



THE BEREIA PAGE

"Examining . . . to see if these things are so" ~ Acts 17.11

"The Berea Page"

My purpose in this e-zine* is to encourage Berea-like examination of the Scriptures and related matters (Acts 17.11) in keeping with the New Testament charge to test what we hear and believe (cf. 1 Thess 5.21; 1 John 4.1).

Acts 17.11 opens the door to explore a broad range of subjects, but I intend to focus mainly on being prepared to give an answer/defense (1 Pet 3.15) about belief, emphasizing the issues related to the case for Christ, faithfully dealing with trials and suffering, and occasionally discussing the relationship of faith and truth.

I also want to encourage better Bible study and more awareness of challenges to belief posed by our culture, matters I plan to address via brief pointers, quotations, or references to other resources.

* *E-zine* better describes this publication than "newsletter" or "bulletin." An e-zine is an *electronic zine*, "a noncommercial often homemade or online publication usually devoted to specialized and often unconventional subject matter" (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zine>; accessed Sept. 30, 2019). Hopefully, what I do will be more "specialized" than "unconventional"!

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A Model for Truth Seekers

David Anguish

One of the most encouraging events on Paul's initial preaching tour of Greece (Acts 16.6-18.23) occurred as he went from Thessalonica to Athens. When fellow-believers in Thessalonica were dragged from their homes, beaten, and charged with opposing Caesar's decrees, Acts 17.10-12 says that,

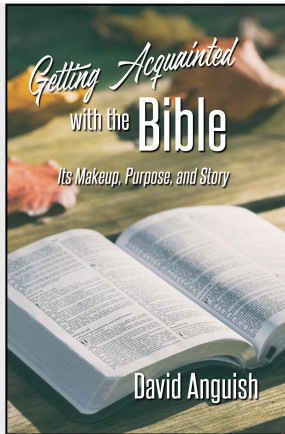
The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men (ESV).

Whereas the Thessalonian Jews were jealous and abusive, the Bereans were open and receptive. But receptive did not mean gullible. The Bereans went to the trouble to check up on Paul, "*examining the Scriptures*" to see if what he said was true (v. 11).

Called to Be Examiners

From the time of Thucydides (ca. 460-400 BC), the Greeks had used "*examine*" (ἀνακρίνω, *anakrinō*) to mean, "to examine closely, to question, interrogate."¹ The word appears sixteen times in the New Testament, referring: (1) to *forensic or judicial examination* (Luke 23.14; Acts 4.9; 12.19; 24.8; 28.18) or an adapted use of that meaning (1 Cor 4.3-4; 9.3); (2) to a distinction between the *discernment* of spiritual and natural people (1 Cor 2.14-15); (3) to *questioning* (1 Cor 10.25, 27); and (4) to an *accountability* that was needed (1 Cor 14.24).

In Acts 17.11, *anakrinō* means, "to learn the nature or truth of something by the process of careful study, evaluation and judgment."² The Bereans engaged in examination "*daily*"³



I also plan to share information about my writing and teaching. (A print edition of my book, pictured above, is available at both [Amazon](#) and [Barnes and Noble](#); it can also be ordered through a bookstore. Click [here](#) to find ebook vendors.)

I'd Like to Hear from You

While I've chosen this format instead of a blog, I do welcome interaction from readers, having often benefited from hearers and readers who asked questions, sought clarification—or just thought I was wrong about something. Those exchanges sharpen my thinking, help me clarify my communication, and, yes, at times, lead me to rethink and revise.

So, I hope you'll use the email address in the lower right corner and contact me. I'll read, reflect, and at some point respond.

Worth Pursuing

Years ago, reading an author's treatment of 2 Corinthians 3.18 in a book on ethics helped me more clearly see the Christian's life purpose: "... *beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*"

What a lofty and exciting goal! I hope "The Berea Page" contributes to its pursuit.

and consequently were declared to be "noble" (εὐγενής; *eugenēs*), that is, having "the type of attitude ordinarily associated with well-bred persons, *noble-minded, open-minded.*"⁴

Unlike the Athenians who were interested in hearing new things because of their novelty (Acts 17.21), the Bereans' open-mindedness aimed to determine whether Paul's interpretations of the Scriptures with regard to the messiah "were so." In other words, the Bereans were *truth seekers*, committed to critical thought before reaching a conclusion.

The commendation of their examination habit is part of a larger New Testament emphasis. Preachers invited skeptical hearers to check out their claims (cf. Acts 26.26). Leaders told the disciples to test what they heard and to believe only what proved to be true. They were to be diligent to find out what was so (1 Thess 5.21; 1 John 4.1; Luke 1.3; cf. Gal. 2.5, 14; 4.16; 2 Thess. 2.10, 12-13; 1 Tim 2.4; et. al.).

A Call for "Bereans"

A well documented downside of social media is "fake news," spread in large part because many uncritically, with no real effort to examine for truthfulness, accept what they read as so. But social media didn't create the problem; it simply allows unexamined tales to spread more quickly.

The truth-seeking Bereans remind us that we who follow Jesus should be leaders on a different path. We should exercise diligence to *understand* what we should believe and then prepare to show *why* we have a right to believe (and practice) it (cf. 2 Tim 2.15; 1 Pet 3.15).

May we all be "Bereans."

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Notes

¹ H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, eds. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, Accordance electronic ed., version 2.3, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., "ἀνακρίνω," *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, 2d, Accordance electronic ed., version 4.2 (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), 331.

³ The modifier "daily" (ESV) translates two words (καθ' ἡμέραν, *kath' hēmeran*) that mean "according to the day" or "day by day."

⁴ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 404.

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