fervent in our great desire to see you in person.¹⁸ For we wanted to come to you (I, Paul, in fact tried again and again) but **Satan thwarted us**.

Be prepared for the enemy's response when we share the Gospel with others. When you want to do it God's way...be ready for the enemy to respond.

Acts 17:14-15 (NET) ¹⁴ Then the brothers sent Paul away to the coast at once, but **Silas and Timothy remained in Berea**.¹⁵ Those who accompanied Paul escorted him as far as Athens, and after receiving an order for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they left.

Why did Silas & Timothy stay in Berea? It seems to be obvious that they stayed to help protect, nurture, & prepare the young believers to stand strong & share with the Berean community and beyond. They would continue to echo the example of Paul, to help the Bereans know & share the Scriptures with others, because...

The Scriptures are the FOUNDATION for WHY we believe WHAT we believe.

That's OUR task too. God has put us here to become disciples who develop disciples who understand WHY we believe WHAT we believe. We don't just make up our belief system. We MUST point people back to the Scriptures - **the FOUNDATION for WHY we believe WHAT we believe.**

FEET2FAITH

🕒 **Read the Scriptures** - Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Mark 15-16:8; Hebrews 8-10.

🕒 **Point another to the Scripture.** (Gospel of Mark or John; Buy an understandable Bible if they need one.)